Summary records of Abidjan IWG Meeting, May 2015

Document 02 – Background document
DAY I: .............................................. 22 MAY - “WORKSHOP: NEW DEAL INSTRUMENTS AND GUIDANCE”

Workshop revealed the need for more country-specific articulation of how to appropriately use different instruments of the New Deal together and the need for light, short general guiding frameworks, the importance of moving away from the New Deal as a package/label, but as a ‘guiding set of principles’ for more effective peacebuilding and statebuilding.

Participants welcomed more substantive discussions at country level not only to inform guidance but to improve application of the New Deal principles at country level. They also emphasised the need for more systematic identification of ‘entry points’ for applying New Deal principles / approaches.

Participants wanted short 1-2 page summaries of existing Guidance that incorporate country experiences and set the ‘general framework’. They will draw on country experience and not be overly prescriptive.

The Workshop will be followed up with country level consultations on New Deal instruments that can inform a) the development of 1-2 page summaries of existing Guidance; b) country specific articulation and lessons learned; and 3) the next round of New Deal Monitoring and Independent Review

DAY II: ................................................................. 23 MAY - Implementation Working Group Meeting

Country Dialogues. Three types of Country Dialogues were agreed on: the Use of Country systems; Transparency; and Reflecting on New Deal Instruments. There was also the sense that the first two could be combined given potential overlap and continuity of these discussions. Country Dialogue on Use of Country Systems (UoC) could be held in Afghanistan, DRC, Sierra Leone and Somalia (potential candidates). South Sudan volunteered for a Country Dialogue on Transparency. Holding a Country Dialogue should account for representation of all process stakeholders including the private sector. Both topics could be interlinked. It was agreed that the Secretariat would follow up with each country.

Work Plan to be updated and focussed on country level, reference groups for each work stream to consult between meetings on for example 1. Country Dialogues on UoC and Transparency (including private sector); 2. Country level consultations on instruments of New Deal implementation

Monitoring, Independent Review, and the revision and development of Guidance should be informed by those Dialogues/consultations.

Draft Crisis Approach paper welcomed; to be revised based on written input to be sent to the IDPS Secretariat.

Next Round of Monitoring to be decided upon by written procedure.
DAY I, 22 MAY, “WORKSHOP: NEW DEAL INSTRUMENTS AND GUIDANCE”

The IDPS Secretariat introduced the purpose and scope of the workshop, including challenges outlined in the first New Deal Monitoring Report relating to Fragility Assessments (FAs), the Compact development processes and linkages. The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) then presented a Background Note (*New Deal Instruments and Guidance*) inviting participants to relay country experiences of using New Deal instruments and the implications for Guidance notes.

1. **COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS FROM g7+ PILOTS**

Presentations by government/civil society focal points from the g7+ pilot countries highlighted, among others, the following points:

**Fragility Assessments:**

- **Validation of FAs within the government** is lacking but is important.
- **Better dissemination/translation** into French/local languages needed.
- There must be a **shift from focusing purely on process to promoting the principles** when it comes to FAs.
- There is no one model for Fragility assessments, the country context should be referred to in priority.
- FAs should be more concise and not too politically sensitive, so the real drivers of change can be identified.
- FAs should **not just look at PSGs** (structural causes of violence, conflict and fragility) but should also look at elements of **TRUST** principles, e.g. transparency, with attention to the specific issues that reinforce fragility or present obstacles to peaceful transitions in the respective country.
- The experience of **inclusion of civil society (CS) in FA processes has been mixed.** CS provided good analysis to be shared with the government in some countries. However, CS participation in many FA processes was low at the sub-national/local levels.
- **Sufficient resources are needed** to ensure effective FA consultations can be conducted in all regions.
- Sector-specific analysis of fragility is important to understanding how to support country’s resilience (e.g. study on agricultural sector on food security).
- Desk review based FAs or capital consultations may present possible alternatives to participatory processes, but only with justification and should be validated through some kind of inclusive process. If this option is selected then more participatory assessments should be considered as the situation evolves.
- FAs are not meant to be ‘one offs’ – but rather regularised processes that allow review of progress over time.

**Indicator Development:**

- **Strong integration of indicators into planning** in some countries but **too many parallel processes running at the same time** making ‘New Deal implementation’ difficult.
- Language of ‘New Deal Implementation’ may be part of the problem – the New Deal is not just a package, but also a set of principles, whose application can happen at different entry points.

**One Vision, One Plan:**

- National Development Plans can integrate ALL frameworks and programs, and serve as vehicles for introducing New Deal principles and findings of FAs.
Compact Development:
- Often compacts are too ambitious and not conflict sensitive. It is important to take conflict/national dynamics into account and prioritize around the key areas identified as reinforcing fragility and undermining peaceful transitions.

TRUST principles/PSGs:
- TRUST principles are hard to apply in certain contexts; donor commitment is therefore hard to secure.
- Use of Country Systems (UoC) remains a key issue. Donors should not ignore importance of UoC. IDPS is well placed to help in fostering the constructive dialogue needed to overcome what can at times seem like stalemates between donors and governments.
- The practical meaning of PSGs for the government and for the citizens needs to be worked out in given contexts.

Civil Society (CS)/Inclusion:
- CS coalitions have struggled at times because of challenges in defining what the most appropriate representation looks like.
- Yet inclusion of CS is necessary to ensure plans are grounded in popular priorities. There are now good examples of CS and government collaboration, including CS input to budget planning and to support for SSR that includes needs from populations for defining security policy and programmes.
- Governments at times need help in identifying the right CS actors and how to engage them; not always obvious.
- Civil society representation needs to include community level perspectives from sub regions around the country.
- In many countries, the New Deal is the only framework for the civil society to engage in planning processes.

Linking instruments and building on one another:
- Ideally, the findings of FAs should lead into national priorities/’One vision, One plan’ that would lead into benchmarks for Compacts between partners and the government.
- Yet, this is a dynamic process in dynamic environments so New Deal mechanisms have to adapt. The context should guide which instrument should come first and how to apply them.
- New Deal processes are often stalled because of changes in governments in g7+ and partner countries lead to lack of high level political buy-in. Continued sensitization is necessary. This should be supported by the IDPS co-Chairs to secure ownership.
- Whole of government and whole of society approach is needed.
- Better coordination, alignment and lead donors are needed because of multiple processes running parallel to the New Deal processes and competition between donors.

2. RESULTS OF GROUP EXERCISE: REFLECTING ACROSS CASES

This session enabled participants to deepen sharing of experiences and challenges of linking Fragility Assessments, Compacts and Monitoring processes (integrating PSG Indicators into planning). Participants – sharing informally across constituencies – reported finding this format extremely useful. They identified opportunities for addressing challenges and made recommendations for guidance.
KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM GROUP DISCUSSION

FAAs and capturing drivers of conflict, fragility and resilience:

- Some argued that the findings of FAAs should be institutionalised and merged with different assessments made by other actors.
- A wide understanding of fragility drivers is needed to anticipate future shocks.

Measuring progress towards New Deal implementation:

- Compacts should be simple and realistic, build directly on FA findings, and address core drivers of conflict and fragility that could undermine peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts.
- Donors should integrate indicators into their own strategies and report on their use of FAAs.
- Civil society and citizens need to perceive quantifiable changes in the way policies are made and delivered in countries and we need to be able to measure that perception.
- Leadership becomes an issue when national policies refer too much to donor frameworks.

Lessons and effective New Deal implementation:

- There is need to reflect at country level on what ND implementation means, looks like; the strategies; there should be clear ‘theories of change’ to guide action and enable effective review.
- Context specificity, path dependency: Factors which allow for highly consultative processes in some countries may not be easily transferable to others.
- “Inclusive” needs clarification. More guidance from CSPPS could be helpful. If it is similar to national ownership then more constructive and deeper conversations with influential stakeholders is needed.
- Coordination is a key problem, pooled and trust funds exist, and it is crucial to ensure they are harmonised. New Deal Implementation is diverse and therefore accepting flexibility is necessary.
- Integration of New Deal knowledge into transition or interim agreements, which are often developed by individual partners not in collaboration, is really lacking.
- The New Deal needs high level marketing and communication for each country.

3. WHAT SORT OF GUIDANCE IS REQUIRED

Discussion

- Guidance should emerge through lessons at the country level, and through reflection in country consultation should be continued
- Purpose should be to review and decide how to practically improve implementation process and to strengthen country ownership.
- Guidance Notes should be simplified so they focus on key issues that undermine development.
- National experiences need to feed into Guidance Notes.
- Guidance Notes cannot be prescriptive, must be flexible and integrate frequent country information (living document). Information about relevance and use of the Guidance Notes by countries, partners, and civil society, must be solicited.

A decision was not made about the process moving forward in developing the guidance, but the Guidance Working Group remains in effect, and constituencies have expressed ongoing interest in furthering the guidance.
Day II, 23 May:

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Agenda, meeting objectives, and Summary Record from the October 2014 Washington DC meeting of the Implementation Working Group (including the addendum from civil society on the unfinished discussion on champions across IDPS constituencies for the IWG Work Plan), were approved.

COUNTRY DIALOGUES

*The concept of Country Dialogues was affirmed. Three types of Country Dialogues were agreed to: the Use of Country systems; Transparency; and Reflecting on New Deal Instruments. There was also the sense that the first two could be combined given potential overlap and continuity of these discussions. Reflecting on New Deal Instruments was initiated by civil society, but both Sierra Leone and DRC agreed to having dialogue / consultations on this topic prior to the workshop.*

2. COUNTRY DIALOGUES ON USE OF COUNTRY SYSTEMS

*Concrete next steps for the Country Dialogues on Use of Country Systems (UoC) in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Afghanistan were agreed on.*

KEY OUTCOMES

- **IDPS Secretariat** gave an update on the history of the discussion on UoC in the IWG since 2013 and explained the concept note.
- Countries are at different stages and the readiness of their country systems varies significantly.
- **Afghanistan** confirmed commitment of the government to UoC (Goal is to increase the use of country system by at least 50% of the ODA provided) and expressed interest in holding a Country Dialogue. Possible timing would be before/back-to-back with g7+ Ministerial Meeting in the fall/autumn.
- **DRC** expressed willingness to conduct a Country Dialogue. The timing needs to be considered given their high level seminar on the New Deal scheduled for early June. The outcome of that consultation would then allow for a Country Dialogue on UoC.
- **Somalia** was not present at the meeting. The IDPS Secretariat will follow up after the meeting.
- **Sierra Leone** expressed interest in starting a conversation around the UoC at country level, using the lessons learned from the Ebola response (possibly including Liberia/Guinea).
- Important to draw on and combine work that has already been done by the IDPS, the EIP/CABRI and g7+ with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI); A preparatory Country Dialogue on UoC was conducted in Liberia in 2014 with support from EIP and CABRI. The IDPS should build on lessons learned.
- Country-level dialogues are key to enhancing New Deal implementation at country level; they should include the perspective of the PSGs (Inclusive Politics, Security and Justice, in particular).
- **UNDP** agreed to fund Country Dialogues; the request must come from the government focal point.
- Clarity is needed around what ‘country systems’ mean in each context. This can be done through country profiles. The importance of civil society systems being part of this discussion was underlined.
- **Clear and brief guidance** is needed regarding UoC and Country Dialogues.
- Trust between partners and donors, and in particular of civil society is required to enable the use of country systems.
- Better information sharing and use of existing networks of communication between capitals and field offices are all important.
• Safeguarding them from shock is key to country systems.

NEXT STEPS
• IDPS Secretariat will revise the Concept Note based on comments made to define the scope of using country systems.
• IDPS Secretariat, with support from other three Secretariats, will start preparing work with the focal points (government, lead donors and civil society) to gather country specific data and define the scope for the Country Dialogues, in Afghanistan, DRC, Somalia, and Sierra Leone.
• Government focal points to identify the timeline.
• IDPS and g7+ Secretariats and focal points will work with UNDP to secure the funding.
• IDPS Secretariat will review Liberia work on UoC and collaboration with CABRI, and will share the report with members.

3. COUNTRY DIALOGUES ON TRANSPARENCY

Concrete next steps for the Country Dialogue on Transparency were agreed.

KEY OUTCOMES
• IDPS Secretariat gave an update on history of the discussion on Transparency in the IWG since 2013 and explain the concept note.
• Timor-Leste outlined progress made on Transparency and their plans for New Deal implementation. They highlighted the importance of priorities other than the Country Dialogue, at present.
• South Sudan volunteered to conduct a Country Dialogue on Transparency.
• Transparency is relevant for state-society relations but also for the relationship between donors and government. This means making sure that aid is aligned to citizen’s needs (Social Accountability).
• Dialogue needs to be broadened: Add private sector/business actors, open government, International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).
• Country Dialogues on UoC should be linked with Dialogues on Transparency.
• Regional workshop to share experiences on UoC and Transparency is possible (DRC could be an option; rich civil society engagement in DRC on transparency of budget in relation to the New Deal).

NEXT STEPS
• IDPS Secretariat, with support from the three other Secretariats, will start working with the focal points from South Sudan (Government, lead donors and civil society) to gather country specific data and define the scope for the Country Dialogue.
• DRC focal points (government, lead donors and civil society) with support from four Secretariats to explore possibility of a regional lesson learning workshop.

4. THE WORK PLAN

IWG, priorities were confirmed, with some discussion on possible champions for work areas and consideration of how New Deal Monitoring Report could be best taken into account
KEY OUTCOMES

- The IDPS Secretariat reviewed the New Deal Monitoring Report (NDMR) and its main findings to confirm IWG work plan priorities (I. Guidance Notes; II. Approach to Crisis; III. Country Dialogues; and IV. Monitoring and Review) were in line with NDMR findings.
- IWG agreed not to re-open work plan discussion, but to confirm the four priority areas and agree on timelines focus in particular on work at country level:
  - Country Dialogues on UoC and Transparency (including Private Sector).
  - Consultations at country level on instruments of New Deal implementation (carrying on Workshop discussions)
  - Participants agreed on need to move from process to principles: this should mean more discussion on substance is needed.
  - Guidance Notes should be informed by dialogue between IWG members (workshop discussions of previous day) and shaped by discussions at country level. They need to be light and practical to use (not too much paper work).
  - Political buy-in and challenges should be taken to the Steering Group level, so that higher levels influence practice and thinking on the ground.
  - Civil society requested consideration of being treated as a more equal member to the IWG, notably, being consulted on documents before they are shared with the entire group, participating in the design of workshop and meeting agendas, etc. The Chairs positively responded to this suggestion, emphasizing the collaboration in Day 1 of this IWG was a model example of what this could look like.

NEXT STEPS

- Experience applying the principles of the New Deal on the ground need to be captured by IWG and shared; this should be a main function of the IWG.
- Political challenges emerging should be fed up to the Steering Group: This may mean the need for a Political Working Group? This is a question that could be raised in the Independent Review for consideration.
- Work Plan needs to be updated to reflect IWG meeting conclusions. This will be done by IDPS Secretariat with co-Chairs.
- We are still looking for champions to lead work streams; the IDPS Secretariat will follow up shortly with members so that they indicate their interest via email.
- CSPPS announced that they are willing to contribute to each work stream, particularly through focal points on the ground and suggested to further explore linkages between the work streams.
- Independent Review should be informed by the Country Dialogues/Consultations and vice versa.

5. THE NEW DEAL IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

The first draft of the crisis approach note was presented with agreement on how to take this work forward

MAIN OUTCOMES

- Suggestions to develop angle on country specific situations/issues and recommend practical actions (e.g. justice).
- The paper should look at the capacity of the New Deal to address shocks more generally: for example including the Ebola crisis, aligning with political actors.
• Perspective of humanitarian and security actors operating in the context should be more fully considered.
• This is a zero draft. There should be ample opportunity for IWG members to comment and sharing the paper more widely.
• A clear narrative is needed. The IDPS—and not the New Deal—is an actor; this should be corrected in the paper.
• Questions remain: who is the audience for this paper? (political or technical)
• Should the paper include discussion on ‘preventative action, displaced populations, and role of civil society?

NEXT STEPS
• Comments should be sent between now and 2nd July on this paper.
• The IPDS Secretariat will send back the revised paper to IWG group and agree on next steps.
• The paper will not be tabled for discussion at the Steering Group meeting. A Report will be presented to the SG, but not yet circulated.

6. HOW TO TAKE MONITORING FORWARD

The discussion could not be held due to time constraints. The IDPS Secretariat requested written comments from members on Room Document 14: “New Deal Monitoring Report Phase 2 proposal” by 2nd July 2015.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Members agreed to provide feedback key decisions and outcomes of the IWG meeting, to the Steering Group on Monday, 25 May 2015.