Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
Expert Group Meeting on “Protracted Conflicts Dynamics and Resilience in the Arab Region”
Amman, 21-22 May 2015

AGENDA

DAY 1: Thursday 21 May 2015

08:30 – 09:00  REGISTRATION AT KEMPINSKI AMMAN HOTEL, SUN MEETING ROOM

09:00 – 10:00  OPENING SESSION:
Keynotes Speakers: Mr. Abdallah al-Dardari, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN ESCWA
Prof. Sir Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford
HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan

Master of Ceremony:
Dr. Erica Harper, Executive Director, West Asia-North Africa Institute (WANA)
Majlis El Hassan, Jordan

10:00 - 12:00  SESSION I: THE DYNAMICS OF PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
Chairperson: Mr. Tarik Alami, Director, Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division, UN ESCWA

The Internal and External Drivers of Conflict
The session will examine the current conflict dynamic in the Arab region, focusing on the structural and proximate causes as well as triggers.
Deliberations to tackle the following questions:
• What are the common trends of conflicts in the Arab region?
• What are triggers of conflicts in the Arab region? Does the analysis need to be conflict-specific?
• What are the interconnected causes of conflict in the Arab region?
• How do weak economic performance and a wide governance deficit increase the risk of protracted conflict?
• How do high rates of unemployment, in particular for youth, correlate with conflict onset?

Speakers:
Professor Mr. Alexander Betts, Associate Professor in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, Director, Humanitarian Innovation Project, Oxford University
Mr. Youssef Chaitani, Chief, Section on Conflict and Development, UN ESCWA
Mr. Peter Harling, Senior Middle East and North Africa Adviser, International Crisis Group
Mr. Riad Kahwaji, Chief Executive Officer, Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis
Mr. Raja al Khalidi, Development Economist, Palestine
12:00 - 12:30 Coffee Break

12:30 - 14:15 SESSION I – PART 2
Chairperson: Mr. Joost Hiltermann, Director, Middle East and North Africa, International Crisis Group

The Neighborhood Effects and Conflict Spillovers

- What are the roles of cultural, economic, security-related and ideological channels in the transmission of conflict?
- How can we measure how conflict in one country can influence immediate and more distant neighbors?
- What are the channels of transmission of conflict from one country to the next? Are these risks more prevalent in Arab countries compared to the rest of the world?
- Are refugees an important mechanism by which conflict spreads across regions?
- Who does the presence of refugees and displaced populations affect the risk of subsequent conflict in host and origin countries, although the vast majority of never directly engage in violence?
- How do we promote peace and stability in the presence of large refugee populations?
- What is the role of humanitarian aid as a peace building mechanism?
- How do we break the humanitarian dependency trap for displaced and refugee populations?

Speakers
Mr. Raghid El Solh, Independent Consultant and Analyst
Mr. Fernando Cantu-Bazaldua, First Economic Affairs Officer, UN ESCWA
Ms. Neven Bondokji, Independent Consultant, Specialist in Peace and Development Studies
Mr. Issandr El Amrani, Project Director, North Africa, International Crisis Group

14:15 - 15:15 Lunch

15:15 – 17:15 SESSION II: Impact of Conflict and Occupation on Development Outcomes: The Costs and other Challenges on the Arab region
Chairperson: Dr. Erica Harper, Executive Director, West Asia-North Africa Institute, Majlis El Hassan

- What are the social and economic costs of violent conflict?
- What are the priority development outcomes amidst protracted conflict in the Arab region?
- What is the key role of development as a part of the response to address and end violent conflict?
- What are the available quantification methods to be utilized?

Speakers
Ms. Valentina Calderon Mejia, First Economic Affairs Officer, UN ESCWA
Mr. Scott Gates, Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo
Dr. Jad Chaaban, Team Leader, Arab Human Development Report 2015, Associate Professor of Economics, American University of Beirut
Mr. Nader Kabbani, Director of Research and Policy, Silatech
Ms. Katleen Maes, Head of Office, Gaza Sub-Office, OCHA

Discussion
DAY 2: Friday 22 May 2015

09:00 – 11:30 Session III
Conflict Affected LDCs in the Arab Region: Exacerbated Vulnerabilities and Mitigation Options

- How have conflict affected LDCs progressed towards the implementation of the Istanbul Plan of Action (IPoA)?
- What are the lessons learnt after five years of IPoA implementation and what are the challenges encountered in the process?
- What are the international experiences on reducing vulnerabilities and creating economic resilience?
- How can regional cooperation support the implementation of IPoA across different regions for all conflict affected LDC’s?

Chairperson: HE Ms. Hooria Mashour, former Minister of Human Rights, Yemen

Speakers
Ms. Sofia Palli, Associate Program Officer, ESCWA
Mr. Oumar Diallo, Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries
Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif, Head of Governance and Human Security Team, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
Mr. Ala Qasem, Project Management and M&E Team Lead, The Executive Bureau, for the Acceleration of Aid Absorption & Support for Policy Reforms, Yemen
Mr. Daffa-Alla Osman, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sudan
Mr. Ahmed H. Al-Shibami, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Yemen

11:30 - 12:00 Coffee Break

12:00 – 14:00 Session IV
Building Blocks towards Resilience and Transformation: The Essentials

- National Dialogue and Reconciliation: Agreeing on the basics among multi-groups
  ✓ What is required for a prelude to end the fighting in the region?
  ✓ How do Arab countries strengthen justice and reconciliation organizations in order to protect human and property rights?
  ✓ How can we set the arena where the political settlement is to happen?
  ✓ Constitutions more a long term process
- Equity in Access and Opportunity
  ✓ What is the role of national human rights institutions in peace building?
  ✓ How do we root out corruption and favoritism to protect people and their rights but also to promote good governance and public confidence in their institutions?

Speakers
Mr. George Willcoxon, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA
Mr. Reinoldus Leenders, Reader in International Politics and Middle Eastern Studies, Department of War Studies, King’s College - London
Mr. Karam Karam, Head of Research, Common Space Initiative, Beirut
Mr. Zaid Al-Ali, Senior Advisor on Constitution Building, IDEA

Discussion

14:00 - 15:00 Lunch
15:00 - 16:30  Session IV (continued)

- Security Sector Reform and Rule of Law
  ✓ What are the key elements required for a successful security reform?
  ✓ What Institutional devices as well as training programs are needed to keep military organizations neutral?
  ✓ What are the key institutions that need to be created or reformed to guarantee the rule of law?

- Human Rights for All
  ✓ How can we strengthen the ability of Arab countries to establish safety and security and provide for humanitarian and social needs of the population?
- How can resilience of conflict affected populations be supported?

Speakers
Ms. Natasha Ezrow, Senior Lecturer, Department of Government, University of Essex
Mr. Nidal Jurdi, Programme Officer, Arab Regional Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Mr. Amr Mohamed Khairy Abdalla, Senior Advisor for Policy Analysis and Research, Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Addis Ababa University

Discussion

16:30 - 17:30  Open discussion: Prioritizing among a multitude of priorities: The way forward

Chairperson: Mr. Abdallah Al-Dardari, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN ESCWA

Speakers
Mr. Adib Nehmeh, Regional Advisor, UN ESCWA
Ms. Najat Jumman, Member of Chamber of Commerce, Yemen
Mr. Ahmad Sourani, Resilient Development Expert, Palestine