DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

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Background Information

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus was adopted by the DAC at its Senior Level Meeting on 22 February 2019. At the centre of strengthening the coherence between humanitarian, development and peace efforts, is the aim of effectively reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities, supporting prevention efforts and thus, shifting from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need. This will be critical in reducing the humanitarian caseload, and ensuring that we meet our collective pledge of "leaving no-one behind". This requires the engagement of a diverse range of actors, based on their respective comparative advantage, a shared understanding of risk and vulnerability and an approach that prioritises 'prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary'. This approach should also be supported by the right kind of financing, drawing from diverse funding sources to ensure that the right resources are in the right place at the right time.

A global call for strengthened policy and operational coherence

The DAC Recommendation was developed in response to the call for strengthened policy and operational coherence by humanitarian, development and peace actors, reflecting commitments across key global frameworks including Agenda 2030, the Sustaining Peace resolutions and Agenda for Humanity, among others.

In 2016, USD 68.2 billion or 65.5% of total earmarked ODA was spent in fragile contexts, compared to USD 35.8 billion spent in non-fragile contexts. However, and in despite of efforts by OECD Members, in 2016 more countries were experiencing violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. *States of Fragility*, an OECD publication, estimates that nearly half of the 836 million people living in extreme poverty today live in fragile contexts and this will rise to 80% by 2030. Additionally, the number of globally displaced has reached over 65 million; almost double that of 20 years ago. As such, funding for humanitarian action is being outstripped by growing needs, and close to 90% of humanitarian aid is now going to protracted crises.

An inclusive process for developing the DAC Recommendation

Recognising these challenges, the DAC committed to more comprehensive and coherent approaches to humanitarian-development and peace actions during its 2017 High Level meeting through INCAF, the DAC's subsidiary network on conflict and fragility, and at the 2017 Director Level meeting. Likewise, the DAC High Level Roundtable held in November 2018 on "Operationalising the nexus: Principles and approaches for strengthening and accelerating humanitarian, development and peace coherence," and brought together over 100 senior representatives from OECD Members, the multilateral system and civil society. It built on significant efforts made by the DAC and INCAF, over the previous two years to develop stronger policy frameworks and operationalise coherent actions across the 'nexus.'

Building more complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace actions

The DAC Recommendation aims to provide Adherents with a comprehensive framework that can incentivise and implement more collaborative and complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations. It provides a common set of eleven principles to guide and support Adherents, in their capacity as donors, development cooperation actors and stakeholders in the international community. The DAC Recommendation also aims to strengthen coordination, programming and financing to address risks and vulnerabilities, strengthen prevention efforts and reduce need in order to ensure that we reach the furthest behind.

OECD-DAC members in particular are key 'shareholders' in the multilateral system, and vital humanitarian and development actors in their own right. While the multilateral system delivers around 80% of humanitarian assistance in fragile contexts, the majority of development assistance in these contexts—77%—is channeled through bilateral mechanisms. As such, a more coherent and coordinated effort that strengthens complementarity across the 'nexus' must involve a central role for OECD-DAC members in their collaboration with the multilateral system. A common set of principles– this 'DAC Recommendation'– can help to guide and support this collaboration, and build a common

approach across OECD-DAC members, non-OECD DAC members and other organisations that become Adherents to the Recommendation.

INCAF will monitor the implementation and report to the DAC no later than five years following the adoption of the DAC Recommendation.

Dissemination of the DAC Recommendation

Since its adoption, the DAC Recommendation has seen a growing number of UN agencies adhere. This represents an opportunity for better and joined-up engagement in fragile contexts by enhancing operational and normative coherence between bilateral and multilateral actors. In recognition of this important step forward, senior officials of the DAC and the United Nations met on 6 October 2020 for the high-level "Partnership for Peace" roundtable. During the event, Adherents discussed how to strengthen their partnerships in fragile contexts to improve collective efforts to end need, sustain peace and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As a conclusion to the event, an Outcome Document was adopted, through which DAC members and UN Adherents expressed their support for "the DAC's inclusion of UN Adherents to the DAC Recommendation in discussions to review progress, highlight remaining gaps and share learning […] through a working group of DAC-UN Adherents, facilitated by INCAF".

The flyer is available at this link.

THE OECD DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE (DAC),

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council on Good Institutional Practices in Promoting Policy Coherence for Development [OECD/LEGAL/0380];

HAVING REGARD to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations resolutions on Sustaining Peace [General Assembly Resolution 70/262 and Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016)], the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Agenda for Humanity, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, the Paris agreement on climate change, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (appended to General Assembly Resolution 71/1), the Stockholm Declaration on Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World, the OECD Fragile States Principles and the Women, Peace and Security agenda, among other texts;

RECOGNISING that fragility, crises and violent conflict risk undermining global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and increase humanitarian needs;

RECOGNISING also that in recent years, more countries have experienced some form of violent conflict than at any time in the past 30 years, and that these crises and violent conflicts are increasingly complex, oftentimes transnational, recurrent, at risk of protraction and can be exacerbated by environmental degradation and climate change;

RECOGNISING the evidence presented in *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* which should be systematically addressed by OECD Members; instability generated by recurrent political, economic, and social crises along with protracted violent conflict, often with transnational repercussions, are all contributing to increased humanitarian needs and unprecedented levels of forced displacement;

HAVING REGARD to the World Humanitarian Summit's call for increased coordination and cooperation between actors working in crisis and conflict affected contexts and further noting the work accomplished through, inter alia, the Grand Bargain, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and other initiatives in putting these recommendations into practice;

RECOGNISING the Core Commitment of the World Humanitarian Summit on a new way of working that meets people's immediate humanitarian needs, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years through the achievement of collective outcomes;

RECOGNISING the centrality of sustained political dialogue and conflict prevention efforts, as well as engagement and leadership for resolving violent conflicts, through both political agreements that end crises in the short-term and fair and inclusive political systems that deliver equitable development and lasting peace in the long-term, as well as the importance of ensuring humanitarian access through diplomatic efforts;

RECOGNISING that all actors within their respective roles and mandates should strive to make a positive contribution to prevent armed conflict and violence, promote sustainable peace in line also with United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions and international law, at a minimum, adopt a 'do no harm' and conflict sensitive approach;

NOTING that a significant proportion of populations living in fragile and conflict affected contexts or situations, as well as those marginalised or impacted by violence and crises or forcibly displaced are at significant risk, in an era when all UN Member States pledged, in the 2030 Agenda, that no-one would be left behind;

RECOGNISING the need to strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity across the respective mandates of humanitarian, development and peace actors, at all levels, as well as the need to promote

simultaneous engagement and shared responsibility to reduce the likelihood and impact of recurrent and protracted crises by attending to immediate and critical needs of forcibly displaced or otherwise negatively affected populations, reducing chronic vulnerabilities, structural challenges and the risks to sustained peace, whilst being conflict sensitive and doing no harm to the establishment of humanitarian space;

RECOGNISING that engagement in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus should be context-specific, based on respective mandates, governing principles and modes of action and on stakeholders' comparative advantage, common, or shared, multi-stakeholder analysis, shared planning and the common pursuit of collective outcomes;

RECOGNISING that humanitarian assistance is provided in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, the relevant provisions of International Humanitarian Law and the general principles of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, as well as provisions of international law;

RECOGNISING that the principles of effective development cooperation, which call for ownership of development priorities by developing countries, a focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, transparency and mutual accountability;

RECOGNISING the primary responsibility of the state for the well-being and protection of its population, for preventing conflict and for shaping a country's path toward sustainable development, as well as the role of affected societies and local communities in achieving collective outcomes;

RECOGNISING that some contexts may be conducive to greater alignment of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding planning and programming than others;

RECOGNISING ALSO the importance of preserving distinct humanitarian coordination structures and of protecting the space for principled humanitarian action;

NOTING the contribution of DAC members as key 'shareholders' in the multilateral system, as humanitarian actors, and as development actors that deliver a considerable proportion of their Official Development Assistance through bilateral programming in fragile contexts;

RECOGNISING that greater coherence and coordinated efforts by humanitarian, development and peace actors contributing to collective outcomes in crisis and conflict affected contexts are more effective, and further, that structural and transformative development and peacebuilding are often possible and necessary to achieve lasting peace and avoid the occurrence of humanitarian needs, but are often under-resourced in protracted crisis and conflict contexts;

RECOGNISING the value that a common set of principles can bring to guide the approach of DAC members and non-DAC members having adhered to this Recommendation (hereafter the "Adherents") in their capacity as donors, cross-government and international community stakeholders, to implement and support more effective and coherent humanitarian, development and peace efforts – particularly in fragile and conflict contexts, and in recurrent and protracted crises.

I.   **AGREES** that, for the purpose of the present Recommendation, the following definitions are used:

- Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions.

- Nexus approach refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.

- Collective outcome refers to a commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce

people's unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict.

- Comparative advantage refers to the demonstrated capacity and expertise (not limited solely to a mandate) of one individual, group or institution to meet needs.

- Joined-up refers to the coherent and complementary coordination, programming and financing of humanitarian, development and peace actions that are based on shared risk-informed and gender-sensitive analysis; while ensuring that humanitarian action always remains needs-based and principled.

II.   AGREES that the purpose of this Recommendation is to provide Adherents with a comprehensive framework that can support, incentivise and implement more collaborative, coherent and complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict affected situations and to meet our international and regional commitments in this area;

III.   RECOMMENDS that Adherents better **COORDINATE** across the nexus. To that effect, Adherents should:

1.   Undertake **joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict**, as well as positive factors of resilience and the identification of collective outcomes incorporating humanitarian, development and peace actions, by providing:

   a.   Support for joined-up humanitarian, development and peace planning and programming on the basis of a joined-up or joint multi-stakeholder analysis of the risks, needs, vulnerabilities and root causes of conflict for the context, as well as indigenous capacities including for conflict and dispute resolution, utilising data and/or qualitative analysis that has been collected in a transparent fashion, including by:

      i.   Supporting the convening of affected populations, local community stakeholders and authorities, multilateral partners, civil society, development finance institutions (DFIs) and bilateral donors;

      ii.   Identifying country specific collective outcomes to which different stakeholders can contribute, while operating according to their respective mandates and objectives. These collective outcomes should be simple, focused and measurable; and

      iii.   Respecting humanitarian principles, so that humanitarian action is impartial, neutral, and independent from political, economic, military and other objectives. Ensuring also that humanitarian access to people in need is safe, unhindered and is not compromised.

2.   Provide **appropriate resourcing to empower leadership** for cost-effective coordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture, by:

   a.   Supporting local and national authorities, including legitimate non-state authorities, wherever possible and appropriate and in accordance with international law, so as to provide leadership of coherent humanitarian, development and peace actions, while ensuring that humanitarian principles are respected and upheld and development cooperation objectives are maintained;

   b.   Supporting and empowering appropriate UN leadership, in particular UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, through appropriate financing to the United Nations system and through the appropriate use of political influence and the necessary diplomatic approaches;

   c.   Incentivising efficient and effective collective efforts at global, regional, national and local levels through established bodies and existing humanitarian, development, peace coordination mechanisms. Preferably, these will be led by internationally recognised national authorities and, where necessary, bring in neutral conveners to support such collective efforts;

d.   Incentivising partnership with multilateral development banks (MDBs), including the World Bank, which plays an increasingly strong role in contexts affected by fragility, conflict and violence; and

e.   Incentivising joined-up approaches and the rational use of resources to gain efficiencies and facilitate informal exchange between actors across the different pillars.

3.   Utilise **political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches** at all levels to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace, by:

a.   Striving to ensure that diplomatic, stabilisation and civilian security interventions are joined-up and coherent with humanitarian, development and peace outcomes, while respecting humanitarian principles and ensuring humanitarian access to people in need is protected;

b.   Identifying appropriate opportunities to leverage political influence and strengthen capacity to support conflict prevention, humanitarian access and outcomes, peacebuilding and conflict resolution through the greater use of diplomatic, mediation, and dialogue tools and resources, including at national level and with national governments; and

c.   Recognising that decisions should be grounded in an understanding of how power is distributed and used, as well as legal considerations, including the relevant provisions of international law, noting that all interventions affect political dynamics and that the political situation will determine both whether interventions can succeed and how these should be tailored for greatest impact.

IV.   RECOMMENDS that Adherents better **PROGRAMME** within the nexus. To that effect, Adherents should:

1.   Prioritise **prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, investing in development whenever possible**, while ensuring immediate humanitarian needs continue to be met, by:

a.   Increasing support for prevention, mediation and peacebuilding and early recovery, with a view to decreasing the risk of violent conflict, disasters and crises that generate humanitarian needs and undermine development;

b.   Considering, when possible and appropriate, how joined-up programming can more effectively address the root causes and structural drivers of conflict. This includes making a positive contribution to voice, access and rights, social cohesion, trust between state and society and to inclusive and meaningful political dialogue, fairer power structures, economic development and legitimate and effective institutions. Humanitarian action should remain needs-based and in accordance with humanitarian principles;

c.   Incentivising development and peace actors to identify ways to focus on structural drivers that will eventually reduce humanitarian needs and enable humanitarian actors to withdraw gradually as local capacities develop;

d.   Incentivising all actors to transparently identify the needs they aim to address and work collectively to set out the actions and indicators required to reduce humanitarian needs over time, including by supporting collective outcomes to transfer service delivery to non-humanitarian providers and/or local and state institutions over time as conditions permit;

e.   Thinking and acting beyond the government, recognising that while effective and legitimate state institutions are important, significant capacity and sources of resilience lie within communities and civil society; and

f.   Thinking and acting across borders, recognising that the drivers of humanitarian crises, violent conflict and fragility often cut across borders and that country-centric analysis, political/diplomatic action and programming may be limited in impact.

2.   Put **people at the centre**, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality, by:

a.   Setting in place mechanisms to ensure accountability to the people being assisted and strengthening transparency, voice and participation, as a critical element of improving collective outcomes;

b.   Providing opportunities to affected populations to identify their immediate needs and articulate the risks, vulnerabilities and unmet needs that affect them and their own efforts to become more resilient, in particular for excluded or marginalised members of the community, including youth. Affected populations are also well placed to identify the root causes and structural drivers of recurrent crises, protracted conflict and the risk of atrocities. Recognising this, joined-up programming will seek to:

   i.   Ensure an inclusive, people-centred approach in all crises and violent conflicts that respects international human rights principles and standards;

   ii.   Address conflict risks by tackling exclusion, persecution and injustice, promoting gender equality wherever possible as standard good practice; and

   iii.   Actively support the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including through ensuring a focus on gender equality and women's leadership across humanitarian, development and peace actions as essential elements in achieving sustainable progress.

3.   Ensure that activities **do no harm**, are **conflict sensitive** to avoid unintended negative consequences and maximise positive effects across humanitarian, development and peace actions, by:

a.   Ensuring that all interventions are, at a minimum, conflict sensitive in that they draw on a suitable analysis of the conflict context, understand the interaction between the intervention and the context, and act upon this understanding to minimise negative impacts and, where possible and appropriate, maximise positive impacts;

b.   Striving to ensure that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding is designed and delivered in a gender sensitive way, based on a suitable gender analysis and on an informed understanding of risks of exploitation, abuse, and do no harm;

c.   Supporting collective efforts towards understanding and measuring the impact of Official Development Assistance and other peacebuilding measures on political and conflict economies, conflict dynamics, social cohesion, exclusion, resilience, services and markets, and local accountability chains, with a view to reducing negative unintended consequences of external intervention; and

d.   Ensuring that the process of developing joined-up or collective approaches does not impair the flexibility and rapidity of the humanitarian response. Humanitarian assistance should always remain focused on the needs of the beneficiaries (needs-based approach). In order for humanitarian actors to access people in need, neutral and impartial delivery of such assistance is critical. The respect of humanitarian principles should therefore be guaranteed, in order to ensure that humanitarian actors can, as far as possible, operate effectively.

4.   Align **joined-up programming with the risk environment**, by:

a.   Ensuring that joined-up development, peace and humanitarian programming is risk-focused, flexible and avoids fragmentation through context-adaptable programming, including through:

   i.   Designing longer-term development and peacebuilding programming that is flexible and adaptable to future risks and that incentivises partners to remain present in crisis situations;

   ii.   Recognising that peacebuilding and development efforts should be risk tolerant and address root causes of conflict and crises, including in active conflict contexts;

iii.   Supporting opportunities for joint horizon scanning, early warning and risk monitoring as a preventive measure;

iv.   Ensuring that humanitarian assistance is adaptive and contributes, where appropriate, to conditions that are suitable for taking up development efforts, including by supporting community resilience building activities;

v.   Strengthening the impact of programming for, and proximity to, crisis affected communities, including through the greater use of technology for digital engagement where appropriate; and

vi.   Ensuring a flexible approach in terms of working with institutions in fragile or transitional contexts.

5.   Strengthen **national and local capacities**, by:

a.   Investing in partners' capacity to stay and deliver, to better analyse the context and manage risks, including where appropriate:

i.   Prioritising funding to local organisations that are already present when crises occur; which are usually first responders and have specialised knowledge and skills; and

ii.   Incentivising international actors, particularly those with capabilities across humanitarian, development and peace actions, to also invest in local capacities and ensure that, wherever possible, local actors are an integral part of their response with the ultimate goal to gradually end dependence on humanitarian assistance by fostering self-reliance and resilience;

b.   Where appropriate, prioritising working with local and international partners who have the flexibility to adapt programming as the context changes and will sustain their engagement until local capabilities are sufficient to ensure people's survival, dignity, security and human rights.

6.   Invest in **learning and evidence** across humanitarian, development and peace actions, by:

a.   Investing in joint learning efforts across humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in sectors and thematic areas of common interest (e.g. health/nutrition, education, protection/peacebuilding etc.). Where the evidence of what works is weak, programmes and monitoring should be designed in a manner that is adaptive and promotes iteration and learning; and

b.   Promoting best practice and innovative approaches in data collection, management and sharing – including the disaggregation of data by sex, age, disability recognising that this can support more complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions, while also providing guidance and clarity on data protection and ensuring transparency and accountability of data management.

V.   **RECOMMENDS** that Adherents deliver better **FINANCING** across the nexus. To that effect, Adherents should:

1.   Develop **evidence-based humanitarian, development and peace financing strategies** at global, regional, national and local levels, with effective layering and sequencing of the most appropriate financing flows, which may include:

a.   Working at a global level with multilateral partners, IFIs, governments, the private sector and civil society focused on countries most at risk of recurrent and protracted crises, with a view to identifying and closing financing gaps;

b.   At a country level, working with governments, the United Nations Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator, multilateral partners, IFIs, the private sector and civil society to establish multi-year financing strategies with a view to support collective outcomes;

c. Seeking to align resources as closely as possible to needs, risks and vulnerabilities and root causes of conflict to support prevention, preparedness and early action, and avoid significant fluctuations in funding that could destabilise communities or countries; and

d. Using Official Development Assistance as a catalyst to mobilise the full range of financial flows, including public and private international and domestic financial flows, ensuring that diverse financial flows do not contribute to conflict, inequality or instability.

2. Use **predictable, flexible, multi-year financing** wherever possible, which may involve:

a. Identifying financing mechanisms that bring together humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders where possible and appropriate and that promote opportunities for private sector engagement;

b. Striving to ensure that financing is informed by joint analysis and where possible and appropriate, supports greater coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actions;

c. Aligning financing with agreed collective outcomes where appropriate – while recognising that humanitarian, development and peace actions may have priorities that also fall outside of collective outcomes; and

d. Seeking the availability of flexible funding in the different pillars to ensure a better use of allocated resources in response to priority needs.

VI. **INVITES** the Secretary-General to disseminate this DAC Recommendation.

VII. **INVITES** Adherents to disseminate this DAC Recommendation, particularly throughout their development, humanitarian and peacebuilding agencies and respective partners.

VIII. **INVITES** non-Adherents to take account of and adhere to this DAC Recommendation.

IX. **ENCOURAGES** relevant non-governmental organisations to disseminate and follow this DAC Recommendation in their approach to the nexus; and

X. **INSTRUCTS** the International Network on Conflict and Fragility to:

a. Serve as a forum to exchange information on experiences with respect to the implementation of this DAC Recommendation;

b. Monitor the implementation of this DAC Recommendation within existing mechanisms;

c. Report thereon to the DAC no later than five years following the adoption of this DAC Recommendation and every ten years thereafter.

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- **Declarations and Other Substantive Outcome Documents**: OECD legal instruments which are prepared within the Organisation, generally within a subsidiary body, and are not legally binding. They are adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character.

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