

**UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP &
INTERAGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC) TASK TEAM ON STRENGTHENING THE
HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS with a focus on protracted contexts**

Key Messages on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and its Links to Peace

22 March 2019

1. Against the back drop of the SDGs—with the promise of *leaving no one behind*, **ending needs by reducing risks and vulnerabilities is now a shared commitment** within the UN and the IASC. Building on major global processes, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the World Humanitarian Summit, the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, the twin resolutions on Sustaining Peace, the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration, and the OECD DAC recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, new working methods across the humanitarian and development are recognized as imperative, especially with the aim to improve the protection environment and contribute to prevention and peace.
2. **Protracted humanitarian crises continue to increase in numbers.** Over recent years, the nature of crises has evolved both in numbers of affected people and in complexity. These are often caused by drawn-out violent conflicts, frequently impacting neighbouring countries – and have resulted in massive levels of displacement lasting for decades. This adversely affects the ability to strengthen national institutions and human capital. These situations cannot be solved through short-term or incremental approaches.
3. **Reducing the impact of protracted crises on affected populations requires both meeting immediate needs and investing in the medium to long term to reduce chronic vulnerabilities and risks affecting communities.** It requires boosting resilience and building self-reliance by strengthening formal and informal institutions and communities' capacities, improving livelihoods, and increasing access to services that can enhance people's ability to cope with current disasters and withstand future crisis, while addressing the root causes to crises and vulnerabilities. In practice, this requires providing short-, medium- and longer-term assistance concurrently to vulnerable people, while prioritizing "reaching those furthest behind first".
4. **In protracted crises, development and peacebuilding activities are often possible but are under-resourced.** These activities need to be planned and started at the onset of a crisis in close coordination with humanitarian actors and mindful of humanitarian principles, both within the country and neighbouring asylum countries, as relevant. In these contexts, neutral humanitarian assistance is focused on life-saving and quick-impact goals but has become a gap-filling measure, providing independent basic social services perennially, thus increasing the risk of aid dependency. At the same time, prevention and peacebuilding measures are generally initiated too late, not prioritized or insufficiently sustained, and are constrained by limited traction for political solutions.
5. **Aid actors¹ must evolve their thinking and working methods to address these issues more coherently.** This applies equally to dealing with the long-term consequences of drought; to managing the impacts of intractable violent conflicts that impede the prospects of peace and development; to ensuring durable solutions for the millions of displaced

¹ Humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding Agencies, Donors, and bilateral institutions

populations; to mitigating the generational impacts of infectious diseases; or to contributing to prevention and peace in the midst of contexts of violence or prone to violence.

6. The notion of **“collective outcomes” and “whole-of-society” approach have emerged as a possible strategic pathway to cut across traditional sectors and intervention timeframes.** Collective Outcomes can capitalize on individual agencies’ comparative advantages and mandates to transcend long-standing conventional thinking, silos, and other attitudinal, institutional, and funding obstacles. In practice, this entails defining a collective vision based on a joint analysis of context and risks over the short-, medium- and long-term, and set out clear strategies, roles and responsibilities for relevant actors to deliver those outcomes, based on their comparative advantage, over the short-, medium- and long-term.
7. **“Whole-of-society” approaches must inform these strategies to leave no one behind.** The definition of collective outcomes must be based on a strong engagement with all relevant stakeholders (government, UN, donors, as well as local, national and international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors, communities).
8. For this vision to be successful, different streams of **assistance to vulnerable populations must be simultaneously implemented, bearing principled humanitarian action in mind. The overarching aim must be to achieve measurable impact: to meet immediate current needs whilst over time reducing needs and vulnerability as way-stations towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and sustaining peace.** Preventing and responding to violations and neglect of human rights shall be a central joint commitment. The IASC recognizes at the highest level the centrality of protection in all contexts: due importance should be accorded to this in the overall formulation of country strategies.
 - Development action will need to be more responsive, more risk focused, and more flexible through context-adaptable programming, including a stronger focus on presence and impact in communities and a flexible approach in terms of working with fragile/transitional institutions.
 - Wherever relevant, peacebuilding efforts will need to be more preventively focussed on engaging national stakeholders and more risk tolerant, in support to addressing root causes of conflicts and crises.
 - At the same time, humanitarian action should be placed within the broader context of aid: while protecting the humanitarian space, humanitarian actors must clearly indicate what needs they strive to address, and the actions required by relevant stakeholders to support a phase-out of humanitarian aid. Key considerations will be how people can gain sustainable access to services and protection and how to transfer service delivery activities to non-humanitarian assistance providers and/or institutions over time.
9. This **calls for a renewed investment in the participation of local and national actors and affected populations.** We cannot succeed without accountability to those most affected by crises. Shared responsibility requires inclusivity: national and local actors and affected populations must be included into analysis, programme design, and monitoring and evaluating results. Grievance and dialogue mechanisms must also be established to ensure accountability to affected populations.
10. **Changes required to make this approach work are institutionally and financially complex.** Implementing the Humanitarian and Development Nexus and its links to peace requires a New Way of Working by aid actors that is context-specific and that is enabled through flexible structures and support mechanisms at the global level. Any guidance will need to emphasize an approach that learns from the country context to clarify gaps and to

focus on achieving better outcomes. Based on the challenges we currently face, **four priority areas should guide the early phases of changing the way we work together:**

- a. ***Invest in consistent and sound joint context and risk analysis*** to establish a joint problem statement and a shared understanding of priorities based on reliable data as well as the capacities available to address them. This joint analysis must:
 - be conducted on a regular basis by all relevant actors;
 - be led by the UN RC/HC;
 - identify the areas and population groups of greatest need; and
 - identify the risks and vulnerabilities including their drivers and root causes.
- b. ***Incentivize better joined-up response planning and programming:*** Joined-up planning will ensure complementarity of approaches and programmatic activities. This will minimize gaps in the response and this will articulate better the assistance provided to communities towards shared goals. Whenever possible, planning should be done in conjunction with and be consistent with the priorities of national authorities, as long as these are not at odds with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. In every situation, cooperation with relevant local, national or regional partners should be sought. Better joined-up planning should also ensure nimbleness to react to early warning and forecast-based analysis. Common multi-year targets that are realistic, quantitative and concrete and relevant to all pillars should be established where possible to support the achievement of collective outcomes.
- c. ***Strengthen leadership and coordination,*** through governments and appropriate and representative international leadership at country level, to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders (UN entities, national and local authorities, donors, local, national and international humanitarian and development actors and communities). Broad engagement through clearly identified coordination structures will facilitate the identification and implementation of common priorities and will help define modalities for monitoring and financing.
- d. ***Recalibrate financing modalities:*** Both the humanitarian and development agencies would continue to depend on grant-based funding instruments. However, flexible and multiyear public, private and innovative financing will be required for the system to be able to provide more sustainable solutions and reduce vulnerabilities over time. At the same time, it is critical to maintain humanitarian funding streams that are more risk tolerant with funds released at much quicker time frames, in order to be able to respond to emergencies.