DFID

# Building Stability Framework

## 2016

**FINAL VERSION**

This framework provides evidence-based guidance about how UK aid can help build stability, to meet the commitments set out in the 2015 Strategic Defence & Security Review and the UK Aid Strategy. It describes how aid can best help communities, states and regions to make the long transition from fragility to stability. It is primarily intended to inform DFID's business planning and programming but should also be helpful to other departments as part of the UK's broader efforts to support global peace and security.

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# Executive Summary

1. **Tackling conflict and building stability overseas is both in the UK's national interest and underpins the global fight against extreme poverty.** Violence and conflict is turning back the clock on development, causing terrible suffering, and fuelling the refugee crisis in Europe. The UK cannot sit back and wait for international problems to arrive on our shores. As a global and outward-looking nation, the Government has committed to confront these challenges head-on to build a safer world.

2. **As part of the UK's response to these challenges, DFID is increasingly working in the most fragile places.** The 2015 Strategic Defence & Security Review and our recent development reviews make clear DFID's central role in addressing the great challenges of our time, including mass migration, modern slavery, disease and terrorism. We have promised to spend at least half of DFID's budget in fragile states and regions in every year of this Parliament.

3. **We recognise though that the achievement of development results is by itself insufficient to reduce instability and violence in fragile countries and regions.** Rather, we need to make different choices to help countries and communities to manage change peacefully. This framework provides a means to make such choices across all our programmes, not just those we label as establishing security or building peace. Everything DFID does should contribute where possible to global stability and national security.

4. **This framework sets out five building blocks that drive long-term stability, informed by evidence and experience of what works:**
   i. **Fair power structures** that broaden inclusion, accountability and transparency over time, while managing tensions to prevent violence in the short term.
   ii. **Inclusive economic development** which creates widespread benefits, reduces incentives for conflict and curbs illicit economies.
   iii. **Conflict resolution mechanisms**, both formal and informal, that help manage conflict, help people cope with the legacies of violent conflict and strengthen women's role.
   iv. **Effective and legitimate institutions,** both state and non-state, that build trust with those they govern, and which grow in effectiveness over time.
   v. **A supportive regional environment** that enables communities to be more resilient to transnational stresses and shocks, including organised crime and violent extremist ideologies.

5. **Implementing this framework, as part of the UK Government's integrated approach to stability, requires five shifts in the way we currently deliver aid programmes and policies:**
   a. **Put politics first.** Building stability is a political process. Every decision we make has therefore to be grounded in an understanding of how power is distributed, used and perceived.
   b. **Think and act beyond the state.** The stability of countries is often most threatened by transnational pressures, and most underpinned by the resilience of communities.
   c. **See stability through the whole portfolio.** This requires not standalone projects but a coherent strategy to address the drivers of conflict, and to manage trade-offs between aims.
   d. **Be flexible enough to manage risk and return.** We need the right instruments to take advantage of opportunities, and to be explicit about the risks we take in pursuing results.
   e. **Put the right people in the right places.** Making the right decisions needs the right expertise, networks and partners to provide a granular understanding of the realities on the ground.

6. **This framework covers a spectrum of fragility and should be used by DFID offices and departments as a practical "handrail" to develop strategies and programmes as part of a wider UK approach.** In very fragile places its relevance may be obvious; elsewhere, it can help to address risks of future conflict. It should also help other UK spending departments. Further guidance notes, such as those from the Stabilisation Unit, provide more sector-specific details.

# 1. Introduction: a changing context of conflict and development

## Policy context

7.        **The 2016 Bilateral and Multilateral Development Reviews commit DFID to focusing our aid where the need is greatest, expanding our work in the Middle East, the Sahel and Africa's "Arc of Instability".** Over 50% of all DFID spending will go to fragile states and regions in every year of the current Parliament, changing the lives of millions of people in the world's most challenging places. Our aid budget has a crucial role to play in building global security and stability, and in supporting the universal goals of peace and justice.

8.        **That commitment is in line with the UK's 2015 [Strategic Defence and Security Review](.)** The SDSR sets out how building stability requires a patient, long-term approach with strong local, national and regional partnerships. The UK is committed to "help to address the causes of conflict through increased support for tackling corruption, promoting good governance, developing security and justice, and creating jobs and economic opportunity". The 2015 [UK Aid Strategy](.) makes the case that tackling conflict is essential both for poverty reduction and for the UK's national interests.

9.        **The new [UN Global Goals](.), to which the UK is fully committed, recognise that development cannot be realised without peace and security.** Meeting our promise to [Leave No One Behind](.) requires a focus on stability and on the most excluded groups. Goal 16 recognises the importance of peace, justice and inclusive institutions for long term stability. The UK supports the [New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States](.) as a foundation to achieve the Goals in even the most difficult places.

## Global challenges, conflict and development

10.        **The last 25 years have seen remarkable progress towards poverty reduction alongside a steady decline in global conflict**. For most of the period since the end of the Cold War, levels of global violence decreased. The total number of ongoing armed conflicts fell from 51 in 1992 to 37 in 2010, the year the world reached the MDG target of halving extreme poverty.[1]

11.        **However, recent conflict trends threaten development gains.** There has been an uptick in global conflict in recent years, particularly in those places with a history of violence.  This has taken various forms: growing intra-state conflicts where another state supports one of the parties, often resulting in more deadly and prolonged violence;[2]  an increase in the number of non-state armed actors;[3] a steep increase in violent extremism and terrorism;[4] a growth in violence related to organised crime;[5] and a significant rise in violent protest, bolstered by technological connectivity.[6]

12.        **The factors driving violent instability are changing.** State authority is increasingly challenged by ideology, extremism, illicit flows, new technology, transnational shocks (climatic, economic, pandemics) and the integration of criminal and political actors. Trends which may have positive global implications, including urbanisation, youth bulges and the growth of middle classes, often cause acute pressures for fragile states.[7] The exclusion of groups from the process of development can make countries vulnerable to conflict and increase the appeal of extremist narratives.[8]

13.        **The human consequences are stark.** Conflict and violence are leading causes of the migration that is uprooting lives and causing suffering throughout the world. They slow the development of institutions, degrade public and private investment, and constrain the future prospects of the poor. Middle income countries in the Middle East and North Africa are at risk of slipping back into poverty. Fragile and conflict-affected countries typically have the highest poverty rates[9] and highest gender inequality levels.[10] Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile countries, challenging our existing aid models.[11]

## 2. DFID's Stability Framework: a "handrail" for better choices

### Why a new framework?

14.     **This framework has been developed to help DFID take the right decisions to have the greatest impact on stability**. The UK has committed to spend at least half of DFID's budget in fragile states and regions in every year of this Parliament. The highest development returns may lie in the long-term foundations for a future free of violence, rather than in those immediate gains which remain critically vulnerable to being destroyed by conflict.

15.     **We now have an opportunity to ensure that all our efforts have a real impact on building stability – as a development objective alongside ending extreme poverty.** We already support programmes dedicated to peacebuilding, state-building and conflict reduction, and have led reforms in the international system to focus on fragile states.  The framework can help DFID do more and better: it provides evidence that long-term investment in fragile states and regions can help to build stability as well as end poverty; but that achieving this outcome requires considering a different set of choices and issues.

16.     **The framework aims to be a practical "handrail" for decision-makers.** It can be used by DFID offices and departments to develop strategies, programmes and influencing approaches. It should also help other UK departments spending Official Development Assistance (ODA), including through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).  Other UK Government policies and guidance notes provide more sector- or intervention-specific details.[12] The UK Approach to Stabilisation provides a basis for immediate responses before, during or immediately after conflict – where prioritising the immediate reduction of violence may require a trade-off with building longer-term stability.

### Stability and the role of development

17.     **Aid can help to build long-term stability.** Well-designed development programmes can make people feel safer, help put in place accessible systems to resolve conflicts peacefully, give people a credible economic stake in a future without violence, and strengthen the bonds between communities, their governments and their businesses. But each of these needs a careful choice about how aid resources are invested: stability is not a by-product of other interventions.

18.     **Building stability requires a long-term approach to helping communities, states and regions develop by managing conflict and change peacefully.** Stability is frequently confused with short-term security, for example ending a violent uprising. However, the absence of violent conflict does not necessarily mean that lasting stability has been achieved. Short-term security, where grievances remain unaddressed, can store up trouble for the longer term. Building stability is sometimes also considered to refer only to external interventions: but peace requires the emergence of political arrangements that cannot be imposed from the outside (although a range of external support may help to facilitate a cessation of hostilities).

19.     **Stability depends on actions at several levels.** It requires functional national states; but is built also from people with resilient local communities and businesses, and a regional and global community that addresses transnational issues. An effective approach for external intervention is one which engages at each of these levels where relevant, underpinned by regular context analysis.

20.     **Evidence and experience show that our development assistance can have the greatest impact through focusing on five "building blocks"**, set out in this framework. These building blocks offer a lens that teams can use to make sure that our assistance coherently tackles the political, social and economic exclusion which underpins conflict and the risk of violence. We do not seek to

impose template answers on how these issues should be addressed, or the combination of interventions which will be right for different contexts. These are decisions which must be taken locally, with strong reference to local circumstances, and based on up-to-date context analysis.

## Making better programming choices

21.     **This framework is an evolution, not a radical departure, from DFID's peace-building and state-building approach.**[13] A stocktake of the evidence shows that the main objectives of this approach are still right in principle, but that we need to address them more systemically through all our policies and programmes.[14] We need for example to adapt the objectives to pay more attention to *economic development*, find new ways of addressing *transnational factors*, and not assume that all *service delivery* programmes automatically contribute to stability.

22.     **We can support stability through programmes which also deliver other development results.** But doing so effectively will require conscious choices: targeting beneficiary groups most vulnerable to conflict, focusing on excluded regions, or selecting delivery mechanisms which best support a political strategy. In programming for stability, the best value for money will not always be the cheapest or quickest option available. Choices might be very different in a context where immediate stabilisation is needed, compared to one where long-term stability is a feasible aim.

23.     **Increasing our impact on building stability also requires investment in areas more specific to fragile states and regions.** These might include improving the ability of security providers to meet the needs of the population, or supporting processes to deal with legacies of mass violence. Many of these require coordinated approaches across government: DFID's expertise can help ensure these bring about the long-term transformations needed to reduce vulnerability to violence, taking into account political, economic and social factors.

## Helping to achieve UK policy priorities

24.     **The evidence and analysis set out here can help DFID and other departments achieve a wider range of policy aims related to the causes and consequences of conflict, including:**
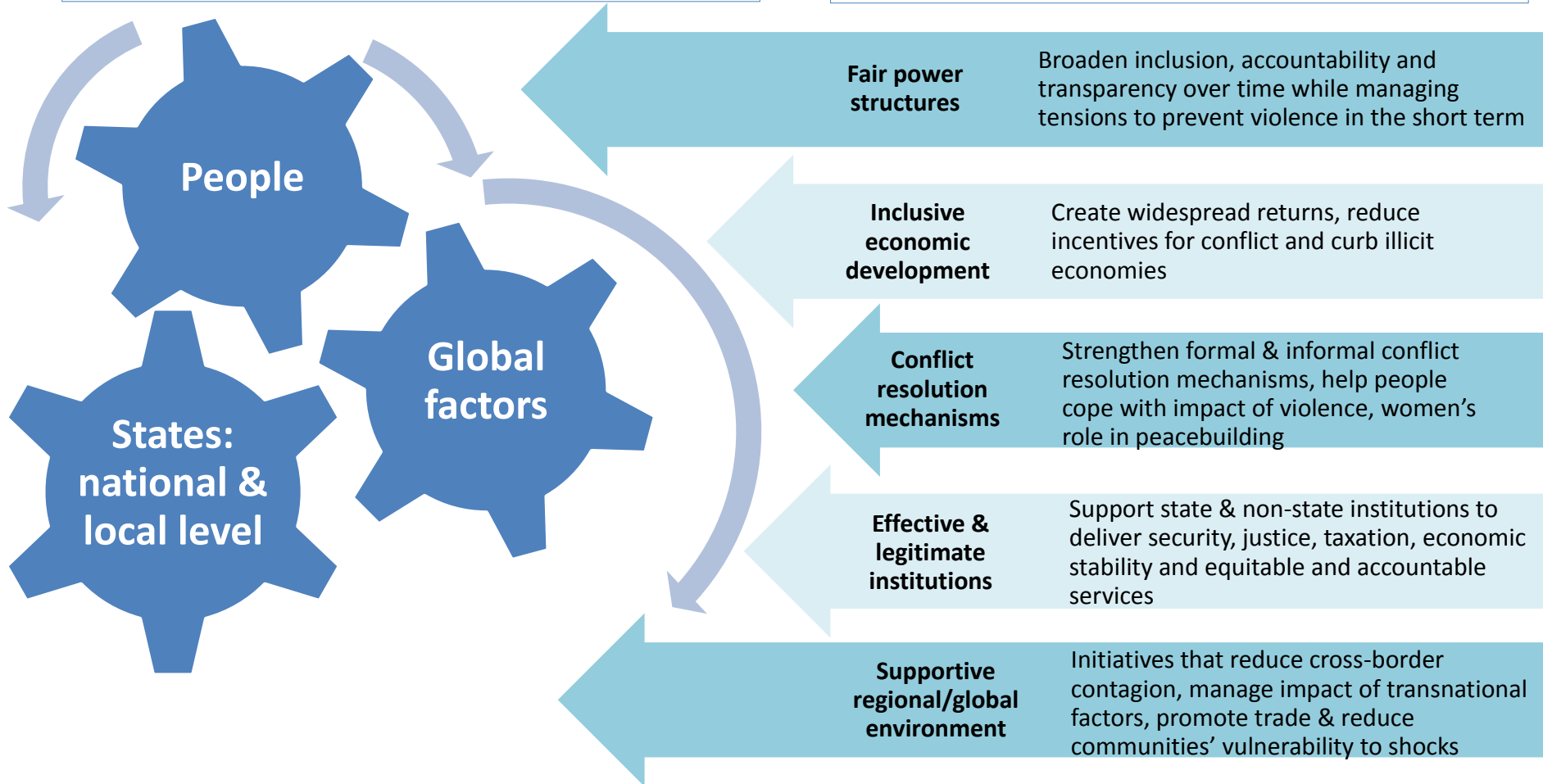
- **Addressing the root causes of migration.** The framework helps to confront the challenges of irregular migration at all levels: addressing root causes locally, helping host countries cope with the pressures of displacement, and improving global responses to protect the vulnerable.

- **Eliminating modern slavery.** The framework provides a basis to respond to transnational factors which affect stability – including the human trafficking often associated with modern slavery.

- **Confronting transnational organised crime around the world.** The recognition that organised crime drives instability is leading DFID to scale up our response, alongside other UK departments, in priority countries including Pakistan, Nigeria and the Horn of Africa.

- **Maintaining international leadership for women and girls in conflict and crisis.** As well as addressing the *needs* of girls and women in crises, the framework focuses on women's roles in the *solutions* to conflict: through strengthening political participation, seizing opportunities to reflect women's perspectives in peace processes, and addressing inequality.

- **Tackling extremism and terrorism.** DFID's evolving approach is based on addressing the drivers of extremism, violent extremism and terrorism as a facet of our work on building stability, in support of the UK objectives in CONTEST.

**2.0 The Building Stability Framework**



Long-term stability: communities, states and regions are able to develop, and manage conflict and change peacefully

**Levels of analysis & response**

**Building blocks**

People

States: national & local level

Global factors

| Fair power structures | Broaden inclusion, accountability and transparency over time while managing tensions to prevent violence in the short term |
| --- | --- |
| Inclusive economic development | Create widespread returns, reduce incentives for conflict and curb illicit economies |
| Conflict resolution mechanisms | Strengthen formal & informal conflict resolution mechanisms, help people cope with impact of violence, women's role in peacebuilding |
| Effective & legitimate institutions | Support state & non-state institutions to deliver security, justice, taxation, economic stability and equitable and accountable services |
| Supportive regional/global environment | Initiatives that reduce cross-border contagion, manage impact of transnational factors, promote trade & reduce communities' vulnerability to shocks |

## 2.1 Building block 1: Fair power structures

### Why is this important?

25.      **Countries and communities are more stable when different groups are included fairly within the structures of power.** Violent conflict is more likely in deeply divided societies, with political, social and economic inequalities between different groups which can be manipulated by elites.[15] Countries with high levels of gender disparity are more likely to experience violence.[16] Building stability is above all a deeply political process of moving from exclusion and inequality towards open institutions which can manage change peacefully; and towards a way of distributing and exercising power which is accepted in the long run by both elites and wider communities.

### What do we know about what works?

26.      **There is evidence that, in the short term, power-sharing arrangements which include the elites of different groups can reduce the likelihood of conflict and promote stability.** Immediate stability in post-conflict contexts may depend on the existence of local or national political coalitions – often temporary – which include those groups who could otherwise undermine the peace.[17] Rivalries over access to resources among elites in South Sudan caused a return to violence in 2013 after independence in 2011 and an end to more than 20 years of civil war.

27.      **Over the long term, countries with more inclusive and open political and economic institutions have been far more successful in promoting growth and stable development**.[18] A failure to widen political inclusion beyond elites can undermine stability later on.[19] In Lebanon, the political system formally divides power across the main confessional groups but it struggles to adjust to demographic changes and to meet demands for better services. The transition from divided societies and weak institutions towards greater stability is a long term process towards fairer power structures and more inclusive politics. It is not always peaceful, and countries can fall back into conflict periodically.[20] External engagement can undermine as well as support prospects for peace.

28.      **A range of political reforms can help to accelerate progress towards fair and open institutions, including for women and girls.** At moments of transition, aid can support peace negotiations, constitutional reforms, elections or decentralisation. At other times, influencing and coalition building may help elites recognise the long-term benefits of greater inclusion. Support for the political participation of excluded groups, more representative local councils or political parties, quality media and civil society can open up new avenues for voice.[21] Indirectly, greater inclusion in economic activity or service delivery can alter the distribution of power and support peace.[22]

### What are the implications for policy and programmes?

29.      **Supporting fairer power structures and inclusive institutions is a very long-term agenda.** It is not just about a single event - a peace negotiation or election. Interventions may face reversals as well as successes. External actors need to stay committed over the long term.

30.      **External actors must consider how their strategies interact with local politics to promote inclusive processes or outcomes.** Realism is needed. They have limited scope to deliberately influence change in underlying power structures. They can do harm, in reinforcing the status quo.

31.      **Interventions should help broaden inclusion, voice, accountability and transparency over time** while managing tensions with what may be needed to prevent violence in the short term.  This includes addressing growing restrictions on civil society and media.

32.      **Programmes should systematically address the exclusion of women and girls from economic, social and political structures of power.** This requires fully understanding their actual and potential roles as active agents for change, not just as passive victims of violence or exploitation.

## Questions for decision-makers

How is power distributed and used, between different groups, at local, national and regional levels, and beneath the surface of formal institutions? Which groups are most excluded from power and may use violence?

What type of political inclusion is most likely to reduce the risks of violence in the short and long term? Which groups in society: elites, or wider constituencies such as women or the poorest?

What is the impact of all our interventions on the incentives of those elites and groups who have a stake in sustaining violence or unfair power structures?



### In practice: Nepal – inclusive transition

Launched in the middle of an armed conflict, DFID's Enabling State Programme (2001-13) adjusted over time to support the political transition and tackle severe exclusion of marginalised groups who face higher rates of poverty, with women worse off across all groups. Through a flexible and politically-informed approach and working with a broad range of partner organisations, the programme contributed to more inclusive constitution-making, and achieved that key public institutions integrated gender equality and social inclusion into their policies and programmes, as well as progress on gender-based violence, community mediation and the right to information. This directly benefitted more than 2 million people across Nepal and contributed to improved state-society relations.
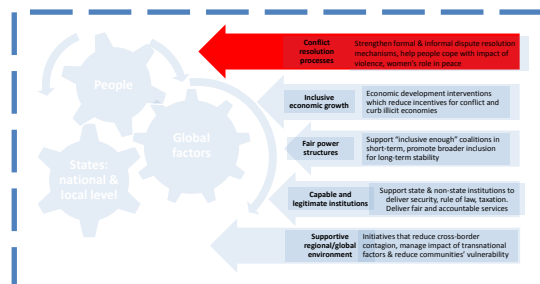
### In practice: Yemen - beyond inclusion

The Gulf Cooperation Council initiative was brokered in 2011 to resolve the crisis arising from Yemen's 'Arab Spring' moment. Power transferred to the vice-president, a national reconciliation government was formed, and an election was held. Donors supported these processes.

But Yemeni citizens widely believed that the international community was focused on stable short term elite bargains and security at the expense of meeting the deeper demands of young people for political, economic and social empowerment. The government struggled with elements of its development and economic reform agendas. Frustration grew and was capitalised on by rival parties; the transition collapsed.

Any future transition needs an enabling context which includes common agreement on the aim of a secure, peaceable and prosperous Yemen, including marginalised groups, youth, rural populations and women. It will need visible international support for long-term reform as well as short-term security.

## Additional resources

DFID/CHASE Evidence Synthesis Note on Fair Power Structures
DFID (2016) How to Note on Parties and Parliaments
Stabilisation Unit (forthcoming) In Pursuit of the Political Deal
DFID (2009) Political Economy Analysis Smart Guide
Rocha Menocal (2015) Political Settlements and the Politics of Inclusion
GSDRC (2015) Gender and Conflict Topic Guide

## 2.2 Building block 2: Inclusive economic development

### Why is this important?

33.      **Countries and communities are more stable when the economy is growing and the benefits are felt by different groups.** Economic exclusion can worsen grievances which fuel violent conflict, especially when combined with other group inequalities.[23] Conversely, a civil conflict costs a developing country an average of 30 years of growth.[24] Getting to broad-based, diversified economic development often means changing incentives to invest returns in the most productive sectors.[25] This is essential during transitions from war to peace, when war economies can sustain violence.

34.      **The stakes are significant and so are the opportunities.** Over the next decade a billion more young people will enter the job market, mainly in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.[26] If provided with economic opportunities they will have a vested interest in peace and stability. But exclusion from the benefits of growth risks increasing both pressures to migrate and the causes of future conflict.

### What do we know about what works?

35.      **Sustainable employment and livelihood creation can promote social stability, especially through capital-centric programmes and by investing in labour-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture.**[27]   While skills training and microfinance have shown little impact on poverty or stability, injections of cash, capital goods, or livestock can stimulate self-employment and raise long term earning potential.[28] By targeting at-risk populations they may provide alternatives to crime and violence, but this is not automatic and only as part of broader strategies.[29]

36.      **Strong regional trade and financial integration can reduce the intensity and duration of conflict** by increasing growth and political stability. Increased cooperation amongst economic decision-makers across countries can help establish economic interdependence and trusting relations within and across borders.[30] It also creates a financial incentive for peace.

37.      **Curbing illicit economies and reducing corruption need to be part of a successful strategy**. Organised criminals and violent extremists profit from war and political instability. They collude with corrupt political leaders who use the illicit revenue to sustain their political power. Oil, gas and mining sectors are in particular vulnerable to corruption and account for a high proportion of GDP in many fragile states. Better management of natural resources, and diversification of the economy away from these sectors, can reduce the rent-seeking that holds countries back.[31]

### What are the implications for policy and programmes?

38.      **Pursue smart implementation of DFID's economic development strategy, tailored to different levels, types and drivers of fragility**.[32] In protracted crises, integrating employment opportunities into a humanitarian response lays the foundation for future economic development. In highly fragile contexts DFID should be realistic about what is achievable and consider the impact on conflict in programme design. As stability improves, economic development can reinforce this.

39.      **Directly target the economic exclusion of certain groups or regions, and focus on interventions that can help build trust.** Marginalised communities and regions need to gain equitably from economic investments; don't assume stability benefits if not explicitly targeted. Access to land tenure security can improve both citizens-state trust and economic outcomes.

40.      **Better connect governance, peacebuilding and economic development programmes to understand and manage trade-offs**. Economic development is shaped by the distribution of power and resources. It is disruptive and creates new winners and losers. Our approach needs to be tuned to the challenges of politics, and fit into a wider and consistent portfolio of interventions.

## Questions for decision-makers

Are we ensuring that our economic development interventions are grounded in a robust context specific diagnostic and focused on the opportunities that they bring to reduce conflict dynamics and are they are helping build the legitimacy of critical institutions?

In seeking to create jobs, are we also benefiting the most vulnerable and those prone to violence? Are our interventions to provide economic opportunity, aligned with political and social support?

Are we prepared to undertake programmes in the face of substantial elite resistance, e.g. on private sector reform? If not, what are the alternatives? If so, are they designed to work with the grain?



### Economic development in a crisis: providing opportunities for displaced populations

Jordan has assumed a heavy burden through hosting refugees from the conflict in Syria, which has imposed severe stress on its economy and host communities. A new paradigm to promote economic development is needed both for Jordanians and refugees.

The 2016 Syria Conference established a new approach to support Jordan's growth agenda while maintaining stability. This included improved EU market access, creating jobs for Jordanians and refugees while supporting the post-conflict Syrian economy. It enabled Syrian refugees to apply for work permits and set up new businesses.
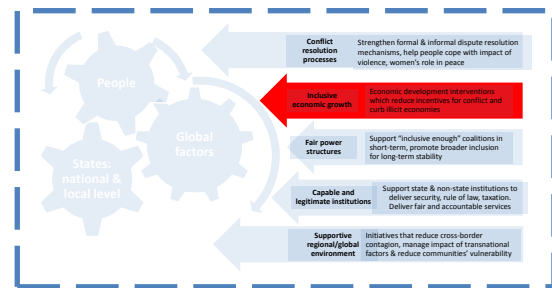
### DFID's Economic Development Strategy: working for stability, peace and security

*"We will build opportunities for economic development in the most difficult environments, helping tackle the causes of instability, insecurity and conflict.*

This includes supporting economic diversification beyond sectors such as oil, gas and mining which can worsen fragility. We will continue to promote stability through regional trade. The TradeMark East Africa programme, for example, supports trade across the East African Community - including fragile states - by developing infrastructure and reducing red tape. Our approach seeks to address incentives for conflict and violence and to curb economies built around narcotics, smuggling and trafficking. This includes helping address economic grievances; promoting job creation and private sector activity with a vested interest in stability."

### Additional resources

DFID/CHASE (2016) Evidence Synthesis Note on Inclusive Economic Development

DFID (2016 - forthcoming) Economic Development Strategy: prosperity, poverty and meeting global challenges

## 2.3 Building block 3: Conflict resolution mechanisms

### Why is this important?

41. **Communities, countries and regions are more stable when they have effective mechanisms in place to resolve conflicts peacefully.** This makes them more resilient to shocks, and able to break cycles of violence. 90% of conflicts occur in countries that have already experienced a civil war. How a country deals with conflict, and how it eventually finds peace, determine its long term prospects for shaping healthy relations between different groups.

### What do we know about what works?

42. *Prior to the escalation of violence*, **early warning** and **resilience building** can reduce violence at a local level. **Citizens' diplomacy and dialogue initiatives** (youth dialogue, inter-faith forums, cross-border trade[33]) can reinforce stability, especially if linked to more formal peace processes.[34]

43. *When violence threatens to escalate or has fully erupted*, external interventions need to support initiatives aimed at **stabilisation**, in particular a cessation of violence:
- **International mediation** can help secure a cease-fire, but mediation efforts should consider a wide range of issues and actors[35] and be buttressed by a longer-term **peace process**.[36]
- **International peacekeeping** operations can reduce the risk of conflict restarting. They need a robust enforcement mandate, a sufficient budget and sufficient forces.[37] But they require careful monitoring for unintended consequences: in some cases the presence of peacekeepers has increased levels of violence from rebel groups targeting civilians.[38]

44. *Stabilisation* is one approach which may be used before, during and after conflict to bring about some form of political deal in a pressured and violent context. Stabilisation activities can have a profound influence on the success of longer term development activities.

45. *In the aftermath of violent conflict*, **reconciliation initiatives** can help societies avoid falling back into violence. They can help address historical grievances, change attitudes that led to conflict, help people coping with the effects of conflict, and rebuild foundations for peaceful relationships between groups. Predictable support for these complex processes can help build trust over years:
- **Truth telling processes,** where victims recount violence and perpetrators seek forgiveness, can strengthen social cohesion. But they may also increase victims' sense of trauma and create a need for additional forms of support.[39]
- **Community reconciliation** and **healing processes** can help communities to build peace. But they need to be linked to other existing initiatives to help survivors cope in everyday life.[40]

### What are the implications for policy and programmes?

46. **Support for conflict resolution requires a sustained engagement at multiple levels, and solid local expertise.** Ill-equipped and insufficiently trained actors can do more harm than good.

47. **Efforts to address underlying causes of conflicts still require adversaries to stop using violence.**[41] An integrated, locally appropriate strategy is required: not standalone interventions.

48. **Conflict resolution mechanisms are more effective when women can influence processes.** There is good evidence that meaningfully including women leads to more sustainable outcomes.[42]
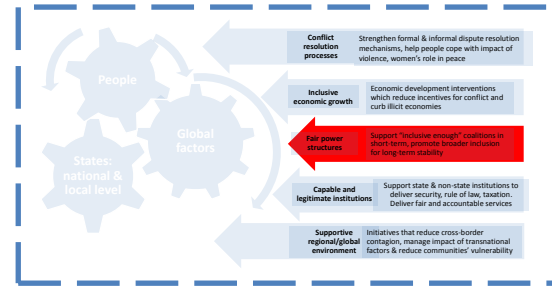
49. **Conflict resolution mechanisms need to be appropriate for the context in which they operate**. There are no universally applicable models. And they need to take full account of local politics – without the commitment of those with power, mechanisms are unlikely to be successful.[43]

## Questions for decision-makers

Do we have a good grasp of local, national and regional conflict resolution mechanisms and their capacity to deal with given drivers of instability and disputes prone to turn violent?

Are UK and wider international efforts to support conflict resolution sufficiently co-ordinated and adapted to local conflict and process requirements?

Does our wider portfolio in health, education and other sectors address specific needs of survivors of violence, and help strengthen peaceful conflict resolution capacities?

**In practice: Central African Republic**

In 2013, Conciliation Resources set up Local Peace Committees (LPC) in Bangui, but also remote hotspots in CAR. The work of the LPCs contributed to early warning detection of potential conflict, a reduction in frequency of violence and it increased the capacity of local and national structures to better respond to conflict. The effectiveness of this initiative is partially attributed to the LPCs serving as an interface structure between government, community leaders and CSOs to set up early warning mechanisms and address conflict in synergy.



**UK Approach to Stabilisation**

Stabilisation is one of the approaches used in situations of violent conflict which is designed to protect and promote legitimate political authority, using a combination of integrated civilian and military actions to protect people, reduce violence, re-establish security and prepare for longer-term recovery by building an enabling environment for structural stability.

**In practice: Supporting peace on multiple levels in Nepal**

The Asia Foundation has facilitated safe space for dialogue between political parties on a national level while implementing mediation programmes at the sub-national and local levels. This has helped prevent conflicts from escalating through resolving over 10,000 conflicts in 5 years.

## Additional resources

DFID/CHASE (2016) Evidence Synthesis Note on Conflict Resolution Processes
Stabilisation Unit (2014) The UK Government Approach to Stabilisation
USIP- Preventing Violent conflict framework toolkit
The Asia Foundation- Working Politically in Practice Series, Case Study No.4
Why Women: Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies, Inclusive Security
UNDP – Why dialogue matters for conflict prevention and peacebuilding
Domingo, P et al. (2013) Assessment of the evidence of links between gender equality, peacebuilding and statebuilding. London: ODI.

## 2.4 Building block 4: Effective and legitimate institutions

### Why is this important?

50.      **Countries and communities are more stable when they are governed by legitimate public authorities whose power is widely accepted and which meet people's priorities.**  Legitimate and effective institutions can reduce violence, overcome social divisions, improve relations between citizens and the state, and manage change peacefully. Conversely, corruption undermines service delivery and reduces public trust.[44] Legitimacy is shaped not only by authorities' capacity and the processes through which they relate to the population, but also by local norms, beliefs, historical grievances and expectations that change over time.[45] State-building remains a crucial element for long term stability. But it must be about more than reinforcing central state institutions' capacity to govern – such interventions need to start with the question "how can we help to build trust".

### What do we know about what works?

51.      **Stability requires improved delivery of core state functions: security, justice and the rule of law, and financial and macroeconomic management**.[46] And it requires looking beyond the central state to consider other state and non-state actors down to the local level, such as municipalities or civil society. Identifying which institutions matter most, and how they are perceived, requires a solid understanding of elites' priorities and people's expectations.

52.      **Improving the quality of and access to security and justice** can directly reduce the risk of violent conflict and fragility, for example through more capable and accountable security forces. It can also improve legitimacy when the state is seen to help resolve disputes fairly, fight corruption or prevent violence against women and girls.[47]

53.      **Sound financial and economic management**, such as by a Central Bank or Ministry of Finance, contributes to stability by providing the resources to sustain the state, deliver services and enable economic activity. More effective and fairer taxation can improve administrative capacity as well as state-society relations.[48]

54.      **Fair access to basic services can contribute to stability, but there is no automatic link to greater state legitimacy.** More equitable access to health or water can help address grievances that fuelled violence. Better quality education can promote a sense of inclusive national identity. What works to improve legitimacy depends on changing public expectations and the state's willingness to address inequality. Equal access and accountability may matter more than quality alone.[49]

55.      **Helping citizens' voices be heard, ensuring authorities are accountable to those they serve, and championing a respect for human rights, can improve legitimacy across all these dimensions.** The perception of fair and transparent processes and inclusion often matters more for stability than the actual distribution of benefits.[50]

### What are the implications for policy and programmes?

56.      **Development programmes to strengthen institutions in fragile states need to consider above all what will help build trust between people and authorities.** They need to understand elite incentives and local perceptions of legitimacy and be able to adjust to unpredictable changes. Sustainable and effective institutional reform processes take at least 15 to 30 years—a generation—and are subject to reversals.[51]

57.      **Reforms need to be prioritised and sequenced, and improve relations between state and society.** Many fragile states do not have the capacity to manage change on several fronts at the same time.  Support should focus on tangible improvements in a few sectors rather than attempting to change too much at once.

## Questions for decision-makers

How can programmes improve the relationship between the state and citizens at the local and national level, according to different groups in society?

Could there be more attention to equity, fair processes and people's perceptions of the state to improve legitimacy through basic services programmes?

How can external actors address failings in security, justice and rule of law and/or financial and economic management that may drive or exacerbate fragility?
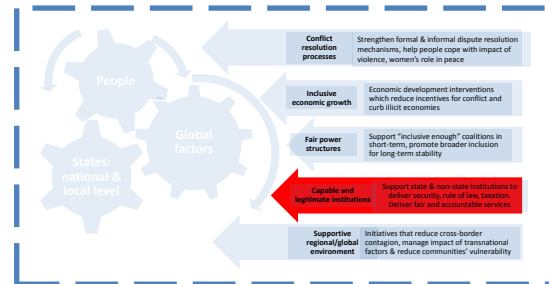


### In practice: Lebanon – service delivery

Lebanon is host to over a million Syrian refugees, a quarter of its population. In some villages refugees outnumber the locals. Public services, already poor before the crisis, are severely strained. Initially, humanitarian aid only targeted refugees. This increased tensions with host communities.

To support stability, DFID is funding a UNDP programme to improve municipal service delivery. Given the complex links between services, social cohesion and legitimacy, DFID is investing in ongoing evaluation and action research. Evidence shows there is more trust in municipalities when there are open channels of communication.

### In practice: Pakistan – policy coherence

In Pakistan the UK Government is scaling up its rule of law assistance based on a Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability. The FCO, MOD, Home Office, NCA and DFID implement the programme through a single platform managed by DFID.

Outcomes will focus on improved performance of police investigations and prosecutions and strategic coordination of internal security policy. The intention is to support greater government ownership of rule of law as well as build foundations for UK-Pakistan operational cooperation on threats such as terrorism.

## Additional resources

DFID/CHASE (2016) Evidence Synthesis Note on Effective and Legitimate Institutions

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## 2.5 Building block 5: Supportive regional environment

### Why is this important?

58.     **Countries and communities are more stable when they are able to benefit from external opportunities and peacefully manage regional threats and shocks**[52]. Conversely, fragile states are particularly vulnerable to transnational threats. Violent extremist and terrorist ideologies, transnational organised crime, illicit financial flows and international corruption challenge the stability of both state and regional-level institutions. Climate change is a "threat multiplier", accelerating pressures on fragile states and challenging their capacity to manage change.

59.     **A country's regional environment can reinforce or undermine its stability**[53]. Migratory and refugee flows can generate instability and trigger conflict as they increase competition over resources and economic opportunities. Arms flows are a significant predictor of conflict risk. In contrast, regional integration, trade bloc accession and the diffusion of institutional norms through regional organisations can be powerful stabilising factors.

### What do we know about what works?

60.     **International interventions can support conflict-affected countries by shaping the regional environment and helping them better manage the impact of transnational threats internally.**
- **"Think local, act global":** Development assistance can be at the centre of efforts that shape global or regional responses. The 2016 Syria Conference has put in place regional models to enable Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey better to meet the needs of Syrian refugees. Development assistance has supported successful international or regional initiatives such as the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala which is prosecuting senior politicians.

- **"Think global, act local":** Development actors can design targeted interventions which enable vulnerable groups or communities to build resilience, reduce vulnerabilities and mitigate the harm of transnational threats. A range of DFID's work on climate change supports states to prepare integrated adaptation plans and implement climate resilience-building initiatives.

- **Make the best of the UK:** Development choices should consider how wider UK policy impacts on these regional and international factors, such as making tax more transparent and tackling corruption. Collaboration across UK government departments and agencies is vital, for example coordination with the FCO on peace support operations or with the Metropolitan and City police to seize in the UK assets illegally acquired in conflict zones.

61.     **Regional conflict management mechanisms can address the spread of conflict.** ECOWAS helped to bring an end to conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the early 1990s and has subsequently helped to maintain peace in West Africa.[54] The lack of a similar conflict management mechanism resulted in the 1996 civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo spreading to nine countries, causing 5.4 million deaths and displacing millions.[55]

### What are the implications for policy and programmes?

62.     **A regional and multi-country analysis of conflict is needed.** Development agencies and government departments face challenges in working beyond the level of the state: this is likely to be inadequate in understanding regionally complex drivers of fragility.
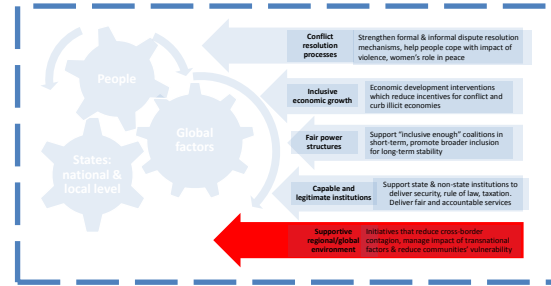
63.     **Only a cross UK government and interdisciplinary approach can provide solutions.** Development actors cannot tackle these issues alone. Combined political, diplomatic and security approaches will be essential, usually with a joint strategy at headquarters and in country.

## Questions for decision-makers

Have we fully incorporated regional and transnational issues into our analysis of fragility?

Have we established an appropriate multi-agency, multi-departmental approach to address the transnational and regional issues which are identified in that analysis?

Can emerging, innovative development approaches to transnational issues on (e.g.) organised crime (including human smuggling and organised immigration crime) be applied in new contexts to address these risks?



### Burma: a regional perspective

Burma has suffered from decades of conflict. Ethnic armed groups fight with the government for rights and autonomy, but also for control over the illicit jade, timber and drugs businesses. DFID and the FCO have tried to foster peace-building through supporting negotiations, creating a multi-donor Joint Peace Fund and backing women's involvement in peace talks.

But external drivers of conflict are extremely powerful. Neighbouring countries provide markets for illegal trade (e.g. $30 billion of mostly illicit jade export), shelter for armed groups, supply arms, and facilitate money laundering. We need to complement our efforts in Burma by addressing these drivers—with the help of FCO and others.

### In practice: a cross-government response to transnational organised crime

Criminal networks in the Horn of Africa have facilitated the large recent spike in the number of people being smuggled into Europe. Addressing this phenomenon will require an integrated approach bringing together law enforcement, diplomatic action and development capacities across countries.

As a first step, the UK' Home Office, National Crime Agency, FCO and DFID are working together to better understand how the smuggling networks operate, and what enables and protects this trade. This analysis will help the UK and other important regional actors like the African Union and the European Union identify entry points to disrupt the trade, protect vulnerable people and support the capacities of institutions in origin and transit countries.

This is an innovative approach informed by a new analysis-to-response framework on organised crime and development by the [Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.](#)

## Additional resources

- DFID/CHASE (2016) Evidence Synthesis Note on Supportive Regional Environment
- Global Initiative (2016) Development Responses to Organised Crime
- de Boer, John and Bosetti, L. (2015) The Crime-Conflict "Nexus"
- GSDRC (forthcoming) Topic Guide on Violent Extremism

## 3.  How DFID is changing to build stability

64.     **Implementing the framework successfully, and making the greatest possible contribution to our commitments on building stability, demands changes across DFID.** This section sets out how DFID's strategy is changing to increase our impact on stability in fragile states and regions; how we are putting in place the right tools, processes and incentives to be more effective on these issues– complementing the principles set out in DFID's Smart Rules; and a set of five shifts which can help make the greatest possible contribution towards UK efforts on stability.

### 3.1 DFID's strategy: changing what we spend, where and how

65.     **The Government has committed to spend at least 50% of DFID's budget in fragile states and regions in every year of the current Parliament.** This represents a major investment in global stability. Our assessment of state fragility is based on open data sources which measure economics, governance, conflict, human rights and demographics.  DFID will update the list of fragile states and regions regularly to reflect changes in this data.

66.     **We are increasing the proportion of DFID's spend which goes to the most fragile countries and regions on this list, particularly those which have the greatest impact on UK security.** This includes increasing funding to deal with causes and impacts of the Syrian crisis, and a new strategy to increase DFID's engagement across the Sahel region.

67.     **DFID's business plans in fragile states and regions for 2016-20 now set out how they will contribute to the SDSR commitment to build stability, including addressing violent extremism where relevant.** This includes both targeted interventions on conflict and security, and incorporating stability into wider programming choices across the DFID portfolio.

68.     **We are increasing our investment in research on conflict, and on how development interventions can address the root causes and drivers of fragility by a further £20 million by 2020.** This will respond to key issues raised in the SDSR such as transnational conflict drivers and enduring challenges in the Middle East.

69.     **DFID's investment in the evaluation of our programmes can provide a growing source of high quality evidence on how development interventions affect stability, both intentionally and unintentionally.** We are working to improve the quality of our evaluations in fragile states and regions and make sure they capture this type of assessment wherever possible.

70.     **We are committed to maximising the impact of the enlarged Conflict, Security & Stability Fund on tackling the root causes of conflict and fragility.** DFID is working with partner departments across the UK government to ensure that the CSSF can meet its full potential in preventing threats, building long-term stability, and responding to crises quickly and effectively.

71.     **DFID is using our influence across the UK government to ensure that National Security Council strategies for fragile states and regions take a long-term, patient approach to building stability.** The best strategies address not just the symptoms of conflict and instability but the underlying, root causes and give consideration to broader views of security. They should be based on a shared understanding of the causes and changing drivers of conflict across all parts of government.

72.     **We expect all our partners – including the multilateral development organisations to which the UK provides significant core funding – to adapt to a changing world in the same way as DFID.** They should focus efforts in the most fragile and challenging contexts, where global challenges are greatest and poverty declining most slowly. Recognising the different comparative advantage

brought by each organisation, they must consider how they can best make sure all they do helps build stability wherever possible.

73. **We are making sure that OECD aid rules fully reflect the importance of peace, stability and effective institutions for reducing global poverty.** For example, changes agreed by all OECD member states in 2016 mean that Official Development Assistance can now be used for appropriate military to military training, with adequate oversight and safeguards, on a limited list of activities, including the protection of women in conflict, human rights and rule of law, anti-corruption. The primary purpose of ODA has not changed: the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

## 3.2 Changing our approach: five shifts to implement the framework

74. **The changes in DFID's strategy set out above are necessary but not sufficient to become an organisation which can make the greatest possible contribution to UK efforts on building stability.** The remainder of this section identifies five shifts in DFID's approach, applicable at both country and central levels, which can help to implement this framework effectively.

| **Put politics first.** | Building stability is a political process. Every decision we make has to be grounded in an understanding of how power is distributed and used, and how far those arrangements are seen as legitimate. The political situation will determine both whether or not our interventions can succeed, and how we might tailor them for greatest impact. |
|---|---|
| | Our ability to contribute to positive change is most likely where our interests align with partner governments. But we can influence politics and change incentives by staying engaged as a trusted partner able to deliver critical messages and support reform. |
| | A good understanding of the political context and actors must inform decisions on how to implement the framework, shape strategy development and set priorities. This should be an ongoing, not just one off, process. Analytical tools, like the Joint Assessments of Conflict and Stability or Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostics, can help. DFID DRC has developed a standalone programme to provide analysis of the political dynamics and inform decisions on an ongoing basis. |
| **Think and act beyond the state.** | Stability requires functional national states, but is built from resilient communities and businesses, and must adapt to transnational pressures. |
| | National governments – including the UK – can face challenges in assessing and responding to regional, global and local issues, even when these may be at the heart of the challenges we are seeking to address. We can tackle this better through regional analysis of conflict, and coherent responses to cross-border issues. New work on illicit economies associated with human smuggling in the Horn of Africa is one example of how this can look. The North Africa JACS shows how regional analysis can help. |
| **See stability throughout the portfolio.** | Building stability is not about standalone projects but a coherent strategy to tackle the drivers of conflict – and a strategy which manages trade-offs between objectives. |
| | The right mix of interventions is essential: accepting the need to work in high-risk sector like security reform, and to focus on realistic objectives in |

| | difficult contexts. |
|---|---|
| | All our interventions should consider their impact on the causes and drivers of conflict and contribute to building stability. It is essential that we are conflict sensitive – that we systematically consider whether interventions may do harm: for example, pushing for peace deals or elections when the conditions are not right may lead to a fall back into violence. |
| | Addressing the root causes of conflict and building stability is DFID's core business. Advice and decisions about how best to meet these commitments, and how to use the framework set out here for best effect across spending portfolios, are best addressed through an interdisciplinary team rather than just by experts on conflict or governance. |
| | Teams need to be explicit about the risks and trade-offs involved in building stability. Tackling conflict and fragility means recognising that the best value for money will not always be the quickest or cheapest option available. Should we seek to influence the powerful, or support the vulnerable? There will be tensions between the building blocks. We should be explicit about the choices we make, and escalate these honestly wherever needed. |
| **Be flexible enough to manage risk and return.** | The right instruments can help take advantage of emerging opportunities and change course in volatile environments.<br><br>New approaches to flexible and adaptive programming can achieve difficult outcomes in challenging contexts. This may be particularly appropriate in contexts where the environment is changing rapidly, and in programmes where we are trying to deliver long-term transformative changes based on limited prior evidence. The Somalia Stability Fund is one example of a programme designed to seize opportunities and adapt to change, based on clear, independent and sustained political analysis.<br><br>Proactive risk management is essential when operating in fragile contexts where there can be reversals, unexpected improvements, or severe unintended consequences. A systematic approach will include monitoring identified and unanticipated risks such as sustaining exclusionary power arrangements, reinforcing social exclusion, contributing to human rights risks, or exacerbating resource scarcity. We need to be prepared to be honest about whether these risks are worth taking (and why), and to adapt our approach quickly when risks change. |
| **Put the right people in the right places.** | To make the right decisions we need the right expertise and networks to provide a granular understanding of the realities on the ground. That might be through DFID's own team, relationships across the UK government, or through our choice of implementing partners in programme governance.<br><br>Understanding and adapting to local realities needs local skills: people who speak the local languages, who have lived the local life, and who have a tacit understanding of the politics and realities of the place they are working. DFID can do more to develop these skills in our own staff, *and* can explore opportunities to bring such skills into our programming decisions from outside through the right partnerships and contracts. |

# 4. A checklist for decision makers

The set of questions in this checklist brings together those used earlier in the framework under each building block. It is neither comprehensive nor scientific, but intended as a prompt to discussion, challenge and analysis for those involved in development programming and planning. It can both help decision-makers make better decisions, and help others to hold decision makers to account.

## Principles for stability

- Do we have a detailed understanding of the drivers of conflict and conflict actors, shared with other government departments, upon which to base decision making?
- What are the priority "building blocks" to address, in what order, and how are they linked?
- How can development work with diplomatic, defence and domestic security counterparts to influence positive change?
- What are short- and long-term objectives? What does success look like in building stability? How should we prioritise using resources for quick results and for slower, more risky but transformative changes?
- Do we have a systematic approach to conflict sensitivity: analysing the interaction between conflict dynamics and our interventions to ensure that we 'do no harm'?

## Fair power structures

- How is power distributed and used, between different groups, at local, national and regional levels, and beneath the surface of formal institutions? Which groups are most excluded from power and may use violence?
- What type of political inclusion is most likely to reduce the risks of violence in the short and long term? Which groups in society: elites, or wider constituencies such as women or the poorest?
- What is the impact of all our interventions on the incentives of those elites and groups who have a stake in sustaining violence or unfair power structures?

## Inclusive economic development

- Are we ensuring that our economic development interventions are grounded in a robust context specific diagnostic and focused on the opportunities that they bring to reduce conflict dynamics and are they are helping build the legitimacy of critical institutions?
- In seeking to create jobs, are we also benefiting the most vulnerable and those prone to violence? Are our interventions to provide economic opportunity, aligned with political and social support?
- Are we prepared to undertake programmes in the face of substantial elite resistance, e.g. on private sector reform? If not, what are the alternatives? If so, are they designed to work with the grain?

## Conflict resolution mechanisms

- Do we have a good grasp of local, national and regional conflict resolution mechanisms and their capacity to deal with given drivers of instability and disputes prone to turn violent?
- Are UK and wider international efforts to support conflict resolution sufficiently co-ordinated and adapted to local conflict and process requirements?
- Does our wider portfolio in health, education and other sectors address specific needs of survivors of violence, and help strengthen peaceful conflict resolution capacities?

- Are we prepared to undertake programmes in the face of substantial elite resistance, e.g. on private sector reform? If not, what are the alternatives? If so, are they designed to work with the grain?

## Effective and legitimate institutions

- How can programmes improve the relationship between the state and citizens at the local and national level, according to different groups in society?
- Could there be more attention to equity, fair processes and people's perceptions of the state to improve legitimacy through basic services programmes?
- How can external actors address failings in security, justice and rule of law and/or financial and economic management that may drive or exacerbate fragility?

## Supportive regional and global environment

- Have we fully incorporated regional and transnational issues into our analysis of fragility?
- Have we established an appropriate multi-agency, multi-departmental approach to address the transnational and regional issues which are identified in that analysis?
- Can emerging, innovative development approaches to transnational issues on (e.g.) organised crime (including human smuggling and organised immigration crime) be applied in new contexts to address these risks?

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### Additional resources

Stabilisation Unit (2016) Conflict Sensitivity: Tools and Guidance

Stabilisation Unit (2012 – update forthcoming) JACS Guidance Note

Stabilisation Unit (forthcoming) Gender and Conflict Sensitivity Issues Note

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# Annex

## Selected bibliography

This bibliography provides a selection of the key pieces of research and analysis that have informed this framework.

**DFID evidence reviews and synthesis papers**

"A review of the evidence informing DFID's Building Peaceful States and Societies practice paper. Paper 1: Political Settlements, Peace Settlements and Inclusion". W Evans.

"Building Stability Evidence Synthesis: Transnational Factors". B Jinga: Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department.

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"Supporting Inclusive Political Settlements for Stability and Development - Case Studies". A Mulli: Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department.

"Building Stability Evidence Synthesis: Fair Power Structures". LH Piron: Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department.

"Building Stability Evidence Synthesis: Capable and Legitimate Institutions". LH Piron: Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department.

"Getting Real About Politics: a stocktake of how DFID has adopted a politically-informed approach (2010-2015)".  LH Piron.

"Building Stability Evidence Synthesis: Inclusive Economic Development". M A Rauf: Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department.

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**Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

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**Fair Power Structures**

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**Capable and Legitimate Institutions**

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