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# Basic guide to Peace in the Post-2015 development agenda

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## The pros and cons of including peace in the SDGs

**This document provides useful background information for all organisations and individuals engaged in peacebuilding who want to better understand how the post-2015 process relates to their work. This information can also be useful to those wishing to interact with their national governments, encouraging them to endorse a coherent and prevention-focused peacebuilding agenda in the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – be that in the form of a ‘peace goal’ or the inclusion of peacebuilding-related targets throughout other goals.**

In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals will expire and a new framework for international development will be launched. This new framework aims to be more comprehensive in its reach and incorporate a more holistic, long-term vision of development than the MDGs. It also aims to be more inclusive of ordinary people’s voices in the formulation of its priorities.

The set of values and goals upon which Member States will negotiate until a final agreement is reached by September 2015, have been established by the UN Secretary General in his report “**The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet**” launched in December 2014<sup>1</sup>. The report synthesizes where UN Member States’ have arrived so far in the drafting process (relying heavily on the Outcome Document produced by the Open Working Group<sup>2</sup>) and provides a vision for a holistic framework that addresses the structural causes of poverty, including by addressing some of the root causes of violence such as inequality, social exclusion, and abuse of basic human rights.

In his report the Secretary General recognized that during negotiations in the Open Working Group, Member States called for **strengthening effective, accountable, participatory and inclusive governance; for freedom of expression, information, and association; for fair justice systems; and for peaceful societies and personal security for all**. All of these are relevant to building peaceful societies. He also identified six priority areas and recommended that a goal tackling peaceful societies fall within them. The goal could reflect the one already articulated in the Outcome Document of the Open Working Group, **Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**.

<sup>1</sup> The Secretary General’s full report can be read here: [http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR\\_advance%20unedited\\_final.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR_advance%20unedited_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Open Working Group consists of 70 UN member states and was mandated to prepare a proposal on the post-2015 SDGs. After a 1,5 year process, the Open Working Group delivered its final outcome document, which forms the basis for the further negotiations on the SDGs. You can read the OWG proposal here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>



This is a great win for the peacebuilding community and sustainable development in general, as it stands to tackle vital issues related to human security for the first time. These issues have been clearly affecting millions of people around the world, as identified by the My World Survey (<http://data.myworld2015.org/>) and the work of many NGOs and individuals around the world, including those expressing their voices through GPPAC’s Human Security First Campaign (<http://www.humansecurityfirst.org/>). Despite this victory, the negotiation process is likely to be a tough one and there is still much to fight for, not least to get some of the key issues still missing from the agenda to be recognized and addressed. Issues such as: i) curbing illicit and irresponsible arms trade, ii) curbing the flow of other illicit commodities that fund violent groups, such as drugs, timber, diamonds and other extractive commodities, and iii) tackling the apparatuses that institutionally and financially support these groups, such as corruption and money laundering.

For those who would like to engage their national governments on supporting the inclusion of a meaningful goal on building peaceful societies in the post-2015 development agenda, and/or encourage other local partners to do so, below is a list of key arguments pro and against the

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inclusion of such a goal. It aims to build the confidence and background knowledge of those who want to advocate for a 'Peace Goal' but have begun to engage with the post-2015 process at a late stage.

Other key points and dates to look out for:

A draft of the final outcome document on the post 2015 development agenda shall be presented to member states in **May 2015** and it will be the basis for their intergovernmental negotiations. The result of these negotiations will form the political commitment and framework for action on global development for the next 15 years. This framework will be announced in **September 2015** during the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Ahead of the September 2015 announcement, the current session of the General Assembly will hold several High-Level meetings and debates on key subjects related to implementing a transformative post-2015 agenda.

1. 9-10 February 2015: High-Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post-2015 development agenda
2. 24 February 2015: High-level General Assembly Thematic Debate on "Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda"
3. 6 March 2015: Thematic Debate on Advancing Gender equality and empowerment of Women in the Post-2015 development agenda
4. 6 or 10 April 2015: High-Level Thematic Debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation
5. 15 May 2015: High-Level Thematic Debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations
6. 29 June 2015: High-Level Event on Climate Change
7. June 2015 (date to be determined): The Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment

Parallel to the thematic work of the General Assembly on post-2015, will be sessions held by co-facilitators of the post-2015 process in support of member states' negotiating process. These will have the following themes:

- 19-21 January 2015 [3 days]: Stocktaking
- 17-20 February 2015 [4 days]: Declaration
- 23-27 March 2015 [5 days]: Sustainable Development Goals and targets
- 20-24 April 2015 [5 days]: Means of Implementation and Global Partnership for Sustainable Development
- 18-22 May 2015 [5 days]: Follow up and review

- 22-25 June 2015 [4 days]: Intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome document
- 20-24 July 2015 and 27-31 July 2015 [10 days]: Intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome document.

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'PEACE GOAL' (SDG 16)	Arguments FOR	Arguments AGAINST
What are the <u>facts</u> linking poverty and violence/ conflict?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links between conflict and development have long been debated and were the main focus of the 2011 World Bank Report, 'Conflict, Security and Development.'<sup>3</sup> Breaking the cycle of violence was seen as a prerequisite to successful development.</li> <li>• In 2005: 20% of the world's poor lived in fragile states. In 2014: 50%+ of the world's poor live in fragile states.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• By 2015: Countries unlikely to meet a single MDG have all been affected by high levels of violence.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• By 2030: 75% of people living in extreme poverty will be living in countries at risk from high levels of violence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most devastating incidents of violence and conflicts around the world during the last decade have not been the direct result of poverty or underdevelopment, but the result of politically repressive regimes and/or geo-political interests.</li> <li>• As poverty and violence are intrinsically linked, if we tackle poverty meaningfully we will also achieve more peaceful societies.</li> </ul>
Are the negotiations for the Post-2015 development agenda the right <u>forum</u> in which to raise this issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about the SDGs has so far included many challenging aspects of the existing development framework, such as international financing, climate change and sustainable cities and agriculture. It is the right moment to also take-on the challenge of building safer, more peaceful and just societies as part of this general overhaul.</li> <li>• In the Rio+20 outcome document, 'The Future We Want,' peace and justice was mentioned once in paragraph 8: '<u>We also reaffirm the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for all human rights, including the right to development and the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food, the rule of law, gender equality, women's empowerment and the overall commitment to just and democratic societies for development.</u>'</li> <li>• The Panel of Eminent Persons mandated by the SG to make recommendations on the post-2015 process, said it should be guided by five transformative shifts, one of which was the inclusion of peacebuilding, and that one of the goals should be on ensuring peaceful and stable societies.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rio+20 outcome document, 'The Future We Want,'<sup>8</sup> sets out three pillars that would underpin the future SDGs, it did not include peace. The three pillars are: i) poverty eradication, ii) a green economy, iii) an international framework for sustainable development.</li> <li>• The SDGs will be the result of a multilateral process mandated by the UN General Assembly. Peace and Security issues are already dealt with at the UN Security Council.</li> <li>• Including peace and security related issues in a General Assembly text could allow the Security Council to comment on these issues and incrementally encroach in General Assembly matters.</li> <li>• The so-called 'peace goal' was one of the most contentious issues in the final negotiations of the OWG. There was no clear consensus over the content of the goal as it currently stands in the document. Some member states prefer the justice-sector related targets while others want to include even better targets specifically related to the reduction of violence.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Development Report, 'Conflict, Security and Development,' April 2011:

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> 'Poverty in Numbers: The Changing State of Global Poverty from 2005 to 2015,' The Brookings Institute, January 2011: [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/1/global%20poverty%20chandy/01\\_global\\_poverty\\_chandy](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/1/global%20poverty%20chandy/01_global_poverty_chandy)

<sup>5</sup> Open Letter from civil society with a peacebuilding focus, to the delegates of the OWG, April 2014: <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/800-open-letter-to-members-of-the-un-open-working-group-on-sustainable-development-goals-effective-targets-to-promote-sustainable-peace>

<sup>6</sup> 'Transformative Shift number 4:

*Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all. Freedom from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. At the same time, people the world over expect their governments to be honest, accountable, and responsive to their needs. We are calling for a fundamental shift - to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing, not optional extras. This is a universal agenda, for all countries. Responsive and legitimate institutions should encourage the rule of law, property rights, freedom of speech and the media, open political choice, access to justice, and accountable government and public institutions. We need a transparency revolution, so citizens can see exactly where and how taxes, aid and revenues from extractive industries are spent. These are ends as well as means."*

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Open Working Group made up of 30 Member States, mandated by the SG to draft a preliminary set of goals and targets, included a goal related to peace: <i>“Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”</i><sup>7</sup></li> </ul>	
<p>What are the positions of <u>key players</u>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Northern Member States supporting peace goals are: the United States, the UK, The Netherlands, Canada and Australia.</li> <li>Importantly, countries emerging from conflict were also supportive, such as East Timor, South Africa, Benin (on behalf of the LDCs), and more broadly, the African Union.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key states opposing peace goals are: Brazil, Russia, China, Pakistan, India and broadly, the G77 group.</li> </ul>
<p>Does it really reflect the <u>priorities</u> people are facing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of August 2014, a global survey conducted by the UN had reached over 3 million people and showed their priorities to include ‘protection against crime and violence’ at no. 5.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None of the recent protests around the world have been about peaceful societies. Although issues are interlinked, the protesters demanded food, political regime change, an end to corruption, work opportunities, better education and better housing.</li> <li>It is unclear the kind of violence people are requesting greater protection from apart from crime. They could mean protection against police brutality, or foreign military occupations, or armed groups, each one of which would require a response from different actors.</li> </ul>
<p>How does this relate to <u>other issues</u>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Disarmament</u>: It raises the stakes for member states to take disarmament seriously. Reducing the threat of international conflicts through disarmament goes hand-in-hand with ensuring peaceful societies in the long run.</li> <li><u>Climate change</u>: Many conflict arise from the shortage of food, water and other vital resources resulting from environmental devastation, such as drought, floods, hurricanes, etc.</li> <li><u>Youth/ Work/ Inequality</u>: High unemployment amongst the youth and the inequitable distribution of resources are root causes of social conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Counter-Terrorism</u>: There is a danger that much-needed financial support for poverty eradication, a primary focus of the new development goals, will be siphoned-off by states to support counter-terrorism measures and encourage further ‘militarization of policing.’</li> <li><u>Financing</u>: The inclusion of too many goals would distract and deter much needed resources away from the core of the new development agenda, namely: poverty eradication, sustainable growth and a better international system of support for development. Therefore, goals that are not directly related to achieving these basic objectives should be discouraged.</li> </ul>

And, “Goal 11: Ensure stable and peaceful societies.”

See, High Level Panel Report, May 2013: <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Rio Outcome Document, July 2012: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E)

<sup>7</sup> Open Working Group Outcome Document, July 2014: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

<sup>9</sup> My World Survey: <http://www.myworld2015.org/>

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<p>What is at <b>stake</b>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positive consequences of having a peace goal as formulated in the OWG Outcome Document:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the major shortcomings of the MDGs, the link between violence and development, would finally be addressed.<sup>10</sup></li> <li>- Meeting the targets under the goal would not only contribute to reducing the levels of violence in society, but also to the formation of a more stable and peaceful society by promoting structures that minimize the drivers of conflict, such as; participatory and responsive decision-making, effective institutions, greater accountability, more a responsive justice sector/ the rule of law, and the protection of political and civil freedoms.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The negative consequences of not having a peace goal:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None of the social benefits of meeting its targets would be had.</li> <li>- The millions of people who expressed concern about the levels of violence and crime in their communities would be left without a vital tool to pressure their governments into action.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The negative consequences of a compromised position:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If the targets under the 'peace goal' are placed elsewhere, they are likely to be less essential to the fulfillment of these other goals and thereby less likely to be prioritized by Member States.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Room for improvement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The target on curbing the flow of illicit arms should be extended to include all 'irresponsible' arms flows (as defined by the UN Arms Trade Treaty).</li> <li>- More detailed language on the protection of freedoms should be introduced to the targets, such as; all social groups should enjoy legal identity, freedoms of speech, association, peaceful protest, civic engagement and access to information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positive consequences of <u>not</u> having a peace goal at all:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although none of the benefits of having a peace goal would be had, there could be more resources allocated to tackle poverty eradication and environmental concerns, which would in turn help reduce violence and conflicts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A compromise position:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The goal's targets can be placed elsewhere and so the peace agenda is effectively 'mainstreamed' throughout the SGDs.</li> <li>- Minimize the number of targets to make the goal more appealing and achievable to Member States.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> For more on the link between violence and development, see the work of the Institute for Economics and Peace: <http://economicsandpeace.org/>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language on the building of capacities to prevent violence, terrorism and crime, should be revised to ensure that it does not support coercive measures.</li> <li>- All targets should be worded in a manner that clearly focuses on outcomes for people rather than creating outputs for states.</li> </ul>	



The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC –pronounced “gee-pak”) is a member-led network of civil society organisations (CSOs) active in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding from around the world. Founded in 2003, the network consists of fifteen regional networks of local organisations; each region having its own priorities, character and agenda. GPPAC members from around the world collaborate on

issues of common interest. As part of its mission to work towards a shift from reaction to prevention of violent conflict, the network supports multiactor collaboration and advocates for local ownership of conflict prevention strategies. Together, GPPAC members create greater synergy in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding by strengthening the role of local civil society groups in conflict regions and connecting them on the national, regional and global level.

## Contact



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