

# ILO IN FRAGILE SITUATIONS

## An Overview

Working in partnership with countries in fragile situations is a priority for the ILO. The significance of Decent Work for peacebuilding and recovery has been highlighted through recent initiatives such as the conclusion of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Over the past decade the ILO has been active in more than 38 fragile and conflict-affected states including all of the 18 member countries of the g7+ group.

### BOX 1: THE FRAGILITY SPECTRUM, g7+ (2013)

*“A state of fragility can be understood as a period of time during nationhood when sustainable socio-economic development requires greater emphasis on complementary peacebuilding and statebuilding activities such as building inclusive political settlements, security, justice, jobs, good management of resources, and accountable and fair service delivery.”*

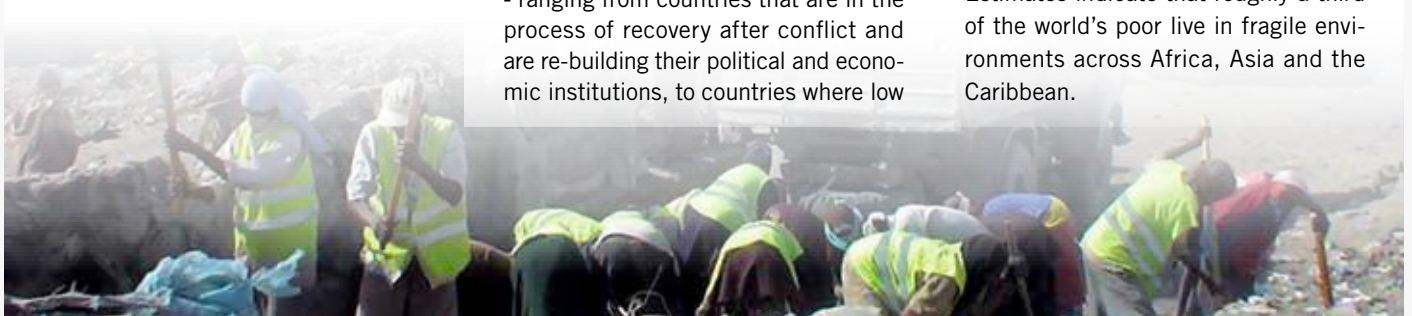
### The notion of fragility

In the past two decades, civil conflict and violent social unrest have increased and the majority of conflicts no longer take place between but within states. The legacy of violent conflict and the inability to absorb internal and external shocks challenge sustained socio-economic development and create a temporary ‘state of fragility’ (see box 1).

The notion of fragility applies to a diversity of situations at national and sub-national level. States move into, out of, and across the spectrum of fragility - ranging from countries that are in the process of recovery after conflict and are re-building their political and economic institutions, to countries where low

levels of state effectiveness and economic development seem to be chronic as well as to countries where state-building and economic development are hampered by protracted conflict. In other cases fragility may occur in isolated pockets that can cross borders.

The consequences of fragility on livelihoods and collective well-being are profound: Countries affected by fragility are the furthest from achieving the MDGs within the current time frame. Estimates indicate that roughly a third of the world’s poor live in fragile environments across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.



### ILO’s role in fragile situations

Since its foundation in 1919, the ILO has facilitated peacebuilding and recovery through social reform and the promotion of democratic participation, social dialogue, fundamental rights and the promotion of Decent Work. In more recent years the ILO adopted a specific focus on conflict resolution and disaster response reconstruction.

In 1996 the Office established the *ILO Action Programme on Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Countries emerging from Armed Conflict*, which became the *InFocus Programme on*

*Crisis Response and Reconstruction* and subsequently was renamed ILO/CRISIS in 1999. In 2013 the *Fragile States and Disaster Response (FSDR) Group* was established to ensure Office-wide coordination of ILO’s engagement in fragile and disaster settings.

In fragile environments the ILO operates through a combination of downstream and upstream activities. Downstream activities are projects that address immediate needs of crisis-affected populations and spread the ‘peace dividends’ at community level. Such efforts serve

then as an entry point and give ILO the credibility to facilitate upstream activities for mid and long-term programming at national and regional level.

ILO’s engagement in fragile situations is based upon the principle of national leadership and ownership: Through collaboration with tripartite constituents and UN partners, ILO’s projects and programmes help to build the capacities of governments and communities to create institutions responsive to the needs of their citizens.

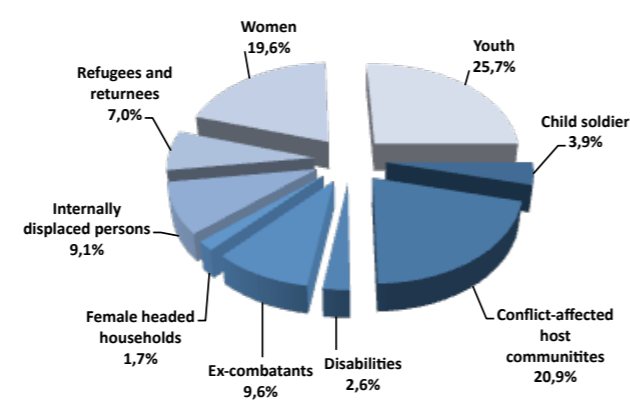


## ILO's work in fragile situations

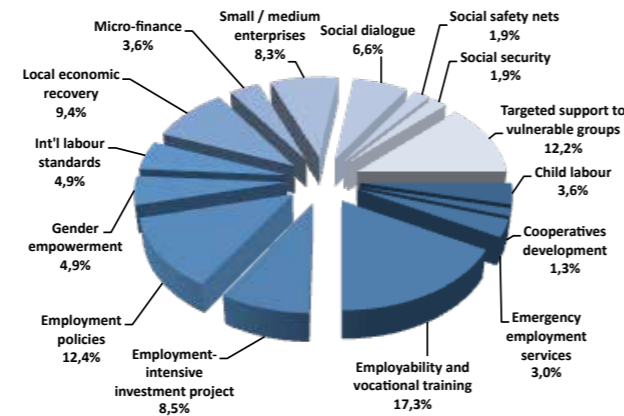
From 2004 to 2013, the ILO has been active in more than 38 fragile and conflict-affected States including all the 18 countries of the g7+ group and implemented more than 360 projects. In 2013, the FSDR Group and PARDEV jointly carried out a comprehensive stock taking exercise to analyse ILO's involvement in fragile situations over the past decade. Data was collected to define primary groups of beneficiaries and to analyse the variety of technical approaches utilised (see box 2 and 3).



### BOX 2: BENEFICIARIES OF ILO PROJECTS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES



### BOX 3: ILO'S TECHNICAL APPROACHES IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES



### Somalia: From immediate interventions to long-term strategy

In Somalia the ILO facilitated through Decent Work approaches a discussion between government and civil society representatives on the impairment of livelihoods as one of the key drivers of conflict. Framing the dialogue within the Decent Work agenda helped to discover common interests and to put forward practical approaches to deliver concrete peace dividends across societies through the assistance of ILO's institutional knowledge and expertise.

In Somalia, following the fall of President Siad Barre, contested leadership is a driver of fragility. The ILO addressed this situation by providing Decent Work programming in Somalia, including with the authorities of Somaliland and Puntland. The Decent

Work process was driven by open dialogue and facilitated Somali owned Decent Work programming with a specific focus on youth employment: 'The Journey to Work'. The ILO continues to work on immediate employment and is a founder of the Joint Programme 'Local Governance and Decentralised Service Delivery', that the government considers fundamental for national development.

Core Decent Work themes remain the creation of immediate and mid-term employment opportunities, the provision of vocational training for young people, the adaption of culturally-strong social protection formats to assist vulnerable populations and the promotion of inclusive-decision making processes.

### National ownership from the start: An 'embedded approach' for Timor-Leste

In fragile States, the key to consolidating peace and stability is to position governments to lead the state and manage the delivery of services to their citizens. Recognising the importance of national ownership, the ILO has therefore adopted the 'embedded approach' in Timor-Leste. This approach foresees that (1) ILO staff is directly integrated in the structure of national institutions and (2) works side-by-side with their counterparts directly through national institutional systems, to (3) ensure that project outputs are delivered by and through national institutions - *from Day One of the project*.

Over the past 10 years, the ILO and Timorese government institutions (including the Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment Policies, the Secretariat of State for the Support and Promotion of Private Sector, and the Ministry of Public Works) have successfully implemented 11 projects. Initiatives such as the 'Business Opportunities and Support Services (BOSS)', the 'Roads for Development (R4D)', the 'Enhancing Rural Access (ERA)' and the 'Training and Employment Support Programme (TESP)' provide rural households with productive employment and sustainable income and spread tan-

gible peace dividends and a visible livelihood improvement across society. The feasibility of implementation through government institutions has been tested in emergency, recovery, reconstruction, and early-stage transition to development program contexts. During project evaluations ILO's 'embedded approach' emerged as a core strength in measures of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Multiple donors such as AusAID, EU, Irish Aid, New Zealand Aid Programme and Norad have generously supported the ILO and its government partners in Timor-Leste.

### Consolidating peace through Trade Unions in Guinea

In fragile settings it is often the experience of employment – rather than unemployment – that drives people to participate in political violence. Poor and exploitative working conditions, extremely low pay and a lack of formal mechanisms through which to express dissatisfaction create the conditions for violence. The ILO therefore recognizes that the dynamics of labour markets are complex and – depending on the quality of labour governance - can do both, facilitate peace as well as produce conflict.

The ILO enhances since 2011 the capacities of Guinean Trade Unions to stren-

gthen their role in preventing conflict and consolidating peace. Applying ILO's 'UN Employment Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration' and its manual on 'Prevention and Resolution of violent and armed conflicts', the ILO supported the Union movement to run a national training followed by several initiatives such as local workshops, campaigns in the poorest neighbourhoods of Conakry, a football tournament and university debates to promote Decent Work as a means to build peace and prevent conflict in Guinea.



### Transition from war to peace: Socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Armed conflicts leave behind large numbers of ex-combatants, from regular armies or from rebel and paramilitary groups, whose disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) into civilian life is critical for a successful transition from war to peace. For ex-combatants, including former child soldiers, demobilization often entails immediate loss of income and social status.

Rapidly providing assistance to support the transition from military to civilian

life is a central component of ILO's work in facilitating DDR processes in post-conflict situations and enables ex-combatants and host communities to find alternative livelihoods and to rebuild their communities.

In the DRC, for the past 15 years the ILO has been supporting post-conflict recovery through socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants, including children. The ILO promotes micro- and small enterprises, employability and

vocational training, and cooperatives development. The latter in particular strengthens social cohesion and improves community collaboration. Other income generating activities include short-cycle business-management training, cash grants, access to micro-finance and health insurance schemes, as well as coaching. Labour-intensive reconstruction works help rehabilitate severely damaged infrastructure.



## Operational challenges in fragile situations

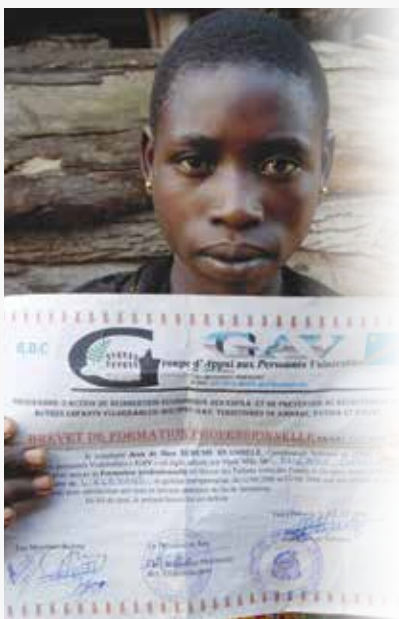
Fragility is not a permanent condition but a temporary challenge to the successful socio-economic development of States and their citizens. Political realities on the ground are rarely evident; and there is no 'one size fits all' approach for operating in fragile environments. National ownership and the inclusion of local expertise are vital for designing evidenced-based and diversified policy approaches that correspond to the individual needs of States and societies affected by fragility.



### BOX 4: THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF FRAGILITY



### BOX 5: ILO CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIVITIES



## The way forward

The ILO seeks to expand its work in fragile States through enhancing its technical capacities, developing partnerships with key actors and through launching new, and extending already existing, programmes in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

Responding to the demand from the field for greater and more coherent coordination of ILO involvement in fragile States, the Office plans to establish a task team on fragility at global and regional level to raise awareness, to coordinate ILO operations and to mobilise ILO action in fragile and disaster settings.

On 20 March 2014, the ILO is due to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the g7+ Secretariat to foster the sharing and exchange of information, the implementation of joint activities and the provision of technical assistance between the ILO and the current 18 g7+ member countries.

In the Horn of Africa and the Sahel the ILO is expanding its programming to tackle the root causes of conflict and fragility at the local, national and regional level across borders and States and to foster peace through the creation of employment and social dialogue opportunities within the regions and beyond.

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