

1-page summary of key points

Provide reflection to better articulate and lay the foundation to build consensus on what the Peace in the HDPN includes in order to be able to improve the collaboration and complementarity across the humanitarian – development – peace spectrum with the ultimate goal to contribute to the prevention and resolution of humanitarian crises.

Section 1: Background and objective of the paper

Humanitarian need continues to grow, is increasingly protracted and is largely driven by conflict. Conflict and violence are major drivers of humanitarian need, forced displacement, and extreme poverty and hunger. Conflicts have become more protracted, the drivers and underlying causes more complex, increasingly have regional spillover effects and involve more non-state actors. Climate change amplifies and multiplies existing environmental, social, political, and economic challenges as well as creating new ones; eroding development gains. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance and protection in 2020 is 168 million, an almost five-fold increase in the last two decades¹. In 2019, almost 71 million people had been displaced by “conflict, persecution or generalised violence”², and 78% of all refugees are displaced for five or more years³. Half of all refugees and 40% of all IDPs are children⁴. In 2018, 34 million (25%) of those requiring humanitarian assistance were women of reproductive age, and 5 million of them were pregnant. Young women are particularly at risk.⁵ In 2019, 135 million people faced severe acute food insecurity (IPC/CH 3 or above)⁶, a figure that has been growing over the past few years. Nearly half of people living in extreme poverty reside in countries affected by fragility and conflict, with this expected to increase to 80% by 2030 current trends persist⁷. As humanitarian needs continue to grow, annual appeals have increased from USD 2.4 billion to USD 29 billion over the last two decades.

There are no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian problems: Major global processes, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the World Humanitarian Summit, the New York Declaration, and the twin resolutions on Sustaining Peace, have stressed that greater coherence across humanitarian, development and peace actions⁸ in fragile and protracted crisis contexts is required to realise rights, reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks, and address drivers and underlying causes of conflict over the long-term. While it is widely acknowledged that ‘Peace’ is a critical element of long-term solutions to protracted crises and fragility, many questions remain and little consensus has emerged around what the ‘P’ means in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN) and what this looks like in practice. There are significant concerns by the humanitarian sector, based on past experience, that working more closely with some peace and security actors may run the risk of compromising humanitarian principles and put humanitarian access and staff at greater risk. In general, the development sector is risk averse and largely operates through bilateral channels.

¹ OCHA (2020). Global Humanitarian Overview 2020

² 25.9 M refugees; 45.7 M IDPs; 3.5 M asylum seekers

³ OCHA (2020). Global Humanitarian Overview 2020

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ UNFPA (2019) Humanitarian Action 2018 Overview https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_HumanitAction_18_20180124_ONLINE.pdf

⁶ Global Food Crises Report 2020

⁷ OECD 2019 States of Fragility Report <https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2018-9789264302075-en.htm>

⁸ tools, approaches and instruments

Objective of the paper: The objective of this paper is to contribute an interagency reflection on what the Peace component of the HDPN might and can look like, as well as make more visible possible engagement pathways along a ‘peace spectrum’ for humanitarian and development actors. It aims to provide clarity on the full spectrum of peace actions and to contribute to efforts to improve the complementarity, coordination and collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors with the ultimate common goal of restoring the safety, dignity and integrity, and protecting the rights of people affected by crisis, in the short, medium and the long-term. The issue paper is aimed at senior management as well as program-level and program development staff, both at HQ and the field, across the HDPN community (including UN agencies, NGOs, international and regional organisations, donors, civil society, governments, businesses), all of whom hold the responsibility to effectively operationalise the HDPN to prevent and respond to protracted crises and fragility.

'Peace actions' refers to activities, projects, programs along the peace spectrum which have the specific objective to contribute to peace as opposed to humanitarian action or development action.

Section 2: The meaning of the ‘Peace’ component in the HDPN: the different elements sustaining peace

In 2016 the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted the twin resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) which lay out a vision for ‘sustaining peace’ describing the peace agenda in the most comprehensive and encompassing way to date.

“Sustaining peace is understood as both a goal and a process to build as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population – communities and governments – are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at *preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict*”. Sustaining Peace Resolutions

Sustaining peace is thus relevant during all stages of the conflict cycle – before, during and after – and includes a wide variety of possible interventions. A priority on preventing crises, including violent conflict, was reiterated in the UN Secretary General’s *Prevention Agenda*⁹ and his *Call to Action for Human Rights*¹⁰ (2020) which emphasised the need for greater collective determination to protect civilians and prevent human rights violations in conflict. These policy frameworks recognise that peace actions have an important contribution to make to promote and protect human rights, can contribute to strengthening peaceful societies in a humanitarian context and as good development practice, contribute to recovery, durable solutions and resilience over the longer term.

In line with the above, this paper takes as its starting point that ‘Peace’ actions refer to deliberate contributions to peace where sustaining peace is a principle objective i.e. preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, and addressing root causes and drivers¹¹. As such, the following section puts forward an understanding of ‘Peace in the Nexus’ as a comprehensive range of actions over the short-, intermediate-and long-term that contribute to preventing conflict and building, making, and sustaining peace. To achieve sustainable peace, investments in strengthening systems,

⁹ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/prevention.shtml>

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-02-24/secretary-generals-remarks-the-un-human-rights-council-%E2%80%9Cthe-highest-aspiration-call-action-for-human-rights-delivered-scroll-down-for-all-english>

¹¹ https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2282.pdf

institutions and social capital, strong rule of law, inclusive and equitable livelihoods and economic growth, equitable and sustainable development, national reconciliation and unity, changing attitudes at multiple levels, good governance, democratic and accountable institutions (including the security sector) at the sub-national and national levels, gender and youth inclusion, gender justice and respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms are required— all key aspects in the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Element 1: Peace is not only the absence of conflict and violence: the concepts of negative peace and positive peace

Short-, intermediate- and long-term actions, whether ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’, large-scale or small-scale, are all important aspects of contributing to peace. These actions can be sequential, or they can occur simultaneously to achieve an absence of armed violence or other sorts of stability in the short-term, while also supporting longer-term transformations that contribute to more sustainable peaceful societies.

The absence of overt, large-scale violence is often referred to as ‘negative peace’ and is most often achieved through the use or threat of military force, ceasefires or other enforcement measures. Such measures can be mandated through Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, through actions undertaken by multilateral alliances, including UN peacekeeping missions or NATO, ECOMOG, G7 Sahel, African Union¹² etc., or through bilateral actions by member states.

While ‘negative peace’ reduces the immediate occurrence and impacts of violence, it also can make a vital contribution to enabling actions that support longer-term sustainable peace efforts, often referred to as ‘positive peace’. Negative peace can create space for humanitarian access and aid delivery, but can also support societal and political processes, such as diplomatic efforts to negotiate and convene longer-term peace and mediation actions as well as peace approaches that support societal reconciliation, promote more inclusive and equitable social, political and economic outcomes, build social cohesion, and/or strengthen trust between citizen and state, and the rule of law and legitimacy¹³.

As such, both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace efforts are intrinsically interlinked and involve actions undertaken by a wide range of actors at different levels of society. Ensuring that multiple actors undertake their roles and responsibilities in a coherent, complementary and mutually reinforcing way is both the opportunity and challenge posed by a nexus approach. This requires a comprehensive understanding of the full range of actors involved, the interactions between them, and the sequencing of such actions to end violence and build longer-term, sustainable humanitarian, development, and/or peace outcomes.

The imperative to end violence and create the space for longer-term political and societal solutions by necessity involves the engagement of security actors. This includes military and police forces, along with a wide range of other functions including, but not limited to, election observers, correctional officers, intelligence officers, and others. These actors are engaged in a diverse set of activities such as peacekeeping, cease-fire monitoring, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration activities, human rights monitoring, election observations, foreign military training, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, policing and other enforcement activities.

¹² The African Union currently operates the world’s largest peace operation

¹³ For more information on the concept of negative and positive peace, see Johan Galtung’s definitive *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Galtung, 1996)

Security sector actions have the potential to positively or negatively impact humanitarian and development programming and the likelihood of securing longer-term, sustainable peace outcomes. For development and humanitarian actors, the security actors who contribute to the achievement of ‘negative peace’ outcomes can help to stabilise insecure areas and facilitate access to vulnerable populations, as well as create the conditions for the resumption of economic activity, social service provision and ‘state reach’. However, if undertaken unilaterally with little coherence, they risk politicising development assistance and threaten the impartiality and neutrality of principled humanitarian action, militarise peace actions and reduce community trust. The current silos between security actors and other actors across the nexus is thus not increasing efficiency, nor safeguarding the integrity of humanitarian and development actions.

Recognising this, both the United Nations and the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members have both highlighted the necessity of security actions in contributing to longer term peace outcomes – if they are undertaken with regard for the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological sources of instability. This was emphasised by the Security Council in 1992:

“The absence of war and military conflicts amongst [and within] states do not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security. The United Nations membership as a whole, (...), needs to give the highest priority to the solution of these matters” (United Nations, 1992).

And the DAC, for its part, revised its eligibility rules for official development assistance (ODA) in 2016, agreeing the inclusion of various security activities, in recognition of the role that security and military actors can play in ending violence to facilitate actions that can reduce poverty, promote economic growth and contribute to more sustainable peace outcomes (OECD, 2016).

In this context, greater complementarity and a ‘nexus approach’ that incorporates the full spectrum of peace actions and actors – those involved in contributing to both ‘negative peace’ and ‘positive peace’ outcomes – can promote understanding of the roles of different actors, ensure that the full range of actions are mutually reinforcing, and thereby mitigate the risks to sustainable peace and principled humanitarian action. This requires all actors operating on the basis of their comparative advantage and within the limits of their respective mandates - and with respect for the mandates of others. Such an approach does not necessarily imply greater integration of the three ‘pillars’ of the nexus – however, more ‘joined-up’ analysis by humanitarian, development and peace actors, for example, can ensure that there is a common understanding of the contextual dynamics, promote decision-making that is politically informed, and take better account of the need to build trust and cohesion at all levels. Examples of successful efforts to ensure more complementary approaches can be found in the forthcoming OECD working paper *Security Actors in Fragile Contexts* (OECD, 2020).

Element 2: Local peace and diplomacy/political peace actors: the concept of ‘little-p’ and ‘big-P’

Along the peace spectrum, activities contributing to sustaining peace can apply different approaches depending on the context and the specific objectives. International and national actors are contributing to peace in several ways through supporting the implementation of peace agreements, convening or mediating inclusive political dialogue, placing peacebuilding on the public policy agenda, supporting institutions to be more accountable and inclusive, creating the conditions for a reduction of violence and

peaceful resolution of disputes, and improving relationships and trust both in the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

Differentiating between “little p” and “big P” peace approaches can help humanitarian actors and development partners understand where and how they can contribute to peace outcomes and collaborate with actors across the broad spectrum of peace interventions.

“Little p” actions are focused on agency and the transformation of relationships, and interventions that are responsive to local needs. “Little p” interventions are typically carried-out at local or community level. They usually involve actors (e.g. local authorities, community leaders, civil society organisations, faith groups, community groups, etc.) and have an influence in shaping individual or collective behavior when it comes to reducing violence, increasing trust in local authorities and improving inter-group relations. These types of interventions can create enabling conditions for quick wins and lead to larger changes that can influence broader dynamics along the peace spectrum at the country level.

Box X Example of “little P” intervention: *The “laboratoires” for peace and social cohesion established in Mali, in the regions of Mopti and Ségou. The laboratoires are composed of women, men, young people, elected municipal officials, community leaders, religious and traditional communicators and allowed the conclusion of ceasefire agreements between different Peulh-Bozo and Bambara-Peulh communities respectively in the circles of Tenenkou and Macina. These activities have contributed to the significant decrease in inter-community violence in the area. During 2019, Tenenkou and Macina did not experience inter-community violence compared to other areas where these actions were not carried out, such as in Koro, Douentza, Bandiagara and Bankass where several types of violence were reported.*

“Big P” interventions are at much larger scale than “little p” interventions and might be supported by a Security Council mandate. They typically are at the national level and could involve a peace agreement. These interventions are generally more visible as they might employ considerable means, including a larger presence of foreign personnel (both military and civilian) on the ground. “Big P” interventions are typically higher profile, particularly in the earlier stages. United Nations Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions are common examples of a “big P” intervention at country (or cross-border) level.

It is important to note that, even with the examples listed above, whether a peace activity is “little p” or “big P” is sometimes a matter of interpretation or implementation. These activities often overlap and should reinforce one another to be effective. “Big P” activities have declined in relative importance to “little p” because of the changing nature of violent conflict – with increased complexity and protracted timelines, many more non-state armed actors and transnational connections among them and multiple factors driving them. Since the end of the Cold War, *formal* interstate peace agreements have declined; the increase in asymmetric conflicts has meant that the necessity of using intrastate agreements has increased and proliferated in sub-state contexts that may no longer include state actors in a hierarchical manner. Today’s peacekeeping operations, for example, are increasingly multidimensional. They are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate political processes, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, support constitutional processes and the organisation of elections, protect and promote human rights, and assist in restoring the rule of law and extending legitimate state authority.

At the same time, local peace initiatives can be used to support peace agreements, negotiations and political dialogues at the national level. For example, in the Central African Republic, Community Violence Reduction (CVR) activities were part of a coordinated and coherent effort to support the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR) signed in February 2019.

Between “big P” and “little p” in the spectrum of peace interventions also fall a number of activities that focus on building the capacity and increasing accountability of state institutions. These can be at the sub-national and/or local level, such as making institutions more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all segments of the society, addressing grievances over natural resources, easing tensions and increasing trust between the citizens and the state, promoting adhesion to national reconciliation processes etc.

Indeed, contributing to peace at the local level often implies working with state institutions at sub-national and national levels - in particular in relation to policies, legislation and capacities. Fostering local peace through “little p” processes can thus potentially have a positive ripple effect on broader conflict dynamics.

Element 3: Integrating peace perspectives in humanitarian and development programming: Positive short/intermediate versus long-term peace

Understanding conflict dynamics requires robust and regular context and conflict analysis to identify the interlinkages between systemic structural causes and the more visible conflict and peace drivers. Structural causes generally develop at the macro-level, emerge from policy (or its absence) and collectively contribute to and/or are informed by societal norms. When associated with more visible and sub-national conflict drivers, the risks of tensions, disputes and conflicts become more likely, though they are not inevitable.

Whereas peace in the very broad sense can be equated with the absence of violence (as outlined further below), the existence and strength of positive peace can be the determining factor in a society’s resilience to conflict at a minimum, and the establishment of inclusive, just and prosperous societies at the maximalist end of the spectrum. Conflict is inherent to all societies at the interpersonal, community and national levels, and originates from disagreements and disputes occurring over incompatible interests and needs. Addressing or managing conflict can incentivise innovation, develop social capital and demonstrate the effectiveness of cooperation over conflict. Conversely, societies fractured by exclusion, marginalisation and insecurity are unlikely to possess the social structures to effectively manage and address conflicts although they may have local capacities for peace such as traditional/indigenous or grassroots conflict resolution mechanisms. As conflict drivers manifest at the local level it is important to identify and build on existing local capacities for peace and/or locally established peace mechanisms. If these mechanisms don’t exist, or have been significantly weakened, then peace actors can play a constructive role in facilitating locally driven peace initiatives and approaches. Peace actors may also act as a ‘bridge’ between national and local level peace processes to ensure these big P and little p process are mutually reinforcing, as appropriate.

Humanitarian interventions respond to the impacts of shocks, both human-induced and natural disasters. These interventions work *in conflict* to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. Long-term durable solutions to protracted crises and forced displacement as well as transforming structural causes of conflict however requires working *on conflict*.

Organisations working along the HDPN may orientate their activities to respond to the impacts of conflict, while also increasing the prospects for peace through approaches that include focusing on the following conflict drivers:

- **Improving horizontal and vertical social capital:** Interventions that directly and indirectly encourage the strengthening of collaborative capacities between community groups and between community groups and local formal and informal institutions.
- **Gender and youth inclusion:** Promoting gender justice and women's empowerment, participation and leadership. Promote the participation of children and youth in civic institutions and processes and increase employment opportunities for youth.
- **Strengthening local conflict prevention and management capacities:** Identifying and supporting inclusive local capacities to identify and mitigate as well as peacefully resolve disputes, tensions and conflicts.
- **Equitable service delivery and effective public infrastructure:** Establishing the conditions for equitable delivery and access to services including education, health, utilities and agricultural extensions. This includes providing assistance to populations according to need, rather than status.
- **Functioning, inclusive and participatory local administration:** Strengthening local administrators with technical and capacity support to improve their accountability and effectiveness with focus on community-based consultations and planning that include women, men, male and female youth.
- **Increasing the opportunity cost of engaging in violence:** Developing viable, inclusive and equitable livelihoods opportunities, support to functioning markets, supply chains and employment with rights, social protection and a voice, giving people dignity and empowerment. Supporting young women and men to be active citizens, creating space for their voices to be heard, and ensuring their participation in peace processes are other important violence prevention factors.
- **Improving the conditions for durable solutions for IDPs:** Through a combination of activities within the above proposed interventions, increase the possibilities of safe and dignified solutions for IDPs and the broader communities in which they reside, so as not to exacerbate tension through perceptions of preferential treatment.
- **Accountability:** Integrate 'accountability' into the above proposed interventions to provide gender-sensitive means and mechanisms for local populations to be involved in planning and implementation processes and provide feedback and voice satisfaction/ concerns with the implementation of activities.

Efforts to address, transform and resolve conflict drivers and support localised peace efforts, remain vulnerable to questions of sustainability, often being subsumed by the national conflict dynamic and/or disassociated with efforts to address the structural causes through engagement with the state.

The transformation of systemic structural causes of conflict requires a longer-term approach for sustainable change to occur. Conflict transformation seeks to constructively and sustainably change attitudes, behaviours and interests through improvements in economic, political, security, legal and social institutions and the formal relationships between them and the constituencies they serve. As such, transformative peace approaches to structural causes of conflict concentrate on national and possibly regional policies and institutions and inclusive participatory processes. Interventions, therefore, become less project-orientated and more focused towards continuing or longer-term engagement with an array of state and non-state stakeholders.

More specifically, transformative peace approaches to structural conflict causes by organisations, through joint programming with peace organisations, or by incorporating explicit peace outcomes in their own work, include working on:

- **Rule of law:** The development of just laws, including human rights, transparent governance, and access to justice, accountable institutions and security sector reform.
- **Social and sustainable development:** Accommodating development needs without compromising resources for future generations.
- **Reconciliation and unity:** The process to define institutional authorities, electoral procedures, security sector reform, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), conditions for the return of IDPs and refugees, and affirmations of commitments to peaceful means to resolve disagreements. This also includes restorative justice processes focused on reconciliation at the societal level, where space is created for women, men, girls and boys to voice their experiences, grieve, blame and forgive, pioneered by South Africa. These processes have been instrumental to peace processes.

Peace outcomes in the nexus are most effective when they are mutually reinforcing. For example, inequality may become institutionalised through a series of long-term policies at the national level prioritising access to public resources for some groups over others. The more visible effects of these policies may be at the community level, accompanied by perceptions of marginalisation. When associated with other conflict drivers and absent of social structures to effectively and peaceably address disputes and tensions, conflict may become more likely. In the short-to-intermediate term, peace responsive programming may include targeting high levels of vulnerability and inequality at the community level, through interventions providing decent, inclusive work and livelihoods opportunities and improved access for women and youth to representative structures. These interventions can then support or reinforce efforts to change policies that have institutionalised inequality and fueled perceptions of marginalisation.

For positive peace to occur, collaborative capacities between groups need to be supported, equitable access to public resources enacted, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups including IDPs and refugees, given equitable participation to representative structures and economic opportunities - while vertical trust between groups and the State is developed. HDP programming that responds to local level drivers, while at the same time acting to transform the deeper structural causes over the long term are more likely to effectively address, transform and resolve conflicts to allow peace and broader development to be sustainable.

Section 3:

a. Conflict prevention and cost effectiveness

The wide range of peace actions outlined above can be crucial in preventing the outbreak and recurrence of conflict when they are 1) applied at the right 'moment' (e.g. mediation, negotiation or enforcement) 2) are sufficient duration (e.g. strengthening social capital) and/ 3) strengthening local capacities for conflict prevention/resolution. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts it can lead to cost efficiencies for humanitarian and development partners to *proactively* and *systematically* engage with peace actors in prevention activities to save lives and protect development gains.

Preventing violent conflict significantly reduces costs, with the average net annual savings for nations and the international community estimated at almost US\$70 billion in the best-case scenario and US\$5 billion

in the most pessimistic scenario¹⁴. Despite this, investments in preventing conflict remain low, estimated at 2% of total ODA spend. This may be partly due to a lack of political will to invest in and concentrate joint efforts on pre-emptive measures, a lack of incentives to do so, and challenges in demonstrating ‘counter-factual’ outcomes.

The SG’s Prevention Agenda and the DAC Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations emphasise the importance of early warning and early action (EW/EA) in preventing violent conflict, with a focus on areas where risk of conflict and instability is highest¹⁵. For the HDPN, the call in the Prevention Agenda to “map, link, collect and integrate information from across the international system” is particularly relevant, and this is echoed in the DAC Recommendation on the nexus. Prevention of conflict requires actions to rapidly understand, anticipate and address the multi-dimensional factors that could escalate into conflict and violence. It also means identifying and building on existing positive drivers and capacities to strengthen societal relations, systems and institutions. Supporting national and local capacities for facilitation and dialogue, ensuring that UN good offices, mediation, crisis response and peacebuilding services are easily and rapidly deployable.

While actions that help to secure a cessation of violence (negative peace) are often useful and necessary, further actions that work toward more transformative outcomes that contribute to long-term sustainable peace should be applied more proactively and systematically. This may include actions such as the strengthening of social cohesion, gender and youth inclusion, and accountability with prevention prioritised as an explicit targeted outcome.

b. Context and conflict analysis

The need for regular local, community-based context and conflict analysis that is both gender and age-sensitive, is important for addressing the multi-layered and multidimensions of conflict to inform all interventions across the peace spectrum - *before, during and after* crises, regardless of agency mandate. Context and conflict analysis contribute to good project, programme and strategy design and allows agencies to better understand its potential contribution to sustaining peace based on its own comparative advantage vis-à-vis its mandate.

There may be opportunities to share context and conflict analysis between agencies where programming occurs in the same area for efficiency gains and to better identify opportunities and risks. There may also be opportunities and incentives to undertake joint, or ‘joined-up’, context and conflict analyses where similar objectives can be identified, especially if issues around data confidentiality can be overcome. The UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) allows key national and international stakeholders to broadly articulate the country context, opportunities and challenges, encompassing sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and security, and humanitarian perspectives. As such a CCA can help frame more local, area-based context and conflict analyses, and shape common objectives, especially if participation is widened out to also include government, civil society, donors, and IFIs.

A robust understanding of context and conflict dynamics is essential to design conflict-sensitive interventions and to regularly assess the relevance and impact of activities. For interventions with peace objectives, the theory of change (ToC) must always be based on a rigorous understanding of conflict dynamics, including the interlinkages between systemic structural causes and more visible conflict and peace drivers, dividers and connectors¹⁶, as well as the stakeholders – their interests, positions, needs and

¹⁴ Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, 2018, pp. 3-4.

¹⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/38368714.pdf>

¹⁶ Dividers and connectors can be systems and institutions; attitudes and actions; values and interests; experiences; or symbols and occasions (<https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Do-No-Harm-A-Brief-Introduction-from-CDA.pdf>).

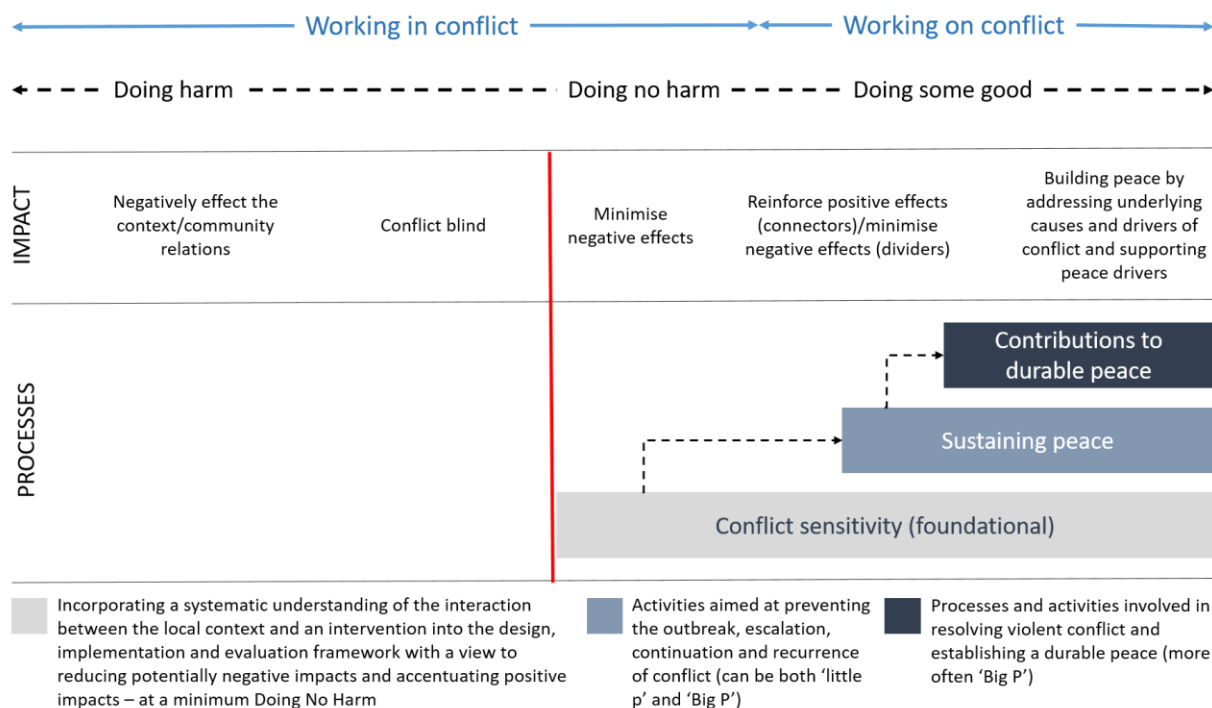
capacities – and their relationships (i.e. their social capital). A ToC is a prerequisite for being able to assess whether and to what extent activities do indeed contribute to peace, allowing assumptions to be tested and verified.

Ideally, context and conflict analyses to inform both conflict sensitivity and peace objectives are inclusive, participatory and action oriented, with participants representing all relevant segments of the population, and the outputs of this analysis is integrated into programme design. Women and youth are rarely included in peace processes, but have a critical role to play, as emphasised in S/RES/1325, and S/RES/2419 and 2250 respectively, particularly at the local level. A people-centred, participatory approach that recognises affected populations as agents of their own recovery and development is in line with the ‘active commitment’ taken by humanitarian actors under Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) commitments.

Figure 1 - Peace spectrum (adapted from FAO 2020)

The peace spectrum is presented below (Figure X). It highlights key concepts and how they relate to each other, as well as how robust and regular conflict and context analysis, and conflict-sensitive approaches are foundational.

Figure X: The Peace Spectrum



In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, interventions are never conflict neutral. The presence of activities and staffing, and selection of beneficiaries impact the context, either positively or negatively, unintended or intended. Transfers of resources (food, shelter, water, health care, training, cash, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment can represent power and wealth and these resources can become an element of the conflict, causing harm to affected populations if not programmed in a conflict-sensitive manner. Alternatively, programming can strengthen local capacities for peace, build on connectors that bring communities together, and reduce the divisions and sources of tensions that can lead to or reinforce conflict.

In short, conflict sensitivity is about managing or mitigating conflict drivers or triggers by taking existing conflict dynamics into account when designing, planning and implementing (and closing) programs and projects with the aim of having a positive impact on existing or potential conflict dynamics. As an approach, conflict sensitivity entails the capacity of an organisation to understand the context in which it operates, the interaction between the intervention and the context, and to act on that understanding in order to avoid negative impacts (Do No Harm, DNH) and if possible, to maximise positive impacts (Do Some Good). It does not have peace as an objective *per se*.

Approaches build on one another. In all cases, the minimum standard of DNH must be met, where conflict-sensitive approaches informed by at least a ‘good enough’ context and conflict analysis are foundational. **Figure X** outlines minimalist to maximalist approaches.

Figure X: Minimalist-Maximalist approaches



c. Humanitarian principles - differences in emphasis

The humanitarian principles provide the foundations for achieving the humanitarian imperative to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during conflict and natural disasters. The humanitarian principles are there to ensure that the most vulnerable people are assisted, their rights are respected, and facilitate access to those most in need. As a result, humanitarian actors might be hesitant to *formally* engage with peace actors, or identify opportunities to contribute to peace, along the full peace spectrum. An HDPN approach imply complementarity and coherence of actions. However, there may also be opportunities for humanitarian actors to incorporate actions that support peace that do not compromise core principles.

This reluctance is partly due to a lack of information on what the full peace spectrum entails and what the different nexus approaches could look like, a gap that this paper aims to fill. Peace is sometimes interpreted as actions aimed at solely securing a cessation of violence i.e. ‘negative peace’, and humanitarian actors, in general, thus do not consider formally engaging with peace actors beyond seeing them as part of a pool of expertise and influence, and maybe a source of information for access or operational planning purposes. Yet, as discussed above, greater complementarity achieved through better understanding of respective roles of humanitarian, development and peace actors, information exchange or joined-up analysis are all important to ensure decisions taken are context specific, politically sensitive, and mutually reinforcing. In addition, as this paper hopes to demonstrate, the full peace spectrum contains a wide range of possible peace-related actions beyond the ‘negative peace’ and the level of engagement can vary from *informal*, i.e. information exchange, to *formal*, i.e. joint or coordinated activities, to also direct contributions to peace. By balancing mandates, humanitarian principles and objectives to have impacts on reducing needs, vulnerability and risks, humanitarian actors will be able to identify strategic and feasible formal and informal pathways of engagement with peace actors and identify actions that also support longer-term peace outcomes.

Humanitarian actors might conclude that to formally engage, it is most realistic and desirable to engage with peace actors and actions in the sphere of positive peace. Positive peace actors, like humanitarian actors, are ideally guided by the four humanitarian principles, while they also face similar challenges to strictly adhere to these in ever changing and complex contexts. Both actors might create contradictions - or at worst have negative impacts on the contexts and conflict dynamics - if their interventions are poorly conceptualised, managed or potential impacts either not or incorrectly predicted. The differences in how humanitarian and peace actors thus adhere to the humanitarian principles are often *only* ‘differences in emphasis’.

Upholding the principle of humanity, i.e. protecting and saving lives and ensuring respect for the rights and wellbeing of human beings, is a core commitment for humanitarian, development and “positive Peace” actors, even if the modalities and outcomes of the interventions differ between the pillars. For instance, for “little p” actors in particular, ‘those most in need’ (i.e. the principle of impartiality) may include a wider community and agents of positive change for peace (such as youth or women), peace actors, too, as these constituencies are critical for them to contribute to restoring the safety, dignity and integrity, protecting the rights and ensuring the wellbeing of affected groups and communities. Whereas it is true that “little p” interventions in fragile and conflict affected contexts implies (at least a degree) of working on the broader political dimensions and might require a re-balancing of socio-political and power dynamics, good peace project design gives peace actors a neutral role (i.e. the principle of neutrality) in its support to locally driven and owned peace processes, including activities to improve social capital, increase gender and youth inclusion, strengthen service delivery and effective public infrastructure, etc. When engaging with local authorities, peace actors do so with the aim of upholding the rights of crisis-affected people and by proactively engaging administrators as duty bearers to fulfil their duty and mandate – not unlike humanitarian actors who, for example, negotiate access or conduct joint beneficiary selection criteria with *the same* local administrators.

Concerted, sustained and focused efforts to engage with a state that lacks political will in order to improve accountability, capacity and its relationship with society is supported by the DAC Principles for good international engagement to reduce fragility¹⁷. As engaging with local (or national) government can carry risks and challenges, however, chosen approaches must always be assessed against objectives to provide

¹⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/38368714.pdf>

lifesaving assistance, improve stability and peace or support development. However, engaging with and empowering local actors, including local authorities, is not just relevant to increase the effectiveness of interventions and achieve project objectives, but is also in line with the global commitment taken on 'localisation'¹⁸.

To conclude, neutrality and impartiality require constant attention and effort by all actors, and conflict sensitivity can be one way of preventing unplanned, negative impact(s) on the power and conflict dynamics within crises-affected populations. This is especially important in resource-poor societies where 'winner' and 'losers' can be created inadvertently through externally provided resources, whether for lifesaving, early recovery, resilience, development or peace specific purposes.

The difference in emphasis of how humanitarian and peace actors adhere or relate (respectively) to the humanitarian principles is important to understand if humanitarian actors wish to explore pathways to engage more proactively and systematically to understand how their own actions can contribute to peace. As a nexus approach focuses on complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace actors as appropriate, it should never be a reason for not triggering a rapid humanitarian response in the face of need.

d. Entry points for humanitarian actors

Given the above, where along the peace spectrum can different organisations, depending on their mandate and existing governing bodies' guidance, consider entry points, noting that not one single understanding of the 'peace piece' may fit all.

Figure X below - and the associated illustrative examples - attempt to answer that question. The schematic is not intended to be exhaustive, and for the sake of clarity presents a somewhat linear and idealised process. That said, the heterogeneity of peace, and the cycles of shocks that require immediate life-saving humanitarian response are reflected.

In complex protracted crisis scenarios, humanitarian, development and peace aspects of the crisis occur in a parallel, non-linear fashion and influence each other. A difficulty for actors across the HDPN is to deliver assistance and implement projects in such contexts when the limited set of issues any one of them can address through a project - or even a portfolio of programmes - will not have an impact in solving the protracted crisis over a short time frame. This is why it is essential to look at the longer-term implications of interventions - for humanitarians this means - ensuring that their actions can complement and transition more effectively to longer term development and peace approaches which can be implemented simultaneously, and that humanitarian action does not undermine the action of others (including peace actors) operating in the same space.

Humanitarian actors can also contribute to 'nexus approaches' by supporting the recovery and resilience of basic services and of communities affected by conflict, violence, and disasters, including in areas beyond the control of the state. For the development side, their contribution could mean not giving up on essential public services even where governance structures are fragile or fragmented, and implementing development policies and investments that reach the most vulnerable. For peace actors, this entails being conscious not to undermine humanitarian access and helping to strengthen capacities for conflict prevention and management at all levels. This requires more risk-tolerant development

¹⁸ Grand Bargain commitment 2, Agenda for Humanity (2016) <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

actions and a commitment from humanitarian actors not to 'crowd out' longer-term actions that can reduce humanitarian need over time or facilitate more sustainable peace. Whilst all actors can contribute to conditions that are more conducive to resolve a conflict, and support sustaining peace, it is important to recognise that the responsibility for this ultimately remains in the hands of political actors, noting states' legal obligations and responsibilities toward their citizens.

Figure X – Illustrations of entry points for humanitarian actors

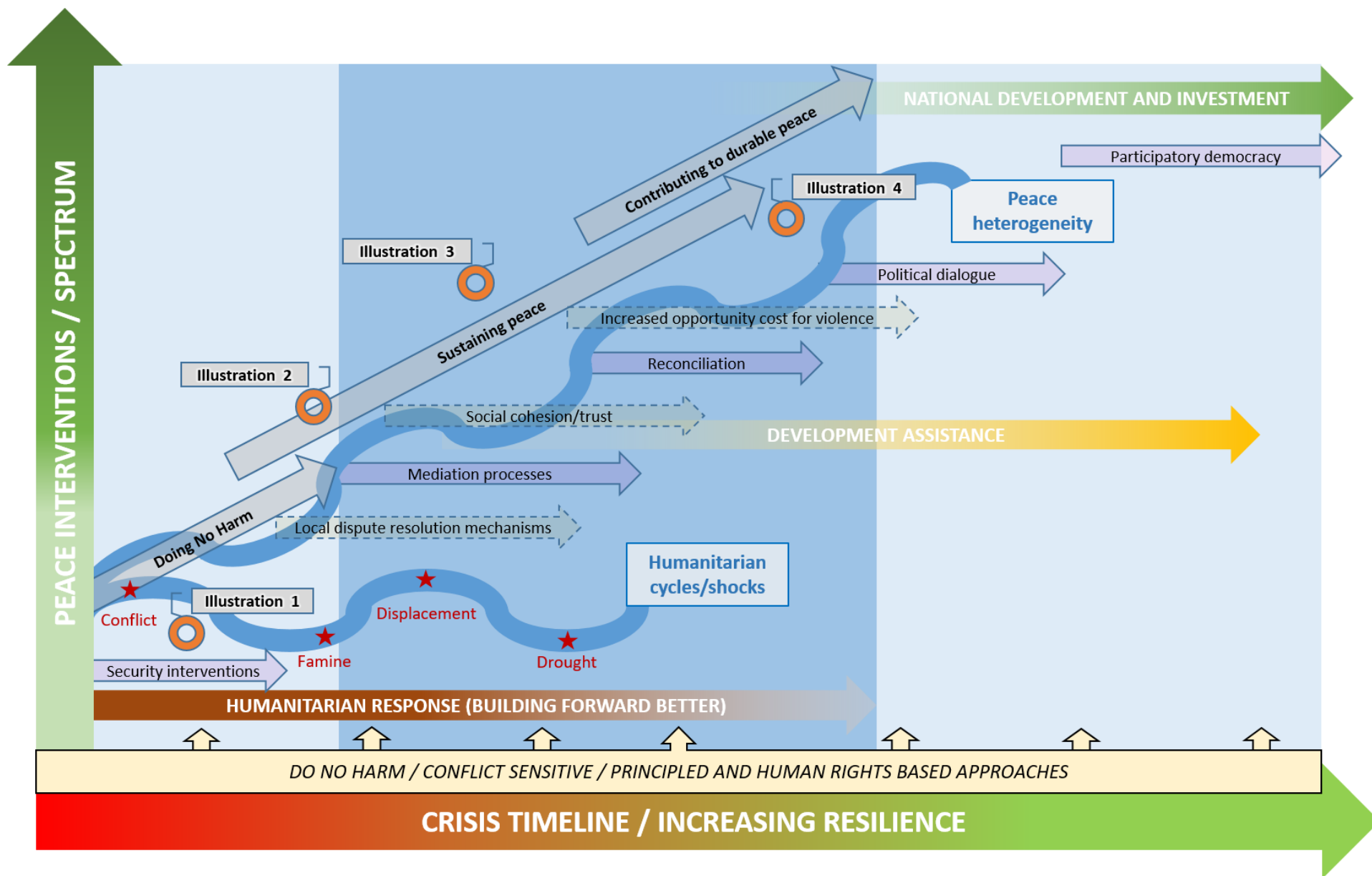


Figure 3 illustrative examples:

Illustration 1: A conflict-sensitive humanitarian response to the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon

A violent crisis in the English-Speaking North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon erupted in October 2016 with protests over perceived marginalisation by the government in the Francophone capital. Initially a peaceful protest by lawyers and teachers, the situation quickly escalated after a series of violent incidents. Within only a few months, armed battles between non-state armed groups and security forces and significant violence against the civilian population triggered a major humanitarian crisis. The consequences have been devastating. It is estimated that about half a million people have been displaced, schools and health facilities closed.

The UN launched an emergency response plan in May 2018 within which UNICEF's interventions focused on internally displaced people and host populations, both in government and non-government-controlled areas. However, the nature of the armed conflict regions posed various challenges for the response. With the volatility of the situation and its rapid escalation, it was difficult to estimate where displaced people were located and what their needs were. Access constraints due to the high level of violence limited UNICEF's ability to monitor the situation and to reach people in need.

UNICEF Cameroon supported a three-week conflict scan and conflict sensitivity review in November 2018 that helped the team gain a better understanding of the conflict dynamics, provided inputs to an integrated response strategy to help children and communities in need most effectively, and to build the capacity of the country office to continue assessing the conflict situation and the resulting needs going forward.

The conflict scan and conflict sensitivity review led to several adaptations in the humanitarian response. Firstly, it helped include a better understanding of risks into the response strategy. This included risks to children and communities, but also to UNICEF's ability to deliver lifesaving support. It also helped anticipate conflict trends to provide support to communities proactively. Thirdly, the exercise helped embed the 'do no harm' principle in the programme, to avoid unintended negative effects of UNICEF's work, for example in its engagement with communities and armed forces. In addition, the conflict sensitivity review also identified entry points for longer term support towards peaceful and inclusive development. UNICEF Cameroon has followed up on the recommendations including dedicating security and programme staff that ensure regular conflict scans, a coherent response strategy, more agile ways of delivering aid in a volatile context, and measures to ensure the accountability of UNICEF's work to affected populations.

Illustration 2:

An FAO intervention, working with local community groups, between 2015 and 2017 in the contested Abyei Administrative Area (AAA) between the Sudan and South Sudan reduced the risk of natural resource-based conflicts and enhanced community resilience. The Abyei Area is a grazing hub in which historically both the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya tribal communities interact, sharing natural resources such as grazing land and water. However, natural resource use was an increasing source of confrontation, leading to frequent outbreaks of violence between the communities. FAO identified a window of opportunity by providing emergency community-based animal health services to both communities,

working with local authorities. This was achieved in collaboration with the peacekeeping mission, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), by facilitating cross-disengagement line movements in central AAA, and sensitising UNISFA to the link between natural resources and local conflicts. This allowed wider resource use issues to be addressed, including movement and access concerns. In June 2016, as a direct result of this work, a community level peace agreement over natural resource use was signed between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok. The peace agreement also led to the establishment of a shared market in the heart of the demilitarised zone (with UNISFA support), facilitating trade and livelihoods, and leading to food price decreases.

Illustration 3:

IOM supports community stabilisation in several fragile and conflict-affected contexts, as an approach to facilitate transition away from humanitarian displacement crises; as an incremental but necessary step towards the attainment of *Durable Solutions*¹⁹. The community stabilisation approach combines a specific focus on addressing the factors that destabilise communities, while at the same time addressing multi-sectoral early recovery needs – infrastructural, economic, or service related – with focus on collective action and inclusivity. For example, in response to high levels of localised violence in conflict and displacement affected communities in Ouham Pende, Central African Republic, in 2018, IOM implemented a community stabilisation project with the objective of strengthening intercommunal dialogue and capacities of communities, civil society, local committees, community leaders and local authorities to proactively and pre-emptively prevent and mitigate intercommunal conflict. To reduce violence and tensions, strengthen social cohesion at community levels, and improve trust in local leadership, community members were brought together to identify needs and define priorities that would benefit all community members, based on a planning process led by the local committees and local authorities. The space created for civic dialogue and the resulting projects that were collectively implemented improved the living conditions for the benefit of all, IDPs, host communities, men, women and youth. An early alert network was further established to share security related information between the communities.

Illustration 4:

Following the signing of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 ex-combatants not integrated into Sudan Armed Forces, Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other armed groups were rapidly disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into their communities. Women who had played supporting roles within armed forces and groups – either voluntarily or through coercion – also needed to be reintegrated. The South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (SSDDRC), in partnership and coordination with the SPLA and the Integrated United Nations Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Unit, implemented the South Sudan DDR Programme, prioritising the elderly, people with disabilities and women. It worked closely with United Nations agencies, international and local NGOs, and the United Nations peacekeeping mission. WFP supported the SSDDRC by providing rations to cover the food needs of 8,400 demobilised ex-combatants, women and their families for a period of three months in Juba, Bentiu, Malakal and Torit, and to support 500 ex-combatants in Greater Bahr-al-Ghazal while they received skills training as part of their reintegration packages. Meeting the

¹⁹ *When internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement.* IASC Durable Solutions Framework (Brookings; 2010) <https://www.brookings.edu/research/iasc-framework-on-durable-solutions-for-internally-displaced-persons-2/>

immediate basic needs of these groups helped prevent them from resorting to negative ways of providing for their dependants.

e. Some (very) broad implications for project/programme delivery

It is worth noting that given the preceding discussion and expected interactions across the HDPN some overarching changes to project/programme design and delivery are likely to be necessary for effectiveness. The below points are not exhaustive, and are not meant to be prescriptive, but a reflection based on recent observations by various entities exploring the HDPN and contributions to peace:

- As noted above, there are opportunities for shared, joint or 'joined up' context and conflict analyses. This implies the need for mechanisms to share, track and enhance knowledge across interventions that support the same population groups, and a move away from siloed tools at an organisational level, in favour of shared or joint data collection and a 'living' analysis of the context. However, it will be necessary to maintain the capacity to rapidly intervene to ensure that lifesaving assistance can be provided.
- Nexus approaches that contribute to more collective and holistic outcomes need to be grounded in outcome-based planning, with interagency efforts ideally coalescing around a set of collective outcomes. This will support the development of longer-term country strategies that better contribute to systemic transformation. This is especially true in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, where achieving development and peace outcomes is a non-linear and slow process.
- Programmes and financing that engage across the HDPN will need to be responsive and agile and adapt to changes in context picked up by all actors be they humanitarian, development or peace. This implies that monitoring and evaluation frameworks that assess project/programmes' impact on drivers of fragility and vulnerability over time will need to operate beyond project timeframes and be more unified in nature.
- A Nexus approach does not imply that staff need to be experts across all pillars of the nexus. However, it does require individuals to work in a more multi-disciplinary fashion, bringing a more 'wide-angle' lens to their particular area of specialisation. As well, given the importance of conflict sensitivity, there may be a need to increase organisational capacity in context and conflict analysis and conflict sensitive programming. Broader shared understanding of the three pillars will also help in the identification of collective outcomes and a common understanding of who are the most vulnerable and what their needs might be.
- Financing will likely need to be based on a clear articulation of the most effective outcomes that do no harm, grounded in a context, conflict as well as risk analysis. Indeed, an insistence on demonstrating this is already being seen more explicitly. This may imply that humanitarian responses could be designed with a perspective that has longer-term objectives of peace and development in mind – saving lives in both the short and longer-term, and increasing the return on investment.