

Quarterly Progress Update on the Multi-Year Appeal

1 July to 30 September 2018

Department of Political Affairs (DPA)



United Nations
Department of Political Affairs
DIPLOMACY. PREVENTION. ACTION

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) continued to focus on its six priority areas outlined in the 2018-2019 Multi-Year Appeal (MYA) for funding: conflict prevention, crisis response, investing in peace, expanding partnerships, strengthening United Nations system-wide collaboration, and ensuring organizational effectiveness. These priorities are in line with the objectives set out in the DPA's Strategic Plan for 2016-2019. Below are a few highlights of our achievements.

Conflict prevention

In **Ecuador**, the security situation in its northern border deteriorated significantly earlier this year with an increase in attacks attributed to groups linked to drug trafficking, including a group composed of members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) that never demobilized. This exacerbated the vulnerabilities of certain groups and increased the risk of conflict in the area. Against this background, the Government requested support from the United Nations to strengthen national conflict prevention and peacebuilding capacities in the northern border zone. DPA deployed a specialist to work with the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team to develop a needs-based strategy for conflict prevention in the northern border area, including a proposal to undertake local dialogues to help identify priorities for UN and Government's action to prevent conflict.

DPA continues to advance the implementation of Security Council resolution 2419 (2018) on Youth, Peace and Security, promoting the inclusive representation of youth in decision-making processes and supporting youth-led peacebuilding and conflict-prevention initiatives. For example, the **UN Regional Office for West Africa and the Sahel** (UNOWAS) rolled out a series of awareness-raising activities related to Youth, Peace and Security in five countries (Benin, Ghana, The Gambia, Guinea, and Togo). Thanks to Extra-budgetary (XB) funding, the Security Council resolutions were translated into local languages and disseminated to governments, civil society organizations, universities, training centers and local youth organizations, as well as through several communication channels, including radio, TV and the internet. Furthermore, UNOWAS kickstarted the compilation of data in all five countries to inform the development of a regional action plan for young men and women's involvement in political and peace processes in the region in partnership with the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) and the G5 Sahel. In **Somalia**, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia supported the Interim Somali National Youth Council initiative to organize a series of regional youth consultations in each Federal Member State that so far gathered more than 780 youth. These events helped promote integration among young people from different Federal Member States and built support for the establishment of the forthcoming National Youth Council.

Crisis response and resolution

During the third quarter of 2018, the UN Special Envoy for **Syria**, Staffan de Mistura continued his high-level diplomatic engagements to establish a constitutional committee under UN auspices consistent with resolution 2254. The Special Envoy held constructive discussions during the high-level week of the General Assembly in New York, including with the Small Group (France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, and the United States of America), the Astana Guarantor Countries (Iran, Russia and Turkey) and regional Arab countries. XB resources were critical in supporting the Special Envoy's diplomatic engagements as well as ensuring coordinated UN messaging on the need to avert a full-scale military operation in Idlib and prevent dire humanitarian consequences. XB funds were utilized to provide strategic advice for senior UN leadership, including the Secretary-General, on the fast-moving developments. Furthermore, the Syria Team continued to rely on technology to support its political analysis by developing maps to visualize the evolving military movements on the ground. The Office of the Special Envoy also continued its engagement with the Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room. XB funding also helped advance the UN's work on the post-agreement planning as per the Secretary-General's Directive of 31 May 2017, in particular on advancing the housing, land and property and governance under the "now" issues.

The Rapid Response and the Standby-Team of Senior Mediation Advisers continued to be an essential part of DPA's **Crisis Response System** to enable the Department to respond quickly with tailored approaches to demands stemming from a broad range of partners. For example, in **El Salvador**, the UN-supported Group to Support Political Dialogue comprising representatives of academia, think-tanks, the business sector and the church continued to promote an agenda for democratic governance in the country. As a result of those efforts, the political parties represented in parliament agreed in July to establish a forum for dialogue and established thematic groups to address five specific topics: (i) institutional reforms; (ii) financing for development; (iii) education; (iv) health and (v) public security. **Rapid Response** funding allowed DPA to quickly respond to these encouraging developments that are key to build confidence in an election year, with the provision of dedicated technical expertise.

In the course of 2018, the **Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers** has provided support in approximately three dozen regions and country contexts. Approximately 30% of deployments have focused on the Middle-East (largely in support of the Special Envoys for Syria and Yemen); 25% in Africa (principally in peacekeeping contexts in Central African Republic, South Sudan and Sudan); and 13% in the Asia-Pacific region (in non-mission settings, often in direct support to Peace and Development Advisers and Resident Coordinators).

Investing in peace

The United Nations Verification Mission in **Colombia** continued to support efforts to reintegrate former combatants and advance the provision of security guarantees for themselves and communities on the ground. Using XB funds, the Verification Mission provided small contributions to jumpstart 13 projects self-funded by former combatants, prioritizing women-led initiatives. These initiatives were carried out while awaiting the disbursement of government funds for longer-term collective reintegration projects. As of October 2018, only two out of 17 government-approved projects had received funds. The self-funded initiatives were therefore largely the only economic activity in reintegration areas and have so far benefitted a total of 795 participants. The provision of XB funding helped boost confidence of the former combatants in the process and reinforced the impact of the Verification Mission in these remote areas. Furthermore, the Verification Mission convened a series of forums to share best practices in reintegration, promote dialogue and reconciliation, and encourage local

authorities, international actors and the private sector to support these efforts. The Verification Mission also took stock of progress in implementing a gender approach on reintegration, brought together national authorities and former combatants to discuss productive projects related to tourism, and fostered reconciliation through smaller meetings at local level.

DPA continued to coordinate the **UN electoral assistance** to Member States and in the third quarter deployed over 20 electoral missions to provide technical electoral advice and assistance to Member States and regional organizations as well as to support UN electoral teams on the ground. In **Afghanistan**, XB funds supported a mission led by Assistant-Secretary-General Jenča to discuss the electoral preparations and underscore the UN's continued support for elections in the country. The mission also had the opportunity to meet prominent leaders and listen to the concerns of various stakeholders, including opposition parties ahead of the 20 October polls. In **Central African Republic**, in response to a request by the Government for UN electoral assistance for the 2020-2021 elections, a needs assessment mission was deployed in September. The mission made several key recommendations including that the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) be given an electoral mandate for the provision of technical, operational and logistical support to the Electoral Commission. The mission also recommended the provision of good offices by the SRSG during the electoral process as needed, and concrete proposals for improving the electoral legal framework, election administration and planning, electoral operations, voter registration, civic and voter education, information technology and electoral logistic.

Deepening partnerships with Member States and regional organizations

XB funding helped advance the partnership with the **African Union** (AU) in the areas of peace and security through the provision of critical support on conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy, including in the implementation of the AU master roadmap of practical steps to "Silence the Guns" by 2020 Initiative. On 9 July, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission convened the Second AU-UN Annual Conference at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. DPA took a leading role in the coordination of the event where both leaders welcomed the strong collaboration between the AU and the UN and expressed

their commitment to further deepen the strategic partnership between the two organizations. The meeting provided the opportunity to highlight the importance of multilateral organizations and multilateralism, as an instrument for effective international governance to address global issues. On 18 July, the Secretary-General issued his report (S/2018/678) on strengthening the partnership with the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU). The report outlined the progress achieved in enhancing collaboration between the two Organizations in peace and security including between their principal and subsidiary organs, as exemplified by the 12th Annual Consultative Meeting of Members of the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council held in New York on 19 July.

The **UN Liaison Office for Peace and Security** (UNLOPS) in Brussels continued to be an instrumental link between the UN and the **European Union** (EU) on peace and security matters. It supported the finalization of the UN-EU Strategic Partnership Priorities on Peace Operations 2019-2021, endorsed by the 28 EU foreign ministers in September and outlined in a UN-EU joint statement released in the margins of the General Debate of the 73rd General Assembly. DPA provided important contributions to the new Priorities, enabling the cooperation to span all UN peace operations, and include conflict prevention and support to political processes and solutions for the first time. UNLOPS also provided support to high-level visitors, including the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, who strengthened the cooperation on Afghanistan with Heads of State and Government attending the NATO Summit, and highlighted the need for political progress and sustained financing for Somalia to Ministers attending the High-Level Partnerships Forum hosted by Sweden and the EU in July.

In July, the UN held its biennial general cooperation meetings with the **League of Arab States** (LAS) and the **Organisation for Islamic Cooperation** (OIC). At the UN-LAS meeting, the participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation and coordination between the UN and LAS on peace and security, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, combating terrorism and radicalization, and electoral assistance, among other issues. In line with the Secretary-General's vision for prevention, the meeting allowed for an exchange of views on the Middle East Peace Process, and on the situations in Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The UN-OIC General Cooperation Meeting welcomed the deepening of relations between the UN and the OIC and emphasized

the increase in scope and frequency of consultations at all levels that should contribute to international peace and stability, sustainable development, and protection of human rights. In addition, XB funds allow for staff exchanges with LAS to enhance working-level relations, deepen desk officers' knowledge of the counterpart organization, and develop complementary methods of effective cooperation.

Finally, XB funding continued to support the delivery of targeted trainings to regional and sub-regional organizations such as the **ECOWAS-UN Training on Gender and Elections** and Roundtable Discussion on Electoral Violence held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in August. A total of 39 participants (85% women) from all 15 ECOWAS Member States, as well as one participant from the Indian Ocean Commission, participated. So far, DPA has partnered with six regional organization for the coordination of these type of trainings (after CARICOM, OIC, LAS, ASEAN and SADC) that benefited around 200 participants from about 90 Member States of the above regional organizations.

Strengthening partnerships with the UN system and beyond

As part of UN's efforts to sustain peace in **Burkina Faso**, the Resident Coordinator initiated a dialogue with key national stakeholders in September to ensure that major issues of national interest are managed in a spirit of national consensus. These issues include national reconciliation, support to the reform of the security sector and preparations for the 2020 general elections. The Resident Coordinator's engagements are part of ongoing efforts by the UN to support national stakeholders to manage and withstand political, social and security shocks, contribute to building social cohesion and enable the country to implement its five-year National Economic and Social Development Plan in a manner that enables it to advance inclusive democratic principles. DPA has been closely monitoring the growing insecurity in the northern and eastern parts of the country, especially as the country heads to its first elections following the transition in 2015. XB Funds have allowed DPA to provide sustained support to the Resident Coordinators' role, in particular in relation to strategic planning, coordination and communication of the sustaining peace initiatives in the ground.

During the 3rd quarter of 2018, DPA's **Gender, Peace and Security Unit** continued to provide technical support and fulfil a coordination role between Headquarters, gender advisers in Special Political Missions, and UN Women

at the Headquarters and regional levels. DPA facilitated regular exchanges and the development of terms of reference for the formation of a Women's Advisory Group to the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq. This Group will help advance the inclusion of women in the Mission's reconciliation and peacemaking efforts in Iraq.

Thanks to XB resources, DPA developed a brief for senior leadership on the findings of a study on UN-World Bank collaboration in Yemen, including the embedding of a World Bank expert within the office of the Special Adviser (and later Special Envoy) to the Secretary-General, highlighting lessons from this arrangement and considerations for its replication in other contexts. Building on the successful, first-ever UN-World Bank desk-to-desk exchange, held in May in Washington, DPA began preparations for a second exchange, to be held in early 2019, which will involve a broader number of UN stakeholders. DPA also engaged in extensive planning across the UN and World Bank in preparation for the regional consultations on the findings and implementation of the UN-World Bank study "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict" which will take place in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Institutional effectiveness

XB funding continues to support DPA's initiatives to enhance its organizational effectiveness, ensure that DPA staff at Headquarters and in the field are properly equipped with the necessary skills to conduct inclusive and gender-sensitive conflict prevention analysis, support mediation processes, prevent electoral violence, and integrate gender, peace and security concerns in its political analysis and recommendations. Three flagship courses were organized during the third quarter, namely the E-Analytics workshop to provide staff members with concrete tools and methodologies to carry out open source data analysis such as sentiment analysis, social media verification, etc.; a training on "preventing and responding to electoral violence"; and a "drafting for political analysis course" delivered in Headquarters and in the UN Regional Office for Central Africa. Thanks to XB funding, DPA is bringing its trainings to field offices and Special Political Missions, a cost-effective practice to develop the capacities of field colleagues. Finally, DPA conducted its 15th Gender/Women, Peace and Security training for DPA staff on September that gathered 23 staff from the field and Headquarters, bringing the total number of staff trained to 351.

DPA continues to strive to strengthen its strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. The Department's **Learning and Evaluation Board** met in August to assess progress in implementing the DPA's 2018 Annual Learning and Evaluation Plan, and XB funds continued to support the dedicated evaluation capacity. The Department commissioned a lesson learned study on the UN's engagement around the 2017 Kenyan elections that is currently underway. In addition, DPA brought external expertise to conduct an independent assessment of its flagship Women Peace and Security training course to assess how participants have applied the acquired learning in the medium to long run, and analyze the extent to which DPA's reports, notes and key messages include gender and WPS considerations.

Finally, at the meeting of the High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation in Helsinki on 18 June, the Secretary-General tasked DPA and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue to develop a toolkit on the **use of new technologies in mediation**. The toolkit aims to assess risks and opportunities resulting from the use of new technologies in the field of armed conflict mediation. It will combine general considerations with concrete examples and practical cases in four priority areas: conflict analysis, inclusion, public information/communication and digital negotiations. A first draft of the toolkit is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

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