INTEGRATING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND DEVELOPMENT: PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK FOR FRAGILE CONTEXTS

ENHANCING PROGRAMME AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS
Foreword
Today, nearly one quarter of the world’s children — 535 million — live in fragile contexts. They are facing conflicts, violence, disasters or chronic political crises that daily jeopardize their health, safety, education and even their lives.

Supporting these children today is about more than fulfilling an immediate humanitarian need. It is about sowing the seeds of lasting development, improved health and education, economic growth, and even peace in communities that have known too little of these benefits.

The Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts details UNICEF’s increased efforts to bridge short-term humanitarian action and long-term development programming. Grounded in practical experiences, data gathered and lessons learned, the Framework is helping us design, shape and deliver innovative programmes with our partners that better serve children affected by a wide range of political, economic, social and environmental shocks.

In particular, the Framework emphasizes investing in prevention. Building better systems and institutional capacities will not only benefit communities over the long term — it will quicken the rate at which countries can recover, once security and stabilization return. And it will help countries preserve hard-won development gains, avoid backsliding, and become stronger and more resilient in the face of future crises.

By helping these communities forge a practical pathway out of fragility today we are — community by community, child by child — building a more sustainable future.

Henrietta H. Fore
Executive Director, UNICEF
5 July 2016, Gilberto’s son and daughter in his home of La Esperanza, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Gilberto had to return home after three difficult years in the United States of America where it was hard to get a job.
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11 March 2017, fourteen-year-old Nadira Mohammed, whose sister Najma left Hargeisa with traffickers in January 2017, walks with her friends back from school to her family home in Hargeisa, Somalia.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organizations</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>GRIP</td>
<td>Guidance for Risk-Informed Programming</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MoRES</td>
<td>Monitoring Results for Equity System</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSE</td>
<td>Non-State Entity</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLaCES</td>
<td>Protective Learning and Community Emergency Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSGs</td>
<td>Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPM</td>
<td>Third Party Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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</table>
13 October 2016, eight-year-old Mylove Théogène (right) sits with other girls near her home in Jeremie, Haiti. Mylove’s family stayed in their home on a hilltop until it collapsed at around 5 a.m. on the night Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti. The family then moved to a school building for shelter.

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Five hundred thirty-five million children – nearly a quarter of the world’s children – were estimated to live in countries affected by armed conflict, violence, disaster and/or chronic crisis in 2017.\(^1\) Fifty million children are deemed “uprooted”, having either migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced by conflict, climate change or poverty.\(^2\) Fragility presents the biggest challenge to current and future achievements in development and humanitarian gains. Fragility is widely considered a significant impediment to development gains achieved through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), since the worst performers on the MDGs were those countries affected by fragility.

Children face more serious deprivations in fragile contexts (see Box 1). Countries affected by fragility are consistently associated with poorer health outcomes for children and children have less access to adequate essential social services. The limited or lack of national capacity to deliver basic social services, including child protection services, coupled with protracted conflict make children significantly more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. More children are displaced as a result of fragility than ever before.

**Box 1: Child vulnerability in countries considered fragile\(^3\)**

- Child poverty rate is higher: 58 per cent in comparison to 17 per cent in non-fragile contexts.
- Children are three times less likely to attend primary school.
- Children are twice as likely to have no access to clean water.
- Children are twice as likely to die before the age of five years.

There is a renewed focus and commitment by the United Nations to ensure that the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are relevant and achievable in all contexts, including fragile contexts. Fragility has many layers – the impacts of climate change and natural disasters are greater in countries that are already struggling with insecurity or to build a fragile peace. Recurrent severe weather events in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa, for example, are devastating people’s lives in countries where violence and instability limit the possibilities for reducing disaster risk. It is estimated that 60 per cent of all disasters occur in fragile contexts. In this context, the United Nations, including UNICEF, is challenged to find ways to accelerate the achievement of results for people and children in fragile contexts through a greater emphasis on prevention and a sustained capacity to respond. This renewed focus builds on past and existing efforts to strengthen results in these unstable contexts such as the New Deal for Engagement

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in Fragile States, Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs), the World Humanitarian Summit, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on ‘sustaining peace’.

**Why UNICEF is well placed to respond to and be effective in fragile contexts**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a useful and important overarching framework against which UNICEF enhanced programming and operational support to fragile contexts is aligned. Not only does the 2030 Agenda set long-term goals, but it also reinforces and acknowledges that sustainable development, resilience and peace are interlinked. This compels the United Nations and all its partners to address the causes of fragility as an integral part of development, rather than just the symptoms and consequences. The ‘Agenda 2030’ also urges that no one is left behind in development. Therefore, enhanced, accelerated and expanded efforts are necessary in fragile contexts if these commitments are to be realized. Within the 2030 Agenda, inclusion, justice, security, strong institutions and equality are global development goals and targets in their own right, and there is agreement that success in these areas is linked to achieving all other development goals. The localization of the 2030 Agenda is especially crucial in fragile contexts where the reach of central authorities may be limited or non-existent.

UNICEF has extensive programme experience of working to build resilience in fragile contexts and is demonstrating some good practices. UNICEF has demonstrated the capacity to implement programmes that aim to address the underlying causes of fragility and, in doing so, emphasizes prevention rather than merely responding to the consequences of fragility. UNICEF is operational and is effective in both humanitarian and development contexts with a strong child/human rights mandate and hence has immense potential to integrate its work in a single response, i.e., meeting immediate needs while putting in place a long-term vision. UNICEF has a critical role in strengthening systems, particularly in social services, as a contribution towards statebuilding. UNICEF works with both government authorities and with local communities so is well placed to strengthen the interface and relationship between these two. UNICEF has the potential to work flexibly, is responsive to changes in the local context and catalyse change through decision-making processes. Therefore, UNICEF is uniquely placed to work effectively in fragile contexts.

**Definition: What is meant by fragile contexts?**

UNICEF defines *fragile contexts* as:

contexts where there is an accumulation and combination of risks as a result of context-specific underlying causes combined with insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks.

Concepts and terms useful in relation to fragility are listed in Annex 1.

**Geographic scope: Where are the fragile contexts that may require enhanced programme and operational support?**

Enhanced programming and operational support for fragile contexts is relevant to countries included on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) States of Fragility\(^4\) report or the World Bank’s Harmonized List of Fragile Situations\(^5\) as a reference or starting point;\(^6\) and other contexts that:

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\(^6\) The OECD list of fragile countries is updated every year. In 2015, it comprised of 50 countries, analyzed with respect to the five underlying dimensions of violence, justice, resilience, economic foundations and institutions. In 2016, it comprised of 56 countries analyzed against specific indicators for risks and capacities in five dimensions including economic, environmental, political, security and societal.
show vulnerabilities as a result of multiple underlying causes of fragility such as: weak economic foundations including youth unemployment, significant environmental risks (climate, natural hazards, biological, health, chemical) with limited resilience of communities and systems to adapt and respond to these risks; weak and unaccountable political and governance structures including weak institutional capacities for social services; poor security due to political and social violence; weak societal cohesion including exclusion and persistent or growing inequalities; face significant aggravating stresses, including: hosting significant numbers of refugees that overstretch already limited social services; serious climate-induced risks; are considered to have significant sub-national pockets of fragility; are emerging as fragile based on forecasting analyses, including worsening inequalities and increasing human rights violations.

It is useful to understand fragile contexts as sitting on a spectrum rather than through a typology. A typology based on a few dimensions is too simplistic, therefore it is more useful to envision a spectrum with ‘violent conflict/low resilience to risks/weak governance’ on the one end of the spectrum and ‘improving peace/resilience to risks/improving governance’ at the other end (see Figure 1). The spectrum is a non-linear one.

Figure 1: Fragile contexts viewed as a spectrum

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Given that there is no universally agreed definition of fragility, it is now widely recognized that it is more important to focus on understanding the determinants of fragility in a given context, rather than defining fragility itself.

Fragility does affect different groups of people in different ways: adolescents, minorities, refugees/internally displaced persons, children with disabilities, rural/urban communities, communities living along disputed borders, etc. Across all population groups, fragility is likely to result in the most vulnerable, including women and children, becoming even further left behind. What is also consistently evident is that:

- widespread human rights violations are pervasive in fragile contexts;
- a strong nexus exists between fragility and gender inequalities (see Box 2);
- climate change and disasters exacerbate fragility and fragility increases disaster risk;
- migration and displacement are both causes and consequences of fragility.

In summary, the UNICEF analytical framework for fragile contexts is described in Table 1.\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2: Gender inequality and fragility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women and girls will be affected differently in fragile contexts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Weak institutions such as justice systems may leave women and girls more vulnerable to social and political violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Women and girls will be further discriminated against in participating in the labour market where high unemployment most likely already exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Women and girls will face even greater obstacles in accessing social services where these are weak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In fragile contexts affected by conflict, women and girls are vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse while men and boys are vulnerable to recruitment as combatants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time, women and girls have a critical role as agents of change in fragile contexts in strengthening the resilience of families, communities and institutions.

\(^8\) Adapted from 'States of Fragility 2016'. 
### Table 1: Analytical framework for fragile contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes/risks and vulnerabilities</th>
<th>Cross-cutting causes and consequences</th>
<th>Human rights implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to risks stemming from weakness in economic foundations: unequal growth; youth unemployment; growing inequities; persistent poverty; market instability; increases in food and fuel prices.</td>
<td>Migration and displacement are both causes and consequences of fragility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to climatic and health risks; natural disasters; chemical (pollution) and biological (disease epidemics, infectious diseases); climate change exacerbates fragility.</td>
<td>Limited institutional capacity, weak governance and limited capabilities to prevent, respond and adapt are both causes and consequences of fragility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to risks inherent in political processes; corruption; oppression; political instability; weak governance and capacity to deliver essential social services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to violence and crime, political and social violence; violent conflict.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to risks affecting social cohesion, inequalities arising within specific groups; low social cohesion; discrimination and growing inequalities: based on ethnic, political and socio-economic disparities; social unrest; religious and ethnic tensions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal framework and the principles underpinning the programme framework for fragile contexts

Convention on the Rights of the Child underpins the work of UNICEF for all children, including children living in fragile contexts. A number of programming principles guide the implementation of the Convention in fragile contexts:

Principle 1: Remain guided by longer-term goals that address the structural causes of fragility while addressing urgent needs.

Principle 2: Stay engaged and maintain and expand access to affected populations through principled action.

Principle 3: Understand local contexts and, where possible, enable local actors to take principled action as a priority.

Principle 4: Overcome delivery challenges through innovative partnerships that allow immediate and sustained support to be given.

Principle 5: Adapt to evolving and complex contexts, with an openness to informed redirection, by making planning instruments and systems work for programming in these difficult operating environments.

These principles are very much in line with the 10 Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations.

Programme framework for fragile contexts

UNICEF’s programme response in fragile contexts focuses on actions in four interrelated priority areas (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

Figure 2: Programme framework for enhancing programme and operational support for fragile contexts

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Table 2: Priorities and actions to enhance programming and operational support in fragile contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>Invest in contextual analysis of multidimensional risks and adapting programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.1</td>
<td>Use innovative instruments in collaboration with others to address gaps in data, information and analysis relevant to fragile contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.2</td>
<td>Assess and understand the structural causes of fragility, including those that underpin violations of human and child rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.3</td>
<td>Integrate a capacity analysis of the national governance, structures and systems, including at the local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.4</td>
<td>Use data and analysis to inform transformative results achievable over longer time frames with continuous monitoring and programme adaptation to context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>Enhance programming strategies in fragile contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.1</td>
<td>Prioritize and respond to the structural causes of fragility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.2</td>
<td>Maintain access and stay engaged using a principled approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.3</td>
<td>Implement humanitarian and development programmes through integrated and shared analysis, frameworks and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.4</td>
<td>Create and maximize the opportunities to strengthen systems incrementally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.5</td>
<td>Enhance performance of decentralized local governance for achieving results in social services that lead to strengthened social cohesion and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.6</td>
<td>Strengthen national institutions and local structures to be equitable and inclusive and to deliver results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.7</td>
<td>Protect the most vulnerable through shock-responsive social protection systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.8</td>
<td>Respond to crises across borders through sub-regional strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 3</th>
<th>Enhance partnerships for more effective results in fragile contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.1</td>
<td>Explore and consolidate partnerships that enhance efforts to strengthen governance and institutions to improve performance in service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.2</td>
<td>Establish inter-agency partnerships within the context of multi-year national planning frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.3</td>
<td>Consolidate long-term partnerships with national NGOs, local CBOs and local private sector businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.4</td>
<td>Identify and strengthen partnerships with human rights organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.5</td>
<td>Youth engagement in the delivery of programmes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Priority 4</th>
<th>Expand and adapt internal capacities, procedures and operational support in fragile contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 4.1</td>
<td>Use the analysis of structural causes of fragility as well as an analysis of risk and the progress towards results to revise, realign and adjust programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 4.2</td>
<td>Expand staff competencies and staff profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 4.3</td>
<td>Prepare well for the effective distribution of supplies, take risks and strengthen local and national procurement and delivery channels for sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 4.4</td>
<td>Secure multi-year, flexible funding sources that support innovation and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 4.5</td>
<td>Engage in enhanced knowledge management to support learning, accountability and innovation in fragile contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3 illustrates an overview of the programme framework for fragile contexts and its linkages with other approaches. In any given fragile context (shown in red), a range of instruments and tools supporting resilient development (shown in light green) may be applied to achieve more resilient communities, families and children (shown in dark green). The application of the four priorities of the programme framework reinforces greater coherence, consistency and deliberate actions – in contextual analysis, in programming, in partnerships and internal systems – all of which are necessary if immediate and sustainable results are to be achieved for children in fragile contexts as a contribution towards the SDGs.

Annex 2 shows some examples of implications for programme shifts that may be a priority in relation to some of the causes of fragility described in the analytical framework in Table 2. (This list of examples is not exhaustive.)

Each of the four priority areas and associated actions are described in more detail in the following sections.
3 December 2016, four-year-old Athra from Mosul, washes her feet at a UNICEF water tap in Debaga camp in Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

© UNICEF/UN042718/Khuzaie
13 February 2016, children play at the Kamesa Child-Friendly Space in Musaga in Bujumbura in Burundi. The Kamesa Child-Friendly Space is one of 37 child-friendly spaces that UNICEF has set up with partners.

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Invest in contextual analysis of multidimensional risks and adapting programmes

It is necessary to address the information and analysis gaps that are evident in fragile contexts. Equally important, information and analyses should be used to inform the design and revision of programmes given the need to continuously reflect on and revise plans in unpredictable and changing contexts.

UNICEF rarely undertakes assessments and analyses alone but ratherdoes so collaboratively with government, United Nations agencies and other partners.

**Action 1.1**

*Use innovative instruments in collaboration with others to address gaps in data, information and analysis relevant to fragile contexts*

**Rationale:** Fragile contexts present significant challenges for information collection, assessments and planning. Given that these contexts are insecure and rapidly changing, information can quickly become outdated or irrelevant and household surveys may not be feasible, especially where there is limited national capacity to lead these assessments. Data in these contexts can potentially be threatening to authorities and so transparent and credible assessments conducted jointly are more relevant. UNICEF will often need to consult and work collaboratively with external experts to implement new and innovative instruments while finding ways to make existing instruments and systems work better. This therefore implies that information, analysis and planning must address, at a minimum, a number of considerations (see Box 3).

**Box 3: Minimum requirements of information collection and analysis in fragile contexts**

- Address gaps in information using alternative instruments for assessments.
- Undertake situation and risk analysis to inform principled and risk-informed programming.
- Understand the drivers and structural causes of fragility.
- Include a political, conflict and risk analysis and consider the implications for programming.
- Establish a rolling mechanism for context analysis to predict and detect rapidly changing situations, including population displacements.
- Include a multi-risk analysis for potential shocks and stresses and their synergistic effect.
- Assess the institutional capacities for the potential to deliver results for children.
Implement assessment methodologies that are appropriate and feasible for difficult operating environments

Alternative and innovative methods for information collection and analysis can be used in situations where household surveys such as Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys are not feasible and/or the data are out of date. For example, in Lebanon, satellite imagery was used to estimate population figures to plan a response; in Iraq, planning estimations were based on extrapolation models applied to census data and combined with figures on displaced populations. Robust rapid assessment methodologies, which do not imply the need for household surveys, should be considered, including through instruments such as Rapid Pro. It is prudent in many contexts to leverage the existing humanitarian assessments such as the humanitarian needs overview. In Tajikistan, an innovative means to monitor the economic crisis and its impact on children is “Listening2Tajikistan”, an instrument that employs a monthly survey undertaken by the World Bank and UNICEF and which is potentially useful for forecasting fragility. In highly insecure contexts, assessments are conducted remotely through local partnerships, with processes in place for robust verification and validation, as has been done in Somalia and Afghanistan. In rapidly changing situations, ‘rolling situation analysis’ allow information and planning to be updated more quickly. An understanding of the situation of children and the design of an appropriate response should be done using the UNICEF Guidance for Risk-informed Programming (GRIP) for programme planning and implementation.

Reinforce and rationalize partnerships for coordinated multi-agency efforts in information collection and analysis

A plethora of United Nations and multi-agency analytical tools is emerging and being applied in fragile contexts, and UNICEF will need to rationalize its engagement and use of such tools and promote their better integration, where possible. Tools range from primary data collection to analytical frameworks for organizing and consolidating secondary sources to general information sources such as the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) Humanitarian Data Exchange and OECD States of Fragility 2016 report.

In terms of engaging in assessments and analyses in the New Deal countries, at a minimum it is necessary to participate in the fragility assessment that informs both the One Vision, One Plan and the Compact/FOCUS, which aims to facilitate engagement for country-owned and country-led pathways out of fragility.

In general, it is preferable to partner with government wherever it is possible to still maintain a principled and impartial assessment and analysis, as well as with United Nations agencies, in both assessments and data analysis, to rationalize the number and type of assessments, optimize data use and also seek opportunities for shared planning across development and humanitarian sectors (e.g., United Nations Development Assistance Framework and COMPACT planning cycle, humanitarian needs overview planning cycle, the Grand Bargain agreement). Information must be used not only to enhance programme action but also to leverage the potential contribution of partners. Wherever possible, local and national partners should be given access to information as equal partners.


13 The New Deal currently implemented in 20+ self-identified countries represents a shift from past efforts in that it places more emphasis on country-led processes through primarily three components: PSGs, FOCUS and TRUST.
Action 1.2

Assess and understand the structural causes of fragility, including those that underpin violations of human and child rights

Rationale: The underlying causes of fragility are multidimensional, with fragility arising where one or more of these are evident. The causes can be categorized in five dimensions as: weak economic foundations, including high youth unemployment; significant environmental threats (climatic, biological, chemical) with limited resilience to adapt and respond to threats and crises; weak and unaccountable political and governance structures and processes, including inadequate or inequitable social services; poor security caused by social and political violence; and weak social cohesion and persistent or emerging inequalities. Fragile contexts are often incorrectly equated solely with conflict-affected or ‘unwilling’ states, yet fragility often arises in the context of diminishing resources as a result of environmental threats and/or the lack of strong governance structures to effectively reverse or halt growing inequalities. An ongoing understanding of these structural causes is fundamental to the design of effective programmes for fragile contexts.

Assess and analyse the structural causes of fragility

Assessments should be informed by an analytical framework that is comprehensive enough to identify the multiple factors underpinning fragility (see Table 2). Engagement in government-led and inter-agency fragility assessments14 (Guidance Note on Fragility Assessments from the New Deal initiative) provide useful analyses of the broader environment within which UNICEF programmes are designed. Risk-informed programming would benefit from a broader fragility analysis. United Nations and UNICEF planning cycles may even need to be of a longer time frame that reflects long-term goals (10–15 years) with frequent and deliberate points of reflection.

A shared analysis of fragility, especially when conducted together with other UN organisations, can potentially strengthen coherence between development, human rights, humanitarian action and peacebuilding (see Box 4).

Key components of the shared analysis and planning efforts include a common understanding of the root causes of vulnerability, the drivers of conflict and the steps to address conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction, social protection and emergency preparedness. In line with the United Nations Secretary-General’s Human Rights Up Front Action Plan, the United Nations must also stay attuned to risks related to the human rights situation to facilitate early warning, prevention and response for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. This will require the development of early warning systems (which should include indicators such as increasing discriminatory propaganda, fundamentalist discourse, hate crimes, discriminatory displacement, inequalities including horizontal inequalities, and access to food, health and education).

Box 4: Shared analysis for greater coherence

Box 5: Lessons learned from implementing conflict analysis in Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

In Burundi, conflict analysis requires a thorough and in-depth historical, social and cultural knowledge of the context. Partnerships with qualified local organizations are essential, not only for undertaking the sensitive research, but also for implementing the community-based change processes.

In eastern (the) Democratic Republic of the Congo, a shared conflict analysis can potentially enhance programme effectiveness. A conflict analysis on its own is insufficient, however. A wider system must also be in place to allow meaningful adjustments to be made to ensure that national, government-led programmes are more conflict-sensitive.

Programming provides a methodology that considers the likelihood of various hazards occurring and their potential to overwhelm weak national response capacities and lead to the rise of acute and urgent needs, a deepening of deprivation facing children or an erosion of development progress.

Access information and undertake analysis to understand the extent, patterns and trends of violations against children

In fragile contexts, the rights of women and children are more likely to be violated. Every effort should be made to ensure that the necessary information and monitoring mechanisms are in place to determine the extent, pattern and trends of these violations and that this information is used to inform action. For example, the monitoring and reporting mechanism implemented in South Sudan has been useful as an advocacy measure through the United Nations Security Council, and has also provided a framework for engagement with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army on an action plan to put an end to child recruitment in the medium- to longer-term.

Use analyses to inform principled programming and action

A context and situation analysis must also identify entry points for principled action that is, the non-negotiable ‘red lines’ that underpin a principled response. A context analysis should also inform the points of convergence for the two sets of principles guiding development and humanitarian work. Working with state institutions does not necessarily imply the need to ignore humanitarian principles but rather the need to take pragmatic, context-specific, principled decisions to work with national structures and local institutions in the interests of the most vulnerable. Context analyses, particularly socio-political analyses, must inform a response that is based on the principles of humanity, neutrality and independence. Evidence of disparities in social development – on the basis of ethnic, religious, livelihood, geographic or socio-economic status –

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must be identified and the design of programmes adjusted. Working with OCHA to assess the patterns and
trends in humanitarian access to affected populations is also relevant in fragile contexts.

**Action 1.3**

**Integrate a capacity analysis of the national governance, structures and systems, including at the local level**

**Rationale:** Weak institutional capacities and systems underpin many of the five underlying dimensions of fragility. Furthermore, achieving results in fragile contexts is often contingent on the capacity of existing formal governance structures and systems to deliver with the support of national capacities at the local level or community structures. These are often weak in fragile contexts, particularly at the local and decentralized levels. An analysis of these capacities is critical to informing a longer-term plan to strengthen the performance of these national structures. While information and analysis need to be strengthened at the central level and aggregated at the national level, information and analysis must also serve the needs of communities and local administrative structures. In fragile contexts, situations change rapidly and decentralized local analysis and use of data potentially leads to a more timely understanding of the situation. Given the relevance of local power-relationships, this also potentially provides a more context-specific analysis. It may also lead to social service providers being more accountable to the local community. Decentralized decision-making can be very challenging in many fragile contexts, however, and it may be necessary to incrementally build the trust required to do this effectively.

**Integrate an institutional capacity development analysis into programme planning**

Use existing analyses or conduct an institutional capacity analysis to plan for the capacity development of institutions and systems to deliver results. The focus and scope of the analysis must be on governance and the potential capacity of institutions to perform and achieve results. Therefore, it is insufficient to merely map out the relevant institutions. Instead, a political economy analysis should inform a more comprehensive capacity analysis of the priority institutions that have the potential to achieve results. The UNICEF Guidance for Risk-informed Programming sets out how to assess the capacities of communities, institutions and authorities. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the United Nations Development Group frameworks are potential instruments that allow a more comprehensive and multifaceted approach to capacity development to be embraced.21

**Box 6: Local decentralized information systems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Kenya**22

“Given that displacement occurs so frequently, the Rapid Response to Movement of Populations (RRMP) in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is predictably triggered by local and regional early warning systems.”

“Some counties in Kenya face recurrent shocks and consequently experience frequent surges in acute malnutrition. UNICEF has supported local government authorities at sub-national level to analyse and apply nutrition information to inform action.”

“In Iraq, a focus on the most severely affected governorates together with a strategy of decentralization leads to a more informed analysis and planning at the governorate level ... and this implies a need to support the governorate and partners to invest in data collection and shared analysis at the sub-national level.”

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22 Case Study: Capacity development to strengthen systems, governance and community structures to implement nutrition programmes and enhance nutrition resilience in Kenya and Zimbabwe. UNICEF, October 2016.
A strong and effective decentralized system of data collection and analysis facilitates greater ownership of decision-making processes and has the potential to trigger more timely responses (see Box 6). Building local capacity for analysis should be part of a longer-term process of building national systems for the collection and disaggregation of data in fragile contexts.

**Action 1.4**

Use data and analysis to plan transformative results achievable over longer time frames with continuous monitoring and programme adaptation to context

**Rationale:** Assessment and analysis tools need to be adequate for defining longer-term goals, including peacebuilding and institutional strengthening, which may only be achieved over longer time frames (10–15 years). At the same time, fragile contexts change rapidly, and so efforts to reflect on and analyse the shifting situation during programme implementation are vital if the programme is to be adjusted accordingly.

⇒ Based on political, conflict and institutional assessments, define longer-term transformative results

These longer-term results may include more peaceful and resilient societies; greater government and community capacities to prevent, adapt and respond to crises; and strengthened institutions to deliver social services. These longer-term transformative results need to be underpinned by comprehensive and evidence-based theories of change. Multi-partner assessments such as the joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment are useful for informing long-term strategies in fragile contexts.

⇒ Put in place consultative mechanisms and procedures to reflect on progress and unforeseen challenges and revise and adjust programme planning

Frequent and well-planned strategic moments of reflection are important opportunities to bring in new data and information; review the economic, environmental, political, security and social situation; and identify new challenges or opportunities that may have arisen since the outset of the programme. Progress towards achieving programme results must be considered in the context of these broader changes and any programming adjustments made. An adaptive management approach needs to be supported by a well-resourced independent learning and evaluation system as well as institutional arrangements that allow programme planning to be revised based on shared evidence and processes, thus supporting transparent, collective consensus building.
16 October 2016, Na’ama (aged 8 years) and her mother Asia (aged 27), a Syrian refugee family who have lived in a tent for four years in the Jordan Valley, Jordan.

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Enhance programming strategies in fragile contexts

**Action 2.1**

**Prioritize and respond to the structural causes of fragility**

**Rationale:** Enhancing UNICEF programming responses in fragile contexts implies the need to more explicitly respond to the multidimensional causes of fragility. Annex 2 describes some implications for programming in relation to each of the dimensions and causes of fragility. Enhancing programme and operational support is not necessarily only relevant to contexts affected by political and social violence and protracted conflict. It is equally relevant to contexts where there are persistent and growing inequities in access to economic resources or diminishing access to natural resources in the context of climate change, often exacerbated by weak governance and inadequate provision of social services. Together with the 2030 Agenda, United Nations policy frameworks in which human rights are central reinforce the need to place a greater emphasis on addressing the multidimensional causes of fragility. Leaving No One Behind[^23^], Human Rights Up Front and the UNSG Priorities for Prevention.

† Informed by an understanding of the underlying causes of fragility, define programme results through longer time frames and, if necessary, an expanded scope of work

Deliberate efforts to address the underlying dimensions of fragility imply the need to define results that are achievable over longer time frames, which are often beyond the scope of regular UNICEF planning, financial and monitoring cycles. Addressing the structural causes may also imply the need to take a more comprehensive approach and seek new partnerships. For example, in situations where violence has become a social norm, UNICEF may be required and well placed to expand the scope and time frame of programme results in collaboration with other partners (see Box 7).

Poor economic foundations, and in some situations high rates of youth unemployment, are often associated with fragility. Building on UNICEF good practices in the provision of comprehensive psychosocial support for youth, there are nascent and emerging practices where UNICEF is engaging in partnership with others on programmes to more comprehensively address youth employability and marketable skills for youth. Given the complexity of programming for youth, it is important for UNICEF to establish such partnerships, including with the private sector.

Weak governance and institutional capacity in the social sectors is both a cause and consequence of fragility and is another area that calls for programming commitments over a sustained period (see Box 8). These efforts need to be supported by a comprehensive capacity development framework and measured through concrete results (see Annex 4). Tensions that have the potential to affect capacity development may arise in fragile contexts and will need to be resolved. The Ebola epidemic that occurred in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea starkly demonstrated that health systems strengthening has to date neglected the importance of making health systems resilient, particularly at district and community levels. In fragile and post-emergency contexts in particular, this requires the construction of health systems that are sufficiently adaptable to reconfigure resources in response to new threats, robust enough to withstand unexpected shocks, and equipped with skilled staff and monitoring and accountability systems that can detect and respond to new challenges.

Box 7: Addressing and preventing violence as a social norm in fragile contexts

Building on the solid work by UNICEF to provide health and psychosocial support and ‘safe spaces’ in crisis situations for women and girls affected by gender-based violence, there is also a need to define longer-term results that address the systemic and underlying factors driving violence against women and children. This will call for a shift in practice, moving from interventions that primarily focus on conflict and its aftermath to ones that address violence – in all its forms – and its prevention. To do this, programming will have to address behaviour change, target multiple levels (individual, community and society) and factor in local power dynamics, external influences, shifting roles, social norms and underlying grievances as well as the interplay between these factors. Interventions should focus equally on the perpetrators of violence, who are the product of learned behaviours and have often been exposed to violence themselves. Both victims and perpetrators must be allowed to break out of their passive roles and help to shape the interventions designed for their welfare.

Box 8: Achieving long-term results in nutrition through capacity development

Drawing on lessons learned in Zimbabwe and Kenya, a multifaceted, long-term and comprehensive approach to capacity development is required if nutrition results are to be achieved at scale and sustained in fragile contexts. This approach should focus on strengthening both national and sub-national governance structures and capacities.

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Define how interventions contribute towards peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts

Increasingly, a multidimensional analysis of fragility is used to inform government-led and inter-agency peacebuilding and statebuilding agendas. Aligning UNICEF peacebuilding work\(^{26}\) to the PSGs and other national development goals is ambitious but necessary if UNICEF is to make a meaningful contribution to peacebuilding and conflict prevention (see Box 9).

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**Box 9: Managing institutional risks by positioning UNICEF results within national planning frameworks in Somalia\(^{27}\)**

The Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic entered the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in 2013 to serve as its national development framework (2014–2016). UNICEF strategically positioned children’s rights within all five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) to ensure entry points for programming and advocacy. For example, children associated with armed groups and forces were integrated into PSG 2 (security) while water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and youth education to support youth employment were embedded within PSG 4 (infrastructure and employment). Most notably, UNICEF took co-leadership of PSG 5 (strengthening social services), in which the UNICEF core programmes of health, nutrition, education and social protection are embedded. Aligning UNICEF organizational commitments to the New Deal compact has led to improved results. First, UNICEF priorities can be supported by other actors since the national plan fosters collaboration. Second, the New Deal structure is the framework for statebuilding and therefore there is accountability for strengthening social service delivery.

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The application of the “do no harm” principle is extremely relevant to fragile contexts. UNICEF has demonstrated its capacity to effectively mitigate against conflict arising or being exacerbated between host and displaced populations. For example, in Pakistan, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, 28 Jordan and Lebanon, 29 UNICEF deliberately ensured that interventions equally benefited vulnerable children within host communities and children from displaced and refugee communities.

Through MoRES, which has been integrated into all programming, UNICEF has demonstrated the capacity to make a contribution towards enhancing social cohesion among different population groups, including as part of resilience development and peacebuilding efforts in fragile contexts. For example, UNICEF has contributed towards greater cohesion among different political parties and ethnic groups in Myanmar. 30 This has been achieved by bringing together government authorities and non-state entities (NSEs) to promote the convergence of the various education systems towards creating a common, multilingual education system that is respectful of the ethnic diversity, or to encourage the adoption of joint maternal health and child health protocols. Addressing equity and discrimination is at the core of all UNICEF programme and policy work, and is necessary for effective, long-term peacebuilding in fragile contexts.

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**Action 2.2**

**Maintain access and stay engaged using a principled approach**

**Rationale:** Organizations such as UNICEF continue to face real dilemmas in maintaining a principled approach in these complex operating environments, especially where programmes are supported remotely. Maintaining a principled approach in fragile contexts is critical and calls for a pragmatic approach that requires the convergence of both humanitarian principles and development principles, including the humanitarian principles and the OECD Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations (see Box 10). Remote programming is increasingly the norm in fragile contexts that are highly insecure, and existing practice must reflect the technological developments, the need to build and sustain principled ‘remote partnerships’ and the need to support governance and systems strengthening remotely.

**Box 10: OECD Principles for Good International Engagement**

- Principle 1: Take context as the starting point
- Principle 2: Do no harm
- Principle 3: Focus on statebuilding as the central objective
- Principle 4: Prioritize prevention
- Principle 5: Recognize the links between political security and development objectives
- Principle 6: Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive stable societies
- Principle 7: Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
- Principle 8: Agree on practical coordination mechanisms
- Principle 9: Act fast — but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
- Principle 10: Avoid pockets of exclusion

** realpath to both humanitarian and development principles; identify points of convergence**

Both the Humanitarian Principles and the OECD Principles for Good International Engagement are relevant to fragile contexts. Both sets of principles must be simultaneously respected. UNICEF and partner organizations working in fragile situations need to identify points of convergence (see Box 11). In some rare situations where a principled humanitarian position contradicts statebuilding principles it may be necessary to prioritize humanitarian action, albeit with a ‘resilience lens’.

**Expand access and achieve principled results through remote programming and partnerships**

UNICEF is facing an increasing number of insecure situations, typically in fragile contexts, where international and even national staff do not have access to affected populations for programme oversight and support. Yet, access by affected populations to social services remains a central goal and UNICEF has managed to continue to support the delivery of results in a (predominately) principled and accountable manner in these contexts. Accountability in remote programming is enhanced by implementing the new standard operating procedures for third party monitoring (see Box 12).

Employing new technologies such as Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking, and inviting feedback from direct beneficiaries via tablet-loaded surveys, call centres and Short Message Service (SMS) messages has greatly enhanced monitoring and accountability capabilities in these difficult environments.
As demonstrated in Libya, where UNICEF is required to work remotely through municipalities, systems strengthening and meaningful capacity development to strengthen these municipalities remains challenging. In some contexts, such as Myanmar, expanding access and increasing geographical reach requires engaging in sensitive negotiations with NSEs. These negotiations are informed and enhanced by in-depth socio-political analysis.

Box 11: Identify points of convergence between humanitarian and development principles

Humanity (saving lives and alleviating suffering) and impartiality (assistance according to need without discrimination) are principles that must be shared by both humanitarian and development actors in fragile contexts. For all contexts, the priority must be on the principle of humanity.

Neutrality and independence are often taken as shorthand for disengagement from state structures rather than as necessitating principled engagement with states. Not taking sides in a conflict and maintaining independence are consistent with working through government structures to provide services where there remains state willingness and capacity. Where there is no willing or recognized government, consideration must be given to working through other ‘local governance structures’ or local non-state structures operating in these areas.

Statebuilding as a central objective is important and few would argue that having legitimate and accountable states able to fulfil core functions is desirable in fragile contexts. Engagement with states in fragile contexts must consistently be principled engagement – that is, engagement that is based on humanitarian principles and which strengthens state accountability. Even in contexts where the state is predatory, there will usually be parts of the system or particular institutions, bureaucrats or ministries through which aid actors can work. The choice is not simply between either working through the state or ignoring it. Many relationships are possible, including being supportive but challenging. According to the Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group: “The point of departure should be to focus on how best to support people’s capacity to cope better in the face of crisis. In each context thorough political and institutional analysis is needed to decide whether this can be achieved best by supporting the state or by supporting people, civil society actors or other formal or informal structures”.

The need to recognize the linkages between political, development and security objectives does not have to be equated with development and humanitarian organizations becoming political instruments, but rather that there needs to be a primary focus on the independence of development objectives in their own right. Furthermore, it is necessary for programmes to be more informed by a strong political, conflict security analysis to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Box 12: Enhancing accountability through third party monitoring in Somalia and Afghanistan

In Somalia, third party monitoring (TPM) is achieved through a mixture of quality assurance monitoring that is conducted by staff monitors in accessible areas and outsourced to local field monitors in inaccessible areas. Local field monitors provide monitoring and verification of partner programme activities with supportive supervision in inaccessible areas. Within the framework of TPM, UNICEF promotes a culture of uncovering problems as a positive approach to learning and adaptation.

In Afghanistan, UNICEF has enhanced its assurance capabilities by contracting partners to undertake TPM. This has been spearheaded by the polio programme in very remote and insecure locations and is now being expanded countrywide. TPM instruments are still being validated but represent a promising approach to monitoring in insecure contexts.

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31 United Nations Children’s Fund, Case Study: Building partnerships with municipalities as a platform for engagement and potential mechanism to go to scale in the absence of a single legitimate national government in Libya, UNICEF, New York, 2016.

32 United Nations Children’s Fund, Case Study: Accountability for delivering results for children through managing risk in Somalia, Link and Case Study: Maintaining a capacity to achieve programme results in a highly insecure fragile context in Afghanistan; making partnerships and accountability mechanisms work, UNICEF, New York, 2016.
**Maintain a principled, independent position in the context of political stabilization and peacekeeping agendas**

Peacekeeping missions potentially provide valuable frameworks for inter-agency coordination. Yet, the presence of missions also increases risks and it is critical that UNICEF maintains an independent position with an emphasis on development and humanitarian objectives (see Box 13). In some situations, statebuilding and principled action may be incompatible, for example, where services are being provided only to those of a specific religious, ethnic or political affiliation. Engagement may still be relevant, but only where it is possible to address issues of discrimination and inequities.

Box 13: Principled engagement with peacekeeping missions

- Apply conflict-informed analyses to programme design and engage in inter-agency conflict analyses to ensure that factors affecting children are reflected, with a focus on reflecting community perspectives.
- Maintain a perceived and actual distance from political/peacekeeping missions and instead focus on humanitarian and development priorities.
- Ensure that any integrated framework is sufficiently detailed to reflect results for children and demonstrate how these can contribute towards peacebuilding results.
- For shared results, define responsibilities clearly.
- Where appropriate, use peacekeeping missions to access non-state entities.
- Impress and promote that it is the agencies and programme funds which implement programmes, not political missions.

Source: Perspectives from UNICEF senior leaders from Enhancing Programme and Operational Support to Fragile Contexts, UNICEF, 2016.

**Define deliberate actions to address exclusion and inequalities**

The principles of ‘do no harm’ and ‘accountability to affected populations’ need to be consistently integrated into programme planning processes in fragile contexts.

Exclusion and unequal access to services in fragile contexts can be based on: ethnicity; political ideology; religious affiliation; means of livelihood such as pastoralism; power relations and access to resources; and disparities in socio-economic status (see Box 14).

Box 14: Promoting and protecting children’s rights in Myanmar: Addressing discrimination, tensions and inequities in a fragile context

Efforts aimed at addressing discrimination against Rohingya children are underpinned by a ‘do no harm’ approach, which is supported by a well co-ordinated strategy that is driven by country-level actions and backed up by regional and global support. At the country level, emphasis is placed on: promoting solutions for all children, highlighting the greater deprivations faced by Rohingya children, based on transparent evidence; ensuring that national development frameworks promote inclusive solutions; establishing a monitoring mechanism for the protection of all children; advocating for universal birth registration; and promoting legislation that is non-discriminatory.
Displaced populations often face discrimination and challenges in accessing services as refugees and may even face these challenges on returning to their communities. It is necessary to continually analyse and overcome the bottlenecks of access and inequities faced by vulnerable children in fragile contexts. In Lebanon, for example, UNICEF paid attention to addressing the diverse cultural and social challenges that different children faced in order to allow all children to access and integrate into the national school system. Older refugee girls faced access difficulties because parents were fearful of harassment. Some refugee children faced language barriers. Overcoming these bottlenecks was important in working towards achieving equal access for all children.33

**Enhance principled advocacy in the context of fragility**

Evidence-based advocacy is critical to enhancing results for children in fragile contexts and is an opportunity to reinforce a commitment to child rights and the principles that underpin all UNICEF work. Managing effective advocacy can be even more challenging if fragility is caused by political and security factors. Due to complex political dynamics and changing power relationships, advocacy in fragile contexts carries a higher risk and therefore should be informed by a number of guiding parameters and principles (see Box 15). Advocacy in fragile contexts requires a more nuanced understanding of the (changing) power relationships in a given context, which implies the need to develop a strategy that is based on mapping formal and informal sources of power and determining who has the greatest influence and incentive to act. More than ever, advocacy in fragile contexts requires working with partner organizations and knowing when it is more effective to leverage the ‘voices’ of others, particularly in complex and politically sensitive environments.

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**Box 15: Guiding parameters for advocacy in fragile contexts**

Advocacy should:

- be accurate, evidence-based and verified
- entail no surprises
- be based on a thorough understanding of human rights and legal frameworks such as international humanitarian law
- focus on issues and not on political agendas
- be based on an accountable and well-coordinated plan of ‘who speaks when’

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34 Based on and adapted from Applying Advocacy in Complex and Sensitive Settings in ESAR. RMT, November 2015.
**Action 2.3**

*Implement humanitarian and development programmes through integrated and shared analysis, frameworks and results*

**Rationale:** Many fragile countries are characterized by extreme, widespread and unpredictable acute needs that persist alongside long-term structural vulnerabilities. This implies the need for long-term commitments that have the flexibility to address both acute and chronic vulnerabilities. Yet a number of dichotomies persist – in co-ordination, in funding and in planning – which help to preserve the humanitarian-development divide. This means, in practice, that common analysis, planning and results frameworks underpinned by a strong resilience agenda are needed. Strengthening, maintaining and institutionalizing capacities for emergency response in national sector policies, line ministries and structures is critical so that the capacity to respond to shocks is sustained.

**Reinforce resilience as a central lens for programming and results in fragile contexts**

Recurrent shocks are likely to occur in fragile contexts, potentially reversing or negatively affecting development gains. Therefore, promoting resilience is central to enhancing programme effectiveness in fragile contexts (see Figure 4). UNICEF has made significant progress in integrating and using programme tools and instruments within all sectors that aim to strengthen resilience by focusing on preventing, mitigating and responding to risks. Furthermore, UNICEF is increasingly engaging in and influencing inter-agency processes that reinforce resilience as a central lens for national and regional policy frameworks, and in particular has promoted resilient and strong social sectors as equally important to livelihoods for promoting resilient communities and societies. Fragility and resilience are often considered opposite ends of the same spectrum.

**Figure 4: Resilient development**

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Establish multi-year funding time frames and shared platforms for collective humanitarian and development outcomes

Collective outcomes, multi-year programmes and comparative partnerships are practical and necessary ways in which cooperation can be enhanced in fragile contexts. There is increasing commitment to multi-year, collaborative humanitarian funding as a more efficient and effective means to support responses (Grand Bargain).requently published United Nations guidelines also reinforce multi-year development and humanitarian planning (see Box 16). In Zimbabwe, UNICEF managed and supported the multi-year Transition Fund on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe, working in close collaboration with a multi-partner steering committee. These multi-year funding mechanisms are effective in fragile contexts when implemented against transparent, results-based planning frameworks that are revised and adjusted regularly in response to evidence and learning, including around changing needs brought about by political, social and environmental shocks. Shock-responsive social protection systems, which are emerging in Ethiopia, Malawi and Nepal, support multi-year outcomes across the humanitarian and development sectors.

Maintain capacity for both emergency and development programming

Fragile situations are characterized by recurrent crises – though some of these may be small in scale – and therefore it is important to maintain and sustain capacity for responding to crises. This implies the need to put in place coherent and complementary programmes that address short-, medium- and longer-term needs. The relative focus will change over time and may be based on predictable – and in some cases, unpredictable – events. In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF recognized that the persistent volatility of the situation and heterogeneity of needs meant it was necessary to consistently combine different complementary strategies and programmes to meet the immediate (acute) needs of newly displaced populations, address the medium-term needs of chronically displaced or vulnerable host populations and move towards development through community-based peacebuilding approaches and governance strengthening. In Iraq, UNICEF has established a rapid response mechanism that

Box 16: Multi-year development and humanitarian funding

“In protracted crises, the UN’s development and humanitarian planning efforts should be multi-year and conducted jointly, based on a shared understanding of crisis risks and humanitarian needs, coupled with an analysis of existing coping and response capacities and a resilience systems analysis. Where there is protracted displacement, the needs of displaced people should be a core element of the planning process in order to support durable solutions to refugees, IDPs or those displaced by natural disasters across borders. Humanitarian components of common outcome areas would form a core part of the joint work plans of the Results Groups, thereby ensuring the strongest degree of coherence between development and humanitarian action and alignment with human rights standards. This would also facilitate developing common multi-year resource mobilization strategies.”

can be triggered to respond to the acute needs of the displaced population while UNICEF continues to simultaneously focus on systems strengthening for the delivery of essential social services through national structures. In \textit{Myanmar}, a concept of ‘adaptive social service provision’ has been implemented, which enables systems to be timeously and flexibly modified for specific contexts, trends and acute situations in a manner that reduces negative consequences and improves service provision and results for the most vulnerable children.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Institutionalize emergency preparedness and response in national sector policies, structures and capacities}
\end{itemize}

Humanitarian and development integration can also be achieved by ensuring that the capacities for emergency response are embedded in national development plans, structures and capacities and supported by appropriate long-term information systems. For example, as a result of UNICEF support, ‘surge’ capacity for the treatment of severe malnutrition is firmly in place in local government health structures in chronically food insecure areas in \textit{Kenya}.\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ethiopia} continues to face environmental, social and political shocks leading to frequent increases in the prevalence of acute malnutrition, which is largely addressed and treated by regular public health facilities (see \textit{Box 17}). In \textit{Pakistan}, Protective Learning and

\begin{boxedquote}
“Unlike in the past, acute malnutrition is treated, even during crisis periods, through the national Health Extension Programme Parallel structures set up by NGOs rarely takes place but support is now harmonized and reinforced through the national system.”
\end{boxedquote}


Community Emergency Services (PLaCES), the UNICEF emergency child protection programme, has been integrated into government systems as a formal structure. PLaCES represents a significant surge capacity involving various services that aim to provide protection for both children and adolescents during crises, including during population displacements that occur as a result of floods or other shocks. Building national capacities for emergency response should be an integral and deliberate component of the cluster approach, prior to phasing out the cluster.

**Action 2.4**

**Create and maximize the opportunities to strengthen systems incrementally**  
**Rationale:** Taking a ‘systems approach’ in fragile contexts is not necessarily the same as doing so in stable situations since entry points, opportunities and risks are dynamic, less predictable and context-specific. Informed by the socio-political context analysis, it is appropriate to prioritize and sequence strategies to build systems incrementally. In fragile contexts, which are often politically sensitive, careful sequencing of interventions is necessary and policy reform is not always possible, especially as an entry point. Strengthening systems also calls for long-term plans that establish institutional arrangements to foster state-community partnerships, especially those that build on community and traditional capacities. Given the complex operating environments characteristic of fragile contexts, it is necessary to put in place a robust learning and accountability framework that facilitates an evolving ‘fit-for-purpose’ model rather than a static technical best practice model.

**Prioritize and sequence interventions for systems building through a deliberate set of evolving actions**

Continued access to basic social services, especially health, water and education, is critical for communities and households in fragile contexts and therefore systems strengthening remains imperative. In fragile situations, however, the sequencing of these interventions – and the very nature of the components (not just governmental) that comprise a system – must be informed by the socio-political context. Systems strengthening in fragile contexts requires a flexible and pragmatic approach with a deliberate evolution of priorities (see **Box 18**).

**Box 18: Building systems in Zimbabwe through multi-year Transition Fund**

The transition funds took a flexible and pragmatic approach with a deliberate evolution of priorities. The sector-based Transition Fund focused on realistic and progressive targets, evolving from a simpler supply-oriented programme (procurement of school supplies or water treatment chemicals) to a more sophisticated scope of work (curriculum reform, policy changes such as removal of user fees in health sector). Incremental gains built trust and confidence among partners. Additionally, the quality of the governance arrangements was identified as a critical success factor supporting the delivery of results. The governance mechanism allowed a valuable balance to be achieved between delivering needed services and building government ownership and government capacity to deliver, without slowing the expected pace of delivery.

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46 For the purpose of this document, “systems” refers to more than just government structures and capacities but also other formal and informal national and community capacities that are required and work with government to bring about accountable and quality services. Strengthening systems also refers to building the relationships and accountability between governments and their communities.

In Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, immunization campaigns conducted during agreed ceasefires represented important entry points for gaining access to and establishing longer-term opportunities to strengthen health systems for routine immunization services. In Nepal, a large-scale emergency cash transfer programme implemented in response to the April 2015 earthquake leveraged opportunities for the expansion of social protection in the longer term. From the outset, the longer-term objectives of systems strengthening and policy reform of social protection were explicit – framing the response on the basis of shock-responsive social protection. With sustained collaboration between UNICEF and partners, enormous achievements were made in the health sector in Afghanistan during the early post-Taliban period and these have been sustained to date. Deliberate choices made early on were driven by an analysis of lessons learned from other post-conflict experience and based on some sound principles and key drivers to incrementally build the health system over time (see Box 19).

Box 19: Key drivers for rebuilding the health system in Afghanistan

The drivers for the response included:

• a commitment to ensure that health system priorities respond to the disease burden in country
• a focus on building confidence in the public health sector by implementing rapidly and at scale some major programmes, e.g., national vaccination campaigns and the development of a standardized basic package of primary health care services
• the decision to focus the role of government on stewardship and the setting of standards (given the capacity gaps in the Ministry of Health and the likelihood that public sector service delivery would have taken many more years to reach scale)
• the decision to allow international and national NGOs to implement the basic package of primary health care services according to the Ministry of Public Health guidelines
• a strong commitment to monitor and evaluate accountability for results
• sustained political leadership within the government
• a small group of strong and cohesive international partners in the United Nations, NGOs and the donor community that supported the approach consistently over a decade.

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Take innovative programmes to scale to address needs, informed by deliberate processes of reflection, accountability and learning

A robust monitoring and learning system implemented through multi-stakeholder platforms is critical to developing a shared understanding of what works in complex operating environments and to advocating for and managing the scaling up of programmes nationally. While lessons can be drawn, it cannot be assumed that what is effective in one fragile context works in another. Furthermore, small-scale programmes need to be implemented with the foresight that if an intervention is proven effective, there is the commitment to (collectively) take it to scale to address the scale of need. For example, in Ethiopia, the research, evidence and learning that UNICEF and partners invested in to support the government’s commitment to expand the Health Extension Programme nationally informed its evolution, scaling up and adaptation. This was implemented together with the commitment to invest in community health workers through professional training nationwide and by supporting their formal remuneration, which was implemented at the national level under government leadership.

Move beyond technically sound programmes: From ‘best practice’ to ‘best fit’

Complex operating environments characteristic of fragile contexts have triggered a shift away from ‘blueprints’ towards a model that is effective for the specific context. A best practice and ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach potentially renders institutional reform ineffective. Rather, an adaptive management approach that facilitates coalition building, deep contextual knowledge and an iterative, non-linear approach that allows room for discussion and debate on a good-fit solution is more relevant to fragile contexts. It is also critical that the approach engages the support of local counterparts and that it builds ownership, country systems and local participation. These management approaches facilitate a ‘best fit’ model relevant to fragile contexts.

Support emerging systems to be inclusive

Recognizing and addressing inequities is central to the design and implementation of programmes in fragile contexts. Differences in children’s outcomes and disparities in access to social services can result from the social, political, environmental, economic and security factors underpinning fragility (see Box 20). A demonstrated improvement in access can lead to confidence building and set the stage for inclusive policy reform in a politically sensitive context. In Eritrea, UNICEF supported a community-led initiative to distribute donkeys to families to effectively overcome barriers to accessing schools for children with disabilities. This innovative approach achieved results, even in remote areas, and also built trust.

Box 20: Support emerging systems to be inclusive

In Myanmar, in the context of addressing inequities faced by Rohingya people, UNICEF has engaged in the development of the Rakhine Socio-economic Development Plan, placing an emphasis on equity and non-discrimination as underpinning principles. As a consequence, given that inclusivity is central to both process and outcomes, achieving equity and non-discrimination has been integrated into the long-term plan and goals for Rakhine State.

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Action 2.5

Enhance performance of decentralized local governance for achieving results in social services that lead to strengthened social cohesion and accountability

**Rationale:** It is not always possible to work through central government in fragile contexts. In these situations, working at the sub-national level may be more appropriate, especially where central government has no legitimate authority or where local governance structures are being deliberately undermined or have weak institutional capacities. Strengthening the delivery of social services can in some contexts lead to improved state legitimacy, which can help to build more peaceful societies, especially where accountability mechanisms are put in place.

Support relevant, sustainable and integrated programmes by strengthening local governance structures

Working through local governance structures and enhancing their capacity often represents a feasible and effective means to achieve results for children in fragile contexts. Working through sub-national governance structures also creates more opportunities to: adapting context specific strategies for a given context; work through local actors; decentralize and empower local actors in decision-making; and engage communities in accountability, mechanisms potentially enhancing state legitimacy. UNICEF is increasingly working through sub-national governance structures, even when this has to be undertaken remotely as in **Libya** (see Box 21).

**Box 21: Working through sub-national municipalities in Libya**

While the Government of National Accord is yet to assume its responsibilities and legitimacy, municipalities functioning at the sub-national level remain the only legitimate mechanism to support decentralized service delivery. Hence, UNICEF has embarked on an innovative strategy to remain engaged with the municipalities to build a strong platform not only for oversight of the delivery of the humanitarian assistance through national NGOs, but also for the purpose of establishing strong relationships for future systems building.

Local governance interventions need to be anchored in broader statebuilding strategies that aim to restore state capacities as a whole and which may be led by other organizations such as UNDP or World Bank. Yet focusing on central governance structures alone is insufficient and experience has shown that supporting multiple-level governance mechanisms led by local actors, including non-formal institutions and actors, is critical to achieve sustained and meaningful changes in service delivery. Given the organization’s decentralized presence, policy and operational role, knowledge of the technical sectors and capacity to work with communities as well as with government authorities, UNICEF is well placed to strengthen local governance structures to deliver quality social services. Therefore, given the comparative niche that UNICEF occupies, it focuses on ‘downstream’ governance while also collaborating with partners such as UNDP and the World Bank to focus on ‘upstream’ governance.

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53 United Nations Children’s Fund, Case Study: Building partnerships with municipalities as a platform for engagement and potential mechanism to go to scale in the absence of a single legitimate national government in Libya, UNICEF, New York, 2016.

An integrated model or ‘convergence’ that is implemented at the sub-national level can more feasibly facilitate the realization of commitments towards collective outcomes. In the Niger, UNICEF efforts to enhance nutrition results are being informed and influenced by a broader regional policy framework and commitment to integrated programing (see Box 22).

Box 22: Achieving results through integrated programming at the sub-national level in the Niger

In response to the persistent high food insecurity that characterizes the Niger and other countries in the Sahel, a number of important regional and national policy frameworks have been put in place that legitimate and reinforce the need for a multi-sectoral approach to address nutrition security. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel identifies three broad goals that focus on strengthening governance, security and resilience. The strategy promotes and encourages multiple actors and sectors to plan together, and reinforces a contiguity of humanitarian and development interventions. This has led, for example, to an approach where programmatic and operational convergence between actors and sectors is being achieved at the municipal level and accountabilities are indicated in a commune development plan. In practice, achieving results in nutrition – which calls for a comprehensive approach to address the causes of malnutrition – is more likely when partners and sectors work towards shared collective outcomes at the sub-national level.

Strengthen local governance including through greater social cohesion and accountability

Work that aims to support the decentralization of services by strengthening local governance structures needs to focus on both performance, to provide quality services, and on accountability. Strengthening the accountability of service providers requires putting in place mechanisms to enhance community participation in monitoring service quality. Indirectly, this can potentially strengthen the legitimacy of local governments, or the ‘social contract’, and contribute to peacebuilding efforts. Enhancing the social contact is important in fragile situations since it potentially promotes peace and stability, the legitimacy of states and the accountability of states to citizens. These concepts of social accountability and social cohesion are extremely relevant to UNICEF reflections on how it works more effectively in fragile contexts. For example, in relatively stable but fragile situations such as in Zimbabwe and Kenya, UNICEF is working with the lowest-level administrative structures to ensure that policies at the national level are being implemented in practice through local structures and capacities. Implementation is being supported by strengthening decentralized information systems to increase accountability between state and communities at the local level.

In fragile contexts affected by political instability, insecurity and/or conflict, UNICEF may be required to engage with NSEs when operating at the sub-national level and decentralized level to reach affected populations effectively. Engaging with NSEs is critical to the ability of UNICEF to fulfill its mandate to deliver assistance and protect children’s rights (see Box 23).

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56 A social contract is the dynamic interaction between expectations that a society has of a given state, the state capacity to provide those services and an agreement between state and society on their mutual roles and responsibilities.
Box 23: Engaging with non-state entities

A number of factors will determine and influence the ability and approach of UNICEF in relation to engaging with non-state entities (NSEs). Some of these factors include: the origins and dynamics of a conflict; the existence and status of a peace process and the actors involved; whether or not there is a warrant from the International Criminal Court/International Court of Justice concerning a specific NSE or its members, or a country situation; a United Nations Security Council mandate; and the perceived intentions of any United Nations peacekeeping or political presence. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the context is necessary before any form of engagement is considered. The imperative for UNICEF to engage with NSEs may be to deliver humanitarian services and protection, to monitor the realization of children’s rights and, where possible, to contribute towards peacebuilding and development. In some complex and politically sensitive contexts, it may be beneficial for UNICEF to engage as a humanitarian actor whose work is guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

Action 2.6

Strengthen national institutions and local structures to be equitable and inclusive and to deliver results

**Rationale:** Limited capacity remains one of the single greatest challenges to delivering results in fragile contexts. Furthermore, there is insufficient investment in capacity development to support institutional strengthening that leads to improved performance of governance structures against measurable results. Capacity development is still inappropriately equated with technical training. Deliberate capacity development strategies, which are long-term, multifaceted and focus on institutions’ capacity to perform, are necessary in fragile contexts. This is particularly relevant given that fragile contexts are generally characterized as having weak governance capacities. Capacity development should focus not only on government structures, but also on the local structures that can support governments to deliver services and results and bring about the greater engagement of local communities.

Support the development of policy frameworks and functioning institutional arrangements that facilitate the practical implementation of policies

It is insufficient to influence policy frameworks and policy reform alone without putting in place the appropriate mechanisms and institutional arrangements to facilitate the practical implementation of policies, including at the sub-national level. In fragile contexts, where institutional and governance capacity is characteristically weak, additional support to facilitate implementation is essential (see Box 24). This implies a deep analysis and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different actors and their capacity to deliver services.

Box 24: From policy to practice in the Niger

In the Niger, UNICEF prioritized the need to put systems in place to enable policy to be translated into practice. Regional and national policy frameworks such as Nigerians Nourish Nigerians (3N) provide an opportunity and enabling environment for a comprehensive approach to nutrition security. These frameworks are insufficient on their own, however, and must be supported by a detailed and practical national nutrition security policy and (national) practical plan of action. The latter represents an important framework for defining the accountabilities of different actors, especially various United Nations agencies, and for linking humanitarian and development interventions. To provide the most effective support, UNICEF nutrition staff must therefore have experience and knowledge of both multi-sectoral policy formulation and policy to practice implementation skills in fragile and low-capacity contexts such as in the Niger.

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Move beyond technical training to support institutional capacity for improved performance in the provision of quality services

Capacity development strategies need to move beyond technical training and support institutions to perform basic governance functions in relation to achieving results. This necessitates adopting a more comprehensive framework for capacity development over a much longer time frame, with the aim of strengthening the institution to perform better by focusing on at least the four following elements: institutional arrangements that facilitate partnership; leadership; sound technical knowledge and skills; and accountability (see Annex 4). A commitment to capacity development to improve institutional performance may require working through alternative models such as in situ advisers within government structures for prolonged periods of time, which provides space to build trust and personal relationships, both of which are critical to effective capacity development.

Invest in local/national NGOs, community structures and the private sector for the delivery of services

National NGO capacity represents a critical capacity to deliver results in fragile situations, and in some situations it may indeed represent the only such capacity. For example, partnerships with local members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have consistently shown that they have in-depth knowledge and are the first responders in a crisis (see Box 25). The capacities of local and national civil society organizations (CSOs), cannot be strengthened through ad hoc processes but rather require sustained and deliberate efforts to enable these organizations to be principled, accountable and transparent. In fragile contexts, CSOs may be motivated by a political agenda and hence it will be necessary to engage over a sustained period to ensure that the CSOs share a common set of principles of engagement with UNICEF. CSOs represent a critical interface between building and strengthening the relationships between state and citizens. UNICEF is well placed to catalyse the necessary trust and partnership between CSOs and governments as is being done in Libya.

Facilitate the contribution of the diaspora

The diaspora represent a significant capacity and facilitating the return of local expertise has been a common strategy adopted by many organizations including UNICEF. Facilitating the return of the diaspora can be politically sensitive in a few situations, however, as sometimes the diaspora has re-associated with opposition groups who have had to flee the country.

Box 25: Strengthening partnerships with local governance structures and national NGOs

Strengthening community structures and capacities is critical to ensuring that communities themselves participate in planning and action. Working through predictable local partnerships – such as the national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society – is necessary for going to scale, as doing so provides a more timely, sustainable and relevant response, including in emergency situations.

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Action 2.7

Protect the most vulnerable through shock-responsive social protection systems

Rationale: It is widely recognized that social protection programmes have an effective role in protecting the most vulnerable and there has been a significant expansion in the number and scale of timely cash transfer programmes, a component of social protection programmes, in response to crises. Furthermore, there is increasing evidence that cash transfer programmes alone are insufficient to support resilient development and need to merge with or be expanded into a broader social protection programme through incremental steps over the longer term. Shock-responsive social protection programmes, when implemented in a timely manner, are effective in meeting needs quickly and efficiently in response to acute crises such as droughts. Shock-responsive social protection can also facilitate the integration of humanitarian assistance into longer-term national social assistance systems. In fragile contexts, social protection programmes need to be incrementally built to provide immediate social assistance through cash and relief assistance and also allow for deliberate expansion to incorporate protective, promotive and transformative social protection as well. Consequently, social protection programmes can contribute towards more resilient societies and institutions and can potentially address some of the structural causes of fragility in the long term.

Incrementally build a comprehensive social protection system

Crisis can present opportunities to begin to build social protection systems where they don’t exist or remain latent (see Box 26). The evolution and incremental expansion of a social protection system will be very context-specific and may even vary across different geographical areas within the same country. Once large-scale delivery cash transfer systems are set up, there is scope and an obligation to slowly expand these programmes to ‘cash plus’ formats – that is, combining cash transfers with social sector strengthening (education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation) to accelerate access to quality services. This has been undertaken in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a cash transfer programme was implemented in conjunction with the improvement of social services. In Ethiopia, UNICEF is currently strengthening the link between the existing social protection system and access to quality nutrition services as a means to more effectively improve national nutrition outcomes.

Box 26: Context-specific expansion of social protection

In Somalia, where no social protection system had previously existed, one was initiated through a large-scale cash transfer programme. The potential for institutionalization within government structures is only relevant in more secure parts of the country, however.

In Yemen, a social protection system that had existed prior to the conflict but which had become dormant, is currently being revived through a large-scale cash transfer programme.

In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme was initiated as an externally resourced national food relief programme. It has since evolved and expanded incrementally to incorporate a large cash transfer component, a government financial contribution and a more deliberate link to enable access to social services under a more comprehensive social protection system.


A cash transfer programme can be incrementally expanded to become a more comprehensive social protection system by adopting and building a broad framework that has complementary elements that are protective, preventive, promotive and transformative. This comprehensive approach then potentially supports a resilience agenda since it not only provides protection, but also enables populations to have greater opportunities and to be more resilient to shocks. Both putting in place multi-year funding for these systems and advocating for government financing in the long term is critical. Generating domestic resources creates the fiscal space for social protection but is unlikely to be a viable short-term goal in fragile contexts. It is fundamental that emergency cash transfer programmes do not undermine broader social protection programmes.

In sum, the sequencing and progression of building a social protection system is context-specific; what works in one context may not work in another and creating and seizing opportunities when and where possible is necessary. A longer-term vision is important to strengthen the linkages and coherence between social protection and humanitarian programmes.

Enable the social protection system to be shock-responsive

Existing social protection systems can be tailored to respond effectively to acute crises, i.e., adapted to become shock-responsive social protection systems. An opportunity to integrate emergency relief assistance (food and cash transfers) into a broader social protection system potentially minimizes duplication and overlap, can lead to a more rapid response, and minimizes the need to set up a parallel humanitarian response (see Box 27). It can imply, however, a need to reassess vulnerability and, in some situations, make a distinction between chronic and acute vulnerability. In large crises, even when a social protection system is expanded vertically and/or horizontally to address new acute needs, additional humanitarian resources may still be needed if the scale of the crisis is significant. In all situations, the humanitarian programme and the social protection system should be coherent and closely coordinated. Furthermore, linking humanitarian programmes with the social protection system does not always mean that a humanitarian programme must be delivered through the social protection system.

Box 27: A shock-responsive social protection system in Nepal responds to the earthquake

In response to the April 2015 earthquake in Nepal, the Emergency Top-up Cash Transfers Programme (ETCTP) was put in place, which represented a vertical expansion of the existing social protection system.

“In the right circumstances, an emergency cash transfer programme can reach many of the most vulnerable through building on and strengthening the existing social protection system. The ETCTP was designed to complement the relief and recovery measures that had been put in place by the government and other development partners. It aimed to reach households that were already vulnerable prior to the earthquakes (who had been identified as labour-constrained and vulnerable). This approach avoided creating a parallel system that is more costly and unsustainable”.

Take informed risks to implement cash transfer programmes, especially in high-risk or conflict environments

Establishing large-scale cash transfer programmes, particularly in high-risk environments, implies a degree of institutional risk. Establishing a partnership with the national social protection system prior to crisis can mitigate some risks. In Nepal and in Yemen, the decision to distribute a significant amount of cash quickly
through the existing system was informed by UNICEF knowledge and its collaborative partnership with the government-led social protection system, prior to the earthquake and conflict respectively. In Somalia, substantive risk mitigation strategies were put in place in response to the risks of corruption and abuse.

**Strengthen the interface between informal and formal social protection mechanisms**

It is well recognized that families and communities are not passive in the face of crises, particularly in fragile contexts and countries where the state is weak. Families and communities do engage in kinship practices that protect the most vulnerable, especially children, and may indeed be relatively more reliant on such informal social protection systems in these contexts. In most situations, however, the interface between the formal and informal social protection systems is minimal. As social protection systems continue to expand and grow in fragile contexts where resources remain scarce, it will be critical that deliberate actions are taken to ensure the more effective integration of the formal and informal social protection systems.

**Action 2.8**

**Respond to crises across borders through sub-regional strategies**

**Rationale:** Fragility is not confined to territorial boundaries. Threats such as conflict, disease epidemics (e.g., Ebola, cholera and polio) and climate change affect multiple countries simultaneously. These threats are often exacerbated by population movements and the threats themselves can trigger population movements within and across borders. Cross-border population movements put additional pressure on shared natural resources as well as social services, often exacerbating fragility and sometimes creating and leading to tensions and even conflict. This implies the need for synergistic action across multiple countries, through the facilitation of strong information management and shared frameworks for response on a multi-country, sub-regional level. It also challenges the predominantly country-specific focus that UNICEF adopts in strategies and response efforts.

**Put in place analysis and response systems that effectively address threats across multiple borders**

Given that threats affect multiple countries simultaneously, synergistic responses across multiple countries are needed to make an impact. Therefore, it is necessary for UNICEF to put in place mechanisms that facilitate analysis and response across multiple borders. In practice, this means supporting multi-country studies and workshops and, where relevant, establishing a formal platform to build networks and collaboration across multiple countries.

UNICEF and partners are embarking on processes that build consensus, share information and increase technical capacity using a common strategy across multiple countries bordering Lake Chad as a means to enhance cross-border cooperation and synergistic action across multiple fragile contexts to mitigate against and respond to cholera (see *Box 28*).

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Similarly, to eradicate polio, joint planning cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan is based on robust information on cases and this information must be managed within the context of the sensitive political relationship that persists between the two countries.

The response to the Ebola epidemic required close collaboration, coordination and communication between Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone as well as other neighbouring countries such as Mali, which faced high risks of transmission of the disease through normal cross-border population movements. A sub-regional strategy was effective for focusing the organization and a process of adaptation for each fragile context was also necessary (see Box 29).

Box 28: Cross-border cooperation and synergistic action to mitigate against and respond to cholera in fragile contexts bordering Lake Chad

“Sub-regional workshops held at least annually are opportunities to improve cross-border collaboration through: sharing good practices; building consensus on common interventions; creating synergy in programme approaches; and networking. Indeed, effective management of the response to cholera in the Lake Chad Basin is dependent on strong collaboration between the countries including on surveillance and early detection, information exchange and experience sharing. Given the frequent population migration patterns between communities within this region, it is widely recognized that actions taken within the borders of a single country are inadequate alone to successfully prevent and control cholera outbreaks. A synergy of actions taken by all four countries is necessary for the elimination of cholera in the Lake Chad Basin”.

Box 29: Sub-regional strategy necessary for identification of priorities for Ebola response

“A single UNICEF sub-regional strategy that describes the organizational priorities to respond to the Ebola epidemic is a useful and necessary instrument for focusing and prioritizing the organization as well as for facilitating co-operation and co-ordination between countries . . . yet in the context of complex dynamics and different capacities, the sub-regional strategy still needs to be adapted to different countries – consistently enabling governments to take a leadership role and recognizing the country- and context-specific realities of the epidemic”.

Interventions which aim to promote peaceful, inclusive communities and strengthen social cohesion may be necessary across borders and within and between ethnic groups that share a territorial boundary. UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is working collaboratively in border communities through a common approach to build social cohesion and communal resilience against conflict (see Box 30).

Prepare for and respond to population movements through multi-country, long-term responses

Fragility is sometimes characterized by frequent and multiple population movements as a result of political and social violence or environmental disasters, which causes populations to become displaced within a country and also to cross borders into neighbouring countries. Population displacement can also be driven by socio-economic reasons, often resulting in population migration towards urban areas, within and across borders, where there are relatively greater opportunities for informal and formal employment.

Displaced populations often exacerbate existing competition for scarce resources and services. Therefore, displacement is recognized as both a cause and a consequence of fragility.

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Given the protracted nature of displacement in most contexts, short-term solutions to meeting the needs of refugees are often inadequate. In protracted refugee situations, it is necessary to put in place longer-term policy frameworks and strategies while meeting immediate needs. For example, support for strategies that enable refugees to become more self-reliant, programmes that aim to strengthen national social services and systems to enable equitable access by both refugees and members of the host population (see Box 31). These initiatives require close coordination between UNICEF in the host country and in the refugees’ country of origin.

Box 30: Building peaceful communities across Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan borders

Continuing sporadic tensions among neighbouring villages on the border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have weakened trust and links between communities, creating an environment of uncertainty that is affecting children and youth. Community-based kindergartens have expanded equitable access to preschool education and contribute towards social cohesion at the local level by uniting community members on young children’s needs. Not only are these interventions helping to improve education outcomes, but communities also now have a common platform to strengthen social cohesion. Critical to this approach are the commitment and capacity to assess and measure changes in social cohesion and determine how strengthened social cohesion contributes to equitable early childhood development service provision and improved cross-border relationships in the longer term.

Box 31: Responding to protracted cross-border population movements

Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPe) Uganda, established by the government with the support of the United Nations in Uganda, aims to provide refugees with opportunities for self-reliance, through interventions that support resilient livelihoods and improved access to essential social services for refugees.

In Jordan and Lebanon, where significant numbers of Syrian refugees are being hosted, UNICEF is focusing on ensuring integrated and equitable access for host population and refugees to essential services by strengthening the capacity and quality of national systems in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and nutrition sectors.
Students of Sali Primary School, in Sali village, Guadalcanal Island, Solomon Islands, gather to greet UNICEF Pacific Representative Karen Allen and team, who visited their school to inaugurate the new washing facilities, including school toilets.

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Enhance partnerships for more effective results in fragile contexts

**Action 3.1**

Explore and consolidate partnerships that enhance efforts to strengthen governance and institutions to improve performance in service delivery

**Rationale:** Strategic partnerships with other organizations committed to addressing the structural causes of fragility – such as UNDP and the World Bank – are critical. Governance and institutional strengthening is an important entry point for these partnerships. The comparative strength that UNICEF has in such partnerships is not just down to its strong sector-wide technical and programme expertise in social services and social protection. Equally important are the knowledge and skills that UNICEF has to support the implementation of sector policy frameworks at the decentralized and local level. Partnership with UNDP in support of strengthening governance functions is potentially very relevant too. Partnership with national NGOs and local community-based organizations (CBOs) is often a good strategy for reaching affected populations more sustainably and more effectively.

Define the comparative niche that UNICEF occupies in relation to the commitment of other organizations – such as UNDP and the World Bank – to strengthen governance in fragile contexts, and use this to inform a more deliberate partnership

Other organizations such as UNDP and the World Bank are themselves engaged in strategic reflections and policy shifts to enable their organizations to be more effective in fragile contexts. For example, the World Bank’s recent policy shifts have led to a significant scaling up of resources in fragile contexts. UNICEF and the World Bank have recently signed a new strategic partnership framework to strengthen institutional partnership at the global level, which will reinforce renewed opportunities for stronger collaboration and partnerships at the programme and operational level (see Box 32). For example, in Yemen, the World Bank and UNICEF established a strong partnership with clear roles and responsibilities in joint efforts to revive the national social protection system during conflict. In Zimbabwe, where the World Bank had not yet re-engaged, UNICEF played a key role in managing multi-donor Transition Fund and the World Bank continued to engage on a technical level.

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Action 3.2

Establish inter-agency partnerships within the context of multi-year national planning frameworks

Rationale: Multi-agency ‘compacts’ informed by Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments and currently implemented in New Deal countries represent significant opportunities for UNICEF to position and align results for children with longer-term peacebuilding and development agendas. UNICEF makes a relevant contribution to each of the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) in these New Deal countries. In other countries and fragile contexts, multi-agency, multi-year frameworks are usually implemented through United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and UNICEF here has a critical role in ensuring that programming remains relevant, flexible, coherent and complementary to humanitarian programmes while reflecting long-term goals.

Engage in government-led and other multi-agency platforms, including in New Deal countries, through compacts and the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals

It is important that UNICEF engages from the outset in fragility assessments and positions itself in a leading role in strategic areas such as the restoration of public services. In Somalia, UNICEF has played a critical contributory role to a number of PSG areas including justice and is the lead agency in the restoration of social services. Where there is a risk that these inter-agency processes place too much emphasis on infrastructure and hardware, such as occurred in the Central African Republic, UNICEF has a valuable role in advocating for investment in children and human capital using an ‘equity lens’.

Action 3.3

Consolidate long-term partnerships with national NGOs, local CBOs and local private sector businesses

Rationale: National NGOs and local CBOs represent a critical capacity for achieving results in fragile contexts. These organizations are often underutilized and sometimes even undermined in fragile contexts, especially where there is pressure to achieve results quickly and to scale. Unless there is a deliberate strategy to engage local partners from the outset together with efforts to support and strengthen their capacity as effective, accountable and principled organizations, there is likely to be a significant ‘capacity gap’ in the longer-term delivery of results in the longer-term. In highly insecure environments, these national NGOs and local CBOs have a critical role in maintaining access to affected populations. Therefore, in protracted crises and fragile contexts, there is scope for UNICEF to more deliberately engage with national NGOs and local CBOs and community structures, including local members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. These organizations...
need to be supported through systematic capacity development as part of a broader systems building approach. Local research organizations and the private sector businesses are also valuable partners in fragile contexts. In the longer term, engagement with national and local organizations facilitates greater sustainability, enables the emergence of a stronger and more accountable civil society, supports an approach that places greater emphasis on local priorities and solutions, and often leads to more timely responses.

**Establish a deliberate and accountable strategy to work through national and local organizations, which includes the strengthening of their capacities**

The model, imperative and rationale for implementing programmes in fragile contexts through local NGOs and through community structures has been validated through multiple evaluations and lessons learned, including in Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka and State of Palestine. UNICEF has demonstrated that partnerships with local organizations in Zimbabwe and Kenya, including their national Red Cross Societies, can lead to cost-effective and timely results. In the Ebola response in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, partnerships with local CBOs enabled greater outreach to small communities and facilitated a deeper understanding of social-cultural factors relevant to the response. Partnership with local research organizations in Burundi and in Somalia has facilitated a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics and local power relationships and dynamics as well as greater capacity for the independent monitoring of programme quality. This reinforces the need to put in place longer-term commitments and resources to strengthen the capacity of national NGOs that can potentially deliver to scale in a principled manner and potentially contribute to greater accountability between state and communities in the longer term.

**Action 3.4**

**Identify and strengthen partnerships with human rights organizations**

**Rationale:** Human rights violations are often the cause of fragility and are perpetuated in fragile situations as a result of a lack of accountability mechanisms.

**Engage in partnerships with relevant human rights organizations**

Human rights violations and discriminations against large or small groups of the population, minorities or specific ethnic groups are undoubtedly a cause of fragility. As a consequence, engaging with human rights partners is critical. UNICEF engagement on human rights abuses must be guided by the legal frameworks and global agreements in place, as described by human rights initiatives such as Human Rights Up Front (see Box 33). The role of advocacy and partnerships with relevant organizations as means to address discrimination and other human rights violations as the root causes of fragility should not be overlooked.

**Box 33: Partnering with Human Rights Up Front in Myanmar**

Framed within the Human Rights Up Front Initiative, an emphasis has been placed on keeping the world’s attention on the heightened multiple deprivations and discriminations faced by Rohingya children. This has led to more effective negotiations and advocacy at the global level and consensus building among United Nations agencies on appropriate actions at the country level.

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Action 3.5

Youth engagement in the delivery of programmes

Rationale: Meaningful opportunities for adolescent participation ensure that adolescents’ voices, especially the most disadvantaged, are heard and that adolescents are empowered to be change agents within their communities.

Ensure that young people have the skills, capacity and resources to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian situations

Long-term commitments are necessary to promote and increase age- and gender-responsive and inclusive programmes that contribute to the protection, health and development of young women, young men, girls and boys within humanitarian settings. Young people’s capacities as effective humanitarian actors in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery need to be recognized and strengthened. UNICEF should empower and support local youth-led initiatives and organizations and increase resources intended to address the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth affected by fragility, disaster, conflict and displacement. Ways to more accurately track and report on the resources allocated to young people need to be identified and age- and sex- disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings must be generated and used.

Box 34: Engaging young people in fragile settings – Examples from Syria and Timor-Leste

In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF provided life-skills training to adolescents and involved young people in social and civic engagement activities. Using focus group discussions, UNICEF and local partners gathered input and involved young people and adolescents in the planning and implementing of their own community-based initiatives for identifying children who had dropped out of school, promoting back-to-learning campaigns, and raising hygiene awareness.

Timor-Leste made significant efforts in involving young people in the creation of an evidence-based National Youth Policy. With a strong partnership with the National Youth Council and links with youth organizations, sustainable youth participation mechanisms were created. The policy’s thematic focus was fighting poverty, and increasing education and civic participation opportunities that contribute to peacebuilding. By creating a Youth Parliament and building capacity of young people (ages 12-16), the government gave legal recognition to the vital role of young people in nation-building and peacebuilding. Through the allocation of funds for Youth Parliament activities and youth centers, mechanisms for policy implementation were created at national, regional and local levels. Young people participated actively and had a strong sense of ownership of the youth policy.
9 September 2016, schoolchildren head home after a day of learning at Seinzane Primary School in Matebeleland South Province, Zimbabwe.

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Expand and adapt internal capacities, procedures and operational support in fragile contexts

Action 4.1

Use the analysis of structural causes of fragility as well as an analysis of risk and the progress towards results to revise, realign and adjust programmes

Rationale: In fragile contexts, given the characteristic volatility of situations, programme responses will either have a limited effect on preventing a deterioration in the situation of children or may encounter unexpected difficulties as contexts change during implementation. Furthermore, countries affected by fragility are not geographically homogeneous and therefore various approaches may need to be implemented simultaneously in different parts of the country. UNICEF practitioners and management need to be equipped to face these uncertainties and diverse contexts and make internal procedures and systems work for any given context.

Ensure that programming is enhanced through an adaptive management approach that supports innovation and iterative learning

In fragile contexts, interventions will continually encounter unexpected difficulties and therefore practitioners need to be systematically equipped to face uncertainties. Adaptive management can assist in navigating complexity by putting in place dynamic teams, appropriate analysis that focuses on prevention, responsive implementation, trusting relations and flexible funding (see Box 35). This approach will enable programmes to be ‘fit for purpose’ in fragile contexts.

Box 35: Adaptive management in practice

- An initial and continued understanding of the broad context and underlying causes of fragility and an ongoing analysis of how it changes over time
- Application of an iterative problem-solving approach, which may involve implementing trial programmes to test assumptions and an acknowledgement of errors
- Facilitate local leadership by influential actors through formal and informal networks
- Significant investment in forecasting, monitoring, feedback and learning, and making adjustments as needed
- Remain flexible and responsive over a sustained period of time
- Invest in an evidence base to facilitate and build collective consensus.

The application of UNICEF’s Enterprise Risk Management Policy is very relevant to fragile contexts and is potentially effective for mitigating and managing operational risks.
**Action 4.2**

Expand staff competencies and staff profiles

**Rationale:** Building on the analysis of the structural causes of fragility and using this analysis to ensure that programmes are both preventive and responsive — and that they aim to address the underlying causes of fragility in the longer term — calls for programme planning and implementation skills that are broader than sector technical expertise. There is a need for existing technical experts to be better equipped to understand how to adapt programmes in these complex political and social contexts. Furthermore, to achieve meaningful change in governance capacity, building trust with government authorities may require alternative models such as long-term advisory support to government authorities.

Ensure that staff profiles include skills in political, conflict, environmental, social, security and economic analysis as well as institutional and governance strengthening

Two opportunities exist to facilitate adjustments in staff profiles. The first option is to invest in acquiring additional staff expertise, either by employing new staff or by establishing external partnerships, for example, with political and economic analysts; experts in conflict analysis and peacebuilding, governance, capacity development, social protection; and social anthropologists. The second option is to invest in building the skills of existing senior technical and planning staff, to equip them with a broader set of political, social and economic skills that will enable them to ensure that sector programmes are fit for purpose and have the potential to have a greater impact in these complex environments (see Box 36).

**Box 36: Adapting and investing in staff profiles**

In response to the Ebola epidemic in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the recruitment of medical and social anthropologists was critical to ensuring that the response reflected an understanding of social and cultural practices, specifically burial practices.

In Burundi, UNICEF invested in staff and partnerships with capacities and skills in conflict analysis.

**Consider and explore the relevance of a model in which senior policy and/or technical experts support the strengthening of the performance of governance structures as advisers**

To effectively build governance and institutional capacity, UNICEF must build trust and relationships with government partners over a sustained period. The model of long-term in situ advisers has been shown to have immense potential to bring about meaningful change. This model has been implemented in Kenya and Zimbabwe (see Box 37).

**Box 37: In situ advisory role for capacity strengthening and governance support for nutrition in Kenya and Zimbabwe**

“embedded advisory and support capacity for nutrition within government at central and sub-national level over a prolonged period of time is an effective and appropriate strategy for capacity development. Advisory support over a sustained period of time potentially builds trust and a deeper understanding of context, which are fundamental to meaningful capacity development. Advisers need to be equipped with skills to enable policies to be put into practice while building and strengthening existing institutional capacity. Advisers need to be accountable for measurable results, e.g., capacities sustained, which requires going beyond merely technical training inputs.”

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**Action 4.3**

Prepare well for the effective distribution of supplies, take risks and strengthen local and national procurement and delivery channels for sustainability

**Rationale:** UNICEF’s flexible and responsive approach in providing supplies even under difficult circumstances is an integral component of working effectively in fragile contexts. Emerging good practices should be built upon to strengthen the capacity of local systems to procure and distribute supplies, and be held accountable for their quality, in fragile contexts.

Robust systems of preparedness and readiness for the rapid delivery of supplies must be maintained while at the same time strengthening local and national procurement and delivery channels for a more sustainable approach in the longer term

While the readiness of UNICEF supply systems (based on robust contingency plans) is critical to facilitate a rapid and effective response in the short term, it is crucial that local and national systems themselves have the capacity to work effectively to access, maintain and distribute supplies in stable and crisis periods. These systems need to be supported and strengthened and, where appropriate, tap into the local private sector as a sustainable capacity for partnership. Strengthening local systems to ensure the timely and accountable distribution of supplies is equally critical to the achievement of programme results in fragile contexts.
Action 4.4

Secure multi-year, flexible funding sources that support innovation and learning

Rationale: While good practices on multi-agency, flexible, long-term funding mechanisms are emerging, these must be catalysed through joint planning to be further institutionalized as standard practice in all fragile contexts.

Expand the number of flexible, multi-year, multi-agency funding mechanisms in line with sector-wide approaches that facilitate integrated humanitarian, transition and development results

Multi-year, flexible funding is critical to the success of programming in fragile situations. Multi-year funding is often catalysed when UNICEF: positions itself as a sector-wide leader with multi-year strategies in support of government-led plans; aligns sector-wide goals with national development planning frameworks such as COMPACTs; demonstrates the integration of humanitarian and development outcomes; places peacebuilding and resilience as central to the design of programmes; and makes capacity development and systems strengthening an integral component of all programmes over an extended period of time. Furthermore, UNICEF has a critical role in catalysing and, where appropriate, putting in place institutional platforms that allow multiple partners and donors to engage and pool resources and capacities to pursue a common set of results that potentially go to scale.

In smaller, chronically underfunded countries, additional efforts may be necessary to protect planning and implement long-term results through predictable multi-year funding sources. Such efforts may include: putting in place a mechanism to enable access to a minimum level of core resources to achieve a minimum set of priority results; much greater investment in private sector resources and partnerships (with equal support to strengthen government roles in oversight and quality control); and participation in multi-country or regional funding and resource mobilization strategies.

Where appropriate, position UNICEF as the fund manager of multi-donor pooled funding mechanisms

Multi-donor funds are effective mechanisms for securing predictable multi-year funding to achieve results in fragile contexts. UNICEF has extensive experience of engaging and participating in established multi-donor pooled funds and some experience of managing multi-donor trust funds on behalf of governments. A number of elements and parameters were used to guide the establishment of the transition funds in Zimbabwe (see Box 38). Significant additional internal capacity and support was necessary to manage the increased fiduciary, operational, programme and reputational risk for UNICEF associated with managing the Transition Fund.
Box 38: Guiding parameters for the Transition Fund in Zimbabwe

- An agreement between the line ministry, the donors and the secretariat on the major objectives and national targets, aligned with sector objectives, based on robust evidence.
- Establishment of a steering committee comprising representatives from government ministries, donors, the United Nations and civil society partners, co-chaired by donor/government with secretariat managed by UNICEF.
- Policies and priorities were evidence-based, founded on rigorous assessments and studies under the leadership of the line ministry with the support of UNICEF.
- UNICEF managing the programme and all financial resources on behalf of the line ministry, in accordance with respective ministry rules and regulations and meets UNICEF financial requirements.
- Scope of work emphasizes the delivery of services at national scale, initially with a focus on arresting the decline in outcomes, accelerating progress against relevant MDGs and then reforming policy and promoting capacity development.
- Partnership with other United Nations agencies and private sector and civil society organizations through a transparent platform that built trust across government, the United Nations and civil society.
- Investment in robust monitoring and independent evaluation mechanisms to ensure accountability.

**Action 4.5**

**Engage in enhanced knowledge management to support learning, accountability and innovation in fragile contexts**

**Rationale:** A knowledge management system that supports learning through non-prescriptive approaches such as the use of case studies and communities of practice will contribute to continued efforts by UNICEF to enhance programme and operational support in fragile contexts.

**Put in place a robust knowledge management and learning strategy for fragile contexts**

Given the difficult operating environments characteristic of fragile contexts, a robust learning tool is necessary. With a focus on the ‘how’, concepts such as ‘implementation science’, ‘delivery challenges’ and ‘adaptive management’ are useful for demonstrating what works in a specific context and support the concept of ‘best fit’ as opposed to ‘best practice’. Learning can therefore be supported through independent evaluations, an investment in monitoring systems and documentation, and the use of case studies as points of reference. Learning should be facilitated within and between countries and regions. A knowledge management strategy needs to be supported by long-term monitoring that examines transformational changes with an emphasis on both contribution and attribution.

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23 November 2016, (left to right) Élodie (aged 7 years), Givelore (aged 8 years), Francesca (aged 6 years), Érica (aged 8 years) gather outside their school, the Notre Dame de Lourdes School, in Jérémie, Haiti. The school was rehabilitated with support from UNICEF.

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## Annex 1

### Concepts and terminology relevant to fragile contexts

These concepts, amongst others, are relevant to the discussion of fragility and are used throughout the programme framework for fragile contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate change adaptation</td>
<td>The adjustment in natural and human systems to actual or expected climate stimuli or their effects; it moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity development</td>
<td>The process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. It places a focus on empowering and strengthening endogenous capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster risk reduction</td>
<td>Disaster risk is the potential loss, expressed in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, that could occur in a particular community or society due to the impacts of a natural hazard. Disaster risk reduction is a systematic approach used to identify, assess and reduce that risk. The purpose of disaster risk reduction is to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society to avoid (prevent) or limit (mitigate and prepare for) the adverse impacts of natural hazards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Refers to all of the processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through laws, norms, power or language. It relates to the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Inequality and inequity         | **Inequality** is the state of not being equal in terms of status, rights and/or opportunities; it is a concept at the heart of social justice. Inequality is measured in terms of outcomes as well as opportunities.  
**Inequity** refers to the lack of opportunities for everyone to start from the same place. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality is treating everyone the same. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and receives the same help. Equity actively moves everyone closer to success by ‘levelling the playing field’. |
| Linking relief, rehabilitation and development | Long-term engagement that can deal with protracted and recurrent crises. This requires overlaps, links and transitions across the spectrum of relief, rehabilitation and development programming. Moving between these phases is non-linear. It implies that development instruments need to become more adaptable and flexible in order to engage with routine unpredictability and crises, and people’s changing and diverse needs. |
| Peacebuilding                   | A range of measures targeted at reducing the risks of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. |

## Concept | Definition
--- | ---
**Resilience** | The ability of children, households, communities and systems to anticipate, manage and overcome shocks and cumulative stresses. **Resilient development** means providing children and families with what they need to better prepare for, mitigate against and manage and recover from crises more quickly.

**Risk** | The likelihood of a harmful event and its probable impacts (including humanitarian crisis, the deepening of deprivation for children or an erosion of development progress). **Risk** is a product or result of the interaction between natural and/or human-induced shocks and stresses, exposure, vulnerability and capacities. Negative impacts are likely to be greater where vulnerability is high and the capacities of people and systems to prevent, prepare for, withstand and recover from a shock or stress are low. **Risk-informed programming** promotes resilient development and makes risk analysis a core element of planning processes.

**Social cohesion** | Refers to the quality of bonds and dynamics that exist between the groups within a society. Groups can be distinguished in terms of regional, ethnic or sociocultural identity, religious or political beliefs or socio-economic status. The strengthening of **social cohesion** vertically (relations between the state and citizens) and horizontally (intra- and inter-group relations within communities) is one of the key results to emerge from effective peacebuilding interventions.

**Statebuilding** | Purposeful action to develop the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state in relation to an effective political process for negotiating the mutual demands of the state and societal groups.

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## Annex 2

### Causes of fragility and vulnerabilities, and examples of priority programmes (not exhaustive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes and vulnerabilities</th>
<th>Causes and consequences</th>
<th>Human rights implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to risks stemming from weakness in economic foundations: unequal growth; youth unemployment; growing inequities; persistent poverty; market instability. Child and adolescent education; programmes for youth employability; enhance social protection to address emerging and existing inequities.</td>
<td>Migration and displacement are both causes and consequences of fragility. Prevent forced migration and displacement; develop resilient and long-term opportunities for the displaced, including by strengthening national social services. Limited institutional capacity, weak governance and limited capacity to respond and adapt are both causes and consequences of fragility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to climatic and health risks: natural disasters; chemical (pollution) and biological (disease epidemics, infectious diseases) risks; climate change exacerbates fragility. WASH and health systems strengthening, including strengthening communities’ capacities to prevent and respond to epidemics; strengthen communities’ and institutions’ capacity to reduce disaster risk and adapt to climate change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to risks inherent in political processes: corruption; oppression; political instability; weak governance and capacity to deliver essential social services. Strengthen national institutions to perform and deliver services; to be accountable; to be resilient; and to overcome delivery challenges through innovative partnerships.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to violence and crime: political and social violence; violent conflict. Programmes that explicitly address violence systemically and contribute towards peacebuilding; programmes that address violence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Vulnerability to risks affecting social cohesion: inequalities arising within specific groups; low social cohesion; discrimination and growing inequalities based on ethnic, political and socioeconomic disparities; social unrest. Programmes that address discrimination, inequalities and disparities; programmes that strengthen social cohesion between state and community and between communities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Annex 3**

Summary of actions for each of the four priority areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1: Invest in contextual analysis of multidimensional risks and use the analysis for planning and adapting programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.1</strong> Use innovative instruments in collaboration with others to address gaps in data, information and analysis relevant to fragile contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement assessment methodologies appropriate and feasible for difficult operating environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reinforce partnerships for coordinated multi-agency efforts in information collection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.2</strong> Assess and understand the structural causes of fragility, including those that underpin violations of human and child rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess and analyse the structural causes of fragility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct a political economy analysis as an integral component of programme planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement a conflict and risk analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access information and undertake analysis to understand the extent, patterns and trends of violations against children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use analyses to inform principled programming and action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.3</strong> Integrate a capacity analysis of the national governance, structures and systems, including at the local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integrate an institutional capacity development analysis into programme planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support and strengthen decentralized systems of information collection and analysis that trigger decentralized decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.4</strong> Use data and analysis to plan transformative results achievable over longer time frames with continuous monitoring and programme adaptation to context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on political, conflict and institutional assessments, define longer-term transformative results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Put in place consultative mechanisms and procedures to reflect on progress and unforeseen challenges and revise and adjust programme planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2: Enhance programming strategies in fragile contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 2.1</strong> Prioritize and respond to the structural causes of fragility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Informed by an understanding of the underlying causes of fragility, define programme results through longer time frames and, if necessary, an expanded scope of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using the theory of change, define how interventions contribute towards peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 2.2</strong> Maintain access and stay engaged using a principled approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adhere to both humanitarian and development principles; identify points of convergence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expand access and achieve principled results through remote programming and partnerships, including through capacity development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintain a principled, independent position in the context of political stabilization and peacekeeping agendas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Define deliberate actions to address political and conflict-related exclusion inequalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhance principled advocacy in the context of fragility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Action 2.3 | Implement humanitarian and development programmes through integrated and shared analysis, frameworks and results. | • Reinforce resilience as a central lens for programming and results in fragile contexts.  
• Establish multi-year funding time frames and shared platforms for collective humanitarian and development outcomes.  
• Maintain capacity for both emergency and development programming.  
• Institutionalize emergency preparedness and response into national sector policies, structures and capacities. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action 2.4 | Create and maximize the opportunities to strengthen systems incrementally. | • Maintain commitment to long-term systems strengthening while supporting implementation.  
• Prioritize and sequence interventions for systems building through a deliberate set of evolving actions.  
• Take innovative programmes to scale, informed by deliberate processes of reflection, accountability and learning.  
• Move beyond technically sound programmes, from ‘best practice’ to ‘best fit’.  
• Support emerging systems to be inclusive. |
| Action 2.5 | Enhance performance of decentralized local governance for achieving results in social services that lead to strengthened social cohesion and accountability. | • Support relevant, sustainable integrated programmes by strengthening local governance structures.  
• Strengthen local governance including through greater social cohesion and accountability. |
| Action 2.6 | Strengthen national institutions and local structures to be equitable and inclusive and to deliver results. | • Support the development of policy frameworks and functioning institutional arrangements that facilitate the practical implementation of policies.  
• Move beyond technical training to support institutional capacity for improved performance in the provision of quality services.  
• Invest in local/national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) community structures and private sector for the delivery of services.  
• Facilitate the contribution of the diaspora. |
| Action 2.7 | Protect the most vulnerable through shock-responsive social protection systems. | • Incrementally build a comprehensive social protection system.  
• Enable the social protection system to be shock-responsive.  
• Take informed risks to implement cash transfer programmes even in high-risk or conflict environments.  
• Strengthen the interface between informal and formal social protection mechanisms. |
| Action 2.8 | Respond to crises across borders through sub-regional strategies. | • Put in place analysis and response systems that effectively address threats across multiple borders.  
• Prepare for and respond to population movements through multi-country, long-term responses. |
### Priority 3: Enhance partnerships for more effective results in fragile contexts

| Action 3.1 | Explore and consolidate partnerships that enhance efforts to strengthen governance and institutions to improve performance in service delivery. | • Define the comparative niche that UNICEF occupies in relation to the commitment of other organizations – such as UNDP and the World Bank – to strengthen governance in fragile contexts.  
• Use the above to inform a more deliberate partnership with the World Bank and/or World Bank as appropriate. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.2</td>
<td>Establish inter-agency partnerships within the context of multi-year national planning frameworks.</td>
<td>• Engage in government-led and other multi-agency platforms, including in New Deal countries, through compacts and the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Action 3.3 | Consolidate long-term partnerships with national NGOs, local community-based organizations (CBOs) and local private sector businesses. | • Establish a deliberate and accountable strategy to work through national and local organizations, which includes the strengthening of their capacities.  
• Strengthen partnership with CBOs as equal partners (social mobilization, community engagement). |
| Action 3.4 | Identify and strengthen partnerships with human rights organizations. | • Engage in partnerships with relevant human rights organizations/initiatives such as Human Rights Up Front. |
| Action 3.5 | Youth engagement in the delivery of programmes | • Ensure that young people have the skills, capacity and resources to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian situations. |

### Priority 4: Expand and adapt internal capacities, procedures and operational support in fragile contexts

| Action 4.1 | Use the analysis of structural causes of fragility as well as an analysis of risk and the progress towards results to revise, realign and adjust programmes. | • Put in place a rigorous reflection process that allows programmes to be ‘best fit’ for the contexts not just technically best practice.  
• Ensure that programming is enhanced through an adaptive management approach that supports innovation and iterative learning. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action 4.2 | Expand staff competencies and staff profiles. | • Ensure that staff profiles include skills in political, conflict, environmental, social, security and economic analysis as well as institutional and governance strengthening.  
• Consider and explore the relevance of a model in which senior policy and/or technical experts support the strengthening of the performance of governance structures as advisers. |
| Action 4.3 | Prepare well for the effective distribution of supplies, take risks and strengthen local and national procurement and delivery channels for sustainability. | • Robust systems of preparedness and readiness for the rapid delivery of supplies must be maintained while at the same time strengthening local and national procurement and delivery channels for a more sustainable approach in the longer term. |
| Action 4.4 | Secure multi-year, flexible funding sources that support innovation and learning. | • Expand the number of flexible, multi-year, multi-agency funding mechanisms in line with sector-wide approaches that address integrated humanitarian, transition and development results.  
• Where appropriate, position UNICEF as the fund manager of multi-donor pooled funding mechanisms. |
| Action 4.5 | Engage in enhanced knowledge management to support learning, accountability and innovation in fragile contexts. | • Put in place a robust knowledge management and learning strategy for fragile contexts. |
Annex 4

Capacity development framework for fragile contexts

This diagram shows a capacity development framework for national goals, but such a framework could equally be applied to regional, sub-regional or even sub-national goals.

Note: It is therefore necessary to focus on the following four levers of change (outputs) to potentially bring about change in the performance, stability and adaptability of the relevant institutions (outcomes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lever of change</th>
<th>Capacity development responses and examples of outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Reform and strengthening of institutions, e.g., roles and responsibilities in place, compliance mechanisms in place, institutional platforms functioning effectively to engage partners and build consensus and facilitate collective action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership development, e.g., clear vision in place, leadership role prioritized and developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Education, learning and training information management system, e.g., education and training skills and knowledge strategy in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation, performance monitoring, participatory evaluations, e.g., community engagement in monitoring for accountability of service provision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82 Adapted from United Nations Development Group (2010) and UNDP Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected.
Tensions in managing capacity development in fragile contexts

There are a number of tensions in managing capacity development in fragile contexts, which will need to be resolved in one of several ways depending on the specific tension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tension 1</th>
<th>Implementing capacity development at decentralized level to increase incentives for responsive structures and/or preserving a strong central authority to maintain a minimum level of capacity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tension 2</td>
<td>Extending state authority and capacity from the centre and/or accepting hybrid systems of capacity from below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension 3</td>
<td>Increasing local government capacities and resources to provide services and/or empowering local communities to look after their own needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17 May 2017. Samuel Omondi (aged 29 years) plays with his son Fabien (aged 7) in the playground at the Little Rock Early Childhood Development Centre in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya.

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