FAO’s contribution to sustaining peace

Corporate Framework to support sustainable peace in the context of Agenda 2030
“I encourage all UN entities to view sustaining peace as an important goal to which their work can contribute and to integrate the approach to sustaining peace into their global and country-specific strategic plans.”

UN Secretary-General
January 2018
Overview

Since its founding in 1945, FAO’s core work supporting food security, nutrition, poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture has helped to reduce the economic, political, social and environmental drivers of conflict.

The UN Secretary-General has made sustaining peace a priority focus across the UN system, building on the differing scope and focus of each organization’s mandate and work. At the same time, Agenda 2030 explicitly links sustainable development and peace and calls for improved collaboration on conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution and recovery.

Sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, including by addressing root causes and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development. Opportunities therefore exist for interventions in support of food security, nutrition and agricultural livelihoods to contribute to conflict prevention and sustaining peace, in order to address not only the symptoms but also the root causes of conflict. Major investments in rural development and agriculture should therefore be an integral part of peacebuilding efforts.

Through its work, FAO fosters social cohesion, generates peace dividends, reduces conflict drivers and builds the legitimacy and capacity of governments. For example, facilitating inter-community dialogue on land access in the contested Abyei Administrative Area between South Sudan and the Sudan.

2017 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World

After steadily declining for over a decade, chronic hunger appears to be on the rise, affecting 11 percent of the global population. Conflict and climate change are the major factors behind these rising levels of hunger.
Conflict is eroding development gains and is a major challenge to achieving a world without hunger and malnutrition by 2030. The drivers of conflict are wide ranging from geopolitical interests, control over resources, ethnic tensions, poor governance, limited state capacity, population pressure and rapid urbanization through to factors such as poverty and youth unemployment. Some conflict drivers specifically relate to FAO’s mandate and competencies, including those driven by competition over land, water and other natural resources, the multiple dimensions of food insecurity, government neglect of marginalized areas and environmental mismanagement.

The implications of conflict-induced food insecurity are not limited to specific countries or regions, but have global impacts. In 2015, over 65 million people were forcibly displaced, the majority experiencing protracted displacement. The proximate effects of conflicts are increasingly echoed across the global landscape as conflict-affected people migrate across and within countries, regions and continents.
In times of conflict and of stability, FAO plays a unique role in protecting, restoring and developing the livelihoods of farmers, fishers, herders, foresters and others who depend on agriculture and the natural resource environment for their livelihoods. The Organization’s efforts to both save lives and create long-term resilience are important contributions to peace and stability within countries, across regions and beyond.

FAO has developed considerable expertise in working in conflict-affected situations, from providing livelihoods support to save lives to using agricultural livelihoods as a means to engage local communities in contributing to peace. Through its mandate and by leveraging its core competencies, FAO has supported interventions to reduce economic, social, political, environmental *ex ante* and *ex post* drivers of conflict.

The agriculture sector can be an engine of stabilization and recovery for people living in fragile contexts. Investing in agriculture and local food systems provides people with a means to continue surviving – and an appearance of normality.

FAO is using its leadership role on food security and related issues to advocate for the importance of agriculture, food security and nutrition, safeguarding agricultural assets and sustainable development in contributing to sustaining peace. Since 2016, FAO together with the World Food Programme have regularly provided bi-annual briefings to the UN Security Council on food security in countries that it formally monitors. On 24 May 2018, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2417 (2018), explicitly acknowledging the link between conflict and hunger and calling on all partners to protect civilians including their means to produce or access food such as farms, markets, water systems, and modes of transport.

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**Global Report on Food Crises 2018**

Rising levels of acute hunger – requiring immediate life- and livelihood-saving support – can largely be attributed to new or intensified and protracted conflicts in a number of countries, as well as persistent drought which led to poor harvests in countries already facing high levels of food insecurity.

- **124 million** people in 51 countries faced acute hunger in 2017
- Almost **60%** were in areas affected by conflict and insecurity
- **74 million** people in 18 conflict-affected countries experienced acute hunger in 2017
- **39 million** people in 23 countries experienced acute hunger driven by climate disasters

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The Corporate Framework to support sustainable peace in the Context of Agenda 2030 is rooted in FAO’s mandate and informed by the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objective

Agriculture, natural resources and food security and nutrition can be a source of peace or conflict, of crisis or recovery, of tragedy or healing. Given this, the objective of the Framework is to guide FAO in its areas of competence and comparative advantage towards a more deliberate and transformative impact through:

- supporting the food security, food production and sustainable use of natural resources’ of conflict-affected populations
- where development is possible, notwithstanding conflict contexts, advancing progress on the SDGs through conflict-sensitive approaches
- where food systems, natural resources or food insecurity are drivers of conflict, working directly to reduce conflict risks.
Approach

The Framework rests on a conflict-sensitive and three-pronged approach aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of conflicts on people’s lives and livelihoods, preventing the risks of conflicts while promoting a transformative agenda to address the root causes of conflicts and promote sustainable development.

The Corporate Framework outlines how FAO works on, in and through conflicts to contribute to sustaining peace.

On conflict

Working on conflicts, FAO identifies ways to minimize, avoid, positively transform and resolve conflicts where food, agriculture or natural resources are (or have the potential to be) conflict drivers.

In conflicts

Working in conflicts, FAO seeks to save lives, enable people to remain in their communities, support displaced and host populations, address malnutrition, guard against environmental destruction, prevent sexual and gender-based violence, restore food production and protect food systems and build resilience.

Through conflicts

FAO also works through conflicts to advance sustainable development, including reducing poverty, addressing inequality, promoting sustainable agricultural livelihoods and natural resource management and doing so in a conflict-sensitive manner.
Deliverables

1. The integration of concepts, indicators, and lesson learning on contributing to sustainable peace, reflecting the central importance of gender and age across all five of FAO’s Strategic Objectives and across headquarters, regional and country offices.

2. A robust, flexibly financed global portfolio of engagements in sustaining peace with measurable results.

3. Improved evidence base and strengthened gender- and age-disaggregated monitoring systems that focus on the linkages between food security, nutrition and peace on the effectiveness of various approaches.

4. New coalitions, partnerships and leadership roles at country level and globally on supporting sustainable peace.

5. Demonstrated effective capacity and commitment to sustainable peace of all personnel to work on, in and through conflicts in a way which improves food security and nutrition and fosters agricultural development and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction for men and women.

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**FAO and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Alliance**

The FAO-Nobel Peace Laureates Alliance for Food Security and Peace was established by the FAO Director-General in May 2016 to enhance the role of food security in peacebuilding efforts, while ensuring that peacebuilding reinforces food security. The Alliance is an advocacy group of Nobel Peace Laureates that aims to contribute to creating the necessary political will to eradicate hunger within our generation and to build sustainable peace. It gives visibility to the work of the Organization in post-conflict countries in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Alliance is supporting FAO’s initiatives for food security in situations such as in the Central African Republic and Colombia, garnering political commitment for previously opposing factions to join forces to improve nutrition, access to food, local food systems, land tenure security or other contextually relevant aspects. At the same time, these efforts contribute to reduce the potential for conflict and instability.

With the support of FAO Members, the Alliance is raising awareness and championing global and country-level activities promoting the links between food security, agriculture-based livelihoods, natural resource management and peacebuilding, as well as highlighting FAO’s technical leadership in agricultural and food security policies and actions that promote peace, rural development and food security.

The FAO-Nobel Peace Laureates Alliance members are: Muhammad Yunus, Oscar Arias Sánchez, Tawakkol Karman, Betty Williams, Juan Manuel Santos, Frederik Willem de Klerk, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Jose Ramos-Horta and Mairead Maguire.
Conflicts are often at least partly driven by local issues, often around natural resources, which can play a decisive role in triggering violence, continued violence or relapses into violence. Food security and livelihoods support can address some of these conflict drivers; for example over land tenure and access, and natural resource management.

Pastoralists and people living on marginalized lands are often extremely vulnerable to hunger, with conflict and climate change exacerbating high levels of poverty and often decades of neglect. Across the Sahel today, for example, conflict exacerbated by drought has forced pastoralists to move their livestock along non-traditional transhumance routes, bringing them into potential conflict with settled farmers.

In such contexts, FAO is engaging with youth and providing viable income-earning opportunities to tackle hunger.
Horn of Africa

FAO and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) partnered to coordinate livestock activities in the Kenyan and Ugandan cross-border areas, facilitating peaceful livestock movement between the border areas of the two countries. This allowed Turkana pastoralists to escape the 2017 drought and move peacefully into Uganda to access grazing, reducing conflict incidence between the Turkana of Kenya and the Karamojong people of Uganda. The Governments of South Sudan and Ethiopia have both applied to IGAD to join this agreement from June 2018.

Abyei Administrative Area

An FAO intervention from July 2015 to June 2017 in the contested Abyei Administrative Area between the Sudan and South Sudan reduced the risk of natural resource-based conflicts and enhanced community resilience. Abyei Area is a grazing hub in which historically both the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya tribal communities interact, sharing natural resources such as grazing land and water. However, in recent years, natural resource use has been an increasing source of confrontation, leading to frequent outbreaks of violence between the communities. FAO identified a window of opportunity by providing community-based animal health veterinary services to both communities. This allowed wider resource use issues to be addressed. In June 2016, as a direct result of this work, a community-level peace agreement over natural resource use was signed between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok.
Women are often responsible for family food security and provide the majority of agricultural labour, and this is particularly acute in conflict-affected situations. Experience and evidence show that women are more likely to spend their incomes on food security, health care and education, thus making crucial contributions to post-conflict recovery. Food security interventions can also be an opportunity to address deeply entrenched gender inequalities and promote women’s economic empowerment, their right to land ownership and usage, as well as their participation in decision-making on natural resource management.

FAO uses the Dimitra Clubs, its flagship community-driven approach to enhance rural people’s empowerment and social cohesion for improved resilience, food security and nutrition. The Dimitra Clubs are spaces for dialogue and action at community level that enable their members – women, men and boys and girls – to discuss problems and needs, share concerns and take collective action to improve their living conditions, thus becoming agents of change and development both in agriculture and in important (and often sensitive) social aspects, such as HIV/AIDS, early marriage, social cohesion, gender equality and women’s rights to access resources.

Today, over 2,000 Dimitra Clubs accounting for about 60,000 members are a driver for promoting peace and fighting against gender-based violence in various countries of sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal). It is estimated that the clubs have a positive impact on more than 1.6 million people. Dimitra Clubs are integrated in many programmes developed jointly between FAO, WFP and UNICEF. The approach is increasingly used in protracted crises, with 1,000 new Dimitra Clubs being created in 2018 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Tanganyika, North and South Kivu, Kasai), Niger (Diffa refugee camps) and Mali (Mopti and San).
Resources


“Agriculture and food systems are badly affected by conflict and instability, but remain remarkably resilient. However, when these systems are lost, they are almost impossible to rebuild. FAO together with its partners including other UN agencies, works to provide food security and livelihood support in conflict situations.”

José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General