



World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) Consultation Meeting with NGO, CSO, Private Sector and United Nations Stakeholders

Feedback Summary

Date: April 27, 2019

Location: Kabul, Afghanistan

Audience: NGO, CSO, Private Sector and United Nations Stakeholders

Overview and Key Issues Discussed: World Bank Group representatives including the IFC and the World Bank thanked the participants, appreciating that joining the discussion required a particular effort on a day when many organizations in Kabul faced movement restrictions owing to road closures ahead of planned public events. The WBG presented an overview of strategy, including its purpose, its key thematic elements, and how it will aim to address operational issues that affect delivery in FCV contexts, noting the particular relevance for Afghanistan where partners have been working together on the same issues for many years. The team explained that this gathering was convened as part of the first phase of consultations on the strategy, which includes in-person consultations at the national level. Stakeholders are also welcomed to share additional feedback via email to FCVConsultations@worldbank.org or through the WBG's online consultation portal.¹ Participants were then invited to ask questions and to express their views. The following summary highlights comments and recommendations raised during the discussion.

At the close of the meeting, the WBG team noted the links between the developing FCV strategy and ongoing work in Afghanistan. Noting that the WBG country office is currently conducting a Performance and Learning Review (PLR) of the Afghanistan Country Partnership Framework and given the relevance of issues discussed during the meeting to the PLR, the team briefly shared a summary of emerging “key messages” from the PLR and encouraged participants to share insights on PLR with the World Bank Country Office in Afghanistan.

| Specific Feedback from Stakeholders |
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| 1. General Comments |
| <i>Comments:</i> The strategy development is a significant undertaking, involving both technical and political issues around partnerships. Given that complexity, partners appreciated the early outreach and engagement. Members of the NGO community noted the potential utility of the strategy in helping partners beyond the WBG in their own planning to develop conflict sensitivity programming, and encouraged all partners to take an integrated, cross-cutting approach to addressing conflict. Questions were raised about the “Fragility Conflict and Violence” terminology, its relationship to the former Fragility and Conflict Affected States terminology, and other frameworks including those for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Landlocked Countries. |

¹ Accessible at <https://consultations.worldbank.org/consultation/world-bank-group-strategy-fragility-conflict-and-violence>.

Specific Feedback from Stakeholders

References to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in general and Sustainable Development Goal 16 in particular were appreciated. Partners suggested that more explicit links to other SDGs could be highlighted as the strategy is developed.

Recommendations:

- Continue strong engagement throughout the ongoing FCV strategy development process. WBG FCV team encouraged to engage with the Asian Development Bank headquarters, which is undertaking its own strategic planning process for fragile and violence-affected contexts.
- Either in the strategy or in supporting materials, consider explaining the relevance of including violence in the terminology (reflecting the potential development impact of high levels of inter-personal violence that may or may not be linked to conflict and/or instances of localized conflicts that may not have state-wide effects but can have significant impact on violence) and highlighting the links to/relationship with other similar frameworks.
- Where possible, highlight links between the strategy contents and SDGs in addition to the current explicit link to SDG 16’s focus on peace, justice and strong institutions.

2. Themes: Remaining engaged in situations of active conflict, Sub-National engagement and Natural resource management and conflict prevention

Comments:

The commitment to remaining engaged in situations of active conflict and crisis was welcomed. Discussion stressed that the commitment should extend not only to *countries* dealing with ongoing conflict but *within countries* to subnational areas directly affected by conflict. When possible, programming should extend to subnational areas where insurgent groups exert some measures of control. Afghanistan has seen good progress on improving access to key services in such areas, for example, but other development priorities in regions affected by the insurgency – particularly management of natural resources and scarcity of water resources/lack of access to drinking water – are among the topics fueling conflict and contributing to new/localized conflicts. A comment also encouraged attention to the extension of financial services as a priority, particularly for areas emerging from conflict. Lags in access to financial services have contributed to development delays in post-conflict settings.

Recommendations:

- Consider promoting project design that allows for flexibility in local delivery modalities or enables program design specific to regional needs within a country. Aim for the strategy to acknowledge that national level political solutions to conflict can then engender local conflicts, and the need for development programming to be responsive to such challenges.

3. Delivering services to foster social inclusion

Comments:

A question asked if the WBG was proposing technocratic solutions for fundamentally political problems. Discussion from some partners noted that focusing on the details of implementation can yield important “technocratic solutions” to what may appear to be political challenges, and to that end the strategy’s focus on challenges of delivery can be valuable.

Participants asked WBG to clarify how it would contribute to trust-building in particular. Partners working at the subnational and community levels report significant gaps in information and planning at the central and local levels, with deficiencies in information flow both from communities to the center and from center to the communities. Issues of trust and access to information are relevant not only to the center-subnational dynamic, but also between institutions. Inter-institutional mistrust can contribute to or deepen citizens’ mistrust of the state as a whole.

Specific Feedback from Stakeholders

In Afghanistan, humanitarian actors observe that some past attempts at rapid confidence building through, for example, the Provincial Reconstruction Team approach to stabilization have had unintended impacts that undermined confidence, which has contributed to challenges for humanitarian responses.

Discussion noted the challenge of corruption and in particular political corruption a to trust-building, both for citizens to the state and for donors to recipient countries.

Recommendations:

- Consider elaborating on the role of CDD in trust building, in particular to highlight what is *not* meant by trust building in the context of the FCV strategy. Distinguish *political* trust building from the core development priorities that contribute to citizens' trust in the state, such as reliability of services, ensuring opportunities for participation and voice of citizenry – citizen/state compact. Discussion also touched on the fact that addressing basic bureaucratic challenges (e.g., paying taxes, seeking a business license) can play an important role in trust building, and the strategy may be able to highlight the links to trust-building in other thematic areas beyond service delivery/CDD.

4. Challenges of Delivery/Improving data, evidence and monitoring

Comments:

Discussion noted the challenge, particularly when engaging donor partners, of articulating impacts and “counter-narratives” – instances where prevention has been effective. Discussion cited examples of significant numbers of people who were *not* displaced by recent flooding in Afghanistan, owing to the construction of effective retaining walls. The strategy's focus on data analytics is therefore strongly welcomed. WBG was also encouraged to consider options for shared data platforms and opportunities for promoting direct knowledge and information exchange between local level actors on creative and best practice solutions to specific challenges.

Recommendations:

- Consider highlighting recent examples of shared analytical processes in FCV settings and drawing lessons from same on improving data analytics for development partners overall.

5. Challenges of Delivery/Partnership

Comments:

Participants expressed interest in learning how the strategy envisions addressing partnerships. Whilst governments will remain the primary counterpart for the World Bank and private sector will remain the primary client for IFC, in some conflict affected settings policies and internal procedures can be adjusted to respond flexibly to the needs and capabilities of a wider range of partners. WBG engagement with humanitarian teams and UN Country Teams is increasingly sought and welcomed. It is noted that staffing multiple coordination mechanisms at the country level can be a challenge, but increasingly the WBG is seeking in-country leadership skilled at building and maintaining strong partnerships. WBG leadership in Afghanistan stressed the team's willingness to respond when

Recommendations:

- Candidly address the practical limitations of on-the-ground coordination while citing practical examples of alternative coordination mechanisms such as data sharing platforms, and opportunities for leveraging existing coordinating fora efficiently to address implementation considerations and challenges.

List of Participants: Attached. Note that invitations to the consultation meeting were extended to the United Nations Country Team (including humanitarian agencies and the Asian Development Bank), the

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United Nations Special Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce, Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Afghanistan Banks Association, Afghanistan Microfinance Association, Afghanistan Industrial Association, and more than 30 NGO and CSO partners, including women's organizations. Owing to security arrangements in the capital of Kabul ahead of public events planned for the week, some invitees were unable to join the in-person discussion.

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