

Forum: Economic and Social Council

Issue: Strengthening Global Partnerships to Support Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development in Conflict-Affected Regions

Name: Vaishnavi Adoni Rao

Position: Deputy Chair

Introduction:

For over two decades, conflict has significantly arisen, threatening not only global peace but also sustainable development. Conflict-affected regions face tremendous amounts of suffering and challenges to economies and development in the current global political landscape. Armed conflict causes significant damage to low-capacity institutions and the limited provision of public goods to extreme poverty, forced displacement of the population, and even war, causing long-term economic and social instability.

In this issue, economic recovery in conflict-affected regions revolves around several partnerships in international communities, from national governments and key institutions such as the United Nations (UN), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. The use of global partnerships is perceived as a prominent approach to addressing these challenges. However, these partnerships often face challenges such as political instability, corruption, and geopolitical unrest.

The connection with this issue is that “economic recovery” highlights the restoration of the financial and market system, infrastructure, while creating sustainable employment opportunities. “Sustainable development” pertains to environmentally responsible and meets long-term societal expectations and the overall message of the 17 sustainability goals. Regarding conflict-affected regions, these goals are essential for peacebuilding and establishing lasting stability.

Definition of key terms:

LEDCs: Less economically developed countries

MEDCs: More economically developed countries

Economic recovery: Economic recovery entails the process of reestablishing and restoring an economy after an era of disruption, such as war or conflict.

Conflict-affected regions: Conflict-affected regions refer to countries/areas that are or were experiencing armed conflict, political instability or broader violence. These regions often are confronted with weak governance, damaged infrastructure, and relocation of the population.

Global partnership: Global partnership describes cooperative relationships between multiple international actors, including states, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

Sustainable development: Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the economic and social needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Fragile and conflict-affected states: Fragile and conflict-affected states are countries where access to basic services, such as education, health, and infrastructure, is minimal and worsened by the absence of security and rule of law.

International law: International law is a set of rules and principles governing the relations and conduct of sovereign states with each other, as well as with international organisations and individuals.

Background:

Fragile states have been a lingering concern of the international community over the past decade. Despite ongoing debate over whether the label of 'fragility' is a valid, appropriate or fair description for these states, the concept of a group of poor countries where the structures of power and authority fail to deliver basic public goods is one that has proved extremely resonant. Long-term structural instability is the cause of the economic and developmental obstacles encountered by conflict-affected regions, evolving from historical patterns of conflict and the growing nature of warfare. Normally, the cause of conflict in these regions is internal, prolonged and involves multiple actors, such as militias, extremist groups and foreign powers. The political, economic, and social foundations of a state are progressively weakened by these conflicts,

which not only cause immediate destruction but also make recovery considerably more complex.

The cycle is ongoing as it begins with the breakdown of governance, often leading to state collapse as conflict causes a loss of territorial control, accompanied by institutional decay and systemic failure. Public services such as healthcare, education and law enforcement become ineffective or sometimes cease to function. Alongside this, the economic system begins to crumble as tax revenues decline, currencies lose value, and domestic and international trade and investment decline due to a lack of security. While so many conflicts arise, the destruction of sectors, such as agriculture, trade and industries, leads to widespread unemployment. Infrastructure is crucial, and having it often damaged further limits economic activity and isolates communities.

The United Nations introduced the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, aiming to achieve comprehensive progress across the global economic, social, and environmental sectors by 2030. The SDGs encompass various critical areas, including poverty eradication, improving education and health, addressing climate change, and promoting gender equality, with the ultimate aim of fostering a more balanced and inclusive global development.

In the course of time, there have been attempts to tie humanitarian aid to sustainable development by establishing the humanitarian development approach, otherwise known as the “humanitarian development nexus.” Through increased collaboration among entities like the UN, international financial institutions, and NGOs, steps have been taken to revive economic activities and to rebuild infrastructure, among others. Yet, such an attempt has faced numerous obstacles, such as poor coordination and duplication of mandate, which hinder their collaboration. The result has been economic instability brought about by interrelated problems such as corruption, lack of good governance, insecurity, reliance on aid from abroad, and destruction of infrastructure, among others.

On the other hand, global partnerships have emerged as an important aspect of bringing together all the resources, skills, and tactics of governments, international bodies, nongovernmental organisations, and the business community into one place. Even though partnerships have the capacity to lead to investments, employment, and stability, their success has been greatly hindered by issues such as dominance, exclusion of locals from decision-making, and competition among political forces. The need for partnerships has increased,

especially given that conflict-affected regions are increasingly becoming the centre of global poverty and instability. The recent events in the world, such as the coronavirus outbreak, food and energy price hikes, war conflicts and environmental threats, have shed light on just how vulnerable these regions have become.

Timeline of Key Events

September 8th, 2000	The Millennium Development Goals making its first major impression on global frameworks targeting poverty and development.
September 25th, 2008	The United Nations, the EU and the World Bank signed a declaration to coordinate re-engaging in regions emerging from conflict. It was called the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs).
July 2009 – January 2011	The UN Security Council passes multiple resolutions exclusively targeting post-conflict rehabilitation.
November 30th, 2011	The New Deal for engagement of fragile states is the framework for development partners committed to supporting nationally owned and led development plans and greater aid.
February 2014	The UNDPKO publishes a policy to oversee and control the missions of the peacekeepers in post-conflict regions.
September 25th, 2015	The UN assembly adopted 17 sustainable development goals. Every 17 goals have a specific target, but unite to bring developed and developing countries to a global partnership.
October 5th, 2016	The UN Security Council (UNSC) highlighted the importance of sustaining peace and connecting conflict prevention with development.
February 19th, 2020	The launch of World Bank Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Strategy 2020-2025. Addressing the challenges of fragility, conflict, and

violence is critical to achieving the World Bank Group's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

March 11th, 2020 International organisations, including the WHO and UN, report that COVID-19 has impacted fragile states by overwhelming weak health systems and exacerbating conflict risks.

Major parties involved:

United Nations: The United Nations play a crucial role in addressing conflict and supporting economic recovery. Agencies such as UNDP and UNHRC provide solutions to issues that affect humanitarian aid, support development projects and enable peacebuilding efforts.

World Bank: The World Bank provides financial assistance and expertise for long-term development strategies for conflict-affected regions. The Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) strategy is important for involvement in fragile states.

International Monetary Fund: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) assists in economic stabilisation through loans, policy advice, and financial programs. The goal is to rehabilitate macroeconomic stability, manage debt, and rebuild financial systems in fragile states.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): Organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and the International Committee of the Red Cross operate in conflict zones, providing services such as emergency relief, healthcare, and food supply.

United States of America: The United States is one of the largest states to contribute to humanitarian and development aid globally. The country invests billions to prevent conflict, promote stability, and foster economic recovery.

European Union: The European Union plays a central role in strengthening global partnerships for economic recovery and sustainable development in conflict-affected regions, positioning itself as the world's leading donor of development aid. The EU continues to engage in fragile and conflict-affected states through tailored partnerships to address the drivers of fragility and instability and to support sustainable development.

People's Republic of China: The People's Republic of China (China) supports conflict-affected regions providing large-scale infrastructure, concessional loans, and emergency aid, prioritising development through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Conflict-Affected Regions: Conflict-affected regions from the Middle East to Africa: Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Yemen, Somalia, Palestine (Gaza/West Bank), and parts of the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger). These states have governments at their limited capacity due to weak institutions, instability, high armed conflict, and economic collapse. Due to these reasons, it is essential to restore these countries and implement long-term sustainability.

Relevant UN treaties, resolutions, and reports:

United Nations Security Council. (2014, April 28). Resolution 2151 (2014) on Security Sector Reform. S/RES/2151 (2014). [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2151\(2014\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2151(2014))

The resolution addresses the issue of Security Sector Reform (SSR) in conflict-affected regions, pointing out the importance of creating efficient and accountable security organisations, including law enforcement, armed forces, and justice systems. It argues that a lack of proper security infrastructure may jeopardise peace agreements, prevent economic progress, and hinder sustainable development and urges for greater collaboration among nations to achieve stability in areas affected by conflicts.

Previous attempts to solve the issue:

September 2008: UN–World Bank–EU Post-Crisis Partnership Framework - In an effort to promote economic recovery in areas affected by conflict, the United Nations (UN), World Bank, and EU came up with a common strategy. This approach emphasised rebuilding infrastructure, establishing governance, and restoring labour markets. However, it failed as the policies were mostly developed at a level without taking the impacted nations' economic circumstances into account.

April 27, 2016 – UN Sustaining Peace Resolution - This resolution was adopted by the United Nations (UN) to connect peacebuilding to economic development by focusing on creating job opportunities and lowering inequalities. The goal was to avoid conflicts by boosting economies.

This resolution did not work effectively because of inadequate funding and coordination among various institutions. Many actions were temporary, which did not create a permanent, long-term solution.

Possible solutions:

Investment Models That Are Conflict-Aware:

Collaborating with organisations like the International Finance Corporation to make investments more secure (risk protection, insurance). This makes businesses more willing to invest in conflict-affected areas without worrying about the risks, which helps economic development.

The Digital Economy and Financial Inclusion:

Working together with organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to increase the scope of mobile banking and other digital services. This will enable individuals to gain access to financial resources and help revive their enterprises, which will help local businesses get back to the market.

International Development Finance and Risk-Sharing Mechanisms Should Be Enhanced:

Developing funding systems by working with organisations like the World Bank and regional development banks that use concessional loans, blended finance, and risk guarantees. These mechanisms make investments more accessible in developing nations because of the reduced risk and attraction of private money, as well as the promotion of industries.

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