

HOW CAN THE NEW DEAL AND SDG 16+ BE ACHIEVED?

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OVERVIEW

The Millennium Development Goals were criticized for failing to deliver results in the most fragile countries. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, agreed in 2011 by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, sought to address this failure with a new model that prioritized peace, justice and governance, and the ownership of sustainable development by fragile and conflict-affected states. These principles, advocated by the g7+, later served as the basis for Sustainable Development Goal 16 and were widely integrated throughout the 2030 Agenda.¹

Together, the New Deal, SDG 16+ and the Sustaining Peace resolutions, which were adopted by the UN Security Council and General Assembly in 2016, provide a comprehensive policy platform for supporting inclusive, nationally led efforts to build resilience, promote sustainable development and prevent conflict. Mainstreamed across the development architecture, peace and justice provisions such as governance and the rule of law are now recognized as essential for sustainable economic growth, development and stability. However, translating the frameworks' policy commitments into concrete achievements on the ground remains a challenge, especially in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

This session examined how the peace-, governance- and justice-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and the New Deal have been operationalized. It drew on lessons learned in fragile and conflict-affected states such as South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Tunisia. The discussion was structured around the themes of implementation, impact and inclusivity.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

While the 2030 Agenda sets global goals to be achieved by all countries, the New Deal is a tool specifically designed to allow fragile and conflict-affected countries to achieve sustainable development through inclusive, nationally led processes. Countries affected by conflict and fragility face specific challenges and have limited capacities and resources. A key focus of the New Deal process in the past year has been to reflect on how lessons learned to date can support implementation of the newer and relatively untested 2030 Agenda while ensuring that fragile and conflict-affected countries are not left behind.

Somalia is an example of the strengths and weaknesses of New Deal implementation to date. Adoption of the Somali New Deal Compact in 2013 helped to end a prolonged period of isolation by bringing the country back into international frameworks and allowing it access to international support. However, despite progress on some development objectives, advancement towards objectives of profound importance to the Somali people such as improved health care and security has stagnated. Concerns that Somalia's development efforts have been top-down, rushed and insufficiently inclusive reflect a broader concern about implementation of the New Deal—that a

¹ SDG16+ refers to the range of commitments in the 2030 Agenda to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies (not exclusively the targets under SDG 16). Achieving SDG 16+ is a development outcome in its own right but will also be critical if the other goals are to be met.



process originally meant to allow donors to enhance the relationship between governments and their people has in some cases promoted a bilateral relationship between governments and donors instead.

The experience of South Sudan reveals the challenges but also the need to aspire to implement the principles of the New Deal. Despite the current conflict, important steps have been taken to build consensus and public understanding around the New Deal goals, including mainstreaming them into government work and the national development plan. South Sudan's country-led fragility assessment was most valuable in fostering a local rather than outsiders' understanding of the drivers of fragility and priority actions. For the first time in South Sudan's short history the priorities for a national development policy emerged from local consultations. Efforts to rebuild and enhance relationships among communities, institutions and long-standing international partners are not just in line with New Deal principles—they may represent the only way out of the conflict.

The development and application of indicators based on sound methodologies will be critical to measuring and monitoring progress with both the SDGs and the New Deal. The Praia Group on Governance Statistics is developing a handbook on governance statistics for national statistical offices. This initiative is intended to help build the statistical capacity of fragile countries to produce evidence of national implementation of peace and development goals.

A further lesson of New Deal implementation is the need to focus on resilience as a positive reframing of the concept of fragility. Assessing resilience rather than fragility can provide a greater focus on how to build capacity or utilize the assets that exist in a country to recover from shocks at the local or national levels.

Somalia's experience with the New Deal indicates the crucial need to maintain an inclusive and bottom-up approach. This lesson is also reflected in Tunisia, where obstacles to access to justice for women have emerged as a litmus test of inclusivity in ensuring that justice goals support sustainable development. Tunisia further demonstrates the importance of regional inclusivity. The fact that social and economic disparities were addressed in the 2013 National Dialogue process prevented the collapse of the political process and resulted in a roadmap that all parties have cleaved to. Finally, the inclusion of civil society is crucial to any development agenda as a means of holding governments accountable and ensuring that national priorities reflect the views of all groups in society.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To seek new synergies, bridge gaps in current knowledge and identify areas for further research, the following ideas were drawn from the discussion:

- The need to act: the New Deal, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustaining Peace resolutions constitute a comprehensive policy platform for action.
- The need to be politically smart: consensus must be actively built around development, peacebuilding and state building goals.
- The need to build trust between state and civil society through national systems.
- The need for an inclusive approach to development, including conducting joint analyses to determine priorities and build trust between state and civil society through support to national systems.
- The need to ensure that the global development agenda is implemented and measured in a manner that is adapted to local contexts and priorities.

