

## Putting Peace at the Core of the Post-2015 Agenda.

### The g7+ strategy

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Helder da Costa / Siafa Hage

**Today around one-third of the world lives in fragile situations. For them, education reform, implementing water, sanitation and hygiene programs are unapproachable dreams. Accordingly, very few fragile states are expected to achieve even a single Millennium Development Goal (MDG). The goals were formed without taking into account the special circumstances facing fragile and conflict affected states. Such countries were asked to deliver on par with nations blessed with sustained peace. Thus, the system was unintentionally constructed to ensure failure by fragile states. The post-2015 development agenda must address this shortcoming by putting peace at its core.**

According to a Brookings Institution scenario, by 2018, one half of the world is expected to be fragile and by 2030, it is predictable that two out of every three people will live in fragility. This is not a rich-poor problem. A decade ago, the vast majority of fragile states were low income countries but today, half of all fragile states are middle income countries. The World Bank and the African Development Bank have recognized the global trend towards greater fragility; they are currently restructuring their organizations to respond appropriately. The United Nations (UN) and the rest of the world must act accordingly. Fragility is an epidemic that must be addressed by the world in no uncertain terms. But before providing some ideas and recommendations of how this can be done at a global level let us show two examples of how stability fosters development.

“... there is no peace without development, there is no development without peace, and there is no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect of human rights and the rule of law. ... For the international system to work, and for even a nation to work, you have to have peace, development and respect for human rights and rule of law, and you have to deal with it at the same time.”

*Mr. Jan Eliasson, United Nations Deputy Secretary General*

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### Timor-Leste and Liberia – peace as prerequisite for development

#### The case of Timor-Leste

Since becoming independent, in 2002, Timor-Leste has made remarkable progress. Successive government's social and economic policies have sought to reduce poverty among the people, to consolidate the security and stability of the nation and to build and strengthen State institutions. The on-going processes of peacebuilding and statebuilding have been vital to meet the needs of people in the areas of health, education, job creation and the eradication of extreme poverty. There are some significant statistics that reflect Timor-Leste's success in the 2013 Human Development Report. In 1980 the life expectancy at birth of the average Timorese was 35 years. By 2000 this had risen to 56 years, and in 2012 it was 63 years. Between 2000 and 2012, Timor-Leste's Human Development Index ranking has increased by 38

per cent from 0.418 to 0.576 points; it is now ranked 134 out of 187 countries and territories placing it in the medium human development category.

The country had set backs, and there is still much to be done, but overall it can be seen as a “success case” in international development. In 2013 Timor-Leste held presidential and parliamentary elections that consolidated its young democracy. The peaceful elections were followed by the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission and of the International Stabilisation Force – a sign of confidence in Timor-Leste’s progress. Timor-Leste now stands on its own two feet as an independent sovereign nation.

“... without peace, you couldn’t really do much at work; how can teachers go to school, and how can children go to school for teachers to teach them if there’s no peace, there’s no security.”

*H.E. Emilia Pires, Minister of Finance of Timor Leste and Chair of the g7+*

### The case of Liberia

Liberia’s steep decline into fragility and crisis began on Christmas eve of 1989. The conflict spanned 14 years. Throughout that time, development gains eroded and eviscerated. At the time, the public’s concern was for peace not development. With the end of conflict in 2003 and stability after the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006, the public began to turn its attention towards development. It was during this time that citizens were able to take stock of the development losses and began to pressure the government to take action. It was also during this time that the government was able to begin to address the public’s concern. In the last ten years of peace, Liberia has begun to rebuild its electricity system, which will eventually have greater capacity than the pre-war system. It has also begun to build new roads and repair its water and sewage system. It has renovated hospitals and begun to provide basic health services. And it has also begun to repair the school system and to rebuild the capacity of the civil service. Via an expansion of its peace time economy, the Government’s budget has increased from US\$80 million in 2006 to US\$581 in 2014. Peace and state-building initiatives have allowed Liberia to expand its economic base and respond to the development needs of its people.

“You cannot expect countries that have been through conflict, that are experiencing difficulties in capacities, to have the same standards as those who do not.”

*H.E. Amara Konneh, Minister of Finance of Liberia*

### Lessons learnt

Although low scores with regards to MDG implementation, in peacetime both countries have delivered strong dividends for their respective citizens. But these gains can be lost if peace is not secured and the state is not strengthened to meet the needs of the people. The story for other nations still struggling with conflict is also dependent on peace. Ongoing crisis in countries such as the Central African Republic, Somalia, Guinea Bissau and the Democratic Republic of Congo affect their development. Their pathway towards resilience begins with peace. It is the foundation upon which development takes place.

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### Advocating a peace goal in the post-2015 agenda

The best way to ensure that peace is included in the post-2015 development agenda is via the endorsement of the Secretary General’s High-level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP) illustrative goal 10, which calls for ensuring “peaceful and stable societies” and goal number 11 “ensuring effective and accountable institutions.” With the adoption of a specific goal on peace, the topic will remain prominent throughout the life of the next global development agenda. Statistics on rising fragility around the world warrant its inclusion.

But there is some resistance by some countries to include a goal on peace in the post-2015 agenda. Some argue that peace is the prerogative of the UN Security Council, not the development agenda. The reality is that peace can and should be discussed in both fora. Peace must remain at the center of the UN Security Council’s deliberations but it must also be seen as a prerequisite for development.

To overcome resistance to the inclusion of a peace goal, supportive UN member states must speak out for its inclusion. In the coming months, the g7+ – a coalition of 18 fragile states – intends to be active at the United Nations and engage the post-2015 process through the ambassadors of member nations. The g7+ Secretariat will also have a liaison officer based in New York full-time. This person will follow the various post-2015 debates and provide support to the g7+ ambassadors.

New York advocacy will culminate in a summit of g7+ heads of states/governments in New York during the 69th high-level segment of the United Nations General Assembly. The g7+ anticipates having at least 10

heads of states/governments attend this event and speak out in support of a peace goal. This will be followed by high-level advocacy.

Engagements with regional organizations such as the G-20, the African Union, the BRICS and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as well as with other stakeholders to discuss the merits of a peace goal are also forthcoming. With their buy-in, the g7+ hopes to broaden the coalition in favor of a peace goal. This work begins with haste, as the threat of fragility grows steadily.

“... we need a global target that focuses political attention on peace, justice and human security.”

*H.E. Kaifala Marah, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone*

## Conclusion

Overall the notion that leaves no one behind in the post-2015 development agenda will only be realised if the aspirations of fragile and conflict affected states are taken into account in the upcoming deliberations. People all over the world want to be safe and have equal opportunities. They want to live in a world that is peaceful and stable. This is one of the key messages coming out of consultations undertaken by the United Nations and by the members of the Secretary General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The g7+ calls for a global effort to establish and strengthen people's security, to address

injustices and increase people's access to justice, to generate employment and improve livelihoods, and to manage resources and revenues for accountable and fair service delivery. These issues are pre-conditions to building peaceful states and societies, and enable sustainable development. A key factor for achieving these benchmarks is the United Nations support for peace and state-building goals within the post-2015 development agenda.

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