High-Level Task Force for ICPD

RIGHTS, DIGNITY & HEALTH FOR ALL

Policy Brief & Recommendations
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Conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, promotion of durable peace,
rule of law and governance

KEY MESSAGES

Inequality and poverty at all levels are drivers of conflict.[1] Lack of development generates instability, conflict and violence. Countries affected by conflict, violence and insecurity face the greatest challenges in safeguarding the human rights and wellbeing of their people, eradicating poverty, promoting social equality, protecting the environment, and promoting sustainable development. Their special circumstances were not adequately addressed by the Millennium Development Goals, and they are furthest behind in achieving them—a major lesson learned for crafting the Sustainable Development Goals and the new Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Conflict-affected countries are:

- Home to **1.5 billion people,[2] and represent over half of the world's poor[3] and 60% of the world's undernourished**[4]
- Home to **71% of the world's children who die** before turning 5 years old[5]
- Where **50 million children are out of school**[6]
- Where **maternal mortality is 50% higher than the global average**[7], with 40% of births occurring without skilled attendance
- Where over **40% of people with HIV and AIDS in the world live**[8]
- Where, in some settings, up to **40% of households are headed by women**[9]
- Where, in some countries, **up to two thirds of the population is under 25 years old**.[10]

Investments in gender equality, adolescents and youth, and sexual and reproductive health and rights can have transformative, multiplier effects for fostering peace and stability, economic regeneration, and inclusive, sustainable development—but too often receive inadequate attention in policies and budgets for peacebuilding, reconstruction and promoting inclusive, sustained economic development.

Women's participation in conflict resolution, decision-making and the labor force, and their access to inheritance, property rights, training and skills-building, are associated with good governance, lower corruption, reduced odds of returning to conflict and improved environmental management, which can **positively impact recovery efforts[11] and enhance prospects for peace and sustainable development**.

By their sheer numbers, **young people are a force for stabilization, reconstruction and progress**. Strategic investments in their education, health—especially their sexual and reproductive health—job training and creation of decent work and livelihood opportunities should be a priority, including to enable countries to harness the **'demographic dividend'** for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Challenges for Women & Young People: Missed Opportunities for Peace & Sustainable Development

Despite the importance of women's roles in peacebuilding, only a limited portion of post-conflict spending is dedicated to women's empowerment or gender equality,[12] and fewer than 10% of peace negotiators have been women (between 1992-2011).[13] Implementation of UN General Assembly Resolutions, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent, related resolutions remains challenging, including as regards sexual violence.

In conflict-affected settings, women and young people are particularly challenged to find decent work, access services and social protection, and are often left out of peacebuilding and political processes. Nor are their specific concerns adequately addressed by humanitarian assistance,[14] such as protection from sexual assault and the need for quality education and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services. Women, girls and young people are also especially at risk after conflict has formally ended,[15] including of gender-based violence, criminal networks, gangs and trafficking.

During and after conflict, women often become primary breadwinners, many of them widowed, but the economic opportunities available to them are scarce or low-paying,[16] and many women and girls turn to transactional sex for survival. Their unpaid care work may also increase as family structures shift and family members sustain injuries and disabilities. Discriminatory inheritance laws and practices often mean women cannot reclaim the land or property of their male family members once conflict is over,[17] perpetuating their poverty. Women are often excluded from receiving financial protection and reparations as part of transitional justice plans, and most post-conflict job creation programs target men and ex-combatants.[18]

Sexual and reproductive health problems, including maternal mortality from pregnancy and childbirth complications, unsafe abortion and HIV/AIDS, can multiply and intensify during and after conflict, due to health system collapse, as well as generalized and sexual violence.

Sexual violence as a tactic of warfare leaves individuals, families and communities with devastating and lasting consequences. In addition, in some conflicts, forced marriage and impregnation of women and adolescent girls are additional tools of warfare. Once conflict has ended, many adolescent girls and young women end up as young mothers, without education, skills or supports to sustain themselves or their children.

For young people, conflict and its aftermath disrupts their lives at a critical juncture, undermining their human rights, including their right to development. Families are separated; education grinds to a halt. Many are conscripted as combatants. Income-earning and work opportunities are scarce, with youth unemployment rates as high as 70% in some conflict settings.[19] Unprotected sex is common among young people during conflict and displacement,[20] and some 15 million young people are impacted by HIV and AIDS.[21] Studies have also found that adolescents in particular face difficulties accessing health care, especially sexual and reproductive health information and services in refugee settings.[22]

Young people without a promising future are more susceptible to being recruited into gangs and lured into soldiering.[23] Considering the average length of displacement is 17 years,[24] adolescents and youth require the range of social, health, educational and skills-building services. Education during and after conflict is a source of protection and psychosocial support for young people that can nurture peace and stability and lower risks of conflict.[25] Yet young people are the most under-served group during crises, and the focus of services is mainly on food and shelter. [26]

The international community has a crucial role to play in supporting national efforts to achieve sustainable development in conflict-affected settings and states emerging from conflict. Political commitment and international cooperation are vital to preventing and resolving instability and conflict by addressing the root causes of conflict through the implementation of sound policies for advancing social inclusion and economic growth.

<u>Guiding Principles and Key Recommendations</u>

1. **The sustainable development agenda must be rooted in principles of human rights, human security, equality and the rule of law, with emphasis on poverty eradication, non-discrimination, social inclusion and gender equality.** Durable peace and meaningful progress toward sustainable development will not be achieved unless the needs and rights of populations living in poverty or marginalized are fully protected, especially those most disenfranchised and impacted by conflict, including widows, out-of-school children and young people, refugees, internally displaced people, migrants, slum dwellers, rural populations, ethnic minorities, indigenous communities, people living with disabilities and HIV, among others.

   This means g*uaranteeing equality before the law, access to justice and non-discrimination for all people in the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms*, including the right to development, across the range of social, cultural, economic, civil and political rights, including in accessing social benefits, health services, educational and employment opportunities, political participation, in forming a family, in fulfilling their right to self-expression, to seek and impart information, to freedom of organization and assembly, to freedom from violence and harassment, and to participation in decision-making in reconstruction and peace-building processes, regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, marital, disability, HIV, location, refugee or migrant status, sexual orientation and gender identity, or any other grounds.

2. **Advance gender equality and the human rights of women and girls**, during and after conflict, by:
   - ✓ *Implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 and related Security resolutions* on "Women, Peace and Security", as well as developing national action plans in this regard;
   - ✓ *Securing women's full and equal participation in formal and informal conflict resolution dialogues, in all stages of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and the development, implementation and monitoring of recovery programmes, new constitutions, laws, policies, and institutions;*
   - ✓ *Supporting women's collectives and roles at community levels* as peace brokers, resolvers of disputes and leaders of dialogue and reconciliation, as well as their role in early warning systems of emerging instability and conflict;
   - ✓ *Addressing gender equality and women's priority concerns in peace agreements and accords;*
   - ✓ *Ensuring women are awarded reparations* in conflict-affected scenarios and that reparation packages address their needs, as a key aspect of transitional justice;
   - ✓ *Enshrining gender equality and protections for the human rights of women and girls in new constitutions, legislation and policies*, in line with international human rights standards;

- ✓ *Enabling women's equal political participation and leadership in decision-making at local and national levels*, including through the use of temporary special measures, community education and outreach, and safety measures for female candidates and women in political office and parliament;
- ✓ *Ensuring governance, justice and security systems re-establish and uphold the rule of law for women and girls*—including through increased female personnel—and are responsive to their particular needs and rights, end impunity and provide remedies for injustices committed against them, from land grabbing to gender-based violence;
- ✓ *Raising awareness about women's legal rights and entitlements;*
- ✓ *Providing access to social protection,* with special attention to vulnerable groups, including women widowed or disabled as a result of conflict, adolescent girls with children and female-headed households, and older persons without livelihood options or family providers;
- ✓ *Enacting and enforcing legislation against all forms of violence against women and girls,* including ending child, early and forced marriage, criminalizing sexual violence, and eliminating sexual violence from amnesty provisions in post-conflict settings; and by taking action against sexual exploitation and trafficking;
- ✓ *Ensuring peacekeepers, police officers, refugee and IDP camp managers and other security personnel in conflict-affected communities are properly trained in prevention and response to gender-based and sexual violence*, including application of practical safety measures for women and girls (e.g. lighting in and around camp areas, farm fields, sanitation facilities and other areas they frequent), and establishing and/or strengthening compliance with legal and ethical codes of conduct to punish their engagement in any form of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation of women and girls;
- ✓ *Providing universal access to critical services for all victims/survivors of gender-based violence*, including psychosocial and mental health support; sexual and reproductive health; post-rape care, including emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention and access to safe abortion services in all cases of violence and rape; access to justice; and supports for the elimination of stigma and the reintegration of survivors in their communities;
- ✓ *Investing in women as "frontline" service-delivery agents*—in health, education, agricultural extension, as police and security officers, and in the management of natural resources;
- ✓ *Enabling the role of women's human rights defenders and providing effective protections* from intimidation and violence for them and their families.

3. In the area of Health:
- ✓ *Advance access to quality, affordable health care for all throughout the life-cycle*, including through *universal health coverage schemes*;
- ✓ *Provide universal access to essential, integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education and services;*
- ✓ *Ensure the Minimal Initial Service Package (MISP) for Reproductive Health* is implemented at the initial stages of an emergency, to prevent and manage the consequences of sexual violence, prevent maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality, reduce HIV transmission, and plan for comprehensive reproductive health services, while tailoring such services to the *special needs of adolescents and youth;*
- ✓ *Promote, respect, protect and fulfill sexual and reproductive rights, especially of women and adolescent girls.*

4. **In the area of Education**:
- ✓ *Provide universal access to quality education for all children,* with particular attention to girls' retention and completion rates and the elimination of female literacy;
- ✓ *Integrate peacebuilding and conflict management techniques* into educational curriculae as a conflict-prevention strategy;
- ✓ *Support pregnant girls and young mothers* to enable them to complete their education and balance education, work and family responsibilities, with special attention for victims/survivors of sexual violence and forced marriage;
- ✓ *Provide universal access to comprehensive sexuality education for all adolescents and youth, in and out of school,* linked to youth-friendly services, to reinforce values of human rights, non-violence, tolerance and equality, and to help young people stay healthy and prevent pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, abuse and gender-based violence.

5. **In the area of Decent Work, Livelihoods and Economic Opportunities:**
- ✓ *Provide women and young people with decent work and livelihood opportunities,* including to advance gender equality, economic recovery, and to prevent emigration and social instability;
- ✓ *Ensure women's equal access to economic opportunities and to post-conflict employment and livelihood programs*, including through legal and policy provisions for equal pay with men; equal land, property and inheritance rights; and equal access to resources and farming supports;
- ✓ *Enable job creation for women, youth and the poor and facilitate their access to productive assets, credit, banking and financial services, technologies and ICTs* in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development to drive sustained, inclusive, and equitable economic growth, and to foster entrepreneurship, including training and skills-building that can also help spur technological innovation and 'green' solutions. Such training programmes should continue through periods of protracted displacement;
- ✓ *Invest in measures and technologies to reduce time-use burdens* on women and girls in managing household tasks (e.g. collecting water, fuel), which can increase their vulnerability to violence and limit their labour force participation and productivity.

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[1] UN Sustainable Development Goals Technical Support Team (2013) *Conflict Prevention, Post-conflict Peacebuilding and the Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance.*

[2] World Bank (2011) *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development.* The report states that 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by "violence, conflict or fragility".

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] 28 million children of primary school age and 20 million lower-secondary-aged adolescents. See UNESCO (2013) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*

[7] Secretary-General (2013) *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security to the Security Council, September 2013; S/2013/525.*

[8] World Bank (2011) *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development.*

[9] UN Women (2012) *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security.*

[10] Thomas Reuters Foundation (2013) *Humanitarian response must focus on adolescent sexual health needs – report.*

[11] UN Women (2012) *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security;* See also *UN Sustainable Development Goals Technical Support Team (2013) Conflict Prevention, Post-conflict Peacebuilding and the Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance.*

[12] UN Women (2012) *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security.*

[13] *Ibid.* Note that of the nine active UN-led peace negotiations in 2012, six had a woman delegate - see Secretary-General (2013) *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security to the Security Council, September 2013; S/2013/525.*

[14] UN Women (2012) *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security.*

[15] UN Sustainable Development Goals Technical Support Team (2013) *Conflict Prevention, Post-conflict Peacebuilding and the Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance.*

[16] UN Women (2012) *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] UNFPA (2010) *State of World Population: From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change.*

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] UNHCR and Women's Refugee Commission (2011) *Refocusing Family Planning in Refugee Settings: Findings and Recommendations from a Multi-Country Baseline Study.*

[23] World Bank (2011) *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development*; see also UNFPA (2010) *State of World Population: From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change.*

[24] UNFPA (2010) *State of World Population: From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change.*

[25] Winthrop, Rebecca and Elena Matsui (2013) *A New Agenda for Education in Fragile States; Center for Universal Education at Brookings, Working Paper 10.*

[26] UNFPA (2010) *State of World Population: From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change.*