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**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE  
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## **MORE EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION AND FRAGILITY**

### **DAC Perspectives on Effective Development Co-operation**

This document is submitted for INFORMATION to inform user-friendly DAC tools to support DAC members implement their long-standing effectiveness commitments in view of the rapidly evolving global architecture of development co-operation and diverse national contexts. It was prepared for the Global Effective Development Co-operation Summit session on effectiveness in fragile contexts, which took place in Geneva on 12-14 December 2022. Subsequently this draft has been reviewed by DAC-INCAF members and by DAC effectiveness focal points who have shared feedback and practical examples now incorporated into this final version.

This Secretariat Note sets out an initial overview of challenges and practices across the DAC in relation to the effectiveness principles and their application in fragile contexts.

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# 1 FRAGILITY AND DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Fragility is the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb and mitigate those risks. In that respect, fragility is universal. It is also multi-dimensional. The OECD fragility framework assesses fragility for 176 countries across six dimensions: economic, environmental, political, security, societal and human.

Poverty, violence, and environmental degradation are concentrated in fragile contexts. Fragile contexts undermine the ability of individuals to live decent, secure lives and prevent communities from reducing poverty. As a result, the world is becoming increasingly unequal. In 2022, the 60 most fragile contexts account for a quarter (24%) of the world's population but three-quarters (73%) of people living in extreme poverty worldwide. This concentration highlights the importance of addressing global fragility to achieve – or keep on track – the 2030 Agenda. Official development assistance (ODA) is an important and stable resource for fragile contexts to address some of the drivers of their fragility. ODA is historically a resilient source of funding during crises. In 2020, fragile contexts received 60% of total ODA from DAC members. This ODA is mobilised primarily to support social infrastructure in fragile contexts, and, increasingly, humanitarian assistance in extremely fragile contexts.

Some key aspect of fragility stemming from the States of Fragility 2022 (OECD, 2022<sup>[11]</sup>) report might be counter-intuitive findings but are critical to the effectiveness of development co-operation in fragile contexts:

- **There are now more middle-income than low-income fragile contexts.** This means that poverty reduction and economic growth are necessary but insufficient conditions to address the main drivers of fragility. Middle-income fragile contexts face specific fragility challenges related to debt sustainability, sub-national violence, political challenges and conflict spillovers. However, and irrespective of their fragility profile, middle-income and low-income countries generally present a different profile in terms of capacity, ownership and partnership potential, all requiring a differentiated approach.
- **Fragility and conflict are related but distinct.** Conflict-affected contexts tend to be fragile, but not all fragile contexts are conflict-affected. Violence drives fragility, yet among the 60 fragile contexts identified on the 2022 OECD fragility framework, 53 were not in a state of war in 2020 and 24 did not experience any form of violent conflict between 2010 and 2020. Conflicts tend to shift external support toward humanitarian response, with humanitarian ODA now bigger than development ODA in extremely fragile contexts. The level of humanitarian assistance has a significant impact on the implementation of the development co-operation effectiveness principles, and warrants a differentiated approach, as humanitarian effectiveness and development effectiveness do not coincide and humanitarian and development actors often work in disconnect.
- **Social contracts are eroding in many fragile contexts due to increasing violence and civil unrest driven by multidimensional fragility.** The impact of COVID-19 has demonstrated how shocks and crises provide a momentum for issues such as violent extremism, misinformation, violence against women or abuses by the state to reduce societal coping capacities to deal with

crises. These elements can rapidly undermine the indispensable trust that population, national authorities, and development partners put in each other to reach effective development outcomes.

- **Countries can choose different development models and partners.** New opportunities for development co-operation have appeared from non-DAC donors, for example from China, and south-south co-operation is growing. While this presents new opportunities for development pathways, it also means that some choices made by developing countries may not always align with the outcomes, standards, or approaches sought by DAC members. The development co-operation effectiveness principles are a clear marker of a traditional development model heralded by DAC members, but alternative models provided by other non-DAC development providers may come at odd with these principles.

Rooted in the Paris declaration, the creation in 2008 of the **International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS)** is the most important landmark for effective engagement in fragile contexts. IDPS has established clear peacebuilding and Statebuilding objectives and specific principles for effective engagement in fragile states in *The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (IDPS, 2011<sup>[2]</sup>)*.

### Box 1. The New Deal for engagement in fragile states

The New Deal for engagement in fragile states, or 'New Deal' is a key agreement between fragile and conflict-affected states (represented by the G7+ group), development partners (represented by the INCAF group), and civil society (represented by the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding group) to improve the current development policy and practice in fragile and conflict-affected states. The New Deal recognises that transitioning out of fragility is a long political work that requires country leadership and ownership. Through the New Deal, development partners committed to supporting nationally owned and led development plans and greater aid effectiveness in fragile situations (the TRUST principles), and G7+ governments committed to inclusive planning processes, grounded in context (the FOCUS principles). Both parties committed to pursuing five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs): legitimate politics, justice, security, revenue and services and economic foundations.

This paper explores what drives the challenges to aid effectiveness in fragile contexts and provides some indication on how to make best use of the four principles of effective development co-operation based on examples of good practice from DAC members.

## Fragility is an obstacle to development effectiveness

ODA is public money from the taxpayers of DAC member countries. Rising fiscal pressure in DAC countries puts at risk the available development resources at times of multiplying needs stemming from successive global shocks. Given its important role in fragile contexts, ODA must be efficient to maximise sustainable development results. Yet, evaluations have demonstrated that beyond funding, effective ODA is also about the way it is mobilised to support nationally owned pathways to development. In that sense, partnerships and the architecture of development co-operation can be more important to aid effectiveness than the amounts of funds.

Indeed, the way ODA is mobilised has a direct implication on aid effectiveness. While the consensus remains strong within the DAC around the four effectiveness principles, there is also a recognition that applying these effectiveness principles in the most fragile contexts is challenging. As development outcomes are to be driven by countries themselves rather than by international development partners,

development co-operation can hardly be transformational in contexts where governments struggle -or are unwilling - to prioritise or deliver on their own development strategies.

Yet, addressing the drivers of fragility is a generational endeavour that goes beyond development partners' programming cycles to create lasting stability and prevent conflicts. As a result, the development effectiveness principles represent a particularly useful common standard that serves as a long-standing framework throughout countries' development pathways toward resilience and stability.

## **An increasing humanitarian share of ODA undermines development effectiveness**

Climate change, Covid19 and conflict mean humanitarian needs driven by displacement and hunger are at unprecedented levels. The policy environment is getting more complex in fragile contexts experiencing crises, as a great share of ODA is mobilised in the form of humanitarian assistance. Continued efforts to implement the [OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#) is required to foster greater coherence among actors working to strengthen resilience in fragile contexts and address the root causes of humanitarian challenges (OECD, n.d.<sup>[3]</sup>). While progress has been made in developing new approaches to a shared understanding of how to reduce risks and improve resilience, challenges remain to ensure that joint analysis and joined-up planning translate into programming. Scaling up emerging new operational practices will require sustained collective investment in joint learning and evidence, while strengthening the voice and participation of people affected by crises and fragility.

Humanitarian assistance is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, and these are generally at odds with the principles of development effectiveness (See Box 1). Because mobilising development programming is often long and depends on the nature of the political dialogue between governments, humanitarian assistance has extended its remit well beyond its original mandate of saving lives. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance is not designed to accompany countries and societies through their development trajectory. As such, humanitarian effectiveness is about the quality of the delivery of goods and services to people in need. It is measured through specific metrics, such as the Grand Bargain commitments (IASC, 2016<sup>[4]</sup>).

### Box.2. Humanitarian effectiveness and humanitarian principles

Originated from the International Committee of Red Cross and the National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence constitute the four common principles to international humanitarian law (IHL). They define what humanitarian aid is: delivering life-saving assistance to those in need, without discrimination. Adherence to the humanitarian principles facilitates access, acceptance and helps humanitarian workers carry out their work.

- *Humanity* means that human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable.
- *Neutrality* means that humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute.
- *Impartiality* means that humanitarian aid must be provided solely based on need, without discrimination.
- *Independence* means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives.

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While they are distinct, humanitarian principles and development co-operation effectiveness principles can be applied by organisations implementing programmes in the same crisis context. The DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus is clear about what should be prioritised: “Prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary” (OECD, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>). However, in many fragile contexts, no alternative or complement to humanitarian assistance is available. Either development finance is not adapted to the context that is, sufficiently flexible and predictable, allowing for a timely crisis response to financing needs across the Humanitarian development peace nexus (OECD, 2022<sup>[6]</sup>). Or political and administrative obstacles from both national authorities and development partners prevent durable solutions from emerging, for example in forced displacement situations where refugees and internally displaced people are not always included in national development plans. As a result, operations aimed at building community resilience and addressing some of the local structural drivers of fragility are often implemented through a succession of short-term humanitarian assistance. Achieving system-wide change called for at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 requires accelerating progress on implementing the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, on the condition adherents seize and sustain the strategic momentum that has been building around the DAC Recommendation (OECD, 2022<sup>[6]</sup>).

These challenges have led humanitarian assistance into becoming the default response to crises, especially in contexts where the political environment is not conducive to development co-operation with national authorities. The overuse of the humanitarian system and budgets is detrimental to aid effectiveness, both for receiving and donor countries. First it exhausts the humanitarian capacity to respond to the needs of those people that can only be reached in applying the humanitarian principles. Second, looking at all crises from a humanitarian point of view can prevent the emergence of more sustainable sources of resilience and social infrastructure through the application of development co-operation effectiveness principles.

# 2 BINDING CONSTRAINTS, TENSIONS AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The IDPS recognises the main obstacle to development effectiveness in fragile contexts: “Processes of political dialogue have often failed due to lack of trust, inclusiveness, and leadership. International partners often bypass national interests and actors, providing aid in overly technocratic ways that underestimate the importance of harmonizing with the national and local context, and support short-term results at the expense of medium-to-long-term sustainable results brought about by building capacity and systems” (IDPS, 2011<sup>[7]</sup>).

These challenges are well known, and many evaluations have pointed to the critical obstacles to the implementation of the development effectiveness principles (Zurcher, 2020<sup>[8]</sup>), (Zurcher, 2022<sup>[9]</sup>). These issues are linked to each other and can be broadly grouped in three categories:

## Lack of trust

The lack of trust due to divergent objectives or vested interests is a pervasive problem in development co-operation, which the overarching 2030 agenda does not address. The lack of trust between the national authorities, the population in developing countries and development partners can be compounded by conflict or by a difficult national or international political environment. Mistrust between stakeholders increases the risk of development failure, further fuelling the lack of trust.

**Constrained political dialogue.** Even if society as a whole should be involved in defining development ambitions, inclusive, legitimate institutions remain central to exiting fragility. For example, there is a strong link between the ability to generate fair and stable tax revenue and all the dimensions of fragility (OECD, 2022<sup>[1]</sup>). Therefore, a partnership and dialogue of trust between ODA providers and the national government remains instrumental to address the drivers of fragility. In some contexts, this political dialogue is difficult or even suspended. International sanctions or non-recognition of authorities are stark examples of environments without trust. Limited political dialogue precludes multi-stakeholder partnerships and is an incentive to use humanitarian aid as a default engagement modality with the country.

**Donor transparency and disbursement information.** When donors’ aid disbursement information is not shared, it is difficult for national authorities to plan their own budget priorities or even for DAC members’ embassies in each context to have a full picture of the ODA disbursed and by whom. In addition, the use of thematic funds, global or special crosscutting programs as well as humanitarian aid flows complicates national authorities’ ability to keep track and understand the complete nature of the aid envelope mobilised in their own country. The lack of transparency affects trust in the development co-operation system.

## Lack of country ownership and capacity issues

**Lack of clarity about who owns development agenda.** In contexts where national development objectives are not explicitly formulated and are not given priority in resource allocation by the central

government, there is lack of clarity about who owns development and around which national priorities development partners could co-ordinate their engagement.

**Alignment with country priorities.** In the most fragile countries where development priorities are numerous, the national development plans are very broad by nature, and some development partners participate in the elaboration of national development plans. As a result, any bilateral or multilateral initiative can be considered aligned to government priorities, while following different development agendas according to agencies' mandates or donor development priorities.

**Lack of consistent presence across territory.** In fragile contexts, security, logistical, and technical issues represent a constraint on the government's capacity to deliver services uniformly across its territory. Insecurity, precarious working conditions, and unpaid salaries hamper government presence, eroding trust between the government and population and putting development outcomes and the implementation of policy reforms at risk. In regions where the government is hardly represented, or primarily through its security apparatus, services can sometimes be delivered primarily through international humanitarian assistance or through civil society, therefore disconnected from government systems, planning and budgets.

**Parallel systems.** Capacity building can be at odds with the pressure to deliver fast and with high quality. In some contexts, parallel systems such as project implementation units within ministries are created to focus government resources on specific programmes. While such parallel units generally allow for faster implementation, hiring national civil servants (or even external capacity) at inflated salaries into project implementation units takes qualified civil servants away from government structures, with no incentive for these individuals to return to the national system at the end of the programme.

**Lack of reliable data.** Measuring progress on development effectiveness and sustainability requires solid data and these are harder to obtain in fragile contexts. The capacity and reach of the National Statistics Office may be marginal, creating blind spots for several important development indicators. In conflict areas, the rollout of basic health and household surveys is often impossible, hampering results-based planning and budgeting. When different donors bring their own results-based programming, the problem is compounded for the government.

## Fragmentation and aid architecture

**Emergency mode.** The lack of coherent or consistent strategy across humanitarian and development operations. This in many of the most fragile contexts favours the implementation of projects rather than global programmes. A cumulation of different projects by different entities and with different national partners leads to a dispersion of efforts. It exhausts national capacities and reduces accountability, sustainability, and effectiveness.

**Sustainability.** Sustainability is a general concern in all projects and evaluations in fragile contexts. In the most fragile contexts, public finances and domestic revenue are considered inadequate to sustain the level of expenditure generated by externally funded operations. This is especially true in social sectors (health, social protection, education, etc.) that can be the most successful in terms of human development, but do not generate immediate financial return. Clear exit strategies to mitigate the impact of the termination of external support are rarely built in the project design or overall strategic approach.

**Technical assistance.** The quality of technical assistance provided by donors in extremely fragile contexts generally receives negative reviews in most assessments and evaluations (Zurcher, 2022<sup>[9]</sup>). The focus on direct training of individuals leaves little focus on strengthening local institutions. Donor efforts in capacity building are rarely guided by a coordinated strategy resulting in many isolated and disconnected initiatives.

**Donor coordination.** Limited donor coordination compounds the challenges to country ownership in fragile contexts. Especially where the international presence is strong, an uncoordinated approach can rapidly overwhelm the government's capacity to engage and undercuts its coordination role. Conversely, many DAC members are not represented in fragile contexts, and centralised decision-making can prevent forging partnerships and seeking coherence and complementarity amongst bilateral and multilateral support toward a commonly agreed objective.

**Pressure to deliver.** Especially in recovery contexts or after a peace deal is negotiated, the political pressure to reap rapid "peace dividends" or "early recovery" results has contributed to projects designed with limited regard for long-term impact. This leads to measuring development results and impact through outputs rather than outcomes.

**Eligibility criteria.** The prevalence of middle-income fragile contexts presents new challenges in terms of funding sustainable transitions out of fragility (OECD, 2022<sup>[11]</sup>). Income-based eligibility criteria may make it difficult for middle-income fragile contexts to access concessional finance even though a transition to middle-income status does not necessarily mean a country faces different or lesser challenges (Di Ciommo and Sergejeff, 2021<sup>[10]</sup>).

# 3 “EFFECTIVENESS PATHWAYS” TO DELIVER ON THE COMMITMENTS

Because fragility is multi-dimensional, and because meeting development needs can be as urgent as meeting humanitarian needs in crises areas, most DAC members’ and IFIs’ development policies articulate a specific approach to development co-operation in fragile or conflict-affected countries. In addition to the 2011 New Deal for engagement in fragile states (IDPS, 2011<sup>[2]</sup>) the 2019 DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (OECD, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>) outlines some elements of what good looks like across the development co-operation effectiveness principles.

## Country ownership

The principle of ownership recognises that developing countries have to set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improving their institutions and tackling corruption. Political will to deliver on these strategies is also key. Development partners from their side should align to national development priorities or help create the conditions for national ownership to be effective, through a more systematic use of country systems for aid delivery. Country ownership includes work beyond national authorities, with civil society and sub-national authorities.

- **Fragility assessments** or analysis of the structural drivers of conflict should be made jointly by development partners, the government and key national stakeholders and non-state actors.
- **Sweden** facilitates the nexus donor group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through a nexus adviser based in the Swedish Embassy. The donor group covers a range of activities, from information exchange, coordinating office functions, and practical processes to map and track resourcing against needs.
- **Belgium’s [Fragility Resilience Assessment Management Exercise \(FRAME\) tool](#)** has been used for common risk and opportunity analysis with stakeholders in Mali, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>).
- **Korea**, to take forward its Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Strategy, has established a checklist for enhancing the implementation of the HDP Nexus in the project identification stage for Korea’s Conflict and Fragility Programme. The checklist consists of questions on whether context and risk analysis are conducted, on whether consultation with other stakeholders in partner countries is made and on whether the elements for strengthening capacity building and resilience at the national and local level are fully considered.
- **Common Country Analyses (CCA)** are the UN-led collective, comprehensive, and multidimensional analyses of the situation in each country through the lens of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CCA aims at designing a comprehensive strategy to address issues of fragility in a framework where actions of all actors including the state, local institutions, civil society, development partners and private sector are integrated, coherent and well-coordinated.

- With the support of multiple donors, **UNDP** has supported New Deal Fragility Assessments in 11 countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea -Bissau, Liberia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor-Leste.
- A number of **other frameworks** exists including Conflict and Development Analysis, the EU-UN-WB Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments and the Post Disaster Needs Assessments, the WB's Risk and Resilience assessment.

**National empowerment.** The DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus calls for empowered leadership for cost-effective coordination across the humanitarian, development, and peace architecture, notably by supporting local and national authorities, including legitimate non-state authorities, wherever possible and appropriate and in accordance with international law including humanitarian principles (OECD, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>).

- **Iceland** makes [use of country systems](#) at district level, assisting some of the more marginalised and rural communities in low-income and fragile contexts. [Its programming](#) supports district budgets and uses district systems to monitor projects. In support of national decentralisation efforts, long-term partnerships with district authorities in partner countries have improved their performance and enhanced service provision for the population, making this a suitable approach for small partners.
- **Korea** has carried out the GPEDC Learning and Accelerating Programme (LAP) to meet partner countries' demand for training in areas related to the implementation of effective development co-operation principles. The 2021 LAP focused on Action Area 1.2. "Statistical Capacity and Data" to strengthen the statistical capacity of national statistical agencies in partner countries.

**Localisation.** International organisations and bilateral donors endeavour to strengthen their partnership beyond the central government. Localisation means different things to different stakeholders, and DAC members have adopted various forms of localisation to deal directly with sub-national authorities, with CSOs or grassroots organisations. Localisation of aid is also part of local ownership.

- The **United States** has changed its business practice to greater localisation in Kenya, through partnership agreements with 41 out of 44 county authorities. It has empowered local development organisations (LDOs) and fostered co-creation to deliver programming increasingly through local partners. Integrated programming sets all of US development assistance in a more coordinated fashion, aligned behind county plans. This allows USAID to draw on the substantial resources for health or resilience in a more strategic way, move to direct support to County Governments and focus on system strengthening as well as service delivery (DAC Peer Review of the US, 2022, forthcoming).
- **Norway** launched a pilot project with NORCAP, in the Lake Chad region as a follow-up to the 2017 Oslo Conference. Participating CSOs from Chad, Niger and Nigeria were able to strengthen their capacity in technical project management skills and organisational development. The pilot project also supports the establishment of civil society platforms and mechanisms to include local organisations in decision-making. Experts are hosted by UN agencies and the RC/HC offices but work directly with local NGOs and civil society networks.

**Flexibility and risk appetite.** In some crisis contexts, some donors have allowed greater flexibility in setting their country strategies. Such flexibility allows course correction and change when there is an unexpected contextual development. Several donors have also internalised risk-acceptance for operating in fragile contexts. This is based on the premise that the risk of not acting can also carry significant costs.

- **Sweden's** risk approach to its development co-operation entails identifying risks earlier in the programme cycle and putting in place risk management measures. Risks are monitored continuously throughout the programme cycle with its partners. In Liberia for example, Sweden

embassy had identified three major risks with the potential to derail implementation of the strategy in 2018 and setting out appropriate control actions for managing these risks (OECD, 2019<sup>[12]</sup>).

- **Ireland** understands that supporting the most fragile contexts implies a certain level of risks and agrees to share these risks with its partners. For example, when the Somalia Humanitarian Fund experienced challenges in 2013, Ireland maintained funding and as Chair of the Pooled Fund Working Group, worked with OCHA to strengthen control systems (IASC, 2021<sup>[13]</sup>). In Ethiopia, Embassy management and staff regularly discuss and update the risk register and mitigating measures where necessary, ranging from capacity building to adjusting intervention approaches or suspending payments (OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>).
- **Switzerland** mitigates risks in supporting partners, for example through the deployment of experts to partners –including local actors – to share capacity and learning in managing projects, including risks associated with them (IASC, 2021<sup>[15]</sup>).
- **The European Union**, through its Joint Programming and now Team Europe Initiatives aims to enhance country ownership in synchronising planning cycles and aligning results frameworks, which helps minimise costs and avoid duplications while fostering country ownership. Together with national authorities, EU development partners develop a joint strategy aligned with the partner country's national development plan and results framework. EU Joint Programming started in South Sudan as one of the two first pilot countries. By 2018, joint strategies were in place in 20 partner countries (OECD, 2018<sup>[16]</sup>). In Mali where the EU is the largest donor partner, the Team Europe Initiative developed a programming document for the 2020-2024 period gathering 12 EU member states.
- **Finland** has adapted country programmes, transitioning from a 4-year programming cycle to the implementation of temporary 1-year programmes.

## Focus on results

The principle of focusing on results recognises that providing the right development aid is not only about the size of a project or a loan; it is about how the intervention improves people's lives in a sustainable way. The "New Deal" calls for providing aid and managing resources effectively and aligning these resources for results.

- **Switzerland** operates the Monitoring System for Development-Related Changes as a key instrument to remain flexible, detect changing contexts and needs, and adjust programmes accordingly. With this system, development-related changes are assessed twice a year. Based on these assessments, the Embassy can adjust its engagement to respond to emerging opportunities and adapt to an evolving context (OECD, 2019<sup>[17]</sup>).
- **New Zealand's** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has simplified its approach to results at corporate level, creating space to focus on country-level learning, decision making and mutual accountability. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators are used to plan and monitor progress towards shared results with partner countries.
- **Sweden** made strategic use of results frameworks during the COVID-19 crisis, coupled with greater reliance on locally defined results and theories of change, which allows for flexibility during an emergency period. A critical factor that enables such an approach is a history of trust building with national staff in embassies and with implementing partners, allowing for increased autonomy to adapt the development interventions while relaxing other accountability-driven oversight measures.
- **Canada** incorporated feminist and conflict-sensitive evaluation principles into its 2021 [evaluation](#) of "Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the Middle East and the Maghreb, 2015-16 to 2019-20". This evaluation applied internationally recognized protection

standards and incorporated feminist elements of participation and inclusivity in the creation and application of the [Gender Equality and Empowerment Measurement \(GEM\)](#) tool. This focus group approach builds on the Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change models to gather qualitative data about gender equality and empowerment outcomes.

- The **United Kingdom** has no fixed humanitarian budget, providing flexibility to respond to needs according to its own and its partners' analysis.
- **Finland** provides flexibility in the way funding instruments are used, with the possibility to refocus and rechannel funding (development to humanitarian and vice versa)

**Seek coherence.** While humanitarian response is essential to keep people alive it does not cater to achieving self-sufficiency in the longer term. Therefore, coherence between humanitarian and development programming, based on shared outcomes, can maximise the impact of the response for the affected populations and thus, increase effectiveness (OECD, 2017<sup>[18]</sup>).

## Inclusive partnerships

The principle of inclusive partnerships recognises that development, including economic and social development is a collective responsibility for a society, and does not depend solely on government policies and actions. Fruitful partnerships are based on trust, and trust can be eroded in fragile contexts. Some specific actions can help build a sufficient level of trust to support sustainable development outputs.

**A development vision that builds on partnership.** The New Deal proposes that all development outputs are guided by “One vision, one plan” and compact-like mechanisms are seen as a key mechanism to implement one vision, one plan. The DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus also stresses that development action should be guided by thinking and acting beyond the government, recognising that significant sources of resilience lie within communities and civil society.

- **Sweden** Sida has capitalised on long-standing partnership with research institutions in some countries, such as the [Swedish Action Group for Health Research and Development](#) to rebuild Somalia's health system. This partnership started in 1981 and resumed after the civil war in 2014. Thus provides a platform for expert exchange that generates trust around science in the service of essential population needs.
- **Finland** has created a [Finnish Fund for local co-operation](#), managed by embassies, that provides core and project support to local civil society organisations also in crisis-prone countries and territories for up to two years.
- **Japan** coherently [links its efforts on disaster prevention, preparedness and response](#), and helps to set policy standards on disaster risk reduction in multilateral fora and through strong bilateral relations with partner country governments.
- **Denmark** is defending and developing local partners and encourages its strategic partners to support local civil society actors with longer-term flexible funding and organisational support. Support is either indirect as local partnerships in Somalia, which Save the Children enables using Danish funds, or even direct, as in Burkina Faso where a civil society fund was established in 2008 (OECD, 2021<sup>[19]</sup>).
- **Ireland** promotes multi-stakeholder dialogue through specific platforms on agriculture, health, development education and violence against women that bring together government, civil society, academia, and the private sector foster regular exchange and co-ordination. In Ethiopia, Ireland is considered an indispensable partner for local CSOs with whom dialogue and learning opportunities abound (OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>). The Embassy has posted staff in the regions of the country when regional governments started to assume increasing responsibility in fostering such partnerships.

- **Korea** has hosted the Busan Global Partnership Forum since 2014 to discuss ways to enhance development effectiveness among governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations. A session of the 2021 Forum was organized under the theme of “development effectiveness in fragile contexts”, and various stakeholders discussed the main dilemmas faced by development actors working in fragile contexts and ways to overcome them.
- **United States.** At the end of 2020, the U.S. released its ‘Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability’, which spells out an integrated, evidence-based, prevention-focused, and field-driven approach to address drivers of fragility. The Strategy also includes a specific objective to “*strengthen coherence among humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities to meet emergency needs while breaking cycles of crisis.*” The Strategy responds to a call from the U.S. Congress to change how we work in fragile contexts. This includes how we integrate development with diplomacy, security co-operation, and other tools, and how we orient these around comprehensive strategies that promote principled humanitarian assistance while also addressing the root causes of conflict, violence, and instability.

## Transparency and accountability

Both the New Deal and the DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus foresee mechanisms to ensure accountability to the people being assisted and to strengthen transparency, voice and participation as a critical element of improving collective outcomes, providing opportunities to affected populations to identify their immediate needs and articulate the risks, vulnerabilities and unmet needs. (OECD, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>). Yet fragile contexts present particular challenges.

**Accountability to beneficiaries.** Humanitarian providers are generally accountable to their international donors more than to the government or to affected populations. Although significant efforts are being made to engage with receiving communities and local humanitarian organisations, and collect their feedback, improving humanitarian accountability at national level remains work in progress. From its side, Development Co-operation remains structured by the political dialogue with national government, more rarely with elected representatives, such as parliaments.

- **Norway** highlighted accountability to affected populations (AAP) in the context of localisation and participation, during annual meetings with its Norwegian strategic partners. Norway also has a multi-annual agreement with the Austrian NGO Ground Truth Solutions to strengthen AAP in the global humanitarian response.
- **The Netherlands** launched a “dialogue and dissent” policy framework in 2013. A total of 25 organisations or consortia were awarded grants aimed at enabling CSOs to voice alternative or dissenting views effectively by strengthening their capacity to hold government and business to account (OECD, 2017<sup>[20]</sup>).
- **Finland’s** Ministry for Foreign Affairs has launched a [database](#) on Finland’s development co-operation. The service shows where, when and how Finland’s development co-operation funds have been used. The statistics cover ODA-eligible disbursements allocated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and by other public bodies. The service increases the transparency of Finland’s development co-operation. The service also includes information on Finland’s humanitarian aid.

**Use of national oversight mechanism.** Building on the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action, the New Deal supports the creation and development of national reporting and planning systems (e.g. budgets, transparency portals, aid information management systems) and foresees support to domestic oversight mechanisms including national parliaments and citizen’s views to assess the transparency of domestic resources and aid.

- **Ireland** supports partner country governments, civil society and other stakeholders to participate in mutual assessment reviews at country and sectoral levels in meaningful ways. It helps to ensure mutuality around a shared agenda that does not place the onus for reporting on one partner and enables non-state actors to engage. In Ethiopia, the mutual accountability framework of 2015 bolstered commitment to measurable development results in areas of food security and agricultural growth (OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>).
- With the support of multiple donors, **UNDP** supported fragility-sensitive SDG integration in national development processes (planning, budgeting, aid management, implementation) in 11 countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste.

**Timely and predictable aid.** The New Deal calls for the development and use of simplified, accountable fast-track financial management and procurement procedures to improve the speed and flexibility of aid delivery in fragile situations. The DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus also calls for predictable, flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible, aligning financing with agreed collective outcomes where appropriate – while recognising that humanitarian, development and peace actions may have priorities that also fall outside of collective outcomes.

Fragile contexts represent a particular challenge, especially crises-affected contexts, where humanitarian needs and development needs overlap. Development co-operation engagement is generally long to mobilise, leaving the onus of meeting basic needs for prolonged periods of time on a humanitarian system that is not designed to work on transforming systems.

- **Germany** has designed its Transitional Development Assistance as a quick and flexible instrument with a dedicated budget for recovery, that enables flexible implementation and financing to improve access to basic services in crises contexts and strengthen the resilience of people caught in crises. Doing so, Transitional development assistance thus makes an important contribution to preserving humanitarian assistance and moving to development outputs as soon as possible.
- **France** has developed its 'Minka peace and resilience funds' to finance its efforts to tackle some drivers of crises. The Fund is dedicated to medium and long-term financing operations in regions affected by crisis or violent conflict. The Minka Fund is part of France's peacebuilding efforts, but as it is tailored to unstable areas it helps meet the needs of local communities that would otherwise be funded with humanitarian mechanisms.

## A new monitoring framework

In response to new and evolving challenges that development actors are facing in fragile contexts, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) has adapted how it monitors effective development co-operation. This allows for a leaner and less burdensome monitoring process for fragile contexts that is more attuned to the realities of their development co-operation contexts. Properly applied, this approach will provide an improved feedback loop on where progress is being made, and spur dialogue and action where the bottlenecks lie to implementing existing international commitments in fragile contexts. The tailored approach retains the key features of Global Partnership monitoring: that is, it is voluntary, country-led, and based on multi-stakeholder engagement. Improvements made to Global Partnership monitoring with respect to this tailored approach for fragile contexts will inform improvements to Global Partnership monitoring for all participating countries.

# 4 ANNEXES

## Additional resources

- [States of fragility](#) (2022)
- [The OECD fragility framework](#)
- [The DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian Development Peace nexus](#) (2019)
- [Good development support in fragile, at-risk and crisis affected contexts](#) (2016)

## Development co-operation effectiveness commitments in fragile contexts

The particularity of fragile contexts in development co-operation is long standing, with numerous specific policy commitments to take fragility into account for effective development co-operation. The Paris declaration marked the beginning of the recognition that while the guiding principles of effective aid apply equally to fragile states, they need to be “*adapted to environments of weak ownership and capacity and to immediate needs for basic service delivery*” (OECD, 2005<sup>[21]</sup>). How to adapt the aid effectiveness principles to fragility is tackled by many subsequent policy documents and commitments but remains an unresolved question.

**Table 1. Overview of commitments by DAC members to address fragility**

Pre-GPEDC	
<a href="#">Paris Declaration (2005)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building effective governance structures and institutions</li> <li>• Engaging with partners in developing national planning tools and development strategies</li> <li>• Encouraging broad participation in priority-setting by a range of national actors</li> <li>• Avoiding activities that undermine national institution building</li> <li>• Using an appropriate and flexible mix of instruments, particularly for countries in promising but high-risk transitions</li> </ul>
<a href="#">OECD Principles</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take context as the starting point</li> </ul>

<a href="#">for good international engagement in fragile states and situations (2007)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do no harm</li> <li>• Focus on state-building as the central objective</li> <li>• Prioritise prevention</li> <li>• Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives</li> <li>• Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies</li> <li>• Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts</li> <li>• Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors</li> <li>• Act fast but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance</li> <li>• Avoid pockets of exclusion</li> </ul>				
<a href="#">Accra Agenda for Action (2008)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fragility assessments:</b> conducting joint fragility and governance assessments, and engaging developing country authorities and other relevant stakeholders to the maximum extent possible</li> <li>• <b>Capacity development:</b> providing demand-driven, tailored and co-ordinated capacity-development support for core state functions and for early and sustained recovery</li> <li>• <b>Humanitarian &amp; peacebuilding support:</b> working on flexible, rapid and long-term funding modalities, on a pooled basis where appropriate, to support humanitarian development phases and peacebuilding</li> <li>• <b>Addressing root causes:</b> working and agreeing on a set of realistic peace- and state-building objectives that address the root causes of conflict and fragility and help ensure the protection and participation of women</li> <li>• <b>Monitoring:</b> monitoring implementation of the Good Engagement Principles and sharing results as part of progress reports on Paris implementation.</li> </ul>				
<b>GPEDC &amp; UN</b>					
<a href="#">Busan Partnership Agreement – New Deal for engagement in fragile states (2011)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of the <b>International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding:</b></li> <li>• <b>Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs):</b> which prioritise legitimate politics, people's security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and fair services, as an important foundation to enable progress towards the MDGs to guide work in fragile contexts;</li> <li>• <b>'FOCUS' principles:</b> a new country-led and owned approach to engaging in fragile contexts, comprising five features: fragility assessments, 'one vision, one plan' approach, compacts (mutual accountability frameworks), use of PSGs for monitoring, and support to political dialogue; and</li> <li>• <b>'TRUST' principles:</b> a set of commitments to enhance transparency, share risk, use country systems, strengthen national capacities, and improve the timeliness and predictability of development co-operation to achieve better results.</li> </ul>				
<b>GPEDC &amp; UN</b>					
<a href="#">Nairobi Outcome Document (2016)</a>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="927 1525 1171 1525" style="text-align: center;">GPEDC &amp; UN</th> <th data-bbox="1171 1525 1430 1525" style="text-align: center;">OECD/DAC</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="927 1525 1171 1977"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaffirm support to the new Deal principles and the work of the IDPS</li> <li>• Recognise the link between peace and development, and the <b>multidimensionality of fragility</b></li> <li>• Stress the importance of <b>Fragile-to-Fragile Co-operation</b> between states affected by conflict or fragility in promoting peacebuilding and state building assistance</li> <li>• Indicate that national results frameworks must be developed based on a <b>country-led inclusive assessment of the country's own fragility</b></li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1171 1525 1430 1977"> <a href="#">DAC High-Level Meeting (2016)</a> <p>Address the root causes of conflicts, forced displacement, and refugee flows through effective humanitarian ODA.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	GPEDC & UN	OECD/DAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaffirm support to the new Deal principles and the work of the IDPS</li> <li>• Recognise the link between peace and development, and the <b>multidimensionality of fragility</b></li> <li>• Stress the importance of <b>Fragile-to-Fragile Co-operation</b> between states affected by conflict or fragility in promoting peacebuilding and state building assistance</li> <li>• Indicate that national results frameworks must be developed based on a <b>country-led inclusive assessment of the country's own fragility</b></li> </ul>	<a href="#">DAC High-Level Meeting (2016)</a> <p>Address the root causes of conflicts, forced displacement, and refugee flows through effective humanitarian ODA.</p>
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<a href="#">New way of working World Humanitarian Summit (2016)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The New Way of Working aims to transcend the humanitarian-development divide by working to collective outcomes, which is “a commonly agreed quantifiable and measurable result or impact in reducing people’s needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increasing their resilience, requiring the combined effort of different actor</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Good development support in fragile, at-risk and crisis affected contexts (2016)</a>	Provide twelve principles across three key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building institutional fitness</li> <li>- Aspiring to deliver change</li> <li>- Leaving no-one behind</li> </ul>
<a href="#">IDPS Stockholm declaration (2016)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing the root causes of fragility, conflict and violence through implementing the New Deal</li> <li>Contributing to implementing the 2030 Agenda by using New Deal principles</li> <li>Using development aid in more innovative ways to better respond to protracted crises</li> <li>Wider and stronger partnerships</li> </ul>	<a href="#">DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus (2019)</a>	Provides a set of Recommendation to increase coherence and complementarity toward a peace objective for humanitarian, development, and peace operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination</li> <li>- Programming</li> <li>- Financing</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Geneva Summit Declaration (2022)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country resilience must be supported to address multiple and interconnected development challenges and fragility, cognizant of country-specific development challenges and vulnerabilities</li> </ul>		

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