



## CHAPTER ONE

# POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO PREVENT AND END CONFLICT





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Photo on previous page:

More than 950,000 people are severely food insecure in Burkina Faso. Insecurity has worsened the effects of drought in the north.

OCHA/Otto Bakano

The World Humanitarian Summit took place at a time of heightened humanitarian need, driven largely by armed conflict and complex emergencies. Since the Summit, the number of people in need has continued to grow: from 77.9 million in 2015 to 131.7 million at the beginning of 2019.

The Agenda for Humanity reaffirmed the critical need for collective action to end the immense suffering caused by conflicts and violence. Despite the urgency of this call to action, only 8 per cent of commitments to the Agenda for Humanity went towards achieving the four transformations of Core Responsibility One. As a result, this core responsibility consistently received the fewest self-reports.

The Agenda for Humanity called for five transformations to prevent and end conflict and invest in stability:

1A: Leadership to prevent and end violent conflict

1B: Act early

1C: Stay and invest

1D: Be inclusive in decision-making

5C: Invest in stability

# Summary of progress and challenges

Forty-three stakeholders submitted reports for 2018 against one or more of the transformations under Core Responsibility One, and 11 stakeholders reported against the related Transformation 5C: Invest in Stability.

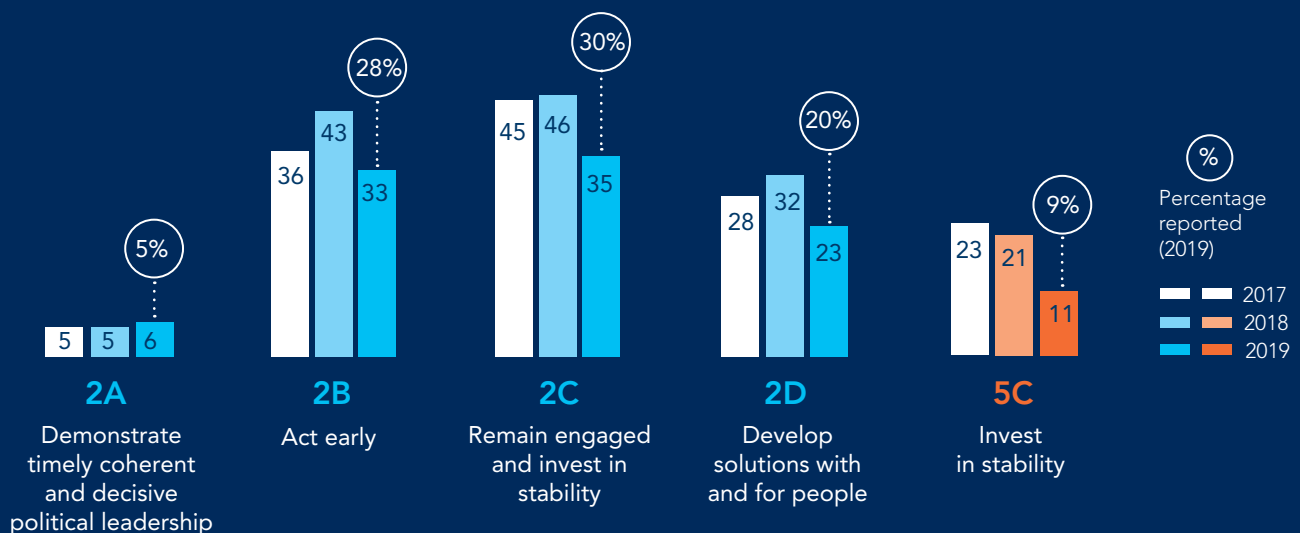
## Key takeaways

There is a growing emphasis on strategic policy and institutional reforms, shifting the focus towards preventing, rather than responding to, conflicts.

Stakeholders are taking practical steps to empower women to work as peacebuilders, mediators, peacekeepers and supporting women-led civil society organizations.

There are persistent challenges: lack of predictable financing for prevention, little flexibility to work across humanitarian, development and peace pillars and limited engagement of civil society organizations and marginalized groups.

## Reporting by transformation 2017-2019



# Stakeholders

Forty-three stakeholders submitted reports for 2018 against one or more of the transformations under Core Responsibility One, and 11 stakeholders reported against the related Transformation 5C: Invest in Stability.

## Progress in 2018

Member States demonstrated strong support for a multilateral approach – including investments in multilateral funds and instruments – to strengthen the international community's capacity to prevent and respond to conflicts and sustain peace. At an institutional level, stakeholders developed policy and guidance, and shared experiences to enhance global capacity for addressing the root causes of conflicts. Many engaged proactively in fragile situations, supporting conflict prevention programmes and responding to early warning signs. In active conflicts, stakeholders worked to improve coherence across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars to ensure a more integrated response. Stakeholders also took steps to increase the meaningful participation of women in peace and stabilization processes, and to engage civil society, faith communities and youth as key partners in building peaceful, resilient societies.

A comparison with the achievements reported in 2016 indicates a shift in approach. First, while earlier reports focused on developing tools and analysis to complement existing ways of working, there is now a growing emphasis on strategic policy and institutional reforms, shifting the focus towards preventing (rather than responding to) conflicts. In line with the UN Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention, stakeholders reported on efforts and investments at a variety of levels to bring about this change. Second, stakeholders are taking practical steps to empower women to work as peacebuilders, mediators, peacekeepers and civil society actors, helping to ensure gender-informed approaches to conflict prevention and response, and sustaining peace. This is part of a growing impetus for inclusive, people-centred action; although, as yet, there is less reporting on practical action to include civil society organizations (CSOs), youth and other under-represented groups. Third, in active conflicts, reporting reflects the growing momentum to improve coherence across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars; although the operationalization of these approaches has yet to catch up with the discourse. Finally, more stakeholders are monitoring and proactively responding to early warning signs – a notable shift in approach.

## Challenges and gaps

The challenges reported by stakeholders reflect the difficulty of translating the ambitions of Core Responsibility One and the Secretary-General's sustaining peace agenda into a cultural shift in international action. Creating the foundations for this change requires strong leadership to drive new policies, tools and expertise, as well as new funding mechanisms. Organizations must develop internal systems for preparedness, early warning and conflict prevention, and hire new expertise or build capacity to work differently. However, stakeholders reported that resource constraints and competing organizational priorities hampered their ability to invest in policy, training and staff development.

Many also highlighted the operational challenges in implementing their commitments: the difficulties of operating in conflict environments, including limited access to insecure areas; growing restrictions on CSOs; and the widespread disregard for international humanitarian and human rights law. Others noted challenges in operationalizing partnerships and managing coordination given the inherent differences between humanitarian, development and peace actors.

The last three years of reporting reveal persistent gaps that impede international efforts to prioritize conflict prevention. First, the lack of predictable and sustained financing for conflict prevention remains a major obstacle, as does the lack of flexibility – both in terms of working across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars and adapting to changing needs. Second, despite high-level political commitments, there is limited engagement of CSOs and marginalized groups in prevention, stabilization and peace processes. Third, a lack of quality data remains a critical gap. Challenges include the scarcity of sex- and age-disaggregated data, the difficulties of gathering data in conflict environments, the limited funding for data collection and analysis, and the lack of appropriate data for measuring the impact of approaches to conflict prevention and stabilization. The absence of data is a constant barrier to investment, advocacy and decision-making. Sustained leadership at all levels – including in the UN Security Council – is needed to guide collective progress and develop mechanisms for following up on commitments and overcoming barriers to action.



“What you see on me is what I have left. I left everything behind to save our lives.”  
- Larissa (16). A large number of women and their families have fled their homes to escape armed violence. Central African Republic. OCHA/Matteo Minasi

## Preventing and ending conflict and investing in stability

### Financing peacebuilding and stability

Member States have responded to the Secretary-General’s call for increased financial support for the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Between 2017 and 2018, contributions to the PBF more than doubled.<sup>1</sup> This increase enabled the PBF to approve over \$183 million for projects in 40 countries – including countries where recent political developments opened up new opportunities for engagement: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe; three new countries were also declared eligible for future funding: Burkina Faso, El Salvador and the Gambia.

In addition to the PBF, Member States directed financing to a range of other peacebuilding, stabilization and crisis prevention programmes. Canada increased its financial and in-kind support to UN peacekeeping, including CAD 3 million for the creation of receptive environments for women peacekeepers. Germany continued to invest over €2 billion a year in efforts to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace in fragile countries. The United Kingdom upheld its commitment to invest at least 50 per cent of its international assistance budget in fragile contexts, launching a four-year, £12 million peacebuilding programme in the Central African Republic, Myanmar and Nigeria. A number of States, including Ireland and Portugal, also provided bilateral funding for stabilization and transition initiatives.

“The international donor community, led by local partners, should work together more effectively to tackle the underlying drivers of instability, rather than focus on the symptoms. The case for greater investment in stability and conflict prevention is both economically and ethically sound.”

United Kingdom, self-report 1C

<sup>1</sup> Member States who increased their contributions to the PBF in 2018 included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. See also the Reports of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund 2018 (A/73/829) and 2017 (A/72/740).

## Improving mediation capacities and sharing learning on conflict prevention

Member States enhanced the capacity of the United Nations for mediation and conflict prevention through contributions to the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs' Multi-Year Appeal (MYA). In 2018, the MYA received its highest level of contributions, with \$35.6 million in support of the UN's prevention agenda.<sup>2</sup>

Stakeholders also made concerted efforts to strengthen the broader international community's capacity for preventive diplomacy. In September 2018, Turkey convened the first Mediation for Peace certification programme for officials from Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and, in November, hosted the Fifth Istanbul Mediation Conference. Spain boosted its support to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Finland, Italy, Norway and Sweden supported national and regional networks for women mediators; Norway also initiated a global alliance of these networks. In addition, stakeholders delivered training to strengthen capacities on other aspects of conflict prevention and peacebuilding: Norway, for example, supported the Training for Peace

programme, which works with the African Union to help prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and promote stability in Africa; and Romania hosted a training programme for G5 Sahel countries on post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization.

Stakeholders also created opportunities to share experiences of conflict prevention. For example, Germany and Finland organized a conference on the 'Responsibility of the religions for peace' in Berlin, and New Zealand hosted an Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum Intersessional Support Group meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy. In the Philippines, Japan and the UN co-hosted the Bangsamoro Forum to disseminate learning from the Mindanao peace process, and Ireland hosted events to share lessons from the Northern Ireland peace process.

## Early warning and preparedness

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of early warning and preparedness initiatives. Member States, including Canada, Denmark and Germany, provided funding for European Union (EU), UN and World Bank early warning

<sup>2</sup> Member States who contributed to the MYA included Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.

A peacekeeper from Togo serving with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) holds a child while on a mission to provide medical care to residents of Mopti region. United Nations



mechanisms. Stakeholders also reported on how these approaches are being operationalized. UNOCHA reported that, in 2018, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Emergency Response Preparedness approach was implemented in 64 countries. Similarly, UNHCR monitored 63 countries at 'medium/high risk of emergency', and activated two 'proactive preparedness' operations in response to early warning. INTERSOS also mounted an early response to the humanitarian crisis in Cameroon. In addition, stakeholders, including FAO, IOM and WFP, continued to produce and share analysis and contribute to inter-agency early warning initiatives.

### Working across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars

In areas affected by intractable conflicts, stakeholders demonstrated support for holistic approaches and worked to improve coherence across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) adopted a *Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace*

Nexus, to support the transition from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need.<sup>3</sup> Member States, including Canada and Germany, strengthened whole-of-government approaches to conflicts and crises. The United Kingdom applied a whole-of-portfolio approach for country-level programming – for example, supporting a range of programmes in Somalia to resolve conflict, build national capacity and increase the participation of women in political decision-making. A number of stakeholders, including Concern Worldwide and FAO, adopted corporate strategies to strengthen country-level conflict sensitivity in their humanitarian and development operations. WFP entered into a partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute to assess the impacts of its humanitarian and development programming on the prospects for peace.

<sup>3</sup> The Recommendation was adopted by DAC at its Senior Level Meeting on 22 February 2019. The recommendation can be viewed here: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>

Nearly 7,000 people moved from rural areas into informal settlements in the provincial capital Qala-e-Naw, Badghis. Afghanistan. OCHA/Phillippe Kropf





## Conflict-sensitive tools and analysis

To improve their capacity to work across the three pillars, stakeholders developed new tools for programming and analysis. FAO, in partnership with the Interpeace Advisory Team, developed tools and provided training on conflict sensitivity and context analysis to staff in 14 countries. Mercy Corps developed two analytical tools to support field analysis of root causes of conflict and strategies for addressing them; it reported reaching over 1.5 million people through 24 programmes. World Vision field-tested a Fragile Contexts Programme Approach in five pilot countries as part of its commitment to the Peace Promise.<sup>4</sup>

Stakeholders also developed tools to forecast future crises. Denmark supported an innovative partnership between the Danish Refugee Council and IBM to conduct evidence-based, tech-driven, predictive analyses of future mixed migration patterns; and the EU worked on a Horizon Scanning product that identifies countries at risk of violent conflict within the next three- to six-months.

## Strengthening inclusive peace processes

The role of CSOs in preventing and resolving conflicts was a prominent theme of reporting in 2018. Non-governmental organizations, including Human Appeal and IMPACT, supported the engagement of local and municipal actors in humanitarian and development action. The United Kingdom launched the Jo Cox Memorial Grants to fund CSOs in fragile settings and conflict-affected countries. Within these broader efforts, stakeholders emphasized the need to make existing processes and mechanisms more inclusive of young people. A number of stakeholders, including Finland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Turkey and Mercy Corps, expressed support for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. New Zealand prioritized youth participation and leadership in programmes to address the root causes of conflict. The American Friends Service Committee supported youth-led peace clubs in Burundi, El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti.

Stakeholders also supported initiatives to promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Switzerland continued to support the Humanitarian Charities Forum in Lebanon, a group of Islamic charities from different

denominations that provides aid beyond confessional boundaries. AISA ONG Internationale organized interfaith activities to celebrate the International Day of Living Together in Peace, and Norwegian Church Aid supported the Interconfessional Council of Burundi, which brought together leaders from different faiths in support of peace and reconciliation efforts. World Vision International and 13 partners from across different denominations organized a forum to develop joint solutions for ending violence against children on the move in fragile contexts.

## Gender equality and women, peace and security

Stakeholders emphasized the critical role of women and women's CSOs in preventing, resolving and responding to crises, and some made progress in engaging them as partners. For example, Oxfam International partnered with women's rights organizations on issues related to women, peace and security in 10 countries, and sponsored women from Iraq, Palestine and Yemen to provide testimonies at the UN Human Rights Council. Norway entered into new three-year partnerships with CSOs working on the inclusion of women in peace and reconciliation efforts.

Member States also highlighted the role of women in peacekeeping and security operations, and reported on their progress in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).<sup>5</sup> Canada continued to support the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peacekeeping Operations, laying the groundwork for a dedicated multilateral funding mechanism to support its work. Japan supported a project led by UN Women on Integrating Gender into Peace Support Operations in East Africa. New Zealand and the African Union co-hosted a high-level meeting on Peace Operations Training and Capacity-Building that included a discussion on the role of women in peace support operations.

<sup>4</sup> The Peace Promise is a set of five commitments to develop more effective synergies among peace, humanitarian and development actions in order to address the drivers of conflict.

<sup>5</sup> S/RES/1325 (2000)

## Achieving the transformation

In their third and final year of reporting against their Agenda for Humanity commitments, **stakeholders stressed the need for the international community to shift from a culture of reacting to conflict to one of prevention and sustaining peace.** While this shift depends largely on decisive political leadership, multilateral organizations and civil society groups can play an important role in providing the basis for collective action and implementing commitments on the ground.

Such a shift in mindset will require concerted action and dedicated, long-term financing. This should build on the momentum generated by the Secretary-General's Report on the restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/72/525), the ensuing resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council, and the recommendations set out by the joint UN-World Bank study, *Pathways for Peace*.

To implement this change in approach, stakeholders should work together to:

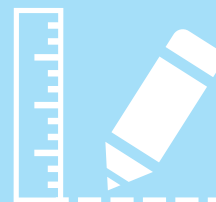
- **Ensure predictable and flexible funding for conflict prevention and sustaining peace:**

Current financing models are more enabling of short-term response than long-term prevention. Sustained and scaled-up funding is critical to incentivize prevention, both through multilateral instruments and on a national and subnational level. In protracted conflicts, multi-year and flexible funding is required to support an appropriate mix of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work. To achieve this at scale, stakeholders need to innovate, work in partnerships and be less risk averse.

- **Engage in inclusive, people-centred prevention and peace efforts:** Peace can only be sustained if the whole of society is part of the solution. The equal and effective participation of women in conflict prevention and peacemaking efforts at all levels is integral to sustainable peace. Furthermore, peace agreements and solutions must address the specific needs of women and girls, and protect their rights. Civil society actors, youth and marginalized groups must also be empowered as agents of change in peacemaking.

- **Invest in data and analysis to inform decision-making:** The lack of timely, quality and reliable sex- and age-disaggregated data to track peace as well as conflict risks is a persistent gap. Strategic investment is needed, both to collect subnational data within conflict-affected countries and to build the capacity of stakeholders to analyse the data and use it to inform decisions. In addition, existing tools and protocols could be used to develop cooperation across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars: using shared data and analysis to set joint priorities and collective outcomes, inform programming and assess impact across the three pillars.

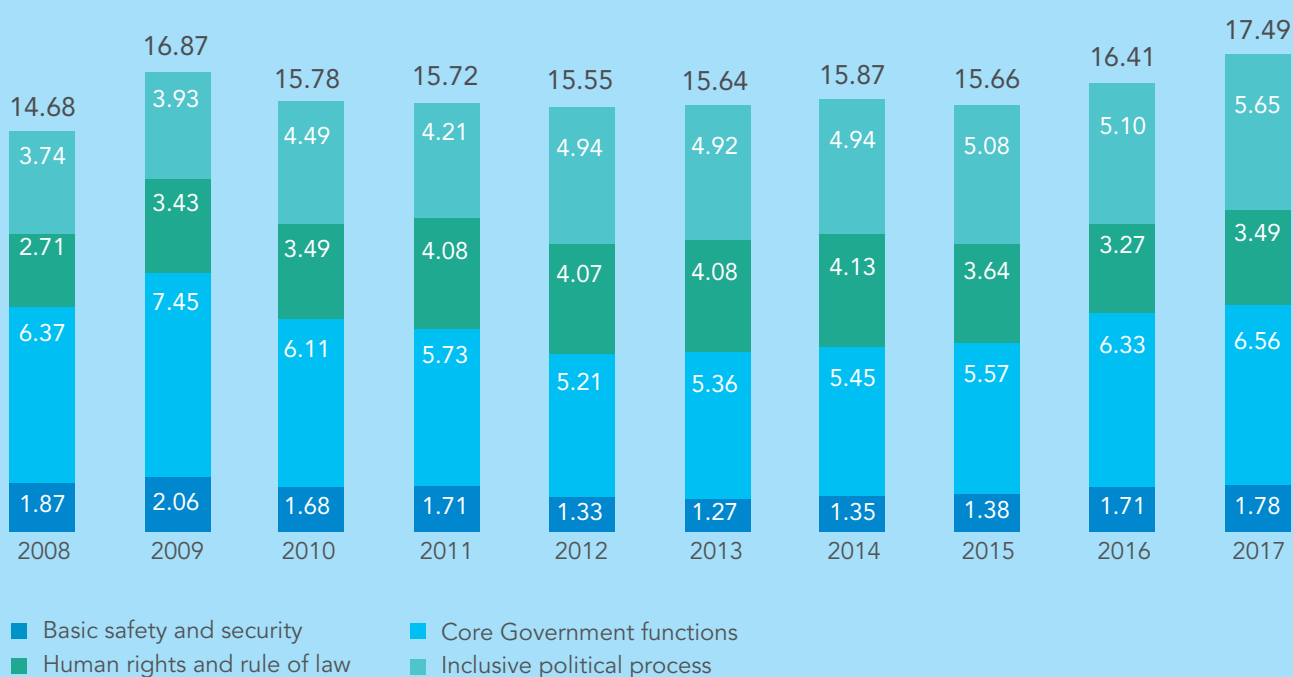
## Assessing progress



Official development assistance (ODA) can be used as a proxy for assessing support for peacebuilding. In 2017, the decline in ODA to conflict-affected countries (as a proportion of total ODA) stopped for the first time in a decade. Since 2015, ODA for peacebuilding-related activities has hovered at around 10 per cent of overall ODA, largely due to investments in inclusive political processes and core government functions. However, investment in basic safety and security, and the rule of law and human rights remains limited.

While ODA is an important measure of investments in stability, it is more difficult to assess the impacts on human suffering. The Sustainable Development Goals indicator for conflict-related deaths (Indicator 16.1.2) may provide insights into progress over time. However, to gain a more complete picture, any assessment of collective progress would also have to examine global trends in areas such as the number and types of conflict, forced displacement and conflict risks.

### DISTRIBUTION OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR PEACEBUILDING (US\$ BILLIONS)



Source: Analysis provided by the Peacebuilding Support Office, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, using data from OECD Stat Creditor Reporting System.