

**Independent Review of Peace and Development Advisors and the Joint  
UNDP/DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention**

November 2014

Prepared by Sara Batmanglich  
*supported by UK DFID  
on behalf of donors to the Joint Programme*

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## Acronyms

BCPR	Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery
BPPS	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CPR	Conflict Prevention and Recovery
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOCO	Development Operations Coordination Office
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division
HQ	Headquarters
HRA	Human Rights Advisor
HRuFAP	Human Rights up Front Action Plan
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PRF	Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
SBT	Mediation Standby Team
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The Joint UNDP/DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (the Joint Programme) provides collaborative and catalytic support to emerging and ongoing conflict prevention initiatives. Utilizing the complementary capacities of each partner, it allows for a range of expertise to be provided across the conflict prevention spectrum – addressing longer-term structural issues, as well as flashpoint tensions that have the potential to escalate. The overarching goal of delivering these outputs is to strengthen conflict prevention capacities at national and local levels, including through the support for national architectures for peace, mediation and dialogue.

The main focus of the Joint Programme's efforts is the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs), who support Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) adapt to sensitive contexts and to develop and implement strategic conflict prevention programmes. PDAs do so by undertaking conflict and political analysis; drawing on that analysis to identify and create entry points; and pursuing a sustainability strategy that is based upon building the capacities of national actors to carry preventive and peacebuilding work forward.

There will be just under 40 PDAs deployed across the world by early 2015, with demand having grown considerably in the past several years. While the Joint Programme is ten years old, there has never been an external review assessing its contribution to UN efforts to advance conflict prevention at the country-level through support provided by PDAs. In addition, recognizing the broader context in which the Joint Programme operates, it is also useful timing to take stock of its contribution to enhancing the UN's capacity to understand and respond to complex political situations.

### Context

In many countries where the UN operates, there is now increased awareness of how the development process can be affected by change, evolution and turbulence – and how this can be particularly acute when a country is emerging from crisis or undergoing considerable transition. Countries grapple simultaneously with addressing development challenges; strengthening governance systems; managing group expectations and the competition for resources; strengthening institutional capacities and state-society relations; and seeking to reconcile societal imbalances.<sup>1</sup> Where any of the tensions inherent in this process bubble over, then not only can development be forestalled, but violence can flare – at times leading to full-scale crisis. National actors are usually the best placed to help their societies manage these tensions, and embedding the capacities to do so in national infrastructures for peace is one of the most sustainable ways to accompany development and mitigate conflict.

Recognizing the complexity and inter-linkages within the development landscape, and understanding that the UN's role in this milieu must be equally comprehensive, the organization has made a number of recent adjustments to how it approaches complex political situations. These are based on the rationale that politics and development are connected, that development is an effective entry point through which to address other sensitive issues, and that the UN's neutrality positions it well to be able to assist national stakeholders develop their own solutions to these. The PDAs are on the frontlines of these efforts – combining political, peacebuilding and development work – in their support of RCs and UNCTs that are better equipped to leverage the entirety of the system, maximize the UN's potential and navigate the risks inherent in these environments.

### Key Findings

- The value of the Joint Programme at HQ and the PDA function existing at the country-level is that, when operating well, they are currently one of the most effective multi-layered platforms for bringing

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<sup>1</sup> UN Joint Programme (2013). 'Reflections', Resident Coordinator Practice Notes, No. 1, p. 3.

together the complete spectrum of UN system resources – from precise technical expertise in a variety of thematic and programmatic areas, to senior mediators and even ‘good offices’ – to focus on specific countries and their needs, allowing the UN to more systematically and coherently address conflict prevention operationally. In this sense, the Joint Programme is a prime example of turning theory and rhetoric into concrete practice and actions.

- The PDA function is structured to channel the comparative advantage of both DPA and UNDP at the country-level, by utilizing comprehensive and multi-sectoral analysis to understand the dynamics of an operating environment, and to identify opportunities for conflict-sensitive and politically astute programming. By carrying out their role, the PDAs also build strong relationships and networks, and through these can then further build capacities both internally within the UN system, and externally with national actors, to identify additional entry points and ideally have a multiplier effect for advancing this kind of work.
- Multiple different audiences benefit from the services that a PDA provides. At any given time a PDA is engaging with actors at HQ, with the RC and the UNCT, government, other national/local partners, civil society and the international community – and the value of a PDA will be spread across and different for each of these. The PDAs analysis is used for informing decision-making, positioning the UN, as well as to contextualize issues of relevance for programming. By serving as the nucleus to these different communities, the PDA can assist with finding commonality for more coordinated approaches – leveraging different parts of the peacebuilding and development architecture in a country and suggesting how it can more systematically work towards addressing core drivers of violence and conflict.
- From the information and analysis the PDA compiles, the RC is also better prepared to strategically guide the UN system, including in sensitive conversations with governments. Especially in countries that are dependent on development aid, there is often no way to avoid these conversations becoming politicized. The international community can also benefit from using this platform to speak more coherently, lending greater weight to messaging. Here the UN, drawing upon their neutrality and impartiality, can play a critical role in ‘communicating quietly on behalf of the international community’ and using their access to advocate for issues in a manner that encourages national actors to take the lead and responsibly address topics of concern.<sup>2</sup>
- It is the PDAs work with national partners that is particularly unique, despite often being the most difficult to adequately capture. Since this support is based on mutually-agreed areas of interest and nationally-defined priorities, local partners view the provision of this individualized senior technical expertise as not only extremely valuable, but also demonstrative of the UNs sincerity in wanting them to lead on their own development strategies. In some places, these competencies might already exist, but perhaps either disparately, or without the extra support they need to flourish. Typical PDA working methods are considered to be consultative, patient, inclusive and encouraging of building additional capacity, and are therefore seen as effective in strengthening what is already in place, despite the fact this is often more time-consuming. It was noted that this approach favorably differentiates the type of support received from PDAs versus other kinds of assistance.
- An increased awareness of the risks and specific challenges that are faced by the UN when operating in complex development contexts has directly correlated to an increase in requests for the type of relevant support that PDAs provide. However, because there has not been a commensurate increase of predictable financial or dedicated human resources, the Joint Programme is close to reaching its full capacity to respond to these requests while still functioning with the degree of quality control, oversight and personalization of support that it has. In addition to requiring efforts to engage with current and prospective donors to expand the resources available (and the predictability of when they are received) this indicates that decisions about where to place PDAs will need to become even more

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<sup>2</sup> UN Joint Programme, ‘Reflections’, p. 15.

prioritized and calibrated based upon the careful consideration of a variety of factors – including a closer examination of the internal dynamics of the UNCT.

- As the factor that was found to have the greatest impact on what a PDA is able to achieve – and which should thus feature heavily in the decision-making process – is the approach and strategic vision of the RC, the PDAs relationship with this person, and the openness of the UNCT to this work. The RC is the ‘gatekeeper’ who greatly influences the type and level of interactions that the PDA can have, their room to maneuver, as well as the breadth of entry points they can seek. Likewise, the UNCT is the gatekeeper to programming that the PDA needs to be involved in, and the contextual information attained from this involvement. Where these relationships all run smoothly, the PDA is able to have an inordinate amount of impact for just one person. Where they do not, the PDA is relegated to becoming an analyst, or just ‘an extra pair of hands’ who sits in the RCs office and is forced to rely upon limited sources of information.
- It is well known that achieving the transformational change the Joint Programme seeks to support is a long-term endeavor. There is a vast difference between what a PDA is able to achieve in one to two years, versus longer and/or successive deployments. The former will still be of value to the UN system. However, maximizing true value for money for a post of this nature, should not just be about providing a service to the UN, but rather about providing a service more broadly – one that will result in the existence of enough local capacities to eventually render it unnecessary.<sup>3</sup> This will require stable commitments that are viewed from the standpoint of a sustainability, not exit, strategy that is based on the qualitative assessment of appropriate benchmarks, and not just when funding runs out.

#### Summary of Recommendations

- 1. Based on the partnership, determine the Joint Programme’s vision for conflict prevention.** There is still some conceptual tension between how each partner defines conflict prevention, views their role in operationalizing this, and sees the Joint Programme as the vehicle for a more strategic approach to these efforts. A holistic vision does not need to be rigid, or completely overlapping, but would bring the two perspectives more closely together by clearly articulating their complementarity.
- 2. Use the above to inform a Joint Programme strategy for each country.** After initial analysis and country-level consultations, support the PDA in identifying a theory of change. This can be fluid and serve as a living document, but its existence will provide greater guidance for a PDAs work with partners, will facilitate monitoring of progress, and will also ensure that handovers between PDAs are based upon the continuation of support to a more long-term strategic vision.
- 3. Continue to expand and strengthen functional cooperation at HQ.** In order to continue to consolidate system-wide policy coherence on the conflict prevention and peacebuilding agenda, expand cooperation with PBSO and with DOCO on countries of mutual interest, and increase outreach about the work of the PDAs amongst operational agencies at HQ.
- 4. Keep the PDAs as an elite cadre.** For this type of work, quality cannot be sacrificed for quantity, which will mean capping the number of PDAs, but giving them more individual resources upon deployment in order to jumpstart innovative programming and develop entry points. Increasingly tough decisions about where PDAs are placed should be based on prioritization that takes into account not only the context itself, but also the dynamics and capacities of the RCO and the UNCT, resulting in an honest decision about whether the PDA will be utilized to the fullest extent possible.
- 5. Maintain greater continuity between successive PDAs.** Because of the investment that PDAs make in cultivating their network and programmes, and building trust in both, the Joint Programme cannot afford to lose this capital by allowing lag time between successive posts. There should be a

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<sup>3</sup> As recently occurred in Ghana, where after three successive PDAs the post was closed because, externally, there is now a national peace architecture and internally within the UN, a national team continues to lead on this work.

minimum standard of joint handovers between PDAs, and where an RC who has not had a PDA before inherits one, the Joint Programme should be prepared to support a joint mission to foster this transition.

6. **Give RCs, as well as RCs and their PDAs, more opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange.** Those meetings and workshops that have already taken place have been fundamental in shifting mentalities and engendering better practice, and the opportunity to advance greater understanding of difficult development contexts throughout the UN system should be increased.
7. **Protect the functioning of the Joint Programme; resist the urge to over-bureaucratize processes.** One of the values of the Joint Programme has been its ability to operate differently than much of the UN system, by retaining its relative speed, flexibility, collection of dynamic personalities who are not easily categorized, and the targeted nature of its responsiveness – and these aspects of the programme must be allowed and encouraged to remain the same.
8. **Increase substantive and technical support to PDAs.** Resurrect the ‘core group’ concept employed by the Joint Programme in previous years for PDAs to have a more established support structure to turn to when needed, including a specialized group for technical and programmatic requirements.
9. **Retain PDAs within the UN system.** There are certain human resource issues which currently disincentive PDAs from staying in the system. To be reemphasized here – based upon their unique skill-sets, varied backgrounds, and the field experience that they are gaining as PDAs – these very much are the next generation of senior staff within the UN system, and every effort should be made to retain them and nurture their careers as such.
10. **Enable PDAs to have greater focus on innovation.** The nature of conflict is changing, as is the pace of change, and the UN must keep up. Instability surrounding criminal, gang and urban violence, resource-based conflicts, violent extremism, etc. is growing in many places where PDAs are deployed. Given their familiarity with analysis, programming, as well as with social resilience mechanisms, PDAs are prime candidates to be leading the UN in developing more innovative thinking about how to address the impact of emerging challenges on development, from a practitioner’s standpoint.
11. **Capture learning and activities.** PDAs are undertaking cutting-edge practice on conflict prevention, social cohesion, governance and peacebuilding. Based on the comparative advantages that allow the UN to try new approaches, as well as to have longer-term commitment to some of the processes it is accompanying, the Joint Programme is uniquely placed to capture learning from these activities and programmes to benefit the wider community of practice.
12. **Expand the other outputs of the Joint Programme.** The Joint Programme is more than just PDAs. Recognizing the vehicle that has been provided by its ability to strengthen collaboration between DPA and UNDP, increase attention and resources to the other three core outputs of the programme. This could include: working through existing mechanisms to identify and more swiftly deploy short-term expertise; supporting DPA and UNDP staff members to undertake longer assignments in support of PDAs<sup>4</sup>; or exploring options for supporting national PDAs to undertake ‘shadowing’ or detailed assignments in countries where an international PDA is deployed.

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<sup>4</sup> One suggestion for these assignments could be to help fulfill recommendation 11, by having these staff support PDAs in gathering the experiences and best practices from their context and feeding them back into the system.

## **BACKGROUND\***

### About the Joint Programme

The Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (the Joint Programme) was launched in 2004 in order to provide collaborative catalytic support to emerging and ongoing conflict prevention initiatives. Matched to the needs of diverse contexts in countries across multiple regions, over the past decade the Joint Programme has contributed to United Nations (UN) support to achieve violence-free elections or referenda; resolve specific conflicts or deadlocks; sustain viable platforms for dialogue or conflict resolution; and implement initiatives to reduce insecurity. The tailored provision of this support is focused on building capacity internally, within the UN Country Team (UNCT), so as to facilitate stronger, more timely and relevant use of the UN's considerable comparative advantages in order to build capacity externally, amongst national stakeholders. In 2012, the programme was extended and reformulated based upon four core areas of support:

- Developing strategic conflict prevention initiatives at the country level, including through the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs);
- Providing targeted assistance for specific facilitation activities jointly undertaken in non-mission settings;
- Supporting joint assessment, analysis, and knowledge development by DPA and UNDP, in the context of support for joint country-level initiatives;
- Providing short-term support for conflict and political analysis through deployment of advisors in countries experiencing crisis or transition.

The overarching goal of delivering these outputs is to strengthen conflict prevention capacities at national and local levels, including through the support for national architectures for peace, mediation and dialogue. The complementary capacities of each partner, allow for a range of expertise to be provided along the conflict prevention spectrum – addressing longer-term structural issues, as well as flashpoint tensions that have the potential to escalate. In this sense, the Joint Programme is intended to augment the existing efforts of conflict prevention, governance and peacebuilding actors within the UN system, particularly by focusing on how the UN's engagement at the country-level is positioned and primed to address, manage and resolve existing and emerging challenges.

### About the PDAs

The predominant, and most visible, focus of the Joint Programme's efforts is the deployment of the PDAs. The role of the PDA is to support Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UNCTs adapt and respond to complex political situations and to develop and implement strategic conflict prevention initiatives and programmes. While the specifics of a PDA's job description vary depending on the country context where he/she is deployed as well as the UN Country Team they are a part of, broadly speaking, they are engaged in four core areas:

- Providing strategic and analytical support to the RC/RR in his/her relations with high-level government officials, civil society, academia, and with the wider political and civic leadership;

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\*This independent review was funded by DFID on behalf of core Joint Programme donors, and was undertaken by a consultant, Sara Batmanglich. The consultant would like to extend her sincere gratitude to the wide range of interviewees who generously gave their time to contribute to the review. Special thanks is also extended to the Reference Group; to UN staff in Ghana, Georgia and Kenya for their assistance with field visits; and to the Joint Programme for greatly facilitating access to all the necessary stakeholders as well as backstopping the process throughout. The opinions expressed herein are solely those of the consultant and do not necessarily reflect that of the Joint Programme or its donors.



- Identifying areas of programmatic engagement with national stakeholders, and supporting the RC/RR in the preparation of the UN response to government requests, related to social cohesion, dialogue, democratic reform, conflict prevention, peacebuilding or other relevant fields;
- Establishing and strengthening strategic partnerships with key national stakeholders, regional and international actors, and development partners;
- Advising on the strategic direction of conflict prevention programming and working to strengthen the capacity of UNDP and the UNCT to undertake conflict analysis and mainstream conflict-sensitivity in regular programming.

PDA's are usually conflict prevention and peacebuilding experts – many who have come from outside of the UN system – who may also have experience in specific technical areas in addition to conflict resolution, facilitation and dialogue, and training and capacity building. The post is either a P-4 or P-5 position, depending on the context. In countries where they are deployed, PDA's are meant to serve as a 'key interface between the UN system, local counterparts (both government and civil society) and the international community in their efforts to build/strengthen national capacities in conflict prevention and conflict-sensitive development.'<sup>1</sup>

Examples of activities that PDA's are typically engaged in range from work around elections and the electoral process; capacity building around dialogue, mediation and negotiation platforms; convening and linking actors working on reconciliation and social cohesion; providing consistent analytical support to strategic and programmatic decision-making; and, increasingly, supporting the UNCT in the design and oversight of joint programming, including that funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

Throughout a PDA's deployment, there should be an overarching focus on three things: (1) undertaking conflict and political analysis; (2) drawing on this analysis to identify and create entry points to further the culture of prevention and strengthen infrastructures for peace<sup>2</sup>, which is intrinsically linked to (3) a sustainability strategy that is based upon creating the conditions for national actors to carry the work forward.

There are currently 34 PDA's deployed, with just under 40 expected to be in place by early 2015. The number of PDA positions has doubled since 2010, with demand swiftly picking up pace in the last several years, as the reputation of the PDA's and the unique service that they provide has become increasingly known and requested. While this is a testament to the fact they fill a clear niche within the UN system, the importance of maintaining the quality and customization of the support the Joint Programme can offer to the UNCT, and is able to provide for PDA's, will be a key matter of consideration going forward.

## CONTEXT

Knowledge about conflict, crises and transitions has advanced in recent years, to the point that we now know how little we actually do know about how, why and when countries slip into and out of crisis. What we have confirmed is that the accelerated pace of change, and the relative unpredictability of the turbulence experienced within the development process, often leaves us learning lessons from hindsight. Far from a neat, straight line, the path that many countries take resembles more of a scribble. And this 'messiness' has made it challenging for the UN system, traditionally predicated on clear divides between mandates and areas of foci, to determine how it can best intervene to support peaceful transitions and development trajectories in increasingly complex contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Spies (2007). 'Navaisha Synthesis Report,' Summary of a workshop for UN conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners. New York: UN, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of 'infrastructures for peace' emerged in 2010 from a meeting of government representatives, political parties, civil society and UN Country Teams from 14 African countries during which they agreed this meant the 'dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a society.' C. Kumar (2011). 'Building National "Infrastructures for Peace": UN Assistance for Internally Negotiated Solutions to Violent Conflict' in *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory*, Vol. 1. Oxford: Praeger Security International, p.385.

This challenge has been exacerbated by the fact that definitions of peace have also expanded, now meaning not only the absence of war, but incorporating ‘all aspects of human life from the right to security to democratic rights; access to justice; protection of human rights; the delivery of health, education, and other basic services; and the provision of social and economic opportunities.’<sup>3</sup> This has incrementally increased the demand on the UN to become more comprehensive, sophisticated and prescient in their delivery of peace dividends with development actors realizing that ‘they need to work in and on conflicts, rather than trying to work around them, because all development activities affect, and are affected by, the conflict dynamics and structures.’<sup>4</sup>

The Security Council has recently reaffirmed the importance of a culture of prevention, one that ‘comprises operational and structural measures for the prevention of armed conflict and addresses its root causes.’<sup>5</sup> But, these raised expectations of performance and the renewed push for prevention, regardless of their validity, are emerging in an age of austerity – where the demand to do more, and better, is taking place in an environment that is offering fewer resources with which to do either. While cost-benefit analysis on disasters has modeled the economic advantage of preparedness versus waiting for emergencies to happen, demonstrating the positive relationship across multiple scenarios, quantifying similar results for conflict prevention efforts has been notoriously difficult.<sup>6</sup>

Yet the danger of inaction has been proven time and time again, despite the fact that ‘it is difficult to think of a situation in which we were not aware of warning signs on the horizon.’<sup>7</sup> The outcomes of the report of the 2012 Internal Review Panel on UN Action in Sri Lanka found that the ‘systemic failure’ of the UN to respond adequately to the conflict was in part because of a ‘model for UN action in the field that was designed for a development rather than a conflict response.’<sup>8</sup> Lessons from this have subsequently led to the ‘Human Rights up Front Action Plan’ (HRuFAP) initiative, which is now being rolled out with the hope of better preparing and positioning the UN to spot and prevent serious human rights violations and to deal with evolving crisis situations.

This latest initiative joins a flurry of other suggested structural adjustments to the way the UN system interfaces internally, as well as with its operating environment, in both mission and non-mission settings.<sup>9</sup> These have also been accompanied by the encouragement of a new approach to and a broader conceptualization of the way the UN should think about its roles and responsibilities, including the acknowledgement that becoming more familiar with risk will be a key feature of working in these contexts. The 2012 Secretary-General’s Decision on Special Circumstances in Non-Mission Settings being particularly notable in this regard, as it served to officially recognize the difficulties and sensitivities of operating in politically complex situations and sought to enhance the system’s ability to respond to and support RCs accordingly. The HRuFAP initiative will take this a step further, and all Policy Committee Decisions pertaining to crisis response will now be unified to ensure a more coherent and consistent policy and normative framework, as well as to increase and align the support afforded to RCs and UNCTs in these situations.

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<sup>3</sup> M. von der Schulenberg (2014). ‘Rethinking Peacebuilding: Transforming the UN Approach,’ New York: International Peace Institute, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> E. Melander and C. Pigache (2007). ‘Conflict Prevention: Concepts and Challenges,’ in Walter Feichtinger and Predrag Jurekovic, ed., *Konfliktprävention zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit*. Wien: the Austrian National Defence Academy (9-17), p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2171 (2014). UN Doc. S/RES/2171, 21 August 2014, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> See, J. Kellet and K. Peters (2014). ‘Dare to prepare: taking risk seriously,’ London: Overseas Development Institute. The report found that even in the most conservative scenario, \$3.25 of benefit is generated for every \$1 spent on preparedness, with this shifting to as high as \$5.31:1 in the least conservative scenario. The issue is also discussed with respect to conflict prevention in the work of Malcolm Chalmers, however this work is now nearly a decade old.

<sup>7</sup> UN Security Council (2014). ‘Annex to the letter from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the UN,’ UN Doc. S/2014/572. 5 August 2014, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> UN (2012). ‘Report of the Secretary-General’s Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka,’ New York: UN, pp. 28-29.

<sup>9</sup> These include the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), the Civilian Capacity Initiative (CivCap), the Delivering as One agenda and the Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal.

Taken collectively, these symbolize several defining elements of the current strategic context: one, that in many places where the UN is present it increasingly faces ‘uneasy choices, which transcend the humanitarian-recovery-development divide’<sup>10</sup>; two, that across all settings there should be the ambition to identify and capitalize on complementarities which leverage the system in a way where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; three, that nurturing national ownership and supporting national capacity development should be a key feature of UN policies, strategies and plans; and, four, that rhetoric, despite its logic, is often difficult to translate into practice that really works on the ground.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW**

Peace and Development Advisors, in their hybrid role, are not only on the frontlines of this evolution – encompassing political, peacebuilding, and development work – but also in many ways serve as an operational example of the aforementioned thinking. It is within this context that the review is taking place, seeking to assess the contribution of the Joint DPA/UNDP Programme to the UN system’s efforts to advance conflict prevention at the country-level, predominantly through the deployment of PDAs.<sup>11</sup>

The objective of this review was not to evaluate individual PDAs or to categorize the numerous activities of either the PDA cadre or the Joint Programme itself, but was instead intended to identify factors that determine the Programme’s success, as well as its current challenges, and to better understand whether these approaches potentially enable the UN to deliver more effectively in dynamic environments and to assist national counterparts in building their own preventive capacity.

It must also be noted that the period in which the review was conducted overlapped with a major restructuring within UNDP, including the establishment of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) following the dissolution of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), who executed the programme on behalf of DPA and UNDP. While deeper discussions of the reorganization are outside the scope of the review, it has been referenced where there are direct implications on the future functioning of the Joint Programme.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Effectiveness**

#### **a. Contexts and enabling/constraining factors**

1. The essence of the PDA model means that, in theory, almost any context could benefit from the type of multi-disciplinary, tailored support that the role provides to the UN Country Team and to national partners. However, when PDAs have been most effective, this has had more to do with the enabling and constraining factors present in these contexts, rather than the characteristics of the contexts themselves.
2. The factor that was overwhelmingly found to have the most impact on a PDAs efficacy, as head of the UNCT, is the Resident Coordinator, and the PDAs relationship with this person. The RC serves as the ‘gatekeeper’ for the PDAs interactions with all other actors both within and outside of the UN system, and as such holds a tremendous amount of influence with respect to shaping the PDAs room to maneuver, defining their approach to the context, and encouraging options for entry points at their disposal.
3. In this respect, it is far preferable to have a PDA paired with an RC who fully understands the purpose of the PDA role; how and where they fit in amongst the rest of the UNCT; considers them a shared resource and encourages interactions as such; provides a degree of regular access to themselves and other decision-makers; trusts and encourages the PDA to establish his/her own

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<sup>10</sup> M. Jacquand and S. Ranii (2014). ‘UN Development System Risk Management in Fragile States,’ A White Paper for the 2014 Utstein Group Spring Meeting. New York: Center on International Cooperation, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Further information on the purpose, methodology and mechanics of the review is available in Annex 3.

networks; and provides and protects the space for them to engage in ‘PDA tasks’ (which oftentimes may mean pushing back on other demands). It is also desirable for the RC to have a vision for the country’s peace and development trajectory that is multi-sectoral (i.e. not only development-oriented), including how the UN can best support the country to achieve this. Lastly, it is advantageous when RCs accept the complexity inherent in such a vision, and are comfortable with their own role in this and the calculated risk-taking sometimes called for, thus grasping the value of the PDA as an ally who can assist with navigating this terrain. Of course, there is also responsibility on the PDAs side to demonstrate their value as this worthy ally, by supporting this vision, and by being adaptable and responsive to the specific backing the RC needs in order to navigate.

4. There are multiple other issues which affect a PDAs efficacy, but where the full understanding and support of the RC is in place, the review found that the PDA is usually able to capitalize on this powerful enabling factor to work around, or through, most other constraining factors that may exist, including those within the context itself. As a PDAs work with national actors is, first and foremost, based on mutually agreed upon areas of interest and nationally defined priorities, where the time is allowed for trust to be built between parties, these relationships do not usually become a constraint. In fact, in some cases, national actors may be much more open to receiving the type of capacity and support that a PDA provides than their own UN colleagues.
5. The PDAs relationship with the UNCT, and the UNDP Country Office in particular, is another factor that was frequently cited as shaping the scope of a PDAs work, and because of its central importance, can have a multiplier effect on the entirety of their role. This is somewhat related to the health of the RCs own relationship with the UNCT, and his/her ability and willingness to encourage constructive engagement with the PDA. One RC described that other UN staff can wonder ‘who is this strange person sitting in the corner doing something that none of us are doing’ and that RCs need to help manage this dynamic carefully.<sup>12</sup> But, at the moment, too much is left to chance, with hope that members of the UNCT will automatically see the presence of the PDA as an asset rather than a threat. If the RC is the gatekeeper to the relationships the PDA needs, the UNCT is the gatekeeper to programming and, given the focus of PDAs work, the naturally compatible portfolio usually rests with UNDP. However, the fierce competition within Country Offices for resources, and for control over programming that can deliver results that performance is assessed upon, creates little incentive for the PDA to be welcomed with open arms. Ironically, even where initial cooperation with UNDP may be lukewarm, the perception of the PDA as solely UNDP staff can still serve to taint their dealings with other members of the UNCT. Similarly, if they are seen to only be a resource of the RCs Office there can be reluctance for other agencies to engage with them. Additionally, the specter of DPA involvement and the direct reporting link, can also give some the impression that the PDA is a ‘spy’ for HQ.
6. Where this is the case, more often than not the onus falls on the PDAs themselves to actively work to undo the ‘guilty until proven innocent’ mindset that can be associated with their role – and the preference for ways to do this varies between PDAs.<sup>13</sup> To open up these entry points, many PDAs set-out attempting to make themselves as useful as possible, which can eventually backfire if they are then seen to be a jack-of-all trades and valuable as an extra pair of hands that can be slotted into wherever ad hoc needs exist. One thing that has been shown to reassure colleagues is the articulation of a clearly defined mandate from the outset about what they are there to do, and not to do, including the degree to which they should be involved with programming – and consistent communication and clarification of this at the beginning.

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<sup>12</sup> UN Joint Programme (2013). ‘Reflections,’ Resident Coordinator Practice Notes, No. 2. New York: UN, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> It was noted that even minor actions (such as the placement of a PDAs desk) send an important message about lines of accountability and where the PDA fits in amongst the rest of the organogram.

## b. Areas and roles PDAs play in affecting change

7. Given that the role is meant to be designed specifically for individual contexts, beyond the four broad categories listed above, it is challenging to adequately cover the variety of areas a PDA engages in; the role will vary considerably between different postings. However, the crux of the role is to serve as an instigator and integrator for approaching politically complex development contexts in a way that is more cognizant of the interrelation between the operating environment and the UNs engagement there. In simple terms, the PDAs promote not doing ‘business as usual’ in environments where to carry on as before is no longer serving to maximize the potential impacts the UN can have in assisting countries with their development transitions. Importantly, they are also equipped to have the necessary, sometimes difficult, discussions with stakeholders to design a ‘new way of doing business.’
8. Typically, the best-case equation of this approach is to: provide comprehensive analysis (merging various disciplines) to understand where the forces of change and tensions are within society + build relationships and networks in order to identify and create entry points = design and guide conflict-sensitive and politically astute programming (ideally leveraging and linking different parts of the UN system to do so). In some places the PDA is establishing the baseline and foundation for pursuit of a transformational/conflict prevention strategy, more proactively finding a way to work towards achieving these goals in programming, including by discovering opportunities that might be hidden within the sum of programmes that are already being implemented.
9. The PDA also frequently serves as an interpreter between different groups of practitioners and stakeholders, in the hopes of finding a common interpretation, and then identifying entry-points based upon this commonality. The breadth of a PDAs group of stakeholders is one of the strengths of the role, but can also be a challenge for them to manage. At any given time the PDA could define their stakeholders as: (headquarters) formerly BCPR, DPA, and now increasingly in some places, PBF or (country-level) RC, UNCT, government, national partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), donors, and regional organizations. The particular grouping of a PDAs stakeholders in a certain place, or during a certain phase of their deployment, will determine whether their role is more inwardly focused on the UN system, or predominantly with external partners. Preferably, there will be a balance between the two. It is also possible to discern certain regional variations in the make-up of PDA portfolios, and the primary audience for their work, with PDAs in the Africa region, for instance, tending to have a heavier involvement in programming with national partners and in Europe/CIS having more involvement with international partners on issues pertaining to analysis sharing and programming coordination and cooperation.
10. There is an uneasy division of labor between the three main functions of a PDAs job – analysis, programming and strategic guidance – with the appropriate balance being subjective and difficult to find, probably because it is a moving target.<sup>14</sup> Nearly everyone agrees that PDAs should have some involvement in programming, as it is the amalgamation of all three functions that makes the role unique; i.e. the PDA is not just an analyst, the PDA is a practitioner. In some respects, the title itself might be one source of confusion, as the vagueness of the term ‘advisor’ could imply that the PDA is meant to be a thinker and a talker, not as much a doer. But the lack of clarity around this division of labor, and the mutable expectations at both field and HQ-level about what the suitable balance is (depending which of the PDAs multiple stakeholders you ask), can result in a PDA feeling unsure whether they are delivering on the right things, for the right group, at the right time.
11. Opinions varied, however, regarding what an optimum level of PDA involvement in programming is. Acknowledging that they can be sucked into the minutiae of daily management, to the detriment of other PDA activities, the majority would prefer to have strategic oversight of concept notes, and programme design but not as much hands-on involvement with implementation activities. There appears to be little appetite, amongst either the PDAs or within Country Teams, for the PDA to fully

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<sup>14</sup> And there is often an additional subtext to the programming requirement, which is to also fundraise for programmes they develop.

run programming, or to be Team Leaders, for instance. A few respondents even felt that this was a conflict of interest given the other aspects of their role. It was also pointed out that in many countries where a PDA has been deployed there is already considerable programming capacity, so the push for the PDA to get involved must be nuanced accordingly; in these cases it will be more about quality control, enhancing conflict prevention impacts and monitoring the opening of further entry points, rather than duplicating the work of programme staff.<sup>15</sup> But the integral link that programming forges with many other aspects of a PDA's work – by opening up access to contextual information, networks, and other entry points – means that a PDA might not always be able to pick and choose to what degree they are involved.

12. Regardless of where they are deployed, recognizing how a PDA can be most effective is often about firstly acknowledging the oftentimes low standing capacity that exists within the UNCT and/or with national partners to do this particular kind of work in the first place. The PDA also frequently finds himself/herself filling other gaps in the way the UN system functions more generally, and using their interagency mandate to attempt to bring colleagues together around certain issues. These multiple demands, some related to the PDA profile, others not, are one of the reasons why PDAs can feel pulled in many different directions at once. One interviewee described PDAs as the 'Harry Potter' of the UN system – meaning they have the potential to perform magic if given the opportunity to channel it effectively. Another term used was 'marriage counselors' with respect to the amount of time that can be spent mediating between colleagues.
13. Because many of the contextual issues that a PDA deals with are multi-dimensional, ideally programming would more frequently follow suit, with the PDA serving as a catalyst for greater joint programming amongst the UNCT. This is where many PDAs see their real value added, and expressed a desire to move beyond mainly working with UNDP. Unfortunately, despite 'Delivering as One' aspirations, the UN is still neither really structured, systemically or procedurally, nor incentivized to conceive of or implement as such. Some members of a Country Team may be open to exploring collaborative opportunities, and actually appreciate the chance to be less confined to a programmatic vision and to contribute to more of a UN vision. However, others are conditioned to do so only when it is likely to lead to additional funding for their own initiatives. There is nothing inherently wrong with this sentiment, but ostensibly it can lower the probability of the UN finding ways to leverage bigger impacts, both direct and indirect, through their work. If and where the staff and the context are primed for this way of working, the PDA is an ideal interlocutor that can help with coordinating and delivering on this vision.
14. If there is a comparable element that emerged from consultations with PDAs working across different contexts, it is that they all believe in a similar *modus operandi* – doing things the right way, not necessarily the quick and easy way. This translates to an approach that is concerned with maintaining a committed process throughout, one that is consultative, patient, inclusive, encouraging and focused on building capacity as it goes along. On the latter aspect, capacity-building is a vague term that is thrown around too frequently in project documents, but discussions with national partners revealed that PDAs practice this in the purest sense. Beyond trainings, and financial and technical support also often facilitated with PDA help, stakeholders discussed that working together on documents, strategies, dialogue processes, partnership building, and programming and proposal development – with all the time-consuming back and forth inherent in such activities – demonstrates that the UN genuinely cares about their perspective and including them in the ongoing development conversation of their own country.
15. PDAs can also play a coordinating role with civil society and other national actors, by helping build synergies between groups and finding ways for them to reduce duplication and work together more. As an example, several CSOs in Ghana mentioned the value of the PDA recognizing and building upon what was already there, as opposed to starting from scratch. Previously, the CSOs had all been following their own initiatives and sometimes working at cross-purposes, but the PDA helped them

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<sup>15</sup> One model that seems to work well is where, for example, a programme manager for the Conflict Prevention and Recovery (CPR) portfolio already exists, enabling the PDA to be involved but without risk of getting too bogged down in the daily aspects.

come together more strategically. While this was originally for funding purposes, the relationships have now outlasted the funding and they are still collaborating. In some African contexts, PDAs can also work with local organizations or local governments, and try to find ways to link and scale-up their activities with what is happening at the national-level.<sup>16</sup>

16. Likewise, the neutral convening role of the UN can be used to similar effect to strengthen partnerships and enhance coordination within the international community. In Georgia, the PDA regularly convened a Joint Consultative Forum where development partners and the PDAs counterparts from embassies would meet to exchange information, brainstorm new ideas and try to find commonalities between their approaches and programming.<sup>17</sup> It was widely lauded as a unique and useful forum where substantive discussions could take place with colleagues working on similar issues, to ensure that even where activities might not match, they would not be working against one another's goals. In this respect the PDA not only helped the UN provide a service to the broader community operating in a politically complex context, but was also able to ensure that certain key normative issues, which otherwise might be lost amongst competing priorities, stayed on the agenda.
17. In some cases, where PDAs have forged strong working relationships with government officials, they can bring their specific expertise to bear in assisting bureaucrats and politicians think through strategies for conflict transformation and peacebuilding, and support the government's conceptualization of a roadmap.<sup>18</sup> Again, as with CSOs, this knowledge might already exist across certain ministries, but the PDA can help pull it all together and suggest opportunities and methods for moving processes forward. The UN, and the PDAs specifically, are uniquely trusted partners in this respect because they are perceived to not have 'hidden agendas' like some bilateral partners. And this level of respect and access at critical junctures places the UN in the privileged position of being able to positively contribute to the 'peaceful resolution of national politics without manipulating outcomes or displacing local initiative.'<sup>19</sup>

### **c. Mainstreaming of conflict prevention and conflict-sensitivity**

18. It can be especially challenging to be designated as a conflict prevention practitioner in a context where there is not armed conflict, or where the existence of either subnational conflict or conflict drivers is not openly recognized at the national level. Here, even undertaking a conflict analysis exercise can be perceived as too political or too risky. In these situations, despite the needs being acute, PDAs can struggle to convince others why their post is necessary in that country, and why conflict-sensitivity should be relevant to everyone's work, with most UN agencies preferring to 'do their own thing.'
19. Even in more politically sensitive or obvious conflict contexts, the importance of conflict-sensitivity can still be an obscure point for many in the UN system. While most will agree upon its importance in principle, what it actually *means* in practice may not be as widely understood, nor will the full value of this approach necessarily be appreciated, especially if it suggests that the conventional way of doing things might have to be altered. In this respect, PDAs point out that there is only so much they can do to reach out to colleagues or convince them of its utility, but that the best way to advocate for greater conflict-sensitivity is to demonstrate the relationship between the context and specific agencies' programming. As a general rule, all PDAs emphasize the necessity of continuing to

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<sup>16</sup> One example of this linking took place in Togo, where in the lead-up to elections the PDA was working with CSOs and the media, doing trainings with the security forces, while at the same time supporting the RC in the high-level dialogue between the government and opposition. A similar method was employed in Cyprus where the PDA linked formal peace negotiations with 'second track' CSO-driven reconciliation efforts.

<sup>17</sup> The Joint Consultative Forum mirrors a higher-level Ambassadorial Working Group, thus linking technical discussions with strategic discussions and ensuring that the agendas of international partners are based on analysis from the ground.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, in Mauritania where the UN has provided technical support to the development of the National Strategy for Social Cohesion, as well as the National Action Plan on Resilience and Development.

<sup>19</sup> UN Joint Programme (2012). 'Lessons Learned in Mediation of the Electoral Dispute in Lesotho', New York: UN, p.16.

consistently engage colleagues, be interested in their programming, be available, and frequently consult with them to spot opportunities for mainstreaming this thinking.<sup>20</sup>

20. Examples of more systematized ways that PDAs may influence mainstreaming is by convening working groups on conflict-sensitivity (or other conflict issues), and by being able to review programme documents and suggest changes to make them more consultative, less biased, or more strategically placed. But it was agreed that the biggest opportunity for mainstreaming is for a PDA to be involved in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and then UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes. Through this, not only can a PDA ensure that the assessments are politically astute and take into account underlying conflict dynamics, but they can also embed that thinking into the next several years of programming – making sure that prevention issues are taken forward and that UNDAFs are not solely technical exercises but are also pushed to be more proactive about addressing root causes.
21. In terms of mainstreaming conflict prevention and awareness more broadly, a PDA and RC can also strategize together about how to advocate for greater priority to sensitive issues with governments. Development can be a neutral entry point for these conversations and a way to raise issues that if approached from a different angle could be seen as more contentious. From this perspective, the UN can demonstrate areas, thematic or geographic, where outstanding instability might be reducing gains, encourage and suggest ways that governments can take the lead on helping the situation, and then offer to provide them any support they need in order to do so.

#### **d. Information and analysis**

22. A core deliverable of the PDA function is the provision of analysis. At the country-level, where this analysis is insightful, comprehensive and is utilized effectively, it is difficult to imagine how the UN functions in many countries without similar inputs. RCs have said that they find it critical for informing their meetings and their positioning of the UN on certain topics. The PDAs are an ‘insurance policy’ of sorts for a UNCT that needs to be both proactive and reactive in dynamic environments. As many international UNCT staff only read the mainstream media, the in-depth multi-disciplinary analysis that a PDA provides can be extremely useful in informing them about issues affecting the mood of the country, as well as giving them a more strategic perspective on areas of risk or controversial issues. Where the PDAs analysis is shared amongst the UNCT, it enables UN actors to feel comfortable enough to hold conversations without being worried that they could inadvertently damage the UNs credibility or be manipulated for political purposes. In highly politicized contexts, one UNCT staff member noted that the population is always on top of the politics, and thus you cannot deal with local partners or beneficiaries without being aware of these dynamics yourself, lest you misstep. In addition to the formal reports, in some countries the PDA will also provide informal reports, or more frequent snapshots, as well as being available for in-depth discussions around analytical points that might be of specific relevance to a certain project.
23. One of the main outputs associated with this analysis is a bi-monthly report delivered to HQ. Yet, while respondents at HQ constantly reiterated how valued and critical the analysis is to them, with DPA saying that in some cases up to 90% of their decision-making is based upon the information they receive from the PDAs, ultimately there is a lack of consensus about what kind of analysis is most useful, with interpretations varying amongst different audiences; some want to see more of a political focus, whilst others want it more contextual, to identify programming opportunities. This uncertainty is perpetuated by the fact that many PDAs are unaware of how the analysis they produce is actually used at HQ, with PDAs citing infrequent and cursory feedback as decreasing their ability to provide analysis that is better targeted towards specific requirements.

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<sup>20</sup> One PDA captured this sentiment by saying that you must (paraphrased) ‘leave your seat and move through the offices.’ Another reiterated this point by saying you have to constantly make yourself available, ‘don’t just sit at your desk and do your work’. This also closely relates to the issue of how, and the degree to which, the RC supports and facilitates engagement with the broader UNCT.



24. Where PDAs are given the space to present briefings at UNCT meetings, this is widely acknowledged to favorably raise the PDAs profile, by not only sending an important message that they are a shared resource, but also by demonstrably performing a service to the Country Team that they find useful. Additionally, it serves as an opportunity to illustrate the added value of analysis to UN positioning and programming, by sparking technical discussions, with UNCT members stating that if the analysis can be directly translated into practical implications for them, they find it especially valuable. While some agencies produce their own situation reports, the broader context and scenario analysis that a PDA can provide is seen as complementarity to this.<sup>21</sup>
25. In addition to these briefings, in a number of countries where they are deployed, PDAs have also led more in-depth analytical exercises. These include joint scenario planning in the context of upcoming elections; perceptions-based surveys and participatory polling exercises; mapping certain resources within regions or communities to identify possible sources of tension; and exploring the use of development indicators as a tool for early warning.<sup>22</sup> Through this work, the PDA serves almost as an in-house think tank for the UN system, reflecting more deeply on issues that the UN should be aware of, but that few others have the mandate to research. Sharing solid analytical outputs with the UNCT also builds the PDAs credibility, allowing them to then use this analysis to identify entry points and ideas for programming that they might be able to take forward with colleagues.
26. A more intermittent but critical role that the cumulative analysis a PDA produces over time can be used for is as a baseline for the UN system to check-in on how their efforts are matched to a context that may be continually changing. If events that have implications for the UNs presence in-country rapidly unfold, on the basis of this analytical history, a PDA is informed enough to proactively assist both the government (through the RC) and the UN (through the UNCT) in thinking through preferred responses and the implications of these. Again, investing in building trust and relationships in times of calm greatly enable the UN to get more quickly involved if crises do arise.

#### **e. Resources and support**

27. The Joint Programme's recent efforts to further systematize the support that PDAs receive when they are deployed, as well as throughout their postings, have been widely recognized and appreciated.<sup>23</sup> All Joint Programme stakeholders, at both HQ and in the field, also cited having a dedicated focal point to manage administrative issues and communications within the programme as a major improvement. The sole Joint Programme employee was frequently name-checked during consultations as having made a comparably large impact in terms of the PDAs and their focal points feeling that they have someone they can turn to with questions, as well as to facilitate the flow of information between HQ and the field.<sup>24</sup>
28. However, despite these improvements, support from HQ is still considered to be patchy and, at times, seriously lacking with some PDAs feeling they do not have a broad-based and structured enough support system that can be called upon if needed. Usually one member of the Joint Programme has a closer and more substantive relationship with a PDA than the other; it was rare to hear of equally strong relationships with both partners. The uniqueness of the PDA role and their placement within the UNCT can be isolating, with PDAs reflecting that HQ does not always seem to understand how much of a 'lifeline' the network there is considered for PDAs, and the leverage that having this link imparts. There is still the sense amongst some that, particularly on the DPA side and especially with countries that may be less of a priority and thus only need light monitoring, HQ is just

<sup>21</sup> For those members of the UNCT who found the PDAs analysis useful, of special note was the forecasting and scenario-planning so that, if necessary, plans of action can be drawn up on the basis of these.

<sup>22</sup> An example from Ghana is the Governance and Peace Poll (GaP Poll) that tracks nation-wide progress on these two issues, and is also linked to UNDAF workplans.

<sup>23</sup> As of mid-2014, PDAs have received \$50,000 to undertake a conflict analysis exercise upon deployment, an induction package of trainings, funding to shadow another PDA in the region for one week, as well as professional development by way of tailored trainings on certain skills required for the profile. Some PDAs can also access additional human capacity through the UN Volunteer programme, which is set to be expanded.

<sup>24</sup> For all 34 PDAs deployed, there is only one dedicated P-2 post attached to the Joint Programme, with other headquarters support being a proportion of several UNDP and DPA staff members' responsibilities.

interested in the analysis that PDAs provide to them, without viewing the relationship as a two-way street.<sup>25</sup>

29. If the street is only one way, then PDAs and their RCs can feel as though they are operating in a vacuum, without enough awareness of the discussions that are taking place in New York about their countries and/or their region – not only within DPA, but also within the wider diplomatic community, including with national stakeholders. The absence of this perspective can make it difficult for a PDA or an RC to know whether there is consistent messaging on common priorities, progress is being made in the right areas, or that the right levers are being used. It also means potentially missing opportunities for the analysis and informational guidance coming from the field to be more specifically targeted towards issues that are relevant from DPAs standpoint.
30. A major way for HQ to demonstrate how much a PDAs analysis is being appreciated and utilized is by making a more concerted effort to engage in thoughtful discussions about their countries, provide more considered feedback on their analysis as well as greater opportunities to delve deeper into the issues they raise therein. These can all occur informally. PDAs would like to think that their reports are catalytic and spark engagement between colleagues at HQ and are not just being sent into various siloed ‘black holes.’ Several PDAs wondered whether their respective focal points, despite working on the same countries, ever talked to one another when not prompted by the PDA.<sup>26</sup> Joint teleconferences were widely referenced as being a valued opportunity to discuss topics more in-depth, provided that participants had read materials beforehand and were prepared to have a substantive conversation.
31. While the provision of resources for an initial analytical exercise have been welcomed, many respondents felt that having a reasonable amount of money for un-earmarked activities might serve as a more effective entry point. PDAs are usually deployed without any budget, and this is not ideal footing to start on, as they often have to rely on the goodwill and generosity of colleagues (many times falling to the UNDP Country Office, which further complicates the lines of accountability referred to above) if they want to plan any initial activities.<sup>27</sup> Thoughts on how much money varied, but respondents agreed that coming with a small pocket of one-off operational funding sends an important message that the PDA work is not just an add-on, in a system that is very aware of what resourcing you bring to the table.<sup>28</sup> This would not only make a PDA more relevant with the UNCT and national partners, but would also allow them to immediately start thinking of ideas and ways to demonstrate the added value of their approach, while also serving as a platform to link up with other actors, build further projects and programming upon, and engage themselves in the context – all of which is required if they are also expected to quickly begin delivering insightful analysis.
32. Joint missions, either before a PDAs deployment, or soon thereafter, are another effective mode of support that can facilitate a PDA more smoothly adapting to the role (especially where they have had some initial difficulties in settling in). These are seen as having been particularly helpful in more closely aligning expectations about what a PDA will focus on, in further sensitizing the RC and the UNCT about the profile itself, as well as in giving the PDA a head start on where to concentrate initial efforts by assessing possible opportunities and entry points. These are also useful in expressly reassuring staff that there is buy-in for this work at HQ and that both the PDA and the RC have the requisite political cover to take calculated risks and undertake any sensitive work that might be required.

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<sup>25</sup> It should be highlighted that this sentiment varies depending on the teams within DPA, with some Divisions systematically having closer working relationships with their PDAs than others.

<sup>26</sup> The desire for more quality conversations with HQ is not the same thing as more frequent bilateral phone calls with each focal point, as PDAs agree it is preferable to still have as streamlined a relationship with HQ as possible.

<sup>27</sup> Some PDAs mentioned paying out of pocket for things when they first arrived, because the alternative was to not seize the opportunity to build their network or create an entry point.

<sup>28</sup> To be emphasized with the UNCT, this is not about supporting the person, or about building a project around them, this is about supporting the work itself through initial activities that can make the investment more effective in the medium to long-term by empowering the PDA with the necessary resources to get them up and running more quickly in the short-term.

## f. Profile

33. With few exceptions, the right people are being recruited for this role – a finding that is especially impressive considering that the distinct mixture of an analytical and practitioner background is not that common. Views were mixed on whether it is preferable for PDAs to have pre-existing knowledge of the UN. Some feel that the successes of the early PDA cohort came from the fact that, in most cases, they were not from the UN system and provided a much-needed injection of fresh thinking and practice (and oftentimes did not know enough about the bureaucracy to be aware of siloes). However, given the complexity of the UNs bureaucracy, others feel that those who do not have familiarity with how it operates could be at a disadvantage since such a large part of the work relies on being able to maneuver and leverage the system as a whole. The rationale behind the Joint Programme’s recent efforts to recruit more internal candidates, especially from HQ, was understood, but it was cautioned that the role is too demanding to learn on the job and that candidates, at the minimum, should have prior field experience working with both analysis and programming, and an awareness of interpersonal process skills and participatory methodologies.<sup>29</sup>
34. There is currently an underrepresentation of women in the PDA group, with only six out of the 34 posts belonging to female PDAs; the Joint Programme is exploring why this is the case. It is accepted that women bring a different perspective and approach to the role than their male counterparts, but it is difficult to compare the ways this might affect how they fulfill their mandate. In contexts where there is a strong patriarchal and/or hierarchical structure in place, respondents did feel that it might be extra challenging for younger or female PDAs to gain the necessary access, especially with senior government officials. Since there are contexts where women and less senior PDAs would have the same level of access, it was suggested that the Joint Programme assess countries on this basis, and focus on placing PDAs where they will not face additional hurdles to an already challenging enough aspect of the role.<sup>30</sup>
35. Where they exist, national PDAs are a critical component of the PDA team and their provision of local analysis and interpretation of cultural subtleties greatly informs and nuances the sensitive work of the PDA. Internally, the presence of a national PDA on the team can reassure UNCT members about work being undertaken with national partners, on domestic issues. However, at least for this early generation of PDAs, in places that are still politically, ethnically, and culturally charged, contextual dynamics which render a national PDA valuable also mean that a large proportion of the PDAs tasks could not be done by a national.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, it was highlighted that while national PDAs should be one aspect of a sustainability strategy – expectations must be managed in terms of the type of role that they will be able to play; it will never be the same as an international PDA. Moreover, portfolios should not be handed over to them until they have developed to the point that a national team can carry the work forward, with a reasonable transition period where they are trained and fully supported in doing so.
36. Many respondents cautioned that with the Joint Programme’s recent growth and the reorganization at HQ, special effort will have to be made to continue to have the same degree of quality control over the recruitment process as in the past. As its success is partially attributed to the attention that has been given to weighing up all aspects of a candidate based upon a close knowledge of the requirements of the role, and the context where they will be deployed, not just a recruitment template. It was emphasized that despite the increased demand the profile cannot be diluted.

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<sup>29</sup> But using HQ staff on short-term assignments to fill particular gaps, as well as those where they would work alongside PDAs already in place was definitely encouraged.

<sup>30</sup> Creative ways for potentially working towards evening out this balance without compromising the access that is so important to the role can also be explored, for instance, perhaps by pairing female PDAs with male national PDAs or, with an eye towards the next generation of PDAs, vice-versa. It was also noted that depending on the phasing of the PDAs work, and their primary interlocutors, some contexts could become more hospitable to different types of PDAs over time.

<sup>31</sup> One government official openly admitted to an international PDA that if national staff had been brought to the meeting they would not be discussing the same issues.

## Relevance

### **a. Type and structure of support**

37. By all accounts, DPA has considerably increased its involvement in and commitment to the Joint Programme over the last several years, with most respondents agreeing that it had become much more of a ‘joint’ partnership – whereas in the past it had been identified mostly with UNDP. The sustained and collaborative engagement of senior leadership from both UNDP and DPA, with both sides strongly championing the importance of the programme and working together, is seen as a significant reason that the programme has grown in popularity and profile. Given this, concerns were voiced hoping that recent shifts in management would not result in a slowing of the momentum that the programme has picked up, and that it remains high on both partners’ priority lists, despite its relatively modest budget.
38. Beyond those closely involved with the Joint Programme, however, there is a sense that DPA still predominantly considers its central purpose as analysis in New York – and that the ‘culture of talking points’ has been tough to fully shift to a more holistic conceptualization of conflict prevention. This remaining conceptual divide complicates broader buy-in of the cooperation the Joint Programme espouses, and can also filter down to the PDAs. Understanding the range of ways that PDAs, as seated in UNCTs, can be used to operationalize conflict transformation and mitigation strategies at the field-level, is too uneven amongst desk officers. In part, respondents attributed this to the fact that many are junior or inexperienced, and have not yet had exposure to realities on the ground. But this signals that further work is required to more evenly spread the idea that operationalizing conflict prevention, even from a HQ-perspective, does not just mean more informed talking points or analytical reports.
39. PDAs also have access to DPA’s highly regarded expertise on mediation, through the Mediation Support Unit (MSU), and on elections, through the Electoral Assistance Division (EAD). In countries where experts from MSUs Standby Team (SBT) have been deployed alongside PDAs, the mutually reinforcing relationship has been found to be extremely useful. If the two are well coordinated, PDAs can prepare the ground for the intervention, and provide their nuanced insights about actors, positions, and other relevant country dynamics to greatly boost the SBT member’s preparatory knowledge about a situation and allow them to focus on the mediation itself. And as a fly-in external expert, the SBT member is able to bring a different perspective and approach than a PDA. Subsequently, because PDAs then stay on after the member has left, they are able to engage in valuable follow-up work – allowing the intervention to be part of a longer-term strategy. Given this natural complementarity, the examples so far have been promising, but moving forward it will be important to further strengthen and systematize links with these experts, as well as with other senior-level country experts within DPA, so that PDAs have more regular access to the range of expertise the department has to offer.
40. The systemic shift of understanding about complicated development contexts and what they mean for the structure and approach of UN assistance there, has resulted in a commensurate strengthening of the relationship between RCs and DPA.<sup>32</sup> In many cases, this has been facilitated by the ethos and platform that the Joint Programme has provided, with RCs becoming more sensitized to and comfortable with the necessity of the political aspects of their role. And they are increasingly required to and assessed upon their capacity to act on these, supported in part to do so by the provision of PDAs to their offices. The Joint Programme has also been an important tool in this regard because the comparative advantage of each partner has allowed the technical discussion to be linked with the strategically political discussion, thus enabling RCs to be on equal footing with both government and ambassadors in their countries, and to represent the UN system in meaningful conversations.

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<sup>32</sup> In light of this shift, DPA is now involved in RC recruitment and assessment.

41. Nevertheless, while the Joint Programme has provided one effective platform to serve the needs of RCs, its ability to adequately provide this support is also dependent upon it being requested in the first place. The growing demand for PDAs demonstrates that RCs are indeed increasingly aware of the need to have a greater appetite for calculated risk-taking; however, it would be premature to say that this is an understanding that is shared fully throughout the RC system yet. In particular, the Montreux series of meetings are considered absolutely crucial to furthering progress on this understanding, by offering an opportunity for peer-to-peer reflection, as well as periodic alignment not only of the thinking behind the UN system's approach to complex political situations, but also making sure it is delivering the right capacity to support this thinking becoming practice.
42. While the Joint Programme has begun to more closely cooperate with the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO), it is imperative that the conversation with them, as well as with other conflict prevention and peacebuilding partners at HQ, continues to deepen and evolve. If the UN system is going to be able to establish working methods and put in place mechanisms to fully maximize its effectiveness in engaging on conflict prevention at the local, national and global level, the responsibility will be far outside the purview of the Joint Programme alone.

#### **b. Monitoring and communicating this work**

43. The nature of the partnership, as well as the work itself, will mean that the Joint Programme will always struggle with the issue of visibility. The presence of DPA in non-mission settings touches upon considerable sensitivities, with many countries being wary and skeptical of why the UN would need to have in-house political awareness and/or conflict prevention expertise. Thus far, the Joint Programme has adeptly been able to maneuver these sensitivities, by adjusting the role, or even just the title, of PDAs accordingly. But it must be recognized that this will serve as a constraint not only to the placement of PDAs, but also to the level of attention and specificity that is afforded to their successful interventions. If the programme is going to be able to continue to operate as it has, then the balance between visibility and accountability will have to be carefully managed and appreciated by all stakeholders.
44. PDAs discussed that their work can fall prey to the same monitoring pressure as much of the UN – where the amount of money spent and delivery percentages, because they are more easily quantified, can be valued over making sustainable changes in people's lives or helping societies peacefully manage change. As with all conflict prevention practitioners, success is about 'measuring' when something does not happen. It is not helpful to count numbers of meetings, or to reduce the work to a collection of sound bites. Instead, impact must be understood, for example, as even getting certain people to sit around the same table and meet in the first place. PDAs are also tacitly sanctioned, and to a certain degree are expected, to inject a higher degree of creativity and innovation into their work, which often means taking risks and departing from conventional programming ideas. The pressure to report on successes must therefore be balanced against not stifling the types of qualities that allow the PDAs to experiment and have noteworthy impact where possible.<sup>33</sup>
45. Two common beneficiaries of PDAs work are government and other national partners, and depending on the kind of support the PDAs provide, especially with certain types of capacity-building, it can be incredibly difficult, as well as perhaps even insensitive, to use traditional methods to measure the difference this intervention might have made in the functioning of a particular group. National pride in local capacity is an important dynamic to be aware of, and experiences with 'leading from behind' have demonstrated that if they UN were to be 'less disciplined' in maintaining a low-key role and not claiming credit, it is unlikely their presence in sensitive processes would continue to be welcomed.<sup>34</sup> As was noted by one respondent, success should not just be about what is done in major events, but also the nitty-gritty daily work, which is often the most time-consuming and impossible to

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<sup>33</sup> As of now PDAs are assessed on the basis of their bi-monthly reports, that are a mixture of analysis and activity updates (including results and impacts, as well as resource mobilization), in addition to a '360 review' that is completed three months prior to the expiration of their contract which captures the views of the PDA, the RC, members of the UNCT, and their focal points regarding the PDAs performance.

<sup>34</sup> UN Joint Programme, 'Lesotho,' p. 10.

reduce to a log-frame and yet, if crises do occur, can be the very source of resilience that can be drawn upon.

46. However, PDAs completely agree that their work should be monitored and want it to not only be captured, but also to be communicated more widely, but in an inspired and suitably discreet way that better matches the types of impacts they are trying to achieve. When asked what this might be, most agreed that transformational work is more about following a narrative as progress might be cumulative and only apparent over time, and tracking ‘the before, during, and after’ allows changes along the trajectory to be seen. It was also suggested that links can be more distinctly articulated between, for example, a certain dynamic within society that analysis has pointed to, the activities that have been undertaken specifically with this in mind, and then an explanation of why the result has (or has not) had the desired impact; in other words, the significance of a chain of events. Lastly, there is an inherent challenge to fully understanding this work without seeing it in action, and speaking with national stakeholders. For this review, it was the interviews with them that were absolutely decisive in coming to appreciate the full significance of the impact that a well-placed and well-supported PDA can have.

### **c. Strengthening system-wide coherence and responsiveness**

47. The recent strong push that the Joint Programme has received from the senior-level buy in and enthusiasm for more collaborative ways of working has been discussed above. But a further benefit of that enthusiasm, as well as the good practice set by the Joint Programme, is a reduction in the competition between two of the UN actors at the forefront of the conflict prevention agenda. Beyond that, at the theoretical-level, is a growing appreciation of partnership and a recognition of the comparative advantage that each partner brings to the table, one fulfilling a niche that is complementary to the other’s and that allows the UN to more systematically and coherently address conflict prevention operationally. As discussed, institutionalizing this appreciation further throughout the working-level is still in progress and should be even more strongly encouraged in this next phase of the partnership. Although UNDP restructuring, with programme and country support now diffused from HQ and located at the regional level, could complicate this effort, if successful, it bodes well for bringing greater coherence to the conflict prevention agenda overall.
48. The streamlined relationship between the two entities improves the support that can be channeled to RCs and UNCTs, with one of the key takeaways from the most recent Montreux meeting being that the field would like to see even broader cooperation and alignment between all UN actors who are working on relevant conflict and crisis initiatives. The value of the Joint Programme at HQ and the PDA function existing at the country-level is that, when operating as it should, they are currently one of the most effective multi-layered platforms for bringing together the complete spectrum of UN system resources – from precise technical expertise in a variety of thematic areas, to senior mediators and even ‘good offices’ – to focus on specific countries and their needs. One respondent described the Joint Programme’s contribution to coherence as ‘oiling the machine’, which has removed some of the bottlenecks that used to exist between teams and has reduced reaction time across the system.
49. However, warmth from the spark of cooperation, still yet to even fully ignite across HQ has filtered down even less to the field. In some places, donors as well as partner governments see the divisions and level of competition between various parts of the UN system as ‘ridiculous’ as well as detrimental and time consuming for them, with pleas for the UN to find more cohesion amongst the various threads of their peace and development agenda. The role of the PDA in these cases was viewed as being a potentially positive addition that could encourage the UN to behave in the field as a more coherent organization, but it was also acknowledged that this is an unrealistic task to expect one person to undertake if institutional realities pull against working more closely together.
50. It is still unclear precisely how the Human Rights Up Front Action Plan will affect the PDAs, though it has been implied that the responsibilities and obligations placed on a PDA in countries without a

Human Rights Advisor (HRA) may represent an additional burden.<sup>35</sup> Where both HRAs and PDAs have been deployed concurrently thus far, the relationship appears to have worked well for the most part, as the similarities and complementarities between certain aspects of their portfolio make them natural allies. However, as always, the effectiveness of the working relationship depends as much on personalities as institutional frameworks, and some fundamental differences between the lenses of the two advisors were highlighted. But the additional accountability and attention that HRuFAP can bring to many of the contexts where PDAs are deployed should result in a greater appreciation for the contextual monitoring they undertake and reinforce their contribution as part of a UNCT better equipped to respond appropriately to rapidly changing circumstances.

51. Beyond the UN system, the aforementioned convening and coordinating role that some PDAs have helped the UN play with the broader international community can facilitate them finding and representing a common message, which can be more effective, as well as efficient, in dealing with partner governments – especially in times of crisis. In places where the UN has played this role well, they have often also achieved the legitimacy to be able to speak more frankly with governments about certain sensitive issues, quietly reinforcing them, rather than bilateral partners who may not be as well placed to.
52. In this respect, in close cooperation with the RC, PDAs can assist the UN in adapting more responsively to changing partnerships within the entire development system at a national level, where decisions are no longer necessarily being made within certain sectors or ministries at the technical level, but are carefully intertwined with changes at the political level, to the degree that the UN can no longer isolate its work from the broader socio-political dynamics within each country.

## **Sustainability**

### **a. Timing and duration of support**

53. Achieving any degree of transformational change within societies that have been beset by conflict or crisis, supporting countries in building their own peace architectures, and helping lay the foundations for infrastructures for peace does not happen overnight. The very nature of the work that PDAs are undertaking, and even the structural language used to describe it, should indicate the long-term engagement that is required. The timeframes for institutional transformation, adjusted most recently on the basis of the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011* which found that even the fastest transformations have historically taken a generation, have demonstrated how unrealistic our expectations have been.<sup>36</sup> And yet it is still difficult to sustain the level of commitment we know to be needed to foster these.
54. PDAs are currently given one-year contracts. The Joint Programme has struggled with juggling the balance between an expanding demand for PDAs with a funding base that has not kept apace. To attempt to fill funding gaps, the programme has explored various ways to cover salary costs after the first year. One is to encourage UNDP Country Offices to co-fund subsequent contract renewals; another is to encourage PDAs to fundraise in-country for their own salary. Both are problematic. The former, because it blurs the lines of accountability that a PDA spends much of their first year clarifying, and it also problematizes the relationship with DPA, as well as with the Joint Programme in general, as once a PDA's salary is covered by UNDP – it is exceedingly difficult to view them as anything but UNDP staff. The latter because when well respected, rather senior, members of the international community such as PDAs are seen to be trying to raise money for their next contract, it is not only demoralizing for the PDA themselves, but it also damages the UN's reputation vis-à-vis their commitment to conflict prevention work. Even where a PDA might be successful in these

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<sup>35</sup> Although several PDAs have noted that especially with the renaming of what was originally called Rights up Front, the more blatant reference to 'human rights' could lead to sensitivities in some contexts and complicate their access and relationships with certain stakeholders.

<sup>36</sup> World Bank (2011). *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*. Washington DC: World Bank, p. 108.

efforts, there is the additional consideration of neutrality and how perceptions could be affected, both internally and externally, if a PDAs salary is supported by a specific government.<sup>37</sup>

55. The recent decision to strengthen what was previously a more ad hoc relationship with the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which co-funds several PDA posts where a Peacebuilding Recovery Facility (PRF) is in place, and to coordinate more frequently, is a much better option to address sustainability. There is a natural partnership between the Joint Programme and the PBF, and a shared affinity for maximizing practical peacebuilding impacts, oftentimes in collaboration with multiple partners and utilizing various entry points. The strengthening of this relationship has dual benefits for the Joint Programme, as it not only provides additional funding for salary costs, but it also means that if they have suitably strong programming ideas, PDAs can more readily access funds for precisely the type of sophisticated programming they are meant to be spearheading.<sup>38</sup> For the PBF, not only can the PDA connect the PBF Secretariat with the rest of the UN system, but the hope is also that the presence of the PDA will strengthen the quality and impact of their peacebuilding programming, with promising indications of this so far.<sup>39</sup>
56. To date, the longest Joint Programme commitment has taken place in Ghana, where three successive PDAs were deployed for a total of ten years, the most recent post drawing to a close in August of this year. Ghana indicates the value of successive deployments and what can be achieved with that kind of sustained commitment – particularly with respect to assisting stakeholders in constructing a national peace architecture, which all three PDAs were heavily involved in.<sup>40</sup> For this work to be successful, the paramountcy of personal relationships as well as building trust over time was repeatedly emphasized.<sup>41</sup> As was the importance of having the vision and work of a previous PDA to build and expand upon. Where successive deployments are going to take place, the longer the gap between PDAs, the more momentum that is lost, and the harder it will be for the new PDA to capitalize on the work and relationships of his/her predecessor; as this is known, planning for recruitment should be handled accordingly.
57. Short-term deployments can be very useful to fill specific gaps or deliver on a particular activity, such as to undertake a conflict and risk analysis in a quickly changing context, or to assist with CCA or UNDAF preparation. In some cases, requests that are initially for a full-scale PDA might be able to be handled by shorter-term assistance. But it was also noted that, because of broader human resource challenges, it is a rarity for PDAs, even short-term ones, to be able to get to where they are needed quickly enough to make this a viable option in most cases.

#### **b. Exit or ‘sustainability strategy’**

58. As per above, a PDA should exit when their work is done, not because the money runs out. The PDA themselves will know whether this has been achieved, and credible third party stakeholders will also be able to provide valuable inputs regarding when enough capacities have been built to sustain the work. Many PDAs actually approach their deployment with the ideal scenario being that they work themselves out of a job in that particular country.

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<sup>37</sup> This issue begs the question whether gradually moving away from donor dependency to a Joint Programme that is funded fully through core budgets should be an eventual aspiration.

<sup>38</sup> In cases where PBF funding does come through for programming related to the PDA, the temptation for the PDA to feel responsible to then become too involved in daily programme management will need to be avoided.

<sup>39</sup> In a recent independent review of UNDP’s implementation of PBF-funded projects, PDAs were found to be ‘a particularly relevant capacity to draw on’ with respect to grounding programming in thorough conflict analysis. K. Tarp (2013). ‘Review of UNDP Implementation of PBF-funded Projects,’ New York: UN, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> For more on Ghana’s peace architecture and National Peace Council, which have served as models for other countries, please see: <http://www.i4pinternational.org/ghana>.

<sup>41</sup> One former RC pointed out that in the lead-up to elections, the conversations that she and the PDA were having with key political actors were taking place over a year before election day, and that it is the existence of these pre-formed relationships and this pre-established trust that then allows you to pick up the phone when you need to.



59. The creation of a small team or unit over time, including a national PDA, will be a critical strategy for ensuring the sustainability of this work after an international PDA post is no longer necessary. Again, the case of Ghana very much proves that this can be done if afforded enough time to be able to devote to building the right team, facilitate relationships with the right people, receive adequate trainings on topics and processes, and shadow the international PDA before they depart.
60. An important note of caution: with this work in particular, the UN could damage their credibility if they are seen to drop the ball prematurely since, in some places, national actors directly translate the presence of a PDA, and their interactions with them, as the UN caring about jointly shouldering the burden together while simultaneously capacitating them to pursue their own trajectory towards peace and development. Therefore, abandoning it could be perceived as an insincerity of commitment in the first place.

**c. Capacity and structure to support**

61. The capacities and governance structures that exist at HQ have gone through an evolution. In the early days of the Joint Programme it was described as more of a niche operation, with a high degree of personalization and close attention that was exactly what was needed to develop carefully and with the quality that it has become known for. Since the reformulation of the partnership in 2012 and the recent period of expansion, much thought has been given to how to systematize the aspects of the programme that were considered too ad hoc, without turning it into an overly bureaucratized process that suffocates the very essence of the responsiveness, the ability to maximize personalities and individual skill sets, and the tailored and catalytic nature of what the Joint Programme seeks to achieve at the country-level.
62. Up until now, this finely tuned balance has worked relatively well, with many agreeing that the current equilibrium between flexibility and systematization, has allowed the Joint Programme to continue to grow without compromising its operations too much. However, with nearly 40 PDAs in place by the beginning of next year, and without a commensurate increase of predictable financial or dedicated human resources, the Joint Programme is swiftly reaching its full capacity to function with the degree of quality control, oversight and support that it has.
63. This unfortunately indicates that, despite the growing demand, the programme will need to further enforce its parameters, and use these to either say no more frequently, or to find alternative mechanisms of support. Regardless of the needs of a given context, PDAs should not be seen as a gift, or taken for granted, but should be deployed only where they will complement a clearly thought through strategy on behalf of a RC/UNCT who are committed to creating the conditions to support the full range of their work. At the same time, with respect to these parameters, it is imperative that the source of the Joint Programme's success – in many cases the very flexibility that has allowed for it to operate the way it needs to, adapting to what country needs dictate – is firmly retained and protected.
64. The decentralization process currently underway will also have important implications for the Joint Programme, with opportunities to regionalize, target and streamline the support available to RCs, as well as PDAs. The new regional hub in Istanbul, for instance, will have several DPA staff deployed alongside UNDP's Conflict Prevention and Recovery (CPR) team, mirroring and supplementing the comparative advantage of the Joint Programme at the regional level. This joint standing capacity will be utilized to facilitate greater coordination, joint analysis and prioritization, as well as more cogent programming. It will also serve as a 'one-stop shop' for the RCOs and the PDAs in the region, to field requests, and perhaps reduce the burden on the Joint Programme by having a finger on the pulse of specific needs, and being able to more quickly deploy the technical expertise that is needed at any given time – which will not always be a PDA. While decisions regarding deployments and other joint support will still be made at HQ, information channeled from the regional hub will be essential to the Joint Programme in prioritizing and determining what support is needed, and where it will be put to best use.

65. More broadly speaking, although it will not be applicable everywhere, there is a need for continuing to explore the regional model as a way to be more strategic about using the limited resources the Joint Programme has at its disposal. With many issues that PDAs work on being cross-border, the current strengthening of UN regional presences, as well as growing partnerships with regional organizations, and the ongoing cultivation of national PDAs – there is a possibility that structures that are developing now could lead to an eventual adjustment in the level of focus for Joint Programme support in some places.

## **LESSONS (and other observations)**

1. All stakeholders that were interviewed for this review fundamentally agreed with the concept of what the Joint Programme is trying to do, and the rationale for having the PDA function, regardless of whether their particular experience was entirely positive. There is a considerable amount of goodwill and buy-in for this programme at the moment – across the UN, with donors, with civil society, and with national governments, where it has had close dealings with them. This should be remembered and reinforced, and efforts should be made in order to capitalize on this window of opportunity to further strengthen the positioning of the Joint Programme within the UN system.
2. The past two years have been a critical phase in the Joint Programme’s evolution, and a great deal of progress has been made in this time. The working relationship between UNDP and DPA has been consolidated further, leading it closer to what it should have always been. And a programme that was previously seen as somewhat parochial, overshadowed by larger and higher profile programming within the UN system, has now become one of the purest examples of operationalizing conflict prevention – it has turned theory and rhetoric into concrete practice and actions.
3. This recent progress can largely be attributed to the right mix of personalities coming together at the right time to give a concerted push in the right direction, who not only were passionate about what the Joint Programme is trying to achieve and excited by its potential, but also, based on their respective backgrounds, had an inherent understanding for how to support and restructure it accordingly.
4. The widespread anxiety that was expressed over what restructuring would mean for the Joint Programme indicates not only how much people care about it, but also how identified it had become with the affiliated management and senior leadership. This personalization served it well, but the opportunity that the change in leadership, combined with the restructuring, provides is to now more deeply embed the Joint Programme throughout the system. This will ensure that its sustainability rests upon broader inclusivity, including with regional offices and divisions, as well as with other partners at HQ that have become increasingly aware of how the programme can assist them with delivery of their mandate in the field.
5. One of the drawbacks of the momentum that carried the Joint Programme through the last several years, is that it was able to function without some key conceptual parameters being set in terms of framing what conflict prevention means for each partner, where these definitions converge, and what this implies for the Joint Programme’s general strategy and approach. The lack of this overarching conceptual framework of conflict prevention results in PDAs not having clear guidelines in terms of how they should interpret their role, or what they are expected to deliver, leading them to often operate with a degree of ambiguity.
6. In part this has worked well so far, because the quality of the people that the Joint Programme has been able to recruit is exceptional, and they have been able to handle self-defining their role and their focus while juggling multiple tasks. As a whole, this is one of the most talented, adaptable and alacritous groups in the UN system. While the lack of a UN career path and contract unpredictability has meant that the system has already lost some very good people, as of now, it has not appeared to have affected the programme’s ability to find strong PDAs – yet. The mixture of their ability to take an integrated approach to both analysis and programming, accompany processes throughout,

combined with their people skills, has been well matched to the gaps that the UN often has, not only in politically complex situations, but in other settings too.

7. It is unfortunate then that they are so vulnerable to the dynamics, politics and personalities of the RCO and the UNCT and that there is very little recourse for assistance with sorting out what can be mildly challenging to deeply troubling working relationships which can considerably restrict what they are able to achieve. While some systems for redress have been put in place, they need to be reinforced and strengthened. Alternatively, when the PDA has been well matched with the existing capacities and attitudes, the combination has been extremely effective, amplifying what the UN is able to do, and affecting real change. But this is still too much of a gamble.
8. Further to this, a frequent answer to multiple questions throughout this review was ‘it all comes down to personalities,’ indicating how people-centered this work in particular really is. Given this, small things can make a big difference in facilitating the programme functioning more smoothly, for instance, including someone on an email, picking up the phone more frequently, or inviting someone to join a meeting or have coffee to discuss ideas. Of course, this also presents a challenge for attempting to institutionalize ways of working.
9. Some of the systems that have been put in place have increased oversight but have not necessarily increased PDAs feeling that they are more supported. As a closer port of call, the regional hubs will now be a critical addition to the PDAs support network, but this will also place pressure on HQ to more clearly determine what their added value is to a PDA, and to strive for more relevance and consistency with the support they provide.
10. National PDAs and small PDA teams are a meaningful addition to the Joint Programme approach, but it would be premature to think of them as a sustainability strategy that will be viable in all settings.
11. The sources of the Joint Programme’s strength are in many ways also the sources of its weakness – these include its informality, adaptability, flexibility, and personality-driven approach. This should be kept in mind whenever changes are proposed to the programme, as it will be incredibly challenging to protect the former, while figuring out ways to bolster the latter.
12. It is the work with national actors that is the most inspiring. The UN is bringing the resources, the experience, the technical expertise, the capacity, and the time to devote to encouraging greater ownership over issues that are fundamentally important to a country’s stability. With this focus, PDAs are helping to build the ‘inclusive enough’ coalitions that can support the peaceful management of transitions.<sup>42</sup>
13. In addition to the above, there are several core selling points the Joint Programme could emphasize with prospective donors. One, the value of this work is that the UN, with their moral and normative legitimacy and impartiality, are the appropriate actors to be undertaking it; as one RC explained to a government ‘we are working together on this, we are not working for you, we are not working against you, and we are working for the needs of the people on the ground.’<sup>43</sup> Two, reassuring some member states that there is no mystique to this ‘light touch’ work – it is not about airing dirty laundry or exposing weaknesses – the UN’s interest is ensuring stability so that the greatest development gains can be achieved, and not reversed. And, three, reminding member states that they have encouraged the UN to operate in many of the ways the Joint Programme actually does, therefore support for this should match the original ambition.
14. While PDAs have vast potential to do innovative, influential and exciting work, the expectations of what one person can achieve must also be tempered with the realities that they often face in their deployment and the difficulties of demonstrating change. The work they do with local actors can be

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<sup>42</sup> As one respondent identified, through infrastructures for peace, the PDAs are putting into practice this concept from the World Development Report. World Bank, *WDR 2011*, pg. 120-121.

<sup>43</sup> UN Joint Programme, ‘Reflections’, p.7.

small scale, the work with governments cannot always be captured, and the coordination work within the UN system is not always trailblazing – but the cumulative impact of this work and, again, that it is being led by one person, must be appreciated. If it was expected to be considerably scaled-up, then so too would the amount of people working on it.

15. It is still too soon to tell from the Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone or Burundi experiences, but the role that PDAs can play in transition settings, especially in ‘ensuring sustained support for peacebuilding priorities’ is particularly compelling and should continue to be explored.<sup>44</sup> Anecdotal evidence has pointed to the fact that handovers, especially on the more political and sensitive issues, are not as robust as they are with other aspects of a mission– and the UNCT might not have the capacity or be comfortable with ensuring that these critical issues continue to be monitored and addressed through the development presence; if they can be brought in early enough before the transition, this is a clear role for a PDA.
16. Where a PDA has an overarching goal, or vision – for example, ‘establishing a national peace architecture’, or ‘facilitating stronger and more effective partnerships’ – there is wider appreciation of what they are trying to do, amongst both internal and external stakeholders. Where their work is more piecemeal, or less guided by this, it is not only challenging to describe to others, but also to determine their contribution to a theory of change. In addition, having a vision to guide the work in-country greatly eases transitions and consistency between one PDA and another – and allows important continuity with partnerships, and progress of the former PDA to be built upon. One PDA described this vision as his ‘mirror’ that he would hold activities up to, if they were inconsistent with this, then they would be adjusted accordingly. Whilst the term ‘theory of change’ can be problematic for some, the principle is something that all PDAs should engage with.

## CONCLUSION

The previously fraught relationship between DPA and UNDP used to frustrate many observers, despite the fact that within governments, other types of organizations and private corporations the difficulty of working together between teams and departments with different deliverables, ethos, skills sets, timelines and incentives is well understood. When speaking one-on-one, the logic of collaboration is almost always appreciated, but it is not necessarily supported on a systemic level.

Likewise, the logic of conflict prevention is frequently touted. Some might even say that prevention has come back into fashion recently, with the past several years witnessing a ‘renaissance of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention.’<sup>45</sup> But to take the fashion metaphor further, the preview for next season portends some worrying trends. Crises such as Ebola, Syria, and Central African Republic – to name a select few—could very easily continue to distract the international community from focusing on properly addressing structural issues that could contribute to the eruption of the next crisis down the line. Especially when progress on the latter is often slow and subtle, and difficult to communicate to member states’ constituencies.

These two issues highlight that while the logic of both cooperation as well as prevention may ring true to everyone, institutional systems and external events sometimes create a reality in which it is challenging for this logic to actually prevail. Put simply, the Joint Programme, while not perfect, has managed to work against the odds and has remained one of the bright lights and purveyors of logic within the UN system. The PDAs are setting a precedent for the UN working differently, often in some of the most difficult environments, and have thus far demonstrated that the sky has not fallen by doing so.

The UK Secretary of State for International Development recently spoke of wanting to have the confidence to do ‘difficult, truly transformational programmes in high-risk environments.’<sup>46</sup> Some of the programmes and activities that the PDAs are leading on demonstrate the comparative advantage of the

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<sup>44</sup> UN, ‘Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal,’ (endorsed on 4 February 2013).

<sup>45</sup> R. Muggah and N. White (2013). ‘Is there a preventive action renaissance?’ Oslo: NOREF, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> UK DFID, ‘Strengthening Programme Delivery,’ Presentation to BOND Group, London, 24 September 2014.

UN being able to do just this. Because of its neutral and normative role, which is non-threatening to governments that are themselves member states, they are more comfortable with allowing the UN to undertake sensitive work with national stakeholders. While the UN as a multilateral actor fills a niche within the international peace and security architecture, the PDA, with his/her interagency mandate, fills a niche within the UNs peace and security architecture.

At the same time, it is ill advised to overstate the impact of the Joint Programme at either headquarters or field-level. To say that its size in both human and financial numbers significantly limits its global scope for engagement would be an understatement. This is one person in each country, and a few at HQ. And yet, through the work of this one person in the field, the Joint Programme is doing its modest bit to support not only the incremental transformation of conflict dynamics on the ground, but also a transformation of the way the UN works. So while this ‘light touch’ intervention is a drop in the bucket of the UN behemoth, it is arguably more effective than supporting large-scale policies and reforms for which there is not only little appetite, but that are also difficult to translate into practice.

The obstacles to this work are twofold. One, is that while awareness of complex situations and what is required from the UN operating in them is spreading throughout the system, there is still a tendency to define many places where the UN is involved as ‘goodbye conflict, welcome development.’<sup>47</sup> Which seriously downplays the complexity and the timescale of just how long transitions actually take. The development imperative is of course important, but we have seen from the situation that many middle-income countries find themselves in, that it is far from a panacea for social fissures that lurk just under the surface of an edifice of stability delivered by economic growth.

Two, it is notoriously difficult to raise money for conflict prevention: ‘the “tyranny of the now” means that resources are rarely set aside for potential crises while current ones are wreaking havoc.’<sup>48</sup> But important to consider with this work is that a prudent investment now, could potentially save a great deal of time and money in the future. The concept note for the most recent Security Council debate on prevention stated that a key challenge in mustering appropriate and timely responses when warning signs do appear ‘has been finding consensus on the balance between, on the one hand, a response that is sufficiently early to prevent international peace and security crises and, on the other, respecting the prerogative of national authorities to resolve internal crises.’<sup>49</sup>

The Joint Programme directly responds to both aspects of this challenge. By having PDAs on-hand early enough in countries, to encourage the formation of ‘anticipatory relationships’<sup>50</sup>, that can be called upon if crisis erupts, and by assisting the capacity of national actors to peacefully manage the disruptive pace of change often associated with the development process. The support that the Joint Programme has provided thus far to furthering the conflict prevention agenda has consistently led to progress, progress that at times may be incremental and modest, but that has been enabled because it is based upon the firm logic of partnership and accompaniment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Based on the partnership, determine the Joint Programme’s vision for conflict prevention.**

Too much variance still exists in answers to the question: what are we trying to do with the Joint Programme and what is our strategic approach? There is an underlying disconnect between the way that each partner defines conflict prevention, views their role in operationalizing this, and sees the Joint Programme as a vehicle. This gap contributes to some of the conceptual tension described above, and should be bridged. A holistic vision need not be rigid, or completely overlapping, but would bring the two perspectives more closely together by clearly articulating where their complementarity is.

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<sup>47</sup> This is the motto supporting Timor-Leste’s Strategic Development Plan, 2011-2030.

<sup>48</sup> Muggah and White, ‘Preventive Action Renaissance,’ p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> UN Security Council, Annex, S/2014/572, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> R. Gowan and B. Jones, with S. Batmanglich and A. Hart (2010). ‘Back to Basics: The UN and crisis diplomacy in an age of strategic uncertainty,’ New York: Center on International Cooperation, p. 4.

2. **Use the above to inform a Joint Programme strategy for each country.** After initial analysis and country-level consultations, support the PDA in identifying a theory of change, or, put another way, the specific issue within the context that the PDA will help address and/or change. Ideally this exercise will be fostered by the leadership of the RC and can be used to engage the UNCT around the development of a broader conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategy. If that is not possible, at the very least it should include the respective UNDP regional bureau and DPA regional division, BPPS, and any other relevant country or technical focal points within agencies. This can be fluid and serve as a living document, and does not need to be long and complicated, but will provide some guidance for a PDAs work with partners, will facilitate monitoring of progress, and will also ensure that handovers between PDAs are based upon a continuation of supporting a more long-term strategic vision.
3. **Continue to expand and strengthen functional cooperation at HQ.** In order to continue to consolidate system-wide policy coherence on the conflict prevention and peacebuilding agenda, expand cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and with DOCO on countries of mutual interest, as well as with other agencies on any specific technical issues, as relevant. Increase communication and outreach about the work of the PDAs, of which there is genuine curiosity and interest, for instance, by hosting informal brown bag lunches. The increased knowledge and understanding of this role and its added value amongst operational agencies at HQ could eventually result in the encouragement of more cooperation between their colleagues at the field-level and PDAs. Further strengthen the spirit of equal joint ownership of the programme between DPA and UNDP, as well as give it some added capacity it needs, by having one more dedicated staff member – one to sit in BPPS, and one in DPA.
4. **Keep the PDAs as an elite cadre.** There is not enough dedicated and predictable resourcing currently available for the Joint Programme to continue to expand if it is going to be able to provide the kind of bespoke and quality support that it is known for. And for this work, quality absolutely cannot be sacrificed for quantity. This will mean capping the number of PDAs, but giving them more individual resources upon deployment with which to jumpstart innovative programming and develop entry points. The Joint Programme will therefore have to make tougher decisions about where PDAs are placed and have a higher degree of pragmatic prioritization of requests based upon the facts of each prospective deployment. In addition to assessment of the context itself, this prioritization should be heavily based upon the dynamics and capacities of the RCO and the UNCT, resulting in an honest decision about whether the PDA will be utilized to the fullest extent possible.<sup>51</sup>
5. **Maintain greater continuity between successive PDAs.** PDA work is often incredibly labor-intensive and reliant upon trust and personal connections. Because of the investment that PDAs place in cultivating their network and programmes, the Joint Programme cannot afford to lose the capital that has been painstakingly built in either by allowing a lag time between successive posts. The standard should be a joint handover; with PDAs who are staying in the system being able to return to their previous country to do so, and where PDAs are leaving the system having the recruitment process expedited so that deployments can briefly overlap. Where an RC who has not had a PDA before inherits one, the Joint Programme should be prepared to support a joint mission to foster this transition.
6. **Give RCs, as well as RCs and their PDAs, more opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange.** The Montreux meetings, as well as workshops that have brought both RCs and PDAs together, have provided a unique platform for RCs to liaise with one another and to consider how they approach their responsibilities in politically complex situations, as well as how they can be better supported. No other community of practice exercise can take the place of sitting face-to-face and discussing these issues, or listening to how your peers are handling similar situations, and the understanding that has been fostered through these exchanges is invaluable. While ‘workshops’ are not a popular activity

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<sup>51</sup> This will require being able to liaise very closely with DOCO – and to have frank discussions about an RCs approach to issues that would affect a PDAs function – as well as to rely on joint assessment missions to field requests and determine the specific nature of support that an RC/UNCT needs and whether the UNCT would be hospitable to the PDAs work.

for donors to fund, these types of workshops, especially when integrated into an overall process, actually are fundamental in shifting mentalities and engendering better practice.

7. **Protect the functioning of the Joint Programme; resist the urge to over-bureaucratize processes.** One of the values of the Joint Programme has been its ability to operate differently than much of the UN system, and that it has retained the aforementioned link to logic, as interpreted by its relative speed, flexibility, collection of dynamic personalities who are not easily categorized, and targeted nature, rather than relying too heavily on systems that restrict it being able to respond to needs on the ground, oftentimes in evolving and risky contexts. These aspects of the programme must be enabled, by management (and donors), to remain the same.
8. **Increase substantive and technical support to PDAs.** Resurrect the ‘core group’ concept employed by the Joint Programme in previous years for PDAs to have a network of people with which they can engage in discussion on developments in their countries, at least around their reports, which means approximately once every two months.<sup>52</sup> In light of restructuring, this mechanism will also provide a platform for linking BPPS and DPA at HQ, with the bureau at the regional-level, and the PDAs at the country-level to retain a degree of coherence between the multiple levels. For more technical and programmatic requirements, each PDA should also have a group of several people that can be called upon as needed, including other PDAs who may have experience on similar issues from their country. Neither of these groups need to be locked into a calendar with a strict meeting schedule, they can operate organically, but it is important that PDAs feel they have more of an established support structure to turn to when needed.
9. **Retain PDAs within the UN system.** The Joint Programme is already instigating a number of conversations regarding the human resource hurdles that PDAs face in terms of the categorization of their contracts, and which currently disincentive them from staying in the system. To be reemphasized here – based upon their unique skill-sets, varied backgrounds, and the field experience that they are gaining as PDAs – these very much are the next generation of senior staff within the UN system, and every effort should be made to retain them and nurture their careers as such.
10. **Enable PDAs to have greater focus on innovation.** The nature of conflict is changing, as is the pace of change, and the UN must keep up. Instability surrounding criminal, gang and urban violence, resource-based conflicts, violent extremism, etc. is growing in many places where PDAs are deployed. Given their familiarity with analysis, programming, as well as with social resilience mechanisms, PDAs are prime candidates to be leading the UN in developing more innovative thinking about how to address the impact of emerging challenges on development, from a practitioner’s standpoint.
11. **Capture learning and activities.** PDAs are undertaking cutting-edge practice on conflict prevention, social cohesion, governance and peacebuilding. Based on the comparative advantages that allow the UN to try new approaches, as well as to have longer-term commitment to some of the processes it is accompanying, the Joint Programme is uniquely placed to capture learning from these activities and programmes that can be used to better understand the types of impacts that can be achieved with this work, as well as to the benefit of the wider community of practice.
12. **Expand the other outputs of the Joint Programme.** The Joint Programme is more than just PDAs. Recognizing the vehicle that has been provided by its ability to strengthen collaboration between DPA and UNDP, increase attention and resources to the other three core outputs of the programme. This could include: working through existing mechanisms to bolster capacity to identify and more swiftly deploy short-term expertise; supporting DPA and UNDP staff members to undertake longer assignments in support of PDAs<sup>53</sup>; or exploring options for supporting national PDAs to undertake ‘shadowing’ or detailed assignments in countries where an international PDA is deployed, also ensuring greater overall sustainability.

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<sup>52</sup> With the frequency of these to possibly increase around the lead-up to key events, such as elections.

<sup>53</sup> One suggestion for these assignments could be to help fulfill recommendation 11, by having HQ staff support PDAs in gathering the experiences and best practices from their context and feeding them back into the system.

## ANNEX 1: LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED\*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization/Agency/Department</u>
Albert Mariner	former PDA (Fiji)
Alessandra Pellizzeri	PBSO
Alex Shoebridge	Joint Programme
Alexandra Pichler-Fong	UN DPA
Ana Izar	UN DPA
Andres Figueroa Davila	UN DPA
Andrew Russell	UN Development Coordinator, Kosovo
Anja Bille Bahncke	DOCO
Anne-Kristin Treiber	former PDA (Chad)
Anthony Omeheng-Boamah	UN Resident Coordinator, Congo-Brazzaville (formerly of Guinea)
Axel Wennmann	UN DPA
Ayaka Suzuki	UN DPA
Bautista Logioco	PBSO
Brian Williams	PBF
Bruno Lemarquais	UNDP/BCPR
Caroline Tissot	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Celine Moyroud	UNDP/RBAS
Cherrie-Anne Vincent	UN DPA
Chetan Kumar	UNDP/BCPR
Chris Spies	former PDA (Guyana)
Christina Hadju	UNDP
Claudia Mojica	UN DPA
Clever Nyathi	PDA (interim), Kenya
Craig Collins	former PDA (Maldives)
Dennis Besedic	PDA Bosnia and Herzegovina
Elizabeth Solomon	PDA Sierra Leone
Enkhtungalag Ganbold	UN DPA
Fiorella Triscritti	UN DPA
Francesc Claret	UN DPA
Gaspar Bergman	UNDP, Georgia
Gay Rosenblum-Kumar	former Executive Secretary of the UN Interagency Framework Team
George Wachira	PDA Guyana
Gianluca Rampolla	UN DPA
Giordano Segneri	PDA Tunisia
Gita Sabharwal	PDA Sri Lanka
Gjermund Saether	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Gregory Connor	PDA Timor-Leste (former FYROM)
Henk-Jan Brinkman	PBSO
Ignacio Saez-Benito	UN DPA
Jamie McGoldrick	UN Resident Coordinator, Nepal (formerly of Georgia)

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\* Given that the vast majority of interviews took place before the UNDP restructuring was complete, former affiliations have been listed. Also, PDAs have been listed here as such, despite the fact they may have a different working title in their country.



Jared Kotler	PDA Colombia
Jelena Raketic	UNDP/BCPR
John Lewis	UNICEF
Jordan Ryan	UNDP/BCPR
Jos De La Haye	UNDP/BCPR
Josephat Balegamire	PDA Chad
Jospeh Oji	UNDP/RBA
Julian Davis	DPA MSU
Knut Ostby	UN Resident Coordinator, Timor-Leste (formerly of Fiji)
Linda Maguire	UNDP/RBA
Luiza Carvalho	UN Resident Coordinator, Philippines
Luqman Patel	UNDP/BCPR
Michael Brown	UN DPA, Meditation Standby Team, former PDA (Ecuador)
Nirinia Kiplagat	UNDP/BCPR
Oleh Protysk	PDA Tajikistan
Oscar Fernandez-Taranco	UN DPA
Ozonnia Ojielo	UNDP/BCPR
Pablo Ruiz Hiebra	UNDP/RBLAC
Paul Partner	PDA Kosovo*
Philip Helminger	UN DPA
Priya Gajraj	UNDP/RBA
Rebecca Adda-Dontoh	PDA Malawi
Ruby Sandhu-Rojon	UNDP/RBA
Salvador Aguilera	PDA Honduras
Samuel Doe	UNDP, former PDA (Sri Lanka)
Samuel Rizk	UNDP/RBAS, former PDA (Sudan, Yemen)
Sanna Tasala	UNDP/BCPR
Sarah Poole	UNDP/RBEC
Sharif Baaser	UNICEF
Stan Veitsman	PDA Ukraine (former Georgia)
Stephen Jackson	DPA MSU
Thomas Gurtner	UN Resident Coordinator, Chad
Vanda Santos	UNDP/BCPR
Vesna Markovic Dasovic	UNDP/BCPR
Victor Munteanu	PDA Belarus
Waly Ndiaye	PDA Comoros
Yasser Baki	UK Mission to the United Nations
Zachary Taylor	UNDP/RBEC
Zebulon Takwa	PDA Nigeria

## **FIELD VISITS:**

### GHANA

Ahmed Gedel National Democratic Congress

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\* Referred to in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

Chukwuemeka B. Eze	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)
Francis Azuimah	National Peace Council
Gloria Gyedu	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
Jennifer Asuako	UNDP, Gender
Jens-Peter Dyrbak	UK DFID
Lawrence Lachmansingh	PDA Ghana
Louis Kuukpen	UNDP, M&E
Mumuni Abdulai Bawumia	former Ministry of Interior, Peacebuilding Support Unit
Samwell Akuamoah	National Commission for Civic Education
Seth Oteng	Youth Bridge Foundation

## GEORGIA

Abdukakhor Nurov	Office of the UN Representative to the Geneva International Discussions
Christopher Joyce	British Embassy
Erika Kvapilova	UN Women
Eva Maria Troya Blanco	European Union
Gabrielle Cowan	Embassy of the United States of America
Gigi Bregadze	UNDP, Democratic Governance
Giorgi Kanashvili	The Caucasian House
Giorgi Vardishvili	European External Action Service
Giorgi Volski	Parliament of Georgia, “Georgian Dream” Fraction
Gottfried Hanne	UNICEF
Horia Marin Draghici	Embassy of Romania
Iago Kachkachishvili	Institute of Social Studies and Analysis
Irina Yegorova	Office of the UN Representative to the Geneva International Discussions
Isabelle Covic	European Union Monitoring Mission
James Gallagher	European Union Monitoring Mission
Johan Axander	European Union Monitoring Mission
Mark Van Embden	Elva, Community Safety Network
Marina Salukvadze	Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation
Natia Nadiradze	Saferworld
Natia Natsvlshvili	UNDP Assistant Resident Representative
Niels Scott	UN Resident Coordinator
Paata Zakareishvili	State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality
Peeter Kaaman	Embassy of Sweden
Radu Gorincioi	Embassy of Romania
Sascha Graumann	UNICEF
Shombi Sharp	UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
Simone Wolken	UNHCR
Tabib Huseynov	Saferworld
Tamar Kochoradze	Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation
Tamar Sabedashvili	UN Women
Tamar Sirbiladze	USAID
Zurab Khrikadze	Peace and Development Programme Officer

## KENYA

Abdi Umar	UNDP, Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Unit
Akademia Nanjala Wandibba	OHCHR
Anders J. Rönquist	Embassy of Sweden
Benson Mutuku	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
Camilla Sugden	UK DFID
Claris Ogangah-Onyango	OHCHR

Emmanuel Ole-Sayiorry	UNDP, Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Unit
Evelyne Batamuliza	UNDP, Gender/Peacebuilding
Fernando Abaga Edjang	UNDP, Deputy Country Director
James Ngului	Kenya National Focal Point on SALW
James Oduor	National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)
Josephine Mwangi-Mweki	Embassy of Sweden
Julius Kiplimo	Peace and Development Network Trust
Leonard Kyalo	Security Research & Information Centre
Leonie Abela	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
Lucy Ndungu	Partnership for Peace and Security
Maria-Threase Keating	UNDP, Country Director
Nardos Bekele-Thomas	UN Resident Coordinator
Njeri Karuru	International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Roba Sharamo	UNDP, Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Unit
S.K. Maina	Ministry of Interior, National Steering Committee
Steve Kirimi	Peace and Development Network Trust
William Saiya	Kenya National Focal Point on SALW

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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## ANNEX 3: PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose: The purpose of the review was to assess the contribution of the Joint DPA/UNDP Programme to UN system efforts to advance conflict prevention at the country-level, predominantly through the deployment of Peace and Development Advisors. The review also sought to identify the factors that determine the Programme's success, as well as its current challenges, and to provide recommendations and next steps to further strengthen these efforts.

Key Objective: The review's key objective was to examine the Joint Programme's contribution to building the UNs capacity to engage in conflict prevention and to respond in complex political situations.

Methodology: In addition to an extensive desk review of all relevant documentation and in-depth consultations with a range of interviewees at headquarters as well as with UN staff based in the field, it was originally envisioned that field research would take place in five countries, to better understand the environments in which the Joint Programme operates at country-level.

The countries selected during the inception phase were: Fiji, Ghana, Georgia, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, due to the Ebola crisis, the Sierra Leone field visit was cancelled. The field visit to Fiji was substituted for attendance at a workshop with PDAs from the Asia-Pacific and Europe/CIS region, where many issues pertaining to the review were discussed.

The review also benefitted from the oversight and feedback of a Reference Group comprised of UNDP and DPA staff, members of the PDA Advisory Group, PBF, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners.

Analytical Framework: The review was framed around the three criteria of *effectiveness, relevance and sustainability*, with the following questions serving to guide the scope of information collected.

### EFFECTIVENESS

1. Are there specific contexts or thematic areas in which PDAs have been particularly effective? What are the main factors that determine how much impact the PDA and the other support provided by the Joint Programme can have at country level?
2. What types of roles can PDAs play in affecting change at national and local level? Where are they most able to affect change? What have been the unexpected results of PDA deployments?
3. To what extent have PDAs (or other support from the Joint Programme) been able to mainstream conflict prevention and conflict sensitivity into the UNCTs' broader development programming and if, so what factors have enabled this to happen?
4. Is the information and analysis generated by PDAs utilised effectively for conflict prevention at: a) country-level b) at HQ-level? How effectively has the Joint UNDP/DPA Programme supported the UNs country analysis and information dissemination for conflict prevention?
5. What resources and support have enabled PDA's to be most effective? Have these been sufficient and what additional support is needed?
6. Is the current profile of people being recruited and deployed as PDA's the right one to meet the Joint Programme's objectives? Due to funding constraints, short-term contracts have been used for PDAs. How does this affect effectiveness? Are there specific issues regarding the deployment of national staff as PDAs?

### RELEVANCE

1. Does the support provided through the Joint UNDP/DPA Programme adequately serve the needs of Resident Coordinators and UNCTs? To what extent has its efforts to build system-wide capacity

contributed to the UNs effectiveness in engaging on conflict prevention at the local, national and global level?

2. How is and should the impact of this work be monitored and communicated?

3. To what extent does the Joint Programme, and the deployment of PDAs, reinforce and advance system-wide efforts pertaining to strengthening the coherence and responsiveness of the UN in crises, including those where the Rights Up Front approach is relevant?

#### SUSTAINABILITY

1. Is there a suggested minimum time period for PDA deployment to be most effective? Do successive PDA deployments need to take place to further develop entry points or, alternatively, can 'quick wins' be sustained?

2. What steps have been taken and should be taken to ensure sustainability of results? What should an 'exit strategy' look like?

3. Are there other initiatives and measures that could be part of PDA deployment that would further the sustainability of engagement (e.g. mentoring of national PDAs, greater focus on training) and support the long-term presence of relevant skills?



#### ANNEX 4: OVERVIEW OF JOINT PROGRAMME SUPPORT (2004-2014)

Region	Current PDA deployments (as of December 2014)	Previous PDAs (and years)	Technical support provided
<b>Africa</b>	Burundi	Ghana (2004 – 2014)	Benin
	Chad	Guinea-Conakry (2012 – 2013)	Guinea-Bissau
	Comoros		Namibia
	Eritrea		Mali
	Ethiopia		South Sudan
	Great Lakes Region		
	Kenya		
	Lesotho		
	Liberia		
	Madagascar		
	Malawi		
	Mauritania		
	Nigeria		
	Niger		
	Sierra Leone		
	Togo		
Uganda			
<b>Arab States</b>	Tunisia	Sudan (2007 – 2009)	Bahrain
		Yemen (2009 – 2010)	Egypt
			Somalia
			Sudan
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>	Fiji	Nepal (2003 – 2004)	Nepal
	Papua New Guinea	Philippines(2012 – 2014)	South Pacific
	Maldives		
	Sri Lanka		
	Thailand		
	Timor-Leste		
<b>Europe/CIS</b>	Belarus	Cyprus (2009 – 2013)	
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	FYR Macedonia (2004 – 2005; 2010 – 2013)	
	Georgia		
	Kosovo		
	Kyrgyzstan		
	Tajikistan		
	Ukraine		
<b>Latin America/Caribbean</b>	Colombia	Ecuador (2005 – 2012)	Bolivia
	Guyana	Peru (2011 – 2013)	Colombia
	Honduras		Peru

## ANNEX 5: MAP, BUDGET AND GROWTH OF PDA DEPLOYMENTS



Figure 1: PDA deployments (including approved deployments from Q3, 2014). As of 23 September 2014.

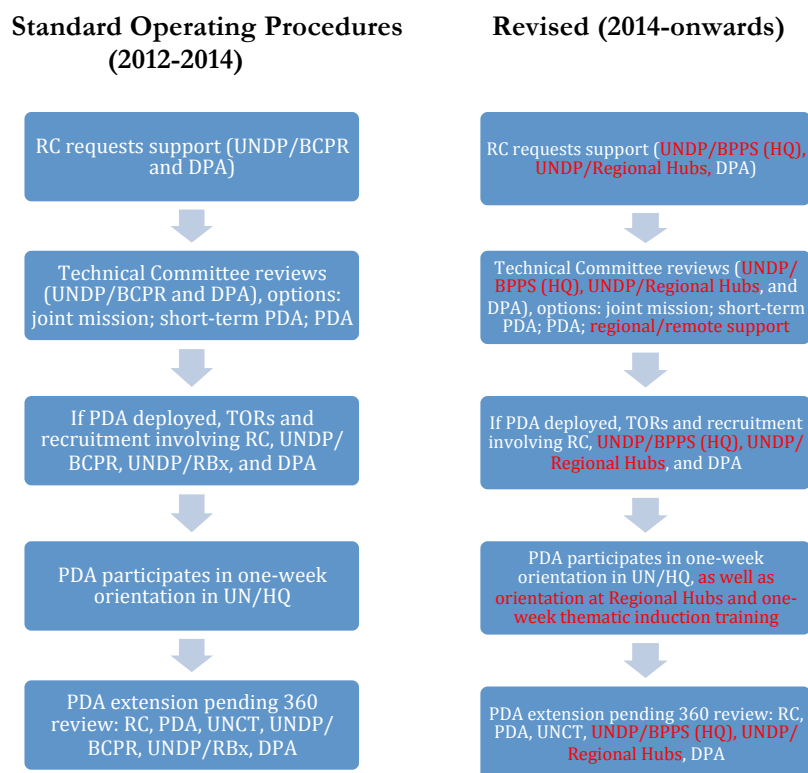
### JOINT PROGRAMME BUDGET: 2012-2104

Donor	2012/2013	2014
Finland	1,600,000	-
Norway	1,142,000	892,000
Sweden	3,050,000	2,900,000
Switzerland	280,000	345,000
United Kingdom	255,000	730,000
DPA	544,000	630,000
UNDP (Global, Regional and Country level)	2,832,000	742,250
Peacebuilding Fund	375,000	435,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,078,000</b>	<b>6,674,250</b>

### GROWTH OF DEPLOYMENTS OVER TIME

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
5	5	6	11	8	15	17	23	24	30	34

## ANNEX 6: JOINT PROGRAMME DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



The Joint Programme is co-chaired by one ASG each from DPA and UNDP. These co-chairs sit on the Steering Committee, which also includes representatives from all DPA Regional Divisions, DPA/Policy and Mediation Division, and UNDP Regional Bureaux (typically at Director or Deputy Director level). The Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis, and provides the overall strategic guidance to the Joint Programme.

The Steering Committee is supported in their deliberations by a Technical Committee, which meets every month. The Technical Committee reviews requests for PDA deployments and other support received from RCs, while also overseeing operational and programmatic initiatives, partnerships and other engagements, planned PDA support, and reviewing any documentation to be submitted to the co-chairs for approval.

## ANNEX 7: FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PDAs

PDAs not only serve a unique role within the UN system, but frequently also possess a unique skill set. As discussed in the review, there can be considerable variation in their daily functions and how they divide their time. The following is information gleaned from different sources and attempts to further loosely categorize the types of skills and backgrounds the function requires, as well as certain aspects of their main responsibilities.

### Three Main Areas of PDA Efforts\*

1. Political and conflict analysis
  - a. To inform the UNs positioning in-country and HQ
  - b. To support the identification of entry points for programming and strategy with the UNCT
  - c. To support participatory or stakeholder-led analysis exercises with national actors to build consensus around drivers of conflict
  - d. To support UNCT agencies have a common and shared understanding of the country context, potential fault lines, and the impact of (and on) their programming
2. Conflict prevention strategy and programming – (linking analysis to this)
  - a. To facilitate processes to develop joint strategic frameworks and programmes
  - b. To support conflict-sensitive programming
  - c. To support the design (and assessment) of specific conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming
3. Catalyzing and facilitating strategic conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives – (responding to needs of the context) around:
  - a. Dialogue and mediation support – by capacity-building of national actors, drawing on convening power, creating space, and inclusion
  - b. Reconciliation and social cohesion – at national and/or community level
  - c. Infrastructures for peace – especially around early warning, election violence, conflict management, social cohesion, and conflict drivers

### PDA Activities

In addition to their other tasks, at any given time, and in combination, PDAs are also able to:

- Conduct rapid assessments as well as deeper analysis on specific issues
- Assess the nature of conflicts, and the appropriate and timely response by the UN
- Collect information on the perspectives of peace negotiations
- Do field visits and needs assessments
- Build capacity of UN colleagues and country counterpart organizations and institutions to undertake similar tasks to that of the PDA
- Develop strategy documents
- Design, manage, coordinate, revise and monitor the implementation of programmes and frameworks
- Promote dialogue and reconciliation around certain issues
- Develop tools, such as training manuals
- Establish a range of relationships, including with political actors
- Represent the UN in various forums, from community-level to senior-level

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\*These categories are taken from the Joint Programme's PDA Practice Note, 'Emerging Promising Practices in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding' September 2013. In addition to that document, this annex has also been greatly informed by issues and terminology that arose during an experience-sharing and capacity development workshop of conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners held in Navaisha, Kenya in 2007 (meeting note listed in Annex 2) as well as from a recent survey administered by the Joint Programme to capture the breadth of PDA competencies.

- Coordinate inter-agency and development partner working groups
- Support high-level engagements and country visits from DPA, UNDP and the broader UN system

PDA skill sets and areas of expertise:

- Observation and collaborative consulting skills
- Leadership and the skill to ignite the energies of others
- Political and cross-cultural sensitivity
- Facilitation and consensus-building skills
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, mediation, negotiation, dispute resolution
- Action learning
- Process design skills (including conceptualization, the identification of strategies, linking conflict prevention/peacebuilding work to development and national strategies)
- Process management skills
- Capacity-building skills

Other technical competencies:

Elections, electoral cycle support, and preventing election-related violence

Parliamentary and political parties support

Public administration

Local governance

Human rights capacity building

Access to justice

Legal frameworks

Constitutional reform

Anti-corruption

Gender mainstreaming

SGBV

Engagement with media

Collaborative leadership

Conflict sensitivity

Political dialogue

National consultation processes

Inter-ethnic relations

Reconciliation processes

Transitional justice

Community security

Early warning/early response

Employment creation

Poverty reduction strategies

Refugees and IDPs

Humanitarian response

Donor coordination

'PDA Types'

In addition to PDAs, there are also 'PDA types' or other conflict prevention specialists, who usually sit within UNDP Country Offices in countries that either have large CPR portfolios or are mission settings. They are not funded through the Joint Programme and have no direct links to either DPA or the RC, although as conflict prevention practitioners they may still have links to the Joint Programme through its other outputs. The similar moniker has to do with comparability in terms of programming focus and approach between the work they undertake and the programming portion of a PDAs function, however the latter role incorporates a more diverse set of responsibilities.