

Statement on safeguarding peace during the COVID-19 pandemic

May 15, 2020

As co-chairs of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), the Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of International Development, and Honourable Francis M. Kai-Kai, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone, today issued the following statement on behalf of the IDPS:

“We, the members of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, stand in solidarity with all those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is a human tragedy and a global crisis that poses grave risks for fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) that extend beyond direct health impacts alone.

“Together, we are particularly concerned about the pandemic’s potentially destabilizing socio-economic impacts in FCAS. In this regard, we support the United Nations Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire to allow countries to unite in responding to the pandemic. In the spirit of cooperation and mutual support, we also welcome the statements on responding to the pandemic made by the g7+ group of FCAS and the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding [CSPPS].

“At this difficult time, we draw the international community’s attention to the need for a holistic COVID-19 response to ensure that hard-won peacebuilding, statebuilding and conflict-prevention gains in FCAS are sustained. This will require responses that draw on integrated support from partners across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and that are also inclusive, nationally led, conflict-sensitive, attuned to conflict drivers and focused on prevention and resilience. Without this cooperation, the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development risk slipping further out of reach.

“In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to advocating for COVID-19 response efforts that advance priorities established by IDPS members in the IDPS 2019 to 2021 Peace Vision, the 2030 Agenda (notably Sustainable Development Goal 16+), the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the Stockholm Declaration. We reaffirm the relevance of our Peace Vision priority themes in our COVID-19 response efforts to enhance national cohesion; advance gender equality and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda; and support a peace-promoting private sector.

“We encourage national governments to ensure that measures used to respond to COVID-19 contribute to just and inclusive societies and do not hamper contributions from various actors, including youth, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. We also reiterate the need to continue supporting the protection and expansion of civil society’s operating space in implementing measures to address the pandemic, including during lockdowns.

“Recognizing that women, girls and other vulnerable groups, such as migrants, refugees and those living in poverty, will be disproportionately affected by the crisis, the global response must be gender responsive and include interventions that protect all vulnerable groups from potential violence and other effects of COVID-19 responses.

“In this context, we also acknowledge the need to galvanize support from the private sector to support pro-peace activities, as well as safeguard livelihoods and the immediate and longer-term economic effects for people affected by the crisis. Together, we will strive to protect official development assistance budgets, encourage other financial flows to support governments and communities in FCAS and invite all of our peacebuilding partners to do the same.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global crisis, and we stress that national responses alone will be insufficient to cope with the various dimensions of its impact (political, economic, social and human capital). The IDPS, as a unique tripartite platform, has an important role to play in bringing together development partners, the g7+ Group and civil society to preserve peace. In addressing this highly complex crisis, the IDPS partnership will endeavour to mobilize diverse actors to ensure inclusive dialogue and collective engagement, and to foster South-South, triangular and fragile-fragile cooperation. We will work together to ensure that our peacebuilding, statebuilding and conflict-prevention objectives remain at the forefront of responses to the pandemic , and together, we will continue to advance our common objective of driving positive change for those in fragile and conflict-affected situations.”