

## **IQSG PROGRAMMING FICHE ON CONFLICT PREVENTION**

Violent conflict rarely erupts spontaneously, or even at short notice. When people resort to arms, it is generally the result of a process of gradual deterioration whose causes are deep-rooted and often well-known. Difficulties in successfully addressing problems such as rapid economic decline, human rights abuses and undemocratic government, inequalities in the distribution of wealth, scarcity and degradation of natural resources, unemployment, lack of education, ethnic and religious tensions, border and regional disputes, disintegration of the State or lack of peaceful means of settling disputes, are all factors contributing to increased risk of violent conflict and insecurity.

Conflict prevention entails both short and long term actions to address the conflict dynamics by addressing structural root-causes of conflict as well as the expressions of violence. Conflict prevention activities can and should be designed before a conflict (preventing the outbreak), during a conflict (preventing its spread) and after (preventing its re-emergence).

### **Basic principles for EC support to conflict prevention**

Conflict prevention should be presented as an integral part of poverty reduction and sustainable development policies. What we need to ensure is that EC external assistance and policies are contributing towards tackling the root causes of the conflict and that EC assistance does not have unintended negative impact on the conflict dynamic. Conflict prevention objectives can be targeted indirectly through sector programmes and/or direct conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. These should be based on an analysis of the causes of conflict, risk factors, actors and their interests and agendas and options for action.

### ***Indirect conflict prevention and peace building in sector programmes***

This notion refers to a set of actions addressing in a given sector (agriculture, education, rural development, governance etc) several of the **conflict prevention objectives**. For example:

- In a conflict-prone area, a **water sector programme** may have as its primary objective the reduction of poverty through the provision of a reliable water supply but may also integrate other objectives linked the potential for conflict. These objectives may be relevant to the equal access of water services by different/antagonistic identity groups, the inclusion of a wide range of stake holders in project planning or the avoidance of disputes over land.
- In the immediate post-conflict phase, a **rehabilitation programme** may address the rehabilitation of socio-economic and physical infrastructure as well as education and training to provide employment skills and equally job creation. Such a programme may however also be designed in order to foster reconciliation between conflict-affected groups and to rebuild the community's social fabric. In this context, the particular needs of ex-combatants may be addressed through a demobilization/reintegration (DDR) element in the programme.

- In a situation of protracted social conflict, a **rural development programme** may address irrigation, livestock, basic health services needs for the most vulnerable groups as well as broader issues such as land reform and good governance within district/local administrations. It may also explicitly include conflict mitigation actions (grass-root mediation, development of conflict resolution skills at local level).

- In a situation of “vertical conflict” (between a region and the central structures), a **good governance programme** may combine assistance to the authorities for the implementation of on-going political processes (e.g. decentralisation, devolution of fiscal resources, management of natural resources) and peace-building activities to defuse tensions at local level.

### *Direct conflict prevention and peace building initiatives*

They could be particularly important in situations which demand higher profile support from the EC in the context of a key political process. These can be for example:

- Conflict-sensitive and targeted human rights and democratisation initiatives e.g. human rights dialogues, participatory processes and strengthening democratic norms;
- support to peace processes/initiatives and high level mediation activities;
- support to state/non-state mechanisms for resolving conflict (eg Ombudsman, arbitration panels, Truth & Reconciliation Commission);
- peace building/grass root initiatives (civil society, including women’s groups, youth organisations, indigenous peoples, peace media);
- targeted natural resource management project to address structural causes of conflict and resources fuelling violent conflict ( access and tenure rights, dispute solving mechanisms, transparency initiatives, guiding business activities etc);
- actions in the field of security sector reform (incl. reform of police, border control, justice reform, parliamentary and civilian control over the security services etc);
- small arms and light weapons projects;
- disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants.

## CONFLICT PREVENTION OBJECTIVES

<b>LEGITIMACY DEFICIT</b>
<b>No checks and balances in the institutional system:</b> Possible objectives:
Supporting debate on the constitution e.g. through political dialogue, civil society actions (scope of the debate is contingent on political and civil freedoms).
Judicial training programmes, exchange schemes for parliamentarians (possibly through regional frameworks/institutions)
Capacity building to regional authorities / accompanying measures in decentralisation processes / support to devolution of control of resources to local governments.
<b>The political/administrative power is exclusive:</b> Possible objectives
Promoting recognition of group identity rights, particularly those of religious and ethnic minorities
Building commitment to increased public reporting within EC funded programmes.
Promoting new forms of decentralisation and autonomy through technical co-operation on constitutional and political reforms such as power sharing arrangements (eg Belgium, Northern Ireland)
<b>Rejection of State authority/separatism:</b> Possible objectives
Strengthening/developing governance institutions that facilitate and regulate normal social conflict among competing interest groups
Supporting institutions which provide a check on centralised state power (eg Human Rights ombudsman)
<b>Corruption is widespread:</b> Possible objectives
Supporting civil society awareness raising/education on accountable and responsible public administration (see Transparency International toolkit).
Developing legal framework, national anti-corruption strategy, and capacities needed to implement the strategy
Simplifying as far as possible administrative rules, introducing compulsory statements of assets for all senior civil servants, ensuring staff recruitment and promotion procedures are fair, adopting a law on public access to information.
Establishing or strengthening an Ombudsman whose remit covers maladministration, including corruption, in both central and local government
<b>RESTRICTIONS TO THE RULE OF LAW</b>
<b>The judicial system is weak:</b> Possible objectives
Strengthening court system and prosecution services, including training of judiciary and prosecutors, and enhancing court capacities
Improving and simplifying court procedures to reduce delays in handling court cases
Advocating reform of law & justice institutions including technical assistance to the judiciary.
Monitoring impartiality of the judiciary
Facilitating access to legal system and equal application of law for all
Developing statistical information collection and analysis as part of improved court management
<b>Unlawful state violence exists:</b> Possible objectives
Providing training on laws (incl. Human rights) to law enforcement officials

Assisting human rights monitoring through strengthening local civil society
Supporting protection of human rights workers (e.g. peace brigades)
<b>Civilian power does not control security services: Possible objectives</b>
Supporting civilian control over political and economic affairs through the selection of appropriate interlocutors for EC interventions.
Strengthening public accountability and civilian control over the security services including setting appropriate level of military expenditure eg ombudsman, civilian review board
Sponsoring exchanges and dialogue between military and civilian groups in relevant local forums.
Fostering participation in international police cooperation, through support to police services and Ministries
<b>VIOLATIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS</b>
<b>Civil and political freedoms are violated: Possible objectives</b>
Support the development of a pluralist political process, an independent and well-functioning justice system.
Strengthening and empowering civil society including through education, training and awareness raising. Supporting institution building, good governance, the rule of law etc. Combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities.
<b>Religious, minority and cultural rights are restricted: Possible objectives</b>
Assisting in the development and implementation of a legal framework for minority protection and religious freedom
Providing support to legitimate NGO activity aimed at promotion of group identity rights.
<b>No respect for basic human rights: Possible objectives</b>
Establishing a Human Rights Commission to ensure that Covenant rights implemented in practice
Supporting measures to develop the capacity of local people to participate in decisions affecting them.
Emphasising human rights obligations in mechanisms for political dialogue and consider support for ratification and/or implementation of human rights instruments.
<b>WEAK CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA</b>
<b>Civil society is ineffective: Possible objectives</b>
Strengthening local arbitration and mediation skills
Building political space for local processes and solutions
<b>No independent or professional media: Possible objectives</b>
Supporting the elaboration of a legal framework for independent and free media
Organising professional training for local journalists and editors
<b>TENSIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES/ ABSENCE OF DISPUTE-RESOLUTION MECHANISMS</b>
<b>Tensions/confrontation between identity groups: Possible objectives</b>
Addressing socio-economic root causes of grievance (see the section below on socio-economic regional disparities)
Establishing confidence building measures including facilitation and mediation training in order to promote a culture of

dispute resolution
<b>No public arbitration over tensions/disputes:</b> Possible objectives
Strengthening local arbitration and mediation skills through grass roots training programmes
Promoting systematised, transparent and fair dispute settlement through structures acceptable to all sides of the community and which conform to human rights standards and reinforce the state's monopoly on the use of force.
<b>Large flows of migrants/refugees generates tensions:</b> Possible objectives
Developing migration management capacities and return/reintegration mechanisms
Assisting in the development of legal framework for rapid social and economic integration of migrants
Promoting stability and tolerance through education and economic and cultural exchange between migrants and host community.
Reinforcing refugee status determination mechanisms
Assisting in clarifying land rights
<b>POOR ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Dependency on too few economic sectors:</b> Possible objectives
Supporting diversification of economy through coherent trade, agricultural, industrial and fisheries strategy towards the country.
Exploring possibilities to encourage export led growth in industrial sectors which add value to primary commodities.
Legal frameworks against profiteering and speculation and limit potential of war economy through transparent national accounts (eg natural resources and extraction industries) and strict controls and drying up of markets (eg arms, drugs trade)
<b>Incapacity to ensure macro-economic stability:</b> Possible objectives
Supporting trade agreements and financial mechanisms stabilising the national economy.
Governance programme to strengthen capacity to regulate foreign investments in accordance with national development priorities.
<b>Environmental degradation is threatening stability:</b> Possible objectives
Supporting viable customary land tenure and resource management systems
Supporting sustainable local development , national and cross-border management of resources (eg water) and integrated disaster preparedness.
Targeting specific environmental problems eg support to rural development programmes in drought prone areas through the creation of durable assets, support to land reclamation projects.
<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC REGIONAL INEQUALITIES</b>
<b>Social welfare is neglected:</b> Possible objectives
Prioritisation of social investment (health, education, water/sanitation)
Targeting basic human needs through food security, safety nets for the vulnerable and access to housing and infrastructure
<b>Social inequalities are fuelling tensions:</b> Possible objectives
Creating better opportunities for the disadvantaged through area based rehabilitation schemes or special education and employment programmes for potentially destabilising groups (eg young, demobilised combatants)

Facilitating access to land, capital and credit for individuals and small and medium sized enterprises.
Supporting broad participation in political processes, labour market and national civil society in particular through the promotion of inter-group co-operation in the development and implementation of social welfare and education programmes.
Skill and awareness development of poor women in order to promote stability at grass roots level.
<b>Regional disparities are fuelling tensions:</b> Possible objectives
Alleviation of regional inequality as a measurement indicator for assistance programme.
Supporting decentralisation of authority and responsibility to regions through capacity building and increased resource allocation.
Prioritising poverty reduction in most deprived areas and review existing donor spread across regions.
<b>GEOPOLITICAL INSTABILITY</b>
<b>The region's geopolitical situation is unstable:</b> Possible objectives
Supporting high-level regional mediation initiatives (e.g. with high political actors) and developing shared regional analysis of problems.
Setting up conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms (e.g. ECOWAS mechanism, African Union early warning system, Andean Community activities)
Supporting regional initiatives for arms control
<b>The state is affected by external threats:</b> Possible objectives
Standardisation of human rights norms and practices (particularly as regards minority rights) between governments at the regional level, to decrease potential for external support to insurgent groups.
<b>The state contributes to regional instability:</b> Possible objectives
Setting clear incentives and sanctions to discourage conflict promoting involvement.