1. **The role of media** – see attached briefing note on Media & Conflicts
In fragile states and conflict contexts, media too are very fragile. They often lack the human, technical and financial resources to function professionally and independently. When they lack good management, independence and trained journalists, media can foster conflicts by spreading rumors, reinforcing stereotypes and stigmatization of some communities and polarization of the whole society. However, professional and independent media can contribute to conflict prevention through a practice of systematized dialogue. Governed by a strict respect of ethical codes, equity rules and a diversity of points of view, media can be a catalyst for a more peaceful public space. By overcoming stigmatizing representations and highlighting realities, inclusive and balanced media can allow antagonistic groups to get to know each other better, start respecting each other's points of views and understand their problems and aspirations. They can create bridges and reduce the polarization of societies divided between ethnic, religious, or political groups.

 The media is an intermediary that fosters interactive communication between citizens, their representatives, and international decision-makers. Therefore, they can help decision makers in better taking into account the needs and capacities of populations affected by conflict. Local, professional, and independent journalists have a watchdog role to play in denouncing the dysfunctions and corruption that characterize societies facing major conflicts. They can also be agents of change by giving voice to the most marginalized population and sharing innovative solutions to conflicts.

2. On the efforts related to **SDG#16**, the role of media and information is often forgotten, yet it is crucial. UNDP and UNESCO have recently produced the attached paper from which we would like to highlight what we think should be taken into consideration in the WB strategy, as media can:

   16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
   Independent, diverse and professional media sectors have the potential to be actors for peace through:
   - Avoiding and reducing the spread of hate speech and disinformation leading to violence,
   - Providing conflict-sensitive reporting, informing on root-causes of conflicts and peaceful solutions,
   - Offering a platform for dialogue and, as a trusted infomediary, supporting broad-based social cohesion, rather than being a vehicle for reinforcing identity politics,
   - Fostering two-way communication on developmental and humanitarian issues, according to good practices in communication for development,
   - Providing gender-sensitive reporting on issues such as violence against women.

   16.4: Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime
   Investigative journalism has been influential in uncovering and forcing action on large-scale illicit operations in recent years (e.g. Panama Papers, Paradise Papers)

16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
Independent media, including investigative journalism:
has been closely associated with corruption control across countries in various ways at different levels of development, as recognised by the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as by UNESCO's declaration on "Free Media Contribute to Good Governance", and by a growing body of research. The important role of the media was also included in the UN commitments made at the London Anti-Corruption Summit in May 2016 and included in the Joint Statement by the High Level Segment at the 18th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Copenhagen in October 2018.
can also facilitate efforts to mobilize citizens around anticorruption agendas and help citizens voice their concerns

16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.
This target directly supports public access to and use of information, in order to support SDG 16 and the broader 2030 Agenda. The indicators serve to highlight the important role of journalists and others in using that information as well as the need for journalists and media workers to be safe to carry out that vital work.

The WB strategy should support Media development interventions to support 16.10 in order to (among other aspects):

- Strengthen a conducive enabling environment for free media actors through advocacy and policy advice
- Support training for independent media professionals so they can make the freedom of information requests necessary for investigative journalism, and for all areas of development reporting, including reporting on the progress made in achieving the SDGs.
- Promote and protect freedom of expression
- Promote and protect safety of journalists and the end of impunity for crimes against journalists
- Support the development of public service journalism
- Support coverage by the media of progress or regress on guarantees for access to information and safety of journalists.

I hope these inputs will be taken into consideration. I remain available to complement or contribute further if possible to your thinking.

Best regards,

Caroline Vuillemin