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# Forging Resilient Social Contracts:

## A Pathway to Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace

### SUMMARY FINDINGS

A Research and Policy Dialogue Project





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**United Nations Development Programme**

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## **SUMMARY FINDINGS**

A Research and Policy Dialogue Project

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~ with Rebecca Hollender, Marie-Joelle Zahar, Mary Hope Schwoebel,  
Alina Rocha Menocal, Alexandros Lordos, and case study authors

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The views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the funders and partners, the United Nations or its Member States, or working group advisers.

# Table of Contents

List of Acronyms.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	8
<b>PROJECT FRAMING OVERVIEW</b> .....	11
Study questions, propositions and research.....	13
Explanation of drivers, cross-cutting issues and sustaining peace.....	14
Methods.....	20
<b>FINDINGS</b> .....	21
Driver 1: Inclusive political settlements addressing core conflict issues.....	21
Driver 2: Institutions delivering effectively and inclusively.....	23
Driver 3: Social cohesion broadening and deepening.....	26
Cross-cutting issues.....	28
Resilient social contracts and sustaining peace.....	29
<b>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	31
<b>PROJECT WORKING GROUP</b> .....	34

# List of acronyms

ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
CA	Constitutional Assembly (Nepal)
CCIs	Core Conflict Issues
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Nepal)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DPA	Dayton Peace Accord
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GNU	Government of National Unity (South Africa)
GNU	Government of National Unity (Zimbabwe)
GPA	Global Political Agreement (Zimbabwe)
GPC	General People's Congress (Yemen)
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFI	International Financial Institution
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)
NDC	National Dialogue Conference (Yemen)
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NP	National Party (South Africa)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGC	Oslo Governance Centre
ONHRI	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (Zimbabwe)
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan (South Sudan)
SAIS	Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
SeeD	Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USIP	United States Institute for Peace
WB	World Bank
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

# Executive Summary

'Forging Resilient Social Contracts: Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace' is an 11-country research and policy dialogue project that aims to revitalise the social contract amidst conflict and fragility and to advance policy and practice for preventing violent conflict and for achieving and sustaining peace. The comparative findings provide evidence and insight into what drives social contracts that are inclusive and resilient, and how they manifest and adapt in different contexts, transcending what are often unsustainable, ephemeral elite bargains into more inclusive ones, with durable arrangements for achieving and sustaining peace. The project involves international scholars, policy advisers and authors from the countries examined: Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen and Zimbabwe. The project activities reported on here took place from 2016-mid 2018 and include case research in these countries, a series of policy and scholarly dialogues<sup>1</sup> and this summary. Future project work could include policy papers on critical themes emerging from the research, knowledge products featuring the case studies, and a social contract assessment tool. The project gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Oslo Governance Centre (OGC), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Berlin and New York, the Julian J. Studley Fund of the Graduate Program of International Affairs at The New School in New York, in this work.

This Summary Findings Report introduces the project context, the project's research framing, and findings from nine of the 11 case studies.<sup>2</sup> Numerous validation workshops and policy dialogues in the case study countries and elsewhere inform the findings. Policy recommendations for national and international policymakers are shared. These findings and recommendations provide a basis for deepened future research and related policy and project activity.

Research findings illuminate how three 'drivers' facilitate resilient social contracts to attain and sustain peace: i) inclusive political settlements addressing core conflict issues, ii) institutions delivering effectively and inclusively; and, iii) social cohesion broadening and deepening. Highlights include:

- The early stages of peace negotiations, especially the peace agreement, can redefine parameters for inclusion and exclusion and for positioning different groups and issues, often with long-term effects; advances, however, can be difficult to maintain.

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1 Dialogues for sharing and validating our research finding have taken place in Bogotá, Sarajevo, Harare, Washington DC, Geneva and Oslo, with upcoming sessions in Stockholm and New York.

2 Afghanistan and Somalia are not included as the cases are not completed, although their high relevance to these findings must be acknowledged.

- Core issues of conflict are often not effectively addressed over time or through previous peace processes and political agreements, directly undermining the inclusiveness of the political settlement.
- Social contract-making mechanisms are often not well-linked in ways that promote the coherent and effective implementation of peace agreements and a more inclusive political settlement. This is true for state institutions, the 'hardware' for carrying forward peace agreement implementation and, similarly, for non-state and customary institutions, which are often not sufficiently or systematically engaged, especially at subnational levels.
- Vertical and horizontal social cohesion are linked in important ways and interact with the other drivers, offering apertures for catalytic action across initiatives and efforts.
- In addition to progress within the three drivers, resilient national social contracts help attain and sustain peace when: i) the drivers interact in mutually reinforcing ways; ii) resilience capacities are mobilised and supported towards peace efforts; and iii) parallel systems and structures and competing social contracts are brought into dialogue, supporting the forging of a national social contract.

Together, these findings offer a valuable way to assess and understand how peace agreements and the political settlements underlying them can deal with the core issues of conflict and can lead to a more lasting formula – namely, an inclusive, resilient social contract.

Policy recommendations, appearing at the end of this document, show how this is relevant for policymakers. Highlights include the need to:

- Identify and strengthen social contracting mechanisms (i.e. dialogue, constitutions, national development plans, subnational arrangements) that inclusively and coherently address conflict issues and new forms of responsive governance that support transforming institutions at all levels.
- Target conflict issues broadly important to state and society with the explicit goal of building consensus around the issues, and agreed mechanisms to address them, thereby building momentum and trust in the ability of these processes to address other conflicts.
- Strengthen social cohesion across drivers in catalytic and context-specific ways,

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