



Citizen-Centered Approaches  
to State and Market



# Securing Stable and Peaceful Societies in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

**Debate chaired by John Ashe, President of UN General Assembly**

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## Themes to Consider

It is well established that peace and stability serve as both means and outcomes for development. Recent data and reports have confirmed their interconnectedness<sup>1</sup>. The discussion of the place of peace and stability in the post-2015 development agenda over the last months is encouraging, and the seriousness with which the members of the UN are addressing the issues is laudable<sup>2</sup>.

The citizen must be our litmus test for development. As we hear repeatedly across all continents and most recently in MyWorld survey data<sup>3</sup>, humans have a fundamental need to feel safe. Today, citizens are at risk from cross-border and internal conflict, as well as criminality and violence – including domestic violence and violence against women. A lack of development or poorly managed progress is in many circumstances a driver of conflict: uneven allocation of resources, corruption, and poor governance lead to feelings of exclusion and become a grievance and rationale for violence. Conversely, conditions for inclusive growth – circumstances allowing for asset creation, investment, and trust in the system – are lacking in conditions of conflict. Security can be established through a variety of means, but stability can only come from winning the trust of citizens through a political and cultural climate of development, and through accountable institutions.

In the post-2015 agenda, we must be more careful about the alignment between peace and stability. All too often, peace deals come at the expense of sustainable development. In conflict-affected areas, elites can divvy up the spoils of war over the heads of citizens, planting the seeds for the next round of violence. In future, we should encourage a type of political process that advances development, serves interests, and allows for the aspirations of the majority of citizens. Building state capacity and functionality are intrinsically part of the peace process. Citizens, including women and youth, are critical actors in as well as beneficiaries of peace-building. More broadly, national dialogues and democratic participation can help reveal how those who govern can gain greater trust and promote accountability to citizens.

Mechanisms of international assistance have often undermined the key goal of consolidating legitimate and accountable state institutions and market activity. We need to consider what type of development is appropriate; the *how* of implementation matters. Success stories exist: South Korea, Malaysia, Brazil,

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<sup>1</sup> In Larger Freedom. UN. Secretary General. 2005. <http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/UNreform/UBUNTU-1.pdf>; Strengthening the Security-Development Nexus. UN and IPI. 2004. [http://www.un.org/esa/peacebuilding/Library/Strengthening\\_SecDev\\_Nexus\\_IPA.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/peacebuilding/Library/Strengthening_SecDev_Nexus_IPA.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> A More Secure World. UN. High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. [http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/historical/hlp\\_more\\_secure\\_world.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/historical/hlp_more_secure_world.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> MyWorld Analytics. UN. 2015. <http://data.myworld2015.org/>

Colombia, and others can shed light on ways to promote successful and sustainable institutions.

Sometimes, the ways in which development is organized can undermine its objectives. Careful examination can reveal how development might exacerbate conflict or divisions within a society. We need a real commitment to do no harm – to eliminate parallel structures, reform our multitudes of projects, and consider the academic and practical lessons that are repeated so often.

### **Key Considerations for Post-2015**

With these lessons in mind, we can examine how our theory and practice of development needs to adjust. Institutions are foundations for both peace and prosperity. While a multi-dimensional approach is essential, not all issues must be tackled simultaneously; careful sequencing of objectives and means is required. Governance is not an abstract but relates to specific and concrete activities. Natural resource management, for instance, can either drive conflict or underwrite development, depending on the rules of the game. The education sector can also be a focal point: primary education has unquestionable value, but equipping the next generation for public and private service is equally important. The laws that set the basis for institutions determine the level of citizen trust and, through consolidating police, justice, and commercial systems, determine capital allocation.

We need a truly citizen-centered approach to development. To achieve this, engagement must be promoted across all demographics, particularly youth and women. As many societies become younger and more urbanized, development work takes on an increasingly different context. Any new social contract must put the aspirations of the next generation at the forefront. Jobs and opportunity should be advanced through inclusive growth, and social policy should prevent exclusion and promote safety. Brazil can be seen as a success story: its laws prioritize the livelihoods and well-being of citizens. Women also cannot be neglected; we must not exclude half the population from being either an object or framer of policy.

Accountability is critical on all fronts, and should be a core principle of aid, budgets, and private investment. Data show that young populations are highly invested in building accountable systems, particularly in areas where narcotics and criminality have footholds. Advanced economies need to play their part in addressing gaps and flaws in the regulation of global markets.

Moving forward, we should look beyond national plans and consider the importance of regional markets. Development across borders can contribute to peace and trust among societies. In particular, regional infrastructure around energy, water, health, and culture creates opportunities for broad integration.

We must demand that countries create their own mechanisms to anticipate, prevent, and respond to crises. Given challenges posed by environmental disasters, national and local resilience will become more important.

### **Conclusions**

In villages and neighborhoods where people live, it is impossible to separate demand for law, order, and safety from the other aspects of citizens' lives and ways that policies and institutions respond to them. There is a critical need for the international community to arrive at a consensus – an agenda that puts safety and peace at its forefront, builds accountable institutions, and strives for development that truly serves the citizen.