IWG workplan and progress update

Document 04 – Background document
Update on Secretariat support to IWG Work Plan

Introduction
This document is intended to update the IWG membership on progress made by the International Dialogue (ID) Secretariat on implementation of the IWG work plan since the last IWG meeting (Abidjan, May 2015). It will serve as a basis for exchange about what the Dialogue’s constituencies have been doing on New Deal implementation since May 2015. It is also intended to remind members about the ongoing work of the group, which will need to be completed - or incorporated into - the new work plan before it is developed.

It should be noted that a full-time, dedicated IWG Secretariat support person was recruited in September 2015, to support the constituencies in facilitating the work of the IWG, and providing specific inputs as requested. The delayed recruitment slowed down the implementation of some aspects of the work plan, which was also modified in part to respond to the specific demands of g7+ focal points and IWG members. A strategy was developed to guide the work of the Secretariat in supporting the IWG objectives and has been guiding the work of the ID policy advisor responsible for in supporting New Deal implementation over the past few months.

This update focuses on 4 main works strands:-
1. Guidance on New Deal implementation in country;
2. Country dialogues;
3. Monitoring progress on New Deal implementation; &
4. The New Deal as an Approach to Crisis paper.

Other strands of work, including engagement with the private sector, partnership with the humanitarian community or support to the broader Dialogue work (such as the organisation of the Stockholm global meeting) are not reflected in this note.

I. Progress on Guidance on New Deal implementation in country

Guidance
The Secretariat has produced two generic guidance notes on ‘What is a Country Dialogue’ and on ‘Country Dialogues on the Use of Country Systems’, including transparency. In line with the recommendations of the Abidjan IWG meeting, the Secretariat is revising the Fragility Assessment and Compact guidance notes to produce two generic short notes. These will serve as the basis for consultation with IWG members, and should be a starting point for the relaunch of the work of the guidance task force.

Country Visits
In response to the request to develop country specific support for New Deal implementation, rather than produce more papers, the Secretariat is currently working with focal points to identify opportunities for in-country support. Existing plans for Fragility Assessments, or recently completed fragility assessments, have been used as opportunities for country visits.

The ID Secretariat visited Timor-Leste, following the presentation of its second Fragility Assessment (the Fragility Assessment will be released shortly). The advisor met with the g7+ Secretariat, focal points, and civil society actors involved in the Fragility Assessment. A mission report outlines recommendations for promoting F2F learning on Fragility Assessments via exchanges. This should be explored as other countries plan for Fragility Assessment.
The ID Secretariat also visited Sierra Leone (January 2016) and discussed plans for improving the next round of its Fragility Assessment (FA) in Sierra Leone with officials in the Ministry of Finance responsible for facilitating FA, and with civil society actors (SLANGO). Sierra Leone is currently engaged in the next round of its Fragility Assessment. The sort of follow up support required from the ID Secretariat will need to be discussed, taking into account the UNDP Annual Work Plan.

The Secretariat has also made existing guidance available to relevant actors in the Central African Republic. Following up from high level visits in early 2015, and the current context of a new government in CAR, regular contacts were established and maintained with key development partners in country (World Bank, EU, French MFA), and UN (MINUSCA) with a focus on New Deal implementation throughout 2015 and 2016. Specifically, the Secretariat worked to ensure that earlier activities that were implemented in line with the New Deal (such as the completion of a Fragility Matrix in February 2015) were integrated into the work of other actors. While the political processes and the planning for elections did not make a high level visit feasible in 2015, indications that an incoming government would renew a commitment to implementing the New Deal has spurred further discussions between the ID Secretariat and key actors in CAR, which should lead to some concrete involvement and/or support in 2016.

In order to map existing support to country level implementation, the ID Secretariat is also engaged in discussions with focal points and UNDP to identify opportunities to support country dialogues on New Deal implementation, discussed further below. This mapping/consultation will feed into the work of the Future of the Dialogue’ Group, and the decisions made at the next Steering Group meeting, in particular with regards to renewed commitments to New Deal implementation at country level. The Secretariat is working to ensure that current progress on New Deal implementation is mapped out, so that it feeds into broader Dialogue-wide strategic planning for the future.

The Secretariat has also commented on the draft of Afghanistan’s Fragility Assessments, as requested by the g7+ Secretariat.

The Secretariat took part in the g7+ technical meeting (Nairobi, December 2015) on monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and identifying indicators which can be monitored across the SDGs in each country. The technical meeting was an opportunity to pick up on the previous indicators discussion within the ID. Many of the indicators developed by the ID are already being used by the UN Statistical Commission (IAEG) and the World Bank. It is time for the ID constituencies to appropriate these indicators, and identify with countries, how relevant indicators might be integrated into plans at national level and monitored.

Through its facilitation of the Future of the Dialogue discussions, the Secretariat now plans to explore with focal points how to better align New Deal and SDG implementation at country level. The g7+ technical meeting, which brought together National Statistical officers from g7+ countries, is being followed up on. A SDG/PSG working group was established in February, to develop a narrative and outline a strategy for aligning the PSGs with the SDGs, both with respect to implementation and narrative. Preliminary discussions with UNDP have also been held with a view to aligning approaches, notably with UNDP plans to roll out its MAPS strategy for SDG implementation in g7+ countries, and ensure that plans are consistent with the New Deal. The ID Secretariat has also engaged OECD-based Paris 21, which provides support to statistical capacity development in developing countries, to explore how, in light of its increased focus on fragile situations, it can provide support to the g7+. This will feed into the conversations at the second g7+ technical meeting in Nairobi (May 2016).
II. Country Dialogues on New Deal Implementation, Use of Country Systems and Transparency

To move forward the planned support to country dialogues on Use of Country Systems and Transparency, a special briefing on Country Dialogues was held on the margins of the Steering Group meeting in Paris, in November 2015. This session aimed at developing concrete proposals for a variety of country dialogues with g7+ countries, and participants explored possibilities for partnerships with the Effective Institutions Platform, making use of their extensive technical support experience on the Use of Country Systems. Following this briefing, focal points in Somalia and Afghanistan expressed an interest in implementing country dialogues on the Use of Country Systems. The CSPPS has highlighted the need to ensure that civil society at country-level is involved in country dialogues, particularly where there are organisations with relevant expertise. The Dialogue is also exploring how to facilitate this process.

Somalia is currently engaged in a continued process of improving its Use of Country systems. They prepared a report for the High Level Partnership Forum (HLPF) held in Istanbul at the end of February. The Ministry of Finance and the Aid Coordination Unit have asked the Secretariat to provide them with possible Terms of Reference to frame the engagement of the Effective institutions Platform in that process. The proposed work plan (which is still to be formally accepted by the Government of Somalia) would see the Effective Institutions Platform support the ongoing development of a roadmap on increasing the Use of Country Systems, and support the implementation of this roadmap though a country dialogue in the spring and summer of 2016. While there has been a continued dialogue with the Somalian government on the actual timeframe for implementation, no date has been set as yet.

Similar conversations were also held with the focal point in Afghanistan, and possible engagement on a country dialogue could be organised in 2016. Liberia also expressed an interest. Similar support to country dialogues on transparency is also envisaged with Timor-Leste, but the details are yet to be elaborated.

Country Dialogues on Inclusivity: Country dialogues on inclusivity were also proposed at the Helsinki conference on the role of civil society in the New Deal process, and inclusivity more generally. The process is largely being led by CSPPS, who have developed a concept note outlining what country dialogues on inclusivity are. The ID Secretariat will also engage with UNDP and CSPPS to explore the nature of support required by the Secretariat. CSPPS is also suggesting that inclusivity needs to be a principle and practice to be woven into all strands of work of the IDPS, rather than being seen as a separate process.

III. New Deal Monitoring Exercise

The New Deal Monitoring exercise for 2015 was postponed until 2016. This decision was taken based on the heavy cost (financial and in terms of human resource capacity) of the Independent Review. The postponement meant that the ID was not able to align its monitoring exercise with that of the Global Partnership. The ID will however, ensure that we share the results of the Independent Review at the Nairobi High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership in November 2016. The IWG has the opportunity to organise a side event on the New Deal and Fragility. Minister Marah also expressed interest in using the next Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) High-Level meeting in Nairobi as an opportunity to get Ministers to re-affirm commitment to the New Deal, following the commitments made in Stockholm (side events and plenary sessions).

The Review process itself was used as an opportunity to take forward the work of the IWG. The Secretariat offered focal points the opportunity to comment on drafts of the independent review in country and at a workshop in Paris on the margins of the Steering Group meeting (November 2015), and to use insights from the Review to push forward other aspects of the IWG’s work plan. This was the case particularly on Somalia.
The case study commissioned to feed into the Independent Review was shared with the Somalia Governmental and Donor task force working on Use of Country Systems. This was in advance of publication. The purpose was to feed into processes for review of the Somali compact. Similarly other aspects of the Review have been integrated into discussions and design of the ID’s future strategy at country level. The Review as a whole has provided g7+ and civil society focal points, as well as members of INCAF, with the opportunity to engage in discussions about their future as a group, and their approaches in country.

IV. Crisis Approach Paper

The Secretariat has received comments on the New Deal as an approach to crisis paper. The Secretariat has now incorporated the comments into a revised version of the paper, and will use the opportunity offered by the IWG meeting in Nairobi (June 2016) to circulate it further. The relevance of the paper has increased, in the light of concerns to work more closely with humanitarian actors and to scale up the political focus of the Dialogue’s work, particularly in light of the commitments made in Stockholm. This could form the basis for sustained engagement with the humanitarian community, and more systematically with a range of actors active in countries affected by crises. The IDPS, UNDP and Germany hosted a side event at the WHS (‘Our Collective Contribution to building peaceful and inclusive societies and sustainable development in the 2030 Era\(^1\): Discussing how humanitarian and development actors can work together using the New Deal to achieve the SDGs in contexts of fragility and protracted crisis’), during which it was suggested that the ID could serve as a platform for piloting and monitoring concrete ways of more effective collaboration – e.g. via joint fragility assessments in a given country. The IWG will need to explore how it may play a role in this.

V. Communication and learning

The Secretariat has reinforced communication with the reconfigured UNDP team in charge of UNDP’s New Deal support facility. This resulted in UNDP’s invitation to scale up focused collaboration with - and support to - new countries (Togo, Guinea...). The Secretariat is currently developing a timetable to align scheduled visits in 2016.

**Somalia outreach:** The Secretariat visited Nairobi (December 2015) for an event organised by the Somali government on PSGs. This was an opportunity to sensitise the Somalia Government on the work of the ID, to begin to re-establish working relationships with Dialogue constituencies in country, and to explore possibilities for further support to g7+ countries. This was also an initial opportunity to follow up on the Independent Review case study findings.

VI. Next steps for IWG consideration

This update is intended to remind members about the ongoing work of the International Dialogue and in particular of the IWG. In view of the forthcoming revisions to the TOR guiding the work of the IWG, and of the thrust of the evolving ID strategy being developed within the broader Dialogue group, which envisages a more pronounced role for the IWG, it will be necessary to consider what will become of the unfinished aspects of the work plan described above. Attention should also be accorded to the fact that the current funding for the IDPS Secretariat is contingent on its ability to deliver on the core work stream areas outlined in this update.

\(^1\) This panel is linked to the Roundtable on Conflict Prevention and its statements / possible commitments: https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/bitcache/fb78631894362be5db7f1095e13ee7441bb927ae?vid=571405& disposition=inline&op=view