A case study for the IOB evaluation of the UN for the Dutch development cooperation policy

The Hague

July 2017

1. Introduction

The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs is undertaking a *policy effectiveness review* to assess the results of its cooperation and contribution to the United Nations (UN) in the period 2012-2015. Specifically, the review focuses on efforts that were undertaken under the Dutch development cooperation policy, broken down in the four 'spearheads' that make up this policy: food security; water management; sexual and reproductive rights; and security and rule of law.

This report presents the findings of the study looking into efforts undertaken under the Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) spearhead. The study aims to produce a descriptive analysis of the broader UN and Dutch efforts in the field of SRoL, as well as an analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of those efforts to which the Netherlands provided a financial contribution or had a direct political interest. This latter analysis is limited in the sense that it focuses specifically on the SRoL efforts funded under the Dutch Trade and Development Cooperation budget – and within that specifically on programmes and initiatives carried out by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). As a result, other elements of the Dutch integrated approach to SRoL – like support to peacekeeping and political missions, mediation, and hybrid initiatives like joint programming between e.g. UNDP and the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) or the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) – are left out of consideration. It would be useful to conduct a more integrated analysis in the near future, to complement the findings of this study.

The current review is based on relevant evaluations, reviews, UN Secretary-General reports, etc. as well as on interviews conducted with key stakeholders both in The Hague and in New York.[1]

The report will first provide a brief overview of the role of the UN in the field of SRoL (chapter 2), followed by an overview of the Dutch engagement in this field (chapter 3). The report then goes on to present an assessment of the UN as an implementing (chapter 4) and a systemic (chapter 5) partner for the Dutch SRoL efforts. Finally, the report presents its key conclusion and a number of points of attention for future Dutch engagement with the UN in the field of SRoL (chapter 6).

2. Background and context

2.1. The rise of conflict and fragility on the international development agenda

Much has been written about the changing nature of conflict since the end of the Cold War.[2] On how conflicts increasingly take place within countries instead of between countries, and on how conflicts are most likely to occur in countries with weak governments and major ethnic and political tensions.

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[1] The interviews conducted were non-attributal. Annex 1 presents a list of organisations that the interviewees represented.

[2] See for instance the World Development Report 2011 on Conflict, Security and Development (https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389), the OECD's 2016 States of Fragility report (http://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2016-9789264267213-en.htm), but also standard reference works like North, Wallis and Weingart's 'Violence and Social Orders' (http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521761734) and Collier et al. 'Breaking the Conflict Trap' (https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13938).

On how civil wars tend to exacerbate the conditions that helped cause them in the first place (state capacity declines, poverty increases, inter-group dynamics become more hostile), and on how this leads to a vicious cycle of conflict and violence, with the 2011 World Development Report stating that 90 per cent of the civil wars since 2000 occurred in countries that had experienced a civil war in the previous 30 years.[3] On how fewer civil wars end in outright victory, and more end in negotiated peace settlements or ceasefire agreements – which increasingly collapse within five years as they fail to decisively settle the rules of the new order.[4] And on how conflict is becoming more intractable and less conducive to political settlement, with three developments significantly complicating international endeavours in response to conflict: a) organized crime has emerged as a major stress factor that exacerbates state fragility, undermines state legitimacy – especially in post-conflict settings, and makes conflict more intractable and messy; b) the increasing "internationalization" of civil war (i.e. increase in military involvement of external actors in civil wars) renders conflicts more difficult to solve; and c) the growing presence of violent extremist groups in conflict settings constitutes a significant challenge as their maximalist goals are difficult to meet through negotiation over democratic power.[5]

Over the last decades, the issue of conflict and fragility has risen on the agenda of the international community as it became clear that – in line with the increasing globalisation – violent conflict in one country affects stability in other countries – and not just the neighbouring countries. Cross-border issues like refugees, international crime, cross-border terrorism and illicit trade increasingly dominate both national and international political debates, and call for a joint response.[6]

Recognising that conflict and fragility negatively impact on development – and as such undermine international efforts to achieve results in this field (commonly accompanied by a reference made to the fact that most fragile states lagged behind in achieving the Millennium Development Goals) – the issue of conflict and fragility has also become an integral part of the international development agenda. Since the early 2000s, development actors like the OECD DAC, the World Bank and the UN have put a lot of effort into increasing their understanding of the linkages between conflict and development, and into strengthening international approaches to deal with these linkages. Increasingly there is agreement on the fact that engaging in fragile and conflict-affected settings is an inherently political effort, and that development cooperation is but one tool in a wider toolbox of international engagement in these types of settings (which also includes diplomatic efforts, military engagement, and trade relations).[7] The need for a coherent, integrated approach to issues of conflict and fragility is now widely acknowledged, aiming to come to an optimal combination of security and justice, good governance and socio-economic development in order to break the conflict and fragility cycle. It is also increasingly acknowledged that in order to achieve meaningful improvements along these lines, a flexible, risk-tolerant and long-term engagement is required – knowing that institutional transformation requires on average 20-40 years, for which there is no 'one-size-fits-all' blueprint available.[8]

2.2. The UN's agenda on peace, security and development

Sustaining peace is amongst the core tasks established for the UN by its Charter's vision of "sav[ing] succeeding generations from the scourge of war".[9] In the first decades after its establishment, the UN took on this task mainly through its Security Council mandated peacekeeping missions. However, in the early 1990s, the organisation recognised that it had to rethink its approach, as "the absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security.

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[3] World Bank, *World development Report 2011 – Conflict, Security and Development*, Washington, 2011, p.3

[4] Simon Fraser University, *Human Security Report 2009/2010: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011

[5] Einsiedel, S. von, *Major recent trends in violent conflict*, UNU-CPR Occasional Paper 1, 2014, pp.4-5

[6] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB), *Investing in Stability*, The Hague, 2013

[7] See for instance the Fragile States Principles (http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance-peace/conflictfragilityandresilience/principlesforgoodinternationalengagementinfragilestates.htm) and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (https://www.newdeal4peace.org/).

[8] World Bank, *World development Report 2011 – Conflict, Security and Development*, Washington, 2011, p.11

[9] Advisory Group of Experts, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, New York, 2015, p.7

The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security. The United Nations membership as a whole, working through the appropriate bodies, needs to give the highest priority to the solution of these matters."[10] Acknowledging that peacekeeping alone, as then practiced, was not enough to ensure lasting peace, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali presented his 'Agenda for Peace' in 1992. In it he made a distinction between peacemaking (and preventive diplomacy), peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and underlined that the UN had a significant role to play in all three. Specifically the introduction of post-conflict peacebuilding – which he defined as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict"[11] – opened the door for a UN-wide engagement in peace and development. However, this also opened the door to a compartmentalised and fragmented approach to the issue, in which the organisation continuously struggled to find a way to coordinate and integrate the efforts of the UN's peace and security, development and human rights pillars.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, it was acknowledged that coordination between the peacekeeping missions and parallel UN humanitarian and development support was ad hoc and poorly defined, with multiple UN entities working at cross purposes. The challenge for the United Nations was to forge a more integrated response, one that emphasized peacebuilding and paid greater attention to the structural root causes of violent conflict.[12] In 2000, the 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations', known as the Brahimi report, presented the concept of 'integrated missions' that brings together the work of security, political and development actors.[13] The rationale for integration rests with the assumption that security and political objectives, as well as development objectives, stand a greater chance of success when implemented in a coordinated fashion by the United Nations Secretariat, peacekeepers and UN Country Teams.[14] As such, the integration was to be driven by DPKO, DPA and UNDP – as Head of the UN Country Teams.

In 2005, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan introduced the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) – consisting of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) – claiming that there was a "gaping hole in the United Nations institutional machinery" in that no part addressed the transition from war to lasting peace.[15] This claim has been contested right from the beginning, with UN-insiders stating that initiatives taken by DPA, DPKO and UNDP since the early 2000s showed that there *was* an awareness of the need for peacebuilding and the prevention of the recurrence of conflict, and that the new structure meant a risk of duplication of activities[16] – and in fact contributed to growing competition and turf wars amongst the different entities involved. It's illustrative for the UN's struggle to 'get it right' in terms of the peace, security and development agenda.

Acknowledging the importance of the issue, as well as the need to do better, the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council requested UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in 2014 to assemble an Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) to conduct a review of the role and positioning of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBC, PBF and PBSO), as well as the operational entities of the UN active in peacebuilding, in order to feed into an inter-governmental process to identify concrete actions to strengthen the UN's approach to sustaining peace. The AGE report quite candidly points to the shortcomings in the UN system thus far, which can be traced back to all the various levels and dynamics that together make up the UN, ranging from the geopolitical level where stand-offs and power struggles between Member States that make up the Security Council affect UN action – but

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[10] UN Department of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1992*, New York, 1992, p.34

[11] United Nations, *An Agenda for Peace – Report of the Secretary-General*, New York, 1992, p.II.21

[12] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.8

[13] United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305 – S/2000/809, New York, 20 October 2000

[14] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.8

[15] United Nations, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All – Report of the Secretary-General*, A/59/2005, New York, 2005

[16] Cheng-Hopkins, J., *Epilogue: The UN Peacebuilding Architecture – good intentions, confused expectations, faulty assumptions*, in: De Coning, C. and E. Stamnes (eds.), *UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The first 10 years*, London, 2016

also where differences between the Global North and the Global South come to the forefront (balancing partnership relations with donor-recipient relations); to the UN organizational level where power struggles between Secretariat entities and UN agencies play out, as well as amongst and within these entities and agencies. The report also points to the role and responsibilities of the individual Member States in all this, stating that they have a key role to play in forcing and supporting the UN system to come together in a more effective and efficient manner (see Box 1).

Box 1. Key findings AGE Report 2015

- The changing global context for conflict and peacebuilding calls for a broader, comprehensive approach of "sustaining peace", all along the arc leading from conflict prevention (on which, in particular, the UN system needs to place much greater emphasis), through peacemaking and peacekeeping, and on to post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. The success of such an approach critically relies on uniting the peace and security, human rights and development "pillars" of the UN – alongside fostering "inclusive national ownership" and establishing and adhering to realistic timelines for UN peace operations and other peacebuilding engagements – and even more so for development assistance.

- The shortcomings in efforts to fill the "gaping hole" in the UN's institutional machinery for building peace are systemic in nature. They result from a generalized misunderstanding of the nature of peacebuilding and, even more, from the fragmentation of the UN into separate "silos".

- For many UN Member States and UN Organisation entities alike, peacebuilding is left as an afterthought: under-prioritised, under-resourced and undertaken only after the guns fall silent. But sustaining peace must be the principle that flows through all the UN's engagements, informing all the Organisation's activities – before, during and after violent conflicts – rather than being marginalised.

- Several principal intergovernmental Organs, and especially the Security Council, hold pieces of the peacebuilding "puzzle," each from the vantage point of their particular Charter responsibilities. The fragmentation between them is reproduced throughout the UN: within the Secretariat, between the Secretariat and the rest of the UN, and in operations on the ground, where peacebuilding actually takes place.

- By allowing the UN's overall fragmentation to continue, Member States are, themselves, part of the problem. The flipside is that they can and must be part of the solution. Simply put, they must accept the need for the different parts of the UN to work together on peacebuilding and find ways to assist them to do so. Without a successful formula through which to unite the common efforts of the three pillars, UN efforts to sustain peace will continue to fail.

Source: The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (June 2015) (pp.7-8)

The presentation of the findings of the AGE report coincided with a number of other influential events relevant to strengthening the peace, security and development agenda of the UN. First, there was the process of coming to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which for the first time include a goal that calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16).[17] Second, a number of other reviews and high-level meetings that took place in 2015 provided stimulus for decisions that will influence the future direction of peacebuilding and reflect the high-degree of interconnectedness of the UN system, and especially its development and peace dimensions: the UN High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), which assessed the UN's special political missions and peacekeeping operations; the review

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[17] See: www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions.html

of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; as well as important meetings on international financing for development and climate change.[18]

With all of these elements in place, the Security Council and the General Assembly simultaneously adopted two substantively identical resolutions in April 2016, both calling for a further development and implementation of the "sustaining peace" agenda for the UN, both underlining the need to reduce fragmentation in the UN system and to come to a more coherent approach.[19] The resolutions are ground-breaking in the sense that they set an agenda for action that exceeded the term of the then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon – calling for an SG Report on the efforts to implement the stipulations of the resolutions for the 72nd General Assembly session, and provide a concrete opportunity for the UN and its Member States to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN efforts to sustain peace. The current Secretary-General Guterres has made this one of the central elements of his agenda, underlining the need for new, strengthened efforts to build and sustain peace ranging from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustainable development.[20]

3. Dutch engagement vis-à-vis the UN in the field of peace, security and development

3.1. Security and Rule of Law policy

3.1.1. Background

The Netherlands has a long track record in the field of peace, security and development, and is specifically well known for its emphasis on the need for an integrated approach to tackle issues of conflict and fragility. In 2005, the Ministers for Development Cooperation, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Economic Affairs jointly presented a policy note on reconstruction after armed conflict, underlining that sustainable reconstruction required an integrated approach – bringing together the fields of security and stability, governance and socio-economic development. As such, the note provided the framework for increased cooperation and coordination between the various Ministries involved, and laid the foundations for the current policy on security and rule of law.[21]

In 2007, the Dutch government presented the policy brief 'Our Common Concern: investing in development in a changing world', stating – amongst other things – that the Netherlands wants more attention to be given to fragile states, home to many of the world's poorest people, to protect their human rights and help limit regional and global threats. The concept of 'enlightened self-interest' is introduced, underlining that a focus on fragile states is partly driven by the need to combat global instability, which undermines our own national security.[22] These basic notions are subsequently operationalized in the '2008-2011 Strategy on security and development in fragile states', which identifies three target dimensions for Dutch engagement: 1) enhancing the security of citizens; 2) contributing to a legitimate government with sufficient capacity; and 3) creating a peace dividend.[23]

The strategy calls attention to the *how* of supporting countries in their paths out of fragility (see Box 2), underlining the need for a pragmatic and modest approach given the complexity of the issues and the limitations of Dutch influence. It calls for more effective action by the international community and presents a Dutch preference to channel support through multilateral channels where possible, and through bilateral channels where necessary. The main reason for this is that it is felt that the problems of fragile states cannot be alleviated without international cooperation and leadership. The multilateral framework is perceived to offer benefits of scale, opportunities for coordination, more political weight, a better guarantee of long-term structural commitment and a

[18] De Coning, C. and E. Stamnes (eds.), *UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The first 10 years*, London, 2016, p.2
[19] See: www.unpbf.org/news/un-general-assembly-and-security-council-adopt-resolutions-on-peacebuilding/
[20] See: www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55935#.WPS24VPyjeQ
[21] See: https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/dossier/30075/kst-30075-1?resultIndex=11&sorttype=1&sortorder=4
[22] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Our Common Concern: Investing in development in a changing world – Policy note Dutch Development Cooperation 2007-2011*, The Hague, 2007, p.12
[23] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Security and Development in Fragile States; The Netherlands' strategy 2008-2011*, The Hague, 2008, p.9

spreading of costs and risks. Reference is also made to the fact that international organisations can encourage the exchange of best practices, and provide the leadership needed to link initiatives in the political, security, humanitarian and development spheres. At the same time it's also acknowledged that a great deal must still be done to improve international cooperation: "Leadership by the international community is often inadequate in fragile situations. Political and financial considerations, rather than actual need, tend to dictate the choices made. International organisations still do not collaborate enough, despite moves in the right direction since the 2001 Brahimi Report, the 2005 UN Summit and the 2006 UN Panel on System-wide Coherence."[24]

Box 2 – A new approach to fragile states

Effective engagement in fragile states calls for a new approach. This requires concepts and instruments that adequately address the stubborn, complex problems that affect fragile states. The guidelines underpinning this new approach are the OECD/DAC Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations. The key focus areas are:

1. An integrated approach;
2. Local partners, local priorities;
3. Sensitivity to context and political issues;
4. Speed, flexibility and long-term commitment;
5. Multilateral where possible, bilateral where necessary
6. Prevention;
7. Taking responsible risks.

Source: Security and Development in Fragile States; The Netherlands' strategy 2008-2011 (pp.18-27)

3.1.2. Spearhead Security & Rule of Law

In 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sends a letter to Parliament explaining the new outlines for Dutch development cooperation, taking into account the fact that the development budget will be cut back substantially and the fact that there is a declining support for development cooperation amongst the Dutch general public. Hence, the letter underlines the need for visible results, and for making strategic choices in terms of identifying policy priorities. The concept of 'enlightened self-interest' remains, driven by the question: "Where can we make a difference, and where do our interests lie?" The main change in comparison to the previous years is that the policy is not driven by a country- or regional focus, but rather is driven by a thematic focus – in which there is a shift from the social to the economic sectors, with more focus on developing countries' self-reliance and more opportunities for private initiative. The four thematic focal areas – or spearheads – are: food security; water management; sexual and reproductive rights; and security and rule of law.[25]

The Security & Rule of Law (SRoL) spearhead builds upon the 2008-2011 fragile states strategy, and as such encompasses more than 'pure' security and rule of law interventions. The spearhead, as presented in a letter to Parliament in 2012,[26] encompasses five key elements that are a further specification of the three objectives that guided the 2008-2011 fragile states strategy:

1. Security for people;
2. A functioning legal order;
3. Political processes in which every group in society can participate, including peace processes, post-conflict reconciliation and democratisation;
4. A legitimate, capable government; and
5. Employment and basic services.[27]

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[24] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Security and Development in Fragile States; The Netherlands' strategy 2008-2011*, The Hague, 2008, pp. 37-38

[25] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Letter to the House of Representatives presenting the spearheads of development cooperation policy*, The Hague, 2011, p.2 (kamerstuk 32 605, nr.2)

[26] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Brief over het speerpunt veiligheid en rechtsorde*, The Hague, 2012 (EFV-190/2012)

[27] On the basis of these five elements a Theory of Change has been developed in 2015 that identifies the following overarching objective: To promote 'legitimate' stability in fragile countries with a view to resolving and preventing armed conflict, protecting people and laying the foundations for sustainable development. In the course of 2015, elements 3 and 4 have been merged into one element: inclusive peace processes and political governance (see: https://www.government.nl/documents/regulations/2015/12/10/theory-of-change-for-the-security-and-rule-of-law-policy-priority-in-fragile-situations).

These elements reflect the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) as agreed upon under the 2011 New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States – a key agreement between fragile and conflict-affected states, international development partners and civil society to improve current development policy and practice in fragile states, which the Netherlands actively helped foster by acting as co-chair of the process of coming to this agreement.[28] Overall, special attention will continuously be given to the political and economic role that women can play in peacebuilding- and reconstruction processes.[29]

The country-specific context and agreements with partners determine the set of objectives to be achieved per country, as well as the mix of activities undertaken to achieve them. In terms of choosing between bilateral, private/civil society and multilateral partners and channels, effectiveness is the guiding principle. It is stated that in most cases, the Netherlands will have to work with multiple partners via multiple channels to achieve a certain objective.[30] As a general rule of thumb, the Netherlands will aim to use the bilateral channel to support activities in areas where the Dutch have a strong track record (i.e. integrated approach in peacekeeping missions; rule of law development; strengthening of local governance; mobilisation of women in peace processes; facilitating multi-party political processes). The Netherlands prefers to use the private/civil society channel to support local counterparts in terms of lobby and advocacy; basic services provision at community level; local conflict resolution and the facilitation of state-society dialogue. And for the multilateral channel, it is stated once more - in line with the 2008-2011 fragile states strategy – that international cooperation and leadership are considered to be of crucial importance in alleviating the problems of fragile and conflict-affected situations given the sheer size of the problems and the fact that multilateral organisations (and specifically the UN) are present in many fragile and conflict-affected countries. Reference is once more made to benefits of scale and coordination, political weight, a better guarantee of long-term structural commitment and a spreading of costs and risks. It is stated that the Netherlands will have to make sharp choices in order to strengthen leadership of and capacity in international organisations active in the field of security and rule of law.[31] However, these choices are not specified, nor is it made clear on the basis of what criteria these choices will be made.

The general rule of thumb in terms of choosing between channels and partners has been specified over the course of 2012-2015 to the following guiding principles:

- Support to a legitimate and capable government mostly via NGOs;
- Support to inclusive political processes mostly via NGOs;
- Support to employment and basic services mostly via NGOs (through subsidy tenders) and Multi-Donor Trust Funds;
- Support to a functioning legal order via a limited number of multilateral organisations and NGOs;
- Support to security for people mostly via multilateral organisations and NGOs.[32]

Notwithstanding the fact that a new overarching policy for development cooperation was presented in 2013 ('A World to Gain – A new agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment'), the SRoL spearhead still guides Dutch efforts in the field of peace and development.

3.2. Rationale and expectations of UN as channel for Security & Rule of Law policy

3.2.1. Changing agenda for multilateral development cooperation

Following the introduction of the new outlines for Dutch development cooperation in 2011, the Dutch Government send a letter to Parliament to outline its policy for multilateral development cooperation, stating that the Netherlands will continue to strive for a strong and effective network of multilateral

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[28] See: https://www.newdeal4peace.org/ and www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/

[29] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Brief over het speerpunt veiligheid en rechtsorde*, The Hague, 2012, p.5 (EFV-190/2012)

[30] Ibid, p.9

[31] Ibid, p.9

[32] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Jaarverslag Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking 2015*, The Hague, 2016 (kamerstuk 34 475 XVII, nr. 1)

organisations, able to deal with 21st century challenges.[33] Multilateral organisations are on the one hand perceived as norm-setting entities in terms of maintaining the international order and pursuing global development, human rights and stability, and on the other as invaluable channels for Dutch development cooperation. Given the limited capacity of Dutch bilateral development cooperation, complementary multilateral engagement is considered indispensable – from a coordination and coherence perspective, as well as from a leverage- and impact perspective.[34]

The letter states that the Netherlands traditionally has a strong position within multilateral organisations, and that it wants to use that position to contribute to necessary reforms and strengthening of the coherence of the system – something that requires a substantial presence in the main organisations, both substantially and financially.[35] However, the engagement vis-à-vis multilateral organisations will be prioritised towards those organisations that are both relevant for the prioritiy areas identified for Dutch development cooperation, and that score well on effectiveness and efficiency – in light of the budget cuts and the need to show results (value for money).[36] Reference is made here to those organisations that serve not only a thematically relevant function, but that also serve a system-wide function as key pillars of the international development system – e.g. the World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF. In order for these organisations to fulfil their system-wide function they require general – or non-earmarked – contributions. The policy not to earmark these contributions is said to be maintained, unless Dutch interests require differently.[37]

However, the 2013 letter to Parliament presenting the multilateral scorecards[38] makes clear that many multilateral organisations are confronted with declining general, non-earmarked contributions, as a result of cut backs in development aid due to the global financial crisis, and the subsequent need to show value for money (which results in a partial compensation in the form of increasing earmarked contributions). The Netherlands follows suit in this regard, by cutting back on its contributions to multilateral organisations, and by increasingly linking the remaining financial contributions to the specific policy spearheads (e.g. the contribution to UNDP will be increasingly focused on security and rule of law issues).[39] As stated in the 2013 policy brief 'A World to Gain – A new agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment', Dutch support for the multilateral channel will be cut over the period 2013-2017, and support will be provided specifically to "those international organisations that are active in fields in which Dutch companies, institutions and civil society organisations rank among the best in the world". The document goes on to state that as the Netherlands attaches great value to the multilateral system, it will work to increase its efficiency and effectiveness, but that in return international organisations must generate added value for Dutch policy.[40]

3.2.2. UN as channel for Security & Rule of Law policy

With regard to the field of peace, security and development, the Netherlands has been consistent in expecting the UN to function as a global leader and coordinator. The UN is perceived to have a legitimate mandate to lead and coordinate not only international humanitarian interventions, but also the provision of shelter for refugees, as well as peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. This legitimacy stems from the fact that almost every country in the world is a member of the organisation, and the fact that all members have a voice – and as such ownership – in the UN's

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[33] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Brief inzake Multilateraal OS-beleid*, The Hague, 2011, p.2 (kamerstuk 32 605, no.53)
[34] Ibid, p.2
[35] Ibid, p.2
[36] Ibid, p.3
[37] Ibid, p.4
[38] In order to support the decision-making process on the actual Dutch contributions to specific multilateral organisations, since 2011 scorecards are developed every two years for all multilateral organisations that receive voluntary ODA contributions. The scorecards are developed on the basis of accountants- and evaluation reports, comparable (recent) assessments made by like-minded donor countries like the UK, Australia and the donor group MOPAN (Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network), and the assessments of relevant MFA staff.
[39] See: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2013/07/04/kamerbrief-over-scorecards-internationale-organisaties - Annex *Brief beoordeling internationale organisaties*, p.2
[40] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *A World to Gain: A new agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment*, The Hague, 2013, p. 57

activities.[41] The Netherlands would like to see a strong UN, setting and upholding international standards and agreements in the field of peace, security and development, and operating in a flexible manner in the first post-conflict phase.[42]

The Netherlands has however also been consistent in voicing its concern about the fact that the UN has not managed to live up to this role due to it being under-equipped in terms of finance, staff for its field offices and cooperation between its organisations (referencing the UN's own assessment reports on this, as described under 2.2 above). The 2008-2011 fragile states strategy for instance, states that one of the key points of attention for Dutch diplomatic and financial contribution to the various UN organisations will be to encourage the UN as a whole to work together more closely, for example in the form of 'One UN' pilots and joint (or integrated) missions. Also, the strategy makes clear that the Netherlands aims to strengthen coordination between the various UN entities involved in the (post-)conflict phase (i.e. DPA, the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), DPKO, the PBC and UNDP), and calls for more clarity in terms of a division of labour between these entities (and other multilateral organisations).[43]

The 2012 SRoL spearhead letter to Parliament reiterates that the Netherlands aims to support the most relevant organisations and funds in the field of peace, security and development – identifying specifically DPKO, DPA, UNDP and the PBF – through policy influencing, limited financial contributions and personnel support, from an overarching objective to strengthen UN coherence. Concrete results that the Netherlands aims to achieve within the UN are:

- Implementation of an integrated approach in the fields of peacekeeping and peacebuilding;
- More UN capacity in the field of mediation, conflict prevention, security sector reform and the strengthening of the rule of law;
- Increased consensus within the UN system on the goals established under the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, and on the implementation of the principles identified in the New Deal (i.e. pursuing more political ways of working to address the root causes of conflict and fragility, and channelling investments in fragile states in line with basic but adapted aid effectiveness principles) by UN organisations. These points will be integrated in the discussions around the post-2015 development agenda (follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals);
- Strengthening the specific role education plays in peacebuilding by supporting a new UNICEF programme in which education is being used to enhance human security and social cohesion in 10 conflict countries (in line with a commitment made to the Senate on this issue).[44]

These results are in line with results identified under consecutive policies on Dutch engagement in the field of peace, security and development – perhaps with exception of the latter. However, interviewees explained that the while the decision to support the UNICEF programme was initially mostly driven by a political deal struck with Parliament[45] and may appear to be out of sink with existing policies, it was in practice turned into an opportunity to contribute to the longstanding objective to strengthen UN capacity and coherence in the field of peacebuilding by stimulating a traditionally development oriented organisation like UNICEF to apply a conflict-sensitive lens in (part of) its programming (see Box 3).

> **Box 3 – UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme**
>
> UNICEF's most recent Strategic Plan gives special emphasis on equity and resilience, with one of the programmatic outputs focusing on "building the evidence base on education and peacebuilding and on the mechanisms through which education contributes to resilience", and

[41] See: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2015/06/19/kamerbrief-over-multilaterale-scorekaarten - *Kamerbrief over multilaterale scorekaarten*, p.1

[42] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Brief over het speerpunt veiligheid en rechtsorde*, The Hague, 2012, p.11 (EFV-190/2012)

[43] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Security and Development in Fragile States; The Netherlands' strategy 2008-2011*, The Hague, 2008, p.41-43

[44] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Brief over het speerpunt veiligheid en rechtsorde*, The Hague, 2012, p.11 (EFV-190/2012)

[45] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Toezegging Onderwijs in fragiele staten*, Verhandeling Eerste Kamer (kamerstuk 32.500 V, T01349)

on using this knowledge to support countries in assessing and managing risks to ensure sustainability of achievements for girls and boys.

To that end, UNICEF received funding from the Government of the Netherlands to implement a programme that provided an opportunity to test whether a social service such as education can be successfully harnessed to promote peace. The aim of the programme Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (2012-2015) was to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in 14 countries recovering from conflict or at risk of falling into conflict.

The extent to which social services (in this case education) can be used for peacebuilding is an area of work that has not previously been tested at scale in UNICEF. Hence PBEA represented an unprecedented effort for UNICEF to go beyond conventional development and humanitarian approaches to try out solutions that interrupt cycles of violence by addressing the root causes of conflict. PBEA opened up the space for learning about peacebuilding processes, and required UNICEF staff to overcome conceptual and practical challenges.

Source: Evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), November 2015

3.2.3. UNDP as key channel for Security & Rule of Law policy

Both in the 2008-2011 fragile states strategy and in the 2012 SRoL spearhead policy, UNDP is identified as a lead UN entity in the field of peace, security and development (next to DPA and DPKO). Where OCHA is perceived to have a clear leading role during the humanitarian phase, and the World Bank and regional banks are considered to be the obvious choices to take charge once a stable development process has been reached, the Netherlands feels that UNDP is the best agency to head the interim phase. UNDP is perceived to fulfil an important system-wide coordinating function in terms of strengthening UN coherence in the field of peace, security and development.[46]

In addition to that, UNDP is perceived to be one of the main implementing partners in this field. UNDP is actively involved in both the implementation and coordination of peace, security and development processes in over 60 countries, and has a strong on the ground presence in these countries. The 2011, 2013 and 2015 scorecards all state that the fact that many (interim) governments trust UNDP – due to its impartiality, its relevant expertise and its worldwide development mandate – makes that the organisation can fulfil a unique role in support of statebuilding processes and the strengthening of state-society relations (building the capacity of civil society and government institutions alike), the reform of justice and police sectors, and the demobilisation of combattants. According to the scorecards, UNDP plays a key role in peacebuilding processes by actively contributing to capacity building, conflict prevention, rule of law, justice, security, livelihoods and gender. Given the fact that the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) has for a long time been the main UNDP entity responsible for the organisation's activities in this field, the Netherlands has been a strong supporter of the Bureau since its establishment in 2001. Reference is also made to UNDP's active involvement in the New Deal process (where in fact UNDP co-chaired the Busan High Level Working Group together with the Netherlands), as well as in the development of the post-2015 agenda (and specifically the development of SDG 16).[47]

UNDP works solely on the basis of voluntary contributions, and the Netherlands has been one of the key donors of the organisation for many years. In fact, in 2010 the Netherlands was UNDP's number one donor in terms of core contributions (non-earmarked). However, in the period 2011-2015, the Dutch core contributions decreased substantially – in line with the overall budget decline and the

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[46] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Security and Development in Fragile States; The Netherlands' strategy 2008-2011*, The Hague, 2008, p.41-43
[47] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* – See: 2011: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/vergaderstukken/2011/10/07/bijl-3-samenvattingen-scorecards-multilaterale-organisaties-2011/bijlage-3-samenvattingen-scorecards-multilaterale-organisaties-2011.pdf / 2013: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2013/07/04/kamerbrief-over-scorecards-internationale-organisaties / 2015: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2015/06/19/kamerbrief-over-multilaterale-scorekaarten

policy to cut back on non-earmarked contributions. In 2011, the Dutch core contribution to UNDP amounted to EUR 66,3 million, whereas in 2012 and 2013 the contribution amounted to EUR 57,5 million annually. The overall budget cuts in the field of development cooperation led to a further decrease in the core contributions to EUR 27,5 million in 2014, and EUR 17,5 million in 2015. Partly this decline was compensated by an increase in earmarked contributions, which were mostly provided under the security and rule of law spearhead.[48] Further information on this is presented in 3.3 below.

Overall still, UNDP has been confronted with declining general, non-earmarked contributions since 2009 (in the period 2011-2015, on average 20-25% of the contributions received by UNDP were non-earmarked[49]), leaving the organisation highly dependent on non-core, earmarked contributions and as such limiting the ability of UNDP to strategically steer its own engagement and activities, and contributing to the fragmentation of efforts. This is actually a contentious point, as many donors – including the Netherlands – have for a long time been calling attention to the fact that UNDP's result areas were not sharply defined. While this had the advantage that it left a lot of room for a demand driven approach (strengthening buy-in and ownership amongst recipient governments), the disadvantage has been that UNDP's efforts subsequently were fragmented and dispersed, and lacked focus. And hence donors have been calling for a sharper definition of result areas.[50] Yet at the same time, from UNDP's perspective, the organisation's ability to focus and prioritise has been undermined by the fact that donors increasingly earmark their contributions for specific countries and issues, and are amongst themselves not coordinated in this regard – resulting in the fact that the organisation is being pulled into too many different directions. One could argue that it's UNDP's responsibility to say 'no' to contributions that lead to further fragmentation of its activities, but this is a difficult thing to do (say 'no' to money coming in) for an organisation that is confronted with a sharp decline in its income to begin with. And also, UNDP has over time build the reputation of being the 'agency of last resort' – meaning that UNDP sees itself confronted with requests to take on certain tasks that other UN entities decline to take on, or for which donors see no other implementing partner (specifically in conflict-affected settings, where the options are limited due to fiduciary rules and regulations set by national parliaments, and security constraints). Still, interviewees underline that UNDP Country Offices have a tendency to say 'yes' first, and think about whether or not they actually have the capacity and expertise to deliver later (see also chapter 4 below).

Acknowledging the need to do better, and to be more focused in its operations, UNDP has gone through a reorganisation process over the last couple of years in order to make UNDP more effective and efficient, and able to respond to the post-2015 agenda in a more strategic manner. Key elements in this process have been the reallocation of staff from Headquarters in New York to regional hubs and country offices, the restructuring of departments in order to diminish overlap, and the sharpening of the results identified in the organisation's strategic plan for 2014-2017.[51] In terms of peace, security and development, one key outcome of this reorganisation has been the merger of BCPR with the Bureau for Development Policy into the newly established Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS). The idea is that BPPS will bring together UNDP's policy work across all regions and all levels, and ensures that risk awareness and crisis prevention and recovery are fully integrated into the development work of the organisation.[52]

In conjunction with this reorganisation, UNDP has also set goals for itself in terms of finding a better balance between core and non-core contributions, by adjusting the financial rules and regulations in order to make sure that earmarked contributions still contribute to covering part of the organisation's overhead costs, and by striving to get to a 50-50 balance between earmarked contributions on the one hand, and core and soft earmarked contributions on the other.[53] This would leave UNDP with 50% flexible resources critical for UNDP's ability to operate strategically, prioritise support to

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[48] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecard 2015*, The Hague, 2015
[49] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47)
[50] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecard 2011*, The Hague, 2011
[51] UNDP, *Changing with the World – UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, New York, 2013, p.13
[52] See: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/corporate/bpps-org-chart.html
[53] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecard 2015*, The Hague, 2015

countries most in need, ensure quality programming, provide substantial support to UN system coordination, and respond quickly to crises and emerging needs and opportunities.[54]

3.3. Expenditures and management of funds under Security & Rule of Law spearhead

3.3.1. Security & Rule of Law expenditures via UN

The expenditures under the SRoL spearhead are part of article 4 of the Dutch Trade and Development Cooperation budget.[55] In the period 2012-2015, a total of EUR 998 million was spent under this article. In addition in the period 2013-2015 EUR 165,6 million was spent from the Stabilization Fund which is administered by the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Of the the total expenditures on SRoL of the Dutch Trade and Development Cooperation budget, EUR 459 million, or 46% of, was channelled through multilateral organisations. Of this, EUR 271 million (27% of the total expenditures) was channelled through the UN, which comes down to 59% of the total expenditures channelled through multilateral organisations (see table 1). In other words, the UN is the main (multilateral) recipient of Dutch SRoL funding.

Table 1 – SRoL expenditures Dutch Trade and Development Cooperation budget **per channel 2012-2015 (in mln. EUR)**

Channel	Expenditures	Percentage
UN	271	27,1
Other multilateral	188	18,8
Government	152	15,2
NGOs	345	34,5
Public-Private Partnerships	6	0,6
Research institutes	37	3,8
Total	*998*	*100%*

Source: Piramide/Dashboard minbuza. **Exclusive the expenditues of the Stabilization Fund**

When broken down into specific UN entities, UNDP is the main recipient of the total UN expenditures (44% - EUR 120 million[56]), followed by UNICEF (34% - EUR 91 million). The remaining contributions are divided over 16 UN organisations and entities, like World Food Programme (WFP), UN Women and UN Habitat.

What is interesting is that out of the three UN organisations specifically identified in the SRoL policy as most relevant for the implementation of the spearhead – UNDP, DPKO and DPA – the two latter organisations receive virtually no funding under the SRoL budget line. This is easily explained by the fact that DPKO and DPA are UN Secretariat entities and as such, are funded through the UN regular budget. They in other words receive funding through the assessed contributions of UN Member States – including the Netherlands. This means that it is difficult for the Netherlands to influence the decision-making in these organisations through financial means. The main discussions on how and where to spend the assessed contributions take place in the so-called Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly.[57] in which the Netherlands operates as part of the EU block – and hence has limited direct influence. The Netherlands could opt to create more possibilities for exerting direct influence by providing voluntary contributions for specific activities. In the period 2012-2015, the Netherlands chose to do so in a very limited way for DPA, by providing a small voluntary contribution to the organisation's mediation support activities (in part by funding the salary of a Dutch expert who was part of the DPA Standby Team). For DPKO, the Netherlands opted to exert influence in an innovative manner by lobbying for and contributing to the Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections – a business improvement initiative initiated to improve the coherence and quality of the UN's rule of law support to crisis- and conflict-affected countries, and to create more integrated ways

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[54] See: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2016/01/25/helen-clark-statement-to-the-first-regular-session-of-the-undp-executive-board.html

[55] This overview does not take into account expenditures that are listed on the Foreign Affairs budget, which includes expenditures under the Stability Fund.

[56] Includes EUR 19,96 million of contributions to trust funds managed by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (see 3.2.5 below).

[57] See: www.un.org/en/ga/fifth/about.shtml

of working among two key UN actors in this field: UNDP and DPKO.[58] The Dutch contributions to this joint venture were channelled through UNDP, but served the purpose of influencing both organisations.

When breaking the SRoL expenditures to the UN down by budget line, the bulk of the funding has gone to the policy objectives a functioning legal order (EUR 104 million or 38% of total UN S&RoL expenditures); security for people (EUR 107 or XX%); and employment and basic services (EUR 83 million or XX%). What is interesting about the latter is that this money was spent entirely on only one specific programme: the UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme. What is also interesting is that, when comparing the UN expenditures with the overall SRoL expenditures in the same period (with EUR 318,2 million for a functional legal order; EUR 223 million for security for people; and 199,2 million for employment and basic services), the UN expenditures on employment and basic services cover 46% of the total expenditures – while the policy documents state that support to this objective will be mostly channelled via NGOs (through subsidy tenders) and Multi-Donor Trust Funds.[59]

For the other two policy objectives – inclusive political processes and a legitimate, capable government – the policy documents state that the Netherlands prefers to use NGOs to channel its support.[60] However, when looking at the actual expenditures, it becomes clear that the UN is in fact a main channel for Dutch expenditures in these fields – specifically under the decentralised budget line for inclusive political processes (with 39% of total expenditures being channelled through the UN). Most of these expenditures are channelled through UNDP.

3.3.2. Management of Security & Rule of Law expenditures via UN

The main responsibility for implementing the SRoL policy, and managing the accompanying budget lines, lies with the Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH). In this, they work together closely with the Security Policy Department (DVB) when it comes to Dutch engagement in crisis management operations and/or countries where peacekeeping missions are active. Regional departments coordinate the diplomatic efforts in relevant regions and countries, whereas the Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department (DMM) and the Social Development Department (DSO) are involved in the decision-making and coordination when it comes to the engagement vis-à-vis the UN. Internal analyses find that coordination requires a lot of time.[61] Interviewees point in this regard to the lack of an overarching strategy for Dutch engagement vis-à-vis the UN, and the fact that this engagement is driven by various thematic agendas/spearheads (including Security & Rule of Law) that are not prioritised against each other.

Table 2 – SRoL expenditures to UN, top 14 activities 2012-2015 (in mln. EUR) (including Stabilization Fund)

	Activity	Selected for review	Organisation	Country	Total 2012-2015
1	Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme	x	UNICEF	Worldwide	83,0
2	Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan 2014-2015	x	UNDP	Afghanistan	25,0
3	UNDP/BCPR 2012-2015 (Global Rule of Law Programme)	x	UNDP	Worldwide	24,0
4	Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) Thematic Trust Fund (BCPR)	x	UNDP	Worldwide	16,0
5	Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan 2013	x	UNDP	Afghanistan	10,0
6	UN Peacebuilding Fund 2012-2015	x	UNDP	Worldwide	10,0
7	National Area Based Development Programme	x	UNDP	Afghanistan	9,8
8	Sistema de la Integración Centroamericano (SICA)		UNFPA	Central America	9,5
9	WFP Food for Assets		WFP	Afghanistan	9,2

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[58] Van de Goor, L. et al., *Independent Progress Review on the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections*, New York, 2014, p.9

[59] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Jaarverslag Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking 2015*, The Hague, 2016 (kamerstuk 34 475 XVII, nr. 1)

[60] Ibid.

[61] See for example the concept proposal '3D Task Force Implementation Stability Fund and BIV' [in Dutch] of 8 January 2014 [Deelproject 3.02.03]

10	Strategic Stabilization East DR Congo		UNDP	DR Congo	9,0
11	Access to Justice and Rule of Law	x	UNDP	South Sudan	8,0
12	Elect II		UNDP	Afghanistan	7,7
13	Community Policing Reform		IOM	Indonesia	5,1
14	Democratic Governance		UNDP	Kenya	5,1

Source: Piramide/Dashboard minbuza

When broken down per activity in the MFA's database, it becomes clear that the top 14 UN activities in terms of funds received (out of a, so 14%) covers 86% of the total SRoL expenditures to the UN (see table 2). The bulk of these activities are either multi-annual thematic programmes, or contributions to trust funds. The remaining 14% of the budget is allocated over 89 activities. This means that the Ministry is managing a large number of relatively small contracts. This raises questions about the efficiency of the portfolio management. Interviewees indicate that a certain level of ad hoc decision-making and pragmatism is part and parcel of engaging in fragile and conflict-affected settings – where opportunities have to be grasped as they arise. However, they also indicate that the lack of an overarching strategy vis-à-vis UN engagement in the field of SRoL allows for fragmentation, which undermines potential impact and in fact further burdens the already limited project management capacity within the MFA.

3.3.3. Core contributions, earmarking and trust funds

The issue of core contributions requires special attention in this review. As stated before, the 2013 overarching policy for development cooperation ('A World to Gain – A new agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment') makes clear that due to budgetary restrictions, Dutch support for multilateral organisations will be cut.[62] The cuts refer specifically to the general – or core – contributions made to these organisations. The shift away from core contributions can be explained by the increasing pressure on the development cooperation budget (due to budget cuts and a declining support for development cooperation amongst the Dutch general public – and by extension, in Parliament), and the subsequent need to show results. When providing core funding, it is not possible to 'follow the Dutch Euro' and to subsequently pinpoint concrete and direct results achieved by Dutch contributions (the attribution issue). Hence, the Dutch government – similar to many other donor governments – increasingly earmarks its contributions, to make sure that its money is spend on thematic issues or countries/regions that are on its own agenda. What is interesting is that this shift in policy did not lead to an adjustment of the policy elements focused on strengthening UN coherence and effectiveness – even though some would argue that by diminishing the core contributions, donors stimulate competition and fragmentation amongst UN agencies, and hence undermine collaboration and coordination.

One way to overcome this is by stimulating collaboration through earmarked contributions. The Netherlands for instance aimed to strengthen coherence between UNDP and DPKO through the above-mentioned Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections. This has been relatively successful: after its start in 2012, the mid-term review finds that the programme is off to a promising start, and that eventual success depends on further improvement on organisational and management issues (i.e. streamlining operational procedures).[63] Also, the support to the UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme intended to stimulate UNICEF to work together more closely with 'traditional' peacebuilding organisations like UNDP. Unfortunately, the programme did not manage to create strategic partnerships in the area of education and peacebuilding and to contribute to greater UN coherence in this field.[64]

Also, when looking at the SRoL UN expenditures in the period 2012-2015, one can distinguish between 'soft' earmarking and 'hard' earmarking. Certain contributions, while not administered as such, were intended to be used as (semi) core contributions (e.g. the contribution to the CPR

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[62] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *A World to Gain – A new agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment*, The Hague, 2013, p. 57
[63] Van de Goor, L. et al., *Independent Progress Review on the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections*, New York, 2014, p.9
[64] UNICEF Evaluation Office, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) – Outcome evaluation*, 2015, pp. x-xv

Thematic Trust Fund of UNDP/BCPR, which basically allowed BCPR to undertake activities as it saw fit). The bulk of these soft or non-earmarked contributions are targeting one specific organisation (like UNDP or UNMAS); only the contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund can be seen as a UN system-wide non-earmarked contribution. The expenditures that are earmarked are mostly earmarked both for a specific country/region *and* a specific thematic issue (like Rule of Law in Afghanistan, or community security in South Sudan).

When it comes to trust funds, the Netherlands underlines the advantages of the multilateral channel in terms of benefits of scale and coordination, political weight, a better guarantee of long-term structural commitment and a spreading of costs and risks. The instrument of trust funds (or pooled funds) has been widely acknowledged as an instrument that can provide similar advantages. As stated in the OECD/DAC Guidance on International Support to Post-Conflict Transition: "[Pooled funds] offer a number of advantages. For example, they promote a more programmatic approach to service delivery, and can increase national ownership and political visibility, while at the same time giving international actors political leverage in discussions with partner governments. They also spread donors' exposure to political and reputational risk by sharing the burdens of control and oversight. Finally, pooled funds can reduce transaction costs for both donor and partner countries by transferring the costs of coordinating and managing funds to a fund administrator."[65] As trust funds are usually administered by multilateral organisations, they are perceived as an instrument in support of the perceived advantages of the multilateral channel.

Interviewees indicate that the Netherlands is perceived to be one of the leading donors in support of trust funds – mostly driven by the thought-leadership provided on the concept and the place of pooled funding in the toolbox of international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected settings, specifically in the period 2008-2012. When looking at the numbers for the period 2012-2015, it becomes clear that the Netherlands channelled 17% of its SRoL expenditures to the UN through so-called multi-partner or multi-donor trust funds. When checking these trust fund expenditures against the specific SRoL budget lines it becomes clear that the bulk of UN trust fund expenditures targets the human security objective – specifically through contributions to the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan and the UN Peacebuilding Fund. What is interesting is that for the policy objective for which the policy documents specifically refer to trust funds as a preferred channel – i.e. employment and basic services – no actual expenditures have been channelled through a UN trust fund in the period 2012-2015. The bulk of the trust fund expenditures was spend on a country-specific trust fund (like the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan). Four global trust funds were supported: the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the UNDP CPR Thematic Trust Fund, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the UN Trust Fund Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR).

EUR 75,81 million of the Dutch SRoL contributions to trust funds is administered by UNDP, of which EUR 55,85 million by UNDP itself (like the SSRF South Sudan), and EUR 19,96 million by the Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office (like the UN Peacebuilding Fund).[66] The MPTF Office services the entire UN system in support of UN coherence and development effectiveness, by assisting the UN system and national governments in establishing and administering pooled financing mechanisms – multi-donor trust funds and joint programmes alike. Although housed within UNDP, the MPTF Office is firewalled from all UN implementing entities, UNDP included.[67] Contributions to funds administered by the MPTF Office can be seen as 'replacements' of system-wide funding, in the sense that even though the money is channelled through one specific UN organisation as administrator, multiple UN entities can benefit from the money as implementers.

The two biggest contributions to trust funds that are administered by UNDP itself are the CPR Thematic Trust Fund (EUR 16 million) and the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan (EUR 35 million). Both funds are in principle only accessible by UNDP.

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[65] OECD, *International Support to Post-Conflict Transition; Rethinking Policy, Changing Practice*, Paris, 2012, p.48

[66] The Netherlands contributed to five MPTF-O administered trust funds: the Yemen National Dialogue and Constitutional Reform Trust Fund; the Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia; the Democratic Republic of the Congo Stabilization Coherence Fund (ISSSS); the South Sudan Recovery Fund; and the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

[67] See: http://mptf.undp.org/overview/office/why

3.4. Other Dutch policy engagement vis-à-vis the UN under the Security & Rule of Law policy

The Netherlands' SRoL engagement vis-à-vis the UN is not limited to financial contributions. In order to achieve the overarching objective of strengthening UN coherence – and through that UN effectiveness – in the field of peace, security and development, the Netherlands has deployed numerous diplomatic and political efforts, both at Headquarters and at field level.

Through its membership of the Executive Board of UNDP for instance, the Netherlands has aimed to guide and influence UNDP in order to fulfil its system-wide coordinating function and to be an effective implementing partner. As a member of the West European and Others Group (WEOG), the Netherlands sits on the Board for 12 out of a period of 15 years (due to the rotational scheme agreed upon in the Group) – including in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The Netherlands coordinates its input in the Board in the WEOG, which includes key like-minded countries like the United Kingdom, the Nordic countries, Australia, Canada and the United States (as observer).

The Executive Board discusses UNDP management, strategy and thematic issues, and is the main platform to hold UNDP accountable for its actions. The strategic guidance provided by the Board is undermined by the fact that the Board is comprised of donor countries and developing countries, who do not always agree on strategic and operational priorities for UNDP. One concrete example in this regard is the discussion around the organisation's results framework. Many donor countries – including the Netherlands – felt that the result areas identified in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 were not sharply enough defined. While this had the advantage that it left room for a demand driven approach (strengthening buy-in and ownership amongst recipient governments – including members of the UNDP Executive Board), the disadvantage has been that UNDP's efforts subsequently were fragmented and dispersed (in a time where resources were decreasing in any case), and lacked focus and guidance from central management. Upon the initiative of a number of donor countries – including the Netherlands – the Executive Board eventually requested UNDP to sharpen its result framework for the next Strategic Plan[68]; something that was indeed done in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Reviews find that UNDP management could be more pro-active in these types of cases and that the UNDP Administrator – seen from the important systemic function of UNDP – could present stronger leadership.[69]

The Netherlands has in this case been successful in its policy influencing vis-à-vis UNDP. However, one other key issue that has been on the Board's agenda in the period 2012-2015 is UNDP's reorganisation process (as described in 3.2.3 above). Seen from a Security & Rule of Law perspective, one of the main consequences of this reorganisation has been the disappearance of BCPR as a separate entity in UNDP, by merging it with the Bureau for Development Policy into the newly established Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS). Despite the fact that the Netherlands was sceptical about the merger and the potential loss of capacity and expertise relevant to the Security & Rule of Law spearhead, it was decided to give UNDP the benefit of the doubt as the merger was considered to be an internal UNDP management issue. The Netherlands underlined that it is UNDP's responsibility to maintain its ability to effectively deliver services – both in the field and towards the donors, and that if it fails to do so, that may have consequences for the Netherlands' financial contribution to UNDP.[70] Interestingly enough, the UNDP scorecards for 2013 and 2015 do not refer to this element of the reorganisation. Interviewees in New York feel that this is an example of the Netherlands not following through on its own innovative and catalytic efforts, being one of the founding donors and key contributors to BCPR. While the concrete results of the restructuring are only now becoming clear, it is widely agreed that the loss of this entity within the largest UN organisation active in the field of peace, security and development undermines the possibilities of coming to an integrated UN approach on this issue. And it is certainly seen to undermine UNDP's own effectiveness and efficiency in this field, as BCPR provided much needed expertise and surge

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[68] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecard 2011*, The Hague, 2011

[69] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47) / UK Department for International Development, *Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, London, 2013 (see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multilateral-aid-review-assessment-of-united-nations-development-programme-undp)

[70] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Internal Assessment Memo CPR-TTF 2014-2015*

capacity to UNDP Country Offices. The fact that as one of the top 10 contributors to UNDP, the Netherlands has not managed – in cooperation with other leading donors to UNDP – to influence the reorganisation process is seen by interviewees as an example of where the Netherlands has missed an opportunity to maintain its moral/political leadership position in the field of peace, security and development.

The Netherlands has also been actively involved in the discussions surrounding the development of the post-2015 agenda – resulting in the agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015. Specifically relevant from the Security & Rule of Law perspective is the process of coming to SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. The Netherlands for instance co-hosted a High Level Meeting on Rule of Law during the General Assembly meeting of 2012, which lay part of the foundations of coming to SDG 16. Also, the Netherlands was one of the lead countries in the Open Working Group on the SDGs, through which it aimed to create 'entry-points' for the political and development aspects of e.g. statebuilding processes.

Another way in which the Netherlands – or any other Member State – can influence UN decision-making and actions (and as such, contribute to the strengthening of coherence and effectiveness) is through the membership of specific decision-making bodies or by being appointed strategic positions in the system. The Netherlands for instance has held a seat in the UN Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group since 2012, and has financially supported a staff position in DPA's Standby Team. Also, the Netherlands has on multiple occasions provided expertise to help further UN processes. One example of this is for instance when the Netherlands paid for the costs of a research project looking into the different roles and responsibilities of UN entities in the process of UN mission (peacekeeping and special political missions) draw-downs or withdrawals, in order to mitigate risks of regression after a mission has withdrawn.[71] This study served as the basis for a series of pilot projects on this issue, currently being conducted by UNDP, DPA and DPKO and financially supported by Sweden. In fact, this example is in line with how the Netherlands likes to perceive itself: as an innovative donor to the UN, with a proven track record on supporting new initiatives like the ONE UN agenda; the foundation of BCPR and its CPR-TTF; the development of UNICEF's Learning for Peace Programme; and the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture – being one of the first contributors to the PBF and being the first Chair of the PBC Country-specific Configuration on Sierra Leone. However, while the catalytic role of the Netherlands is acknowledged and appreciated, questions can be posed in terms of the sustainability and impact of Dutch efforts if there is no follow-through.

In the period 2012-2015, the Netherlands also put forward its candidature for two major positions in the UN system: a seat in the Human Rights Council (for the period 2015-2017 – which the Netherlands won) and a seat in the Security Council (for the period 2017-2018 – which the Netherlands eventually ended up sharing with Italy). The campaigns for these positions were both labour- and time-intensive, and – according to interviewees – took up quite some capacity both in The Hague and in New York; capacity that was decreasing in any case, due to the occurrence of the financial crisis and the subsequent budget cuts. In addition, the Dutch expectations of and contributions to the UN have for the last couple of years been driven by thematic agendas as a result of the shift towards a thematic policy approach in 2011/2012, lacking an overarching strategic guidance. Interviewees state that this resulted in the Netherlands trying to cover a wide variety of issues with less people – and capacity and resources being spread too thin, and in an ad hoc and opportunistic manner. While the focus on Rule of Law has remained strong, the Dutch contributions to (and The Hague engagement with) for instance the UN Peacebuilding Fund have fluctuated and have become less secure. Also, interviewees in New York state that there has been no clear guidance from The Hague on the 2015 review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, and the subsequent 'sustaining peace' resolutions. This is perceived by NY stakeholders as a missed opportunity on the side of the Netherlands, and contributes to the perception of the Netherlands loosing its leadership position in the field of peace, security and development.

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[71] Price, M. and L. Titulaer, *Beyond Transitions: UNDP's role before, during and after UN Mission withdrawal*, The Hague, 2013

4. Assessment of UN as implementing partner for Security & Rule of Law policy

4.1. Introduction

The Netherlands has identified UNDP, DPKO and DPA as the most important and relevant organisations to contribute to the SRoL policy objectives, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) as the most relevant fund in this respect. When looking at the actual expenditures under the SRoL spearhead, the bulk of the money has been spend on UNDP activities, the PBF and UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme. Hence, the assessment of the UN as implementing partner for the Dutch SRoL policy will focus specifically on these activities.

To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN's activities in the SRoL field, a review has been conducted of existing evaluations and studies. For UNDP, the evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries in the context of UN peace operations was a key source of information. This evaluation is based on 9 primary case studies (Burundi, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic Congo, Haïti, Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste), and 11 secundary case studies (Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Nepal, Uganda, Palestinian Territories, Sierra Leone and Chad).[72] In addition, specific UNDP project/programme and country evaluations were taken into account (see Annex 2 for an overview). In addition, a review of the Peacebuilding Fund and of the UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme provided valuable information. However, a number of caveats apply in relation to these reports. First, the political and security contexts in which the activities are being implemented lead to serious constraints in terms of achieving results and/or making these results 'visible'. The diversity of interventions furthermore makes it difficult to come to general conclusions that apply across the board. Also, the evaluations and studies make clear that there is little 'hard evidence' on how exactly specific interventions contribute to the success or failure of a peace and stabilisation process – attribution is problematic. In addition, the objectives and so-called Theories of Change of the interventions are generally not very realistic – as was also noted by the Advisory Group of Experts that conducted the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. Interventions are based on the assumption that they are part of a linear process (i.e. peace agreement – national dialogue with focus on constitution building and statebuilding – elections and subsequent capacity building), which has proven non-existent in practice.[73] The literature review does provide insights into how much is actually known about the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions, but also makes clear that there is a shortage of research conducted at field level that takes the specific context as a starting point to assess interventions (rather than assessing these against irrealistic objectives and Theories of Change).

4.2. Effectiveness of UN Security & Rule of Law activities

4.2.1. UNDP

In general, evaluations mark UNDP's effectiveness in the field of peace, security and development as mostly good – with room for improvement specifically in terms of getting to longer-term and higher-level impact (i.e. beyond project-related results).[74] UNDP is considered to be one of very few international organisations able to operate 'at scale' across multiple programme areas, before, during and after the outbreak of conflict. UNDP's comparative advantages are perceived to be its on-the-ground presence; close partnership with government; role as a bridge between humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts; and role in governance and institutional change in the management of conflict.[75]

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[72] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.viii

[73] Advisory Group of Experts, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, New York, 2015

[74] Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), *UNDP 2012 & UNDP 2015-2016* – see: http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/?hf=10&b=0&r=%2Bf%2Fmopan_organisation_en%2Fundp&l=en&sl=mopan_v2_assessment_package&s=score

[75] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.x and p.xvi

The evaluations and studies reviewed echo a general positive assessment of the effectiveness of UNDP projects and programmes in fragile and conflict-affected settings, though this judgement is mostly based on output assessments (see Box 4).

Box 4. Illustrative findings of UNDP project/programme evaluations on effectiveness

- The annual reports of the **Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA)** show progress in terms of achieving the main objectives of the Fund. In 2014 for instance, LOTFA managed to pay the salaries Afghanistan's approximately 163,056 national police and corrections officers in a timely manner (i.e. within the prescribed 10-15 days from the start of the month). Given the complex sequence of procedures and administrative steps, the process' interdependence with partner ministries and banks, and the different payment modalities required to actually deliver the monthly salary, this was both a positive result and an improvement over previous years.[76] At the same time, attention is drawn to the fact that while timely payment of uniformed police and corrections officers accounts for the lion's share of LOTFA's budget and is crucial to sustaining a professional security apparatus, these core functions of government must eventually be performed independently without operational help from the international community. The sustainability of the payroll management will be affected, in particular in the longer term, by weaknesses in the Government and public administration. Hence, in the next phase of the LOTFA programming, more attention should be paid to integrating capacity building components into the Fund's activities.[77]

- The evaluation of the **South Sudan Reconstruction Fund** (SSRF) finds that the Fund was effective in terms of achieving it results in relation to outputs, and contributed positively to its desired outcome. The evaluation states that it can be reasonably concluded that the SSRF interventions have contributed and may continue to contribute to reducing inter-communal conflicts, displacement and deaths. Also, the evaluation comes to a mostly positive assessment of the activities' contribution to improved access to basic service delivery, for instance through local health clinics.[78] However, during the life of the programme the lack of robust monitoring, and strategic assessment of changing conditions, reduced its effectiveness over time. The evaluation finds that SSRF indicators were not designed to quantitatively, qualitatively and geographically determine the actual outcomes of the SSRF interventions where they were located - and there was no measure that could determine whether the real causes of the conflicts were being reduced. As such, attribution to SSRF outputs is not clear or able to be accurately defined. While this is not an uncommon finding for interventions in conflict-affected settings, the evaluation states that UNDP – as manager of the Fund – should have done better in terms of designing the indicators.[79]

- The evaluation of the **National Area-Based Development Programme** (NABDP) in Afghanistan (2014) finds that a number of important results have been achieved in a complex setting, with reasonable effectiveness. For example: District Development Assemblies have been established in 388 districts and most are performing failry well, having implemented at least one project and some have been able to attract new and larger investments from other donors; local communities have benefited from improved access to energy, irrigation and transport infrastructure through around 2,000 projects; and thousands of jobs have been created, mainly through casual labour in construction, which has provided families with short term income (noting that few sustainable jobs were created).[80] An assessment of impact is limited by availability of data. If there has been impact, it is small scale and unfocused.[81]

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[76] UNDP, *Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) – Annual Progress Report 2014*, 2014, p.1
[77] Ibid, p.2
[78] Barnes, S. et al., *South Sudan Recovery Fund, Round 3: UN Joint Stabilization Programmes – Outcome Evaluation*, 2015, pp.1-2 / p.4
[79] Ibid, pp.3-4
[80] Emmott, S. and A.M. Jawhary, *Evaluation of the National Area-based Development Programme (NABDP) in Afghanistan*, 2014, p.i
[81] Ibid, p.ii

- The mid-term review of the **Access to Justice and Rule of Law** (A2J/RoL) project in South Sudan (2015) finds that the project is 'on track' in terms of achieving the planned outputs. At the national level, the project has played an important role in strengthening the capacity of relevant 'access to justice' institutions, by providing policy advice, training and strategic thinking. The uniqueness of the project lies in its sector- wide approach to address the full cycle of criminal justice, allowing for the institutionalisation of activities such as case management and crime statistics into the existing framework of the RoL institutions. The review points out that the project has met substantial challenges in delivering the outputs according to the timeframe originally foreseen, which is mostly the result of the outbreak of (renewed) conflict in 2013. However, the review finds that UNDP managed well to readjusted the strategic focus of the project to address the changed circumstances, and that there is initial evidence showing that the A2J/RoL project is contributing to the achievement of long-term results for the RoL sector in South Sudan.[82] Despite the fact that the achievements under this project were made in an extremely difficult working environment, with additional challenges emanating from the UNDP system (i.e. changes of mandate of UN Mission – and as a result less support via the Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections; lengthy hiring processes; and rigid procurement rules), the evaluation team found that the project outputs are likely to lead to the planned outcome, namely "access to justice and rule of law improves." Under the sector-wide approach, many project activities, such as RoL forums and the ascertainment of customary law, contribute to more than one output, creating strong synergies and a more level playing field between the different actors, especially for vulnerable groups at the community level.[83]

UNDP's projects and programmes primarily score well in terms of contributing to strengthening (local) government capacity, and strengthening rule of law. The 2013 evaluation of UNDP efforts in the context of UN Peace Operations for instance finds that UNDP has been effective in providing timely technical and financial assistance to national rule-of-law projects, with specific reference being made to UNDP efforts to address the challenge of bridging traditional dispute resolution and formal justice systems, and furthering transitional justice in post-conflict contexts. Varied success is reported in its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts, reflecting diverse context-specific factors in conflict settings, and a tendency to concentrate on immediate outputs rather than longer-term impacts. Also, UNDP efforts to bolster civilian oversight in security sector reform require better sequencing and coordination between reform of the security sector and other sectors. UNDP is found to have made progress in supporting opportunities for women to participate more fully in the emerging political and legal landscape of post-conflict countries.[84]

As is the case for all operational entities operating in fragile and conflict-affected settings, the effectiveness of UNDP programming support in these countries is often contingent upon events in the political and security realm, which are largely beyond UNDP power to influence. Where a modicum of political settlement has been reached and peacekeeping has maintained security, UNDP interventions have been able to support a broader conflict resolution and peacebuilding agenda, and ultimately a development agenda. It is interesting to note that some of the greatest UNDP (and admittedly UN) achievements in post-conflict peacebuilding have been in states that are either (a) geopolitically less prominent and hence the UN's role is greater vis-à-vis other actors; or (b) beset with geopolitically charged environments (like Kenya or Georgia) where political and security influences have become so polarized by internal/external influences that UNDP is able to take on a 'non- threatening' mediation role. Where the semblances of political reconciliation have been scant and violence ongoing, UNDP interventions have had limited impact, and progress has been frequently reversed due to low national buy-in for development interventions or to the resumption of conflict.[85]

Evaluations also point towards the risks of having a wide remit and long-term presence. One of the

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[82] Yang, S.X. and H.K. Logo, *UNDP South Sudan Access to Justice and Rule of Law project – Mid-term evaluation report*, 2015, pp.6-7
[83] Ibid, p.8
[84] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, pp.xii-xiii
[85] Ibid, p.xvi

inherent problems of UNDP presence in a country before, during and after a crisis is that it builds a historical expectation that the organisation will respond positively to the many wide-ranging requests for support it receives. The result can be ad hoc and overly ambitious support programmes, coupled with limited financial and human resources and sometimes slow delivery. Other UN organisations seeking funding and engagement in conflict settings have expressed concern that UNDP sometimes 'over-reaches' by engaging in technical support beyond its expertise and by favouring its own programmes when administering multi-donor trust funds.[86] Also, donors – including the Netherlands – have been consistently calling on UNDP to sharpen its priorities, and hence its ability to say 'no' to support requests.

One issue raised specifically in terms of getting to longer-term and higher-level impact for UNDP engagement in the field of peace, security and development is the need to strengthen UNDP-based standard operating procedures for when and how to conduct conflict analysis. UNDP is often caught off guard and unprepared when conflict erupts, despite its in-country position and close contacts with government and civil society. Anticipating conflict and helping to prevent it requires detailed and operational conflict analyses to be carried out at the country level. Here, evaluations point towards the disjuncture between the holistic conceptual umbrella of 'knowledge' within BCPR and the operational constraints of individual countries. The result in some cases has been a waste of resources on small, inconsequential activities that have traction only for the duration of the 'project', but little long-lasting impact on peacebuilding.[87] This ties in with the need for UNDP to strengthen the political 'lens' of the organisation, and the need to be a more critical partner to recipient governments rather than an implementing body for their policies and programmes. A key element in this regard has been the 'stalemate' that the UNDP Executive Board has found itself in over the last couple of years, with many recipient countries calling for a continuation of UNDP's demand driven approach, and many donor countries calling for sharper priorities, more 'value for money' and concrete results reporting.[88] By working through project support units, which are generally embedded in the public sector and operating parallel to it, UNDP runs the risk of weakening institutions that countries must rely on over the long term. Yet this method does enhance the pace and quality of service delivery, as per the request of UNDP donors – including the Netherlands.[89]

UNDP is found to play a prominent role in the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Its effectiveness is contingent on realistic planning, rapid response, quality personnel, effective coordination with partners and sufficient funding.[90] A positive step in this regard has been the evolution of the Integrated Missions Planning Process, which was supported by the Netherlands. Also, the establishment of the Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections has been found to be initially successful in this regard.[91]

4.2.2. Peacebuilding Fund

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is a global fund that is part of the larger UN Peacebuilding Architecture (as explained in chapter 2 above). The Fund is designed to address immediate needs in countries emerging from conflict at a time when sufficient resources are not available from other funding

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[86] Ibid, pp.x-xii / Barnes, S. et al., *South Sudan Recovery Fund, Round 3: UN Joint Stabilization Programmes – Outcome Evaluation*, 2015

[87] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.xvi / Briefel, D. Kunzman, *Assessment of UNDP's funding mechanisms for crisis prevention and recovery – Trac 1.1.3 and Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery*, 2014

[88] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47) / UK Department for International Development, *Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, London, 2013 (see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multilateral-aid-review-assessment-of-united-nations-development-programme-undp) / Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), *UNDP 2012 & UNDP 2015-2016* – see: http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/?hf=10&b=0&r=%2Bf%2Fmopan_organisation_en%2Fundp&l=en&sl=mopan_v2_assessment_package&s=score

[89] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.xi

[90] Ibid, p.xv / Van de Goor, L. et al., *Independent Progress Review on the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections*, New York, 2014

[91] Van de Goor, L. et al., *Independent Progress Review on the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections*, New York, 2014

mechanisms and will support interventions of direct and immediate relevance to a peacebuilding process and contribute towards addressing critical gaps in that process. The PBF supports activities by channeling money through UN entities, and is reliant on voluntary contributions by Member States for its survival.

The 2015 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (and the two subsequent Resolutions on peacebuilding in the General Assembly and Security Council in April 2016) praised the role of the PBF. The Fund is recognised as playing the critical role for which it was created in 2006, namely filling a gap in existing development aid that didn't match the need for speed and flexibility at critical moments of transition from war to peace.[92] Since the 2016 resolutions, the Fund's role has widened to not only include prevention of relapse of violent conflict, but also sustaining peace in general.

The most recent evaluation of the Fund (2014) assesses the effectiveness of the Fund overall as good. PBF activities are directly and immediately relevant for country-specific peacebuilding processes and are aimed at funding critical peacebuilding activities that cannot be funded or implemented otherwise (including a focus on so-called 'aid orphan' countries, like the Central African Republic). The short-term facility of the Fund (the so-called Immediate Response Facility – IRF) scores particularly well on the 'niche' elements of the PBF: speed and flexibility, as well as risk-taking; while the longer-term facility of the Fund (the so-called Peacebuilding Response Facility – PRF) scores particularly well on relevance, flexibility, gap filling and ownership.[93] PBF activities score between reasonable and well in terms of their catalytic impact – i.e. to act as kick-starter for larger and broader peacebuilding efforts by the UN system as well as other international actors. The set-up and position of the Fund within the UN Secretariat ensure that the work of the PBF contributes to the strengthening of the coordination and coherence of UN efforts across agencies and programmes. The achievement of catalytic effect in tems of fundraising is assessed less positively. This on the one hand is linked to the fact that the PBF focuses mostly on countries and activities that are less quickly and 'easily' supported by bilateral donors (as the risks are considered too high) – and the fact that the willingness of donors to provide additional funding outside the Fund during the evaluation period was negatively affected by the financial crisis. On the other hand, the less positive assessment of catalytic effect in terms of fundraising is linked to the fact that – at the time of the establishment of the Fund – it was assumed that the Peacebuilding Commission would play a substantial role in the fundraising for the PBF – an assumption that has proven to be incorrect over time.[94]

The combination of providing funding for projects in combination with the provision of technical support through the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) is considered to be positive, and a strong added value of the Fund (as it contributes to capacity building of UN Country Offices in terms of peacebuilding). However, donors are not in favour of increasing the staff capacity of the PBSO and are of the opinion that the required expertise should be available within the UN recipient organisations of the Fund.[95] PBF experience up until now however shows that this opinion is not supported by the reality at field level.

4.2.3. UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme

The UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) has focused on addressing causes of conflict that contribute to a culture of violence, exclusion and inequality. Specifically, the programme aimed to strengthen the policy and implementation of education for peacebuilding. A recent evaluation (2015) finds that the PBEA has been successful in implementing the foreseen activities and achieving the short-term results that were foreseen: local institutions (including UNICEF Country Offices) are better capable to provide conflict-sensitive education (amongst other things as a result of trainings and workshops; peace education has improved (specifically in terms

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[92] Advisory Group of Experts, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, New York, 2015
[93] Kluyskens, J. and L. Clark, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund*, 2014, pp.xi-xiii
[94] Advisory Group of Experts, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, New York, 2015
[95] Kluyskens, J. and L. Clark, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund*, 2014, pp. xi-xiii / Advisory Group of Experts, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, New York, 2015

of its content and its pedagogic aspects); and teachers, parents and children are trained in conflict mediation. Attention has been given to strengthening social cohesion (through sports, play and theatre) and the strengthening of (inter-)community dialogue.[96]

The evaluation also finds though, that the results are mostly identifiable at output level and that these are not subsequently linked to the question how these activities have contributed to better preconditions for peacebuilding and social cohesion in the specific countries. The evaluation also finds that UNICEF should pay more attention to the political context in which they are operating in order to be able to effectively intervene in fragile and conflict-affected settings.[97]

The programme did not manage to create strategic partnerships in the area of education and peacebuilding and to contribute to greater UN coherence in this field.[98]

4.3. Efficiency of UN Security & Rule of Law activities

4.3.1. UNDP

When assessing the efficiency of UNDP's (or any other UN agency's) Security & Rule of Law activities, one important element to take into account is the fact that the fragmentation and competition within the wider UN system (as described in chapter 2) inevitably affects individual programming at country-level. Also, UNDP not only operates in complex and challenging environments, but also often acts as 'agency of last resort' within the UN system. Meaning that both other UN agencies and donors have a tendency to turn to UNDP for implementing specific programmes and activities for which they cannot find another reliable (local) partner. Given UNDP's very broad mandate, they find that most of the activities that they come up with will be able to fit somehow within UNDP's mandate. Specifically in conflict-areas, donors additionally turn to UNDP as they can't go out into the field themselves – due to security constraints – to identify suitable (local) partners that they could support bilaterally. Interviewees also point to the limited capacity that UNDP has in relation to the broad agenda that it has to 'cover' in practice, as well as to the variety of 'roles' that UNDP has to play at field level (as coordinator of UN activities through the Resident Coordinator role; as funder and administrator of trust funds; and as implementer of activities).

Taking this into account, the country and programme evaluations do not provide sufficient evidence to come to general findings on efficiency or on the cost-benefit balance of activities. Most findings relate to capacity to manage and implement programmes (see Box 5).

Box 5. Illustrative findings of UNDP project/programme evaluations on efficiency

- The evaluation of the **Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery** (CPR-TTF) is positive about the professional fund management at Headquarter level, but points to a lack of efficient implementation at field level. It is stated that although in many settings the difficult post crisis context, the weakness or non-existence of reliable government partners and security issues combine to make project implementation very challenging, UNDP should undertake more detailed capacity assessments prior to the agreement to fund a certain project, to ascertain if the Country Office can effectively and efficiently accomplish the tasks set out in the project document.[99]

- The evaluation of the **National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP)** in Afghanistan finds that the programme has been cost efficient in terms of the implementation of activities. However, efficiency has been negatively influenced by the donor practice of earmarking, which results in huge imbalance between provinces, and petitions from parliamentarians, which result in a huge backlog of designed projects for which there is no available funding.[100]

- The mid-term review of the **Access to Justice and Rule of Law** project in South Sudanfinds

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[96] UNICEF Evaluation Office, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) – Outcome evaluation*, 2015, pp. x-xii
[97] Ibid, pp. xiii-xiv
[98] Ibid, pp. x-xv
[99] Briefel, D. Kunzman, *Assessment of UNDP's funding mechanisms for crisis prevention and recovery – Trac 1.1.3 and Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery*, 2014, p.8
[100] Emmott, S. and A.M. Jawhary, *Evaluation of the National Area-based Development Programme (NABDP) in Afghanistan*, 2014, p.ii

that the project has been successful in mobilising adequate financial resources, but also points to the fact that every year only a certain percentage of those resources was used (due to delays in planning and implementation). This is linked to the fact that there is a structural shortage in capable staff, which resulted in a backlog in the identenfication and implementation and projects. The availability of tools and equipment has also posed efficiency challenges to the project, especially in the field, including vehicles and service repairs, internet connections, as well as accommodation and office arrangements.[101] This is a recurring issue that is referred to by New York interviewees as well: the fact that implementation of activities in fragile and conflict-affected settings usually requires more overhead than donors are willing to cover (partly as a result of domestic pressure not to have too much tax payers' money going to the "aid industry").

UNDP scores high in terms of financial management, dealing with corruption and strengthening the organisation's monitoring and evaluation capacity.[102] Yet at the same time, UNDP has long been criticised for its high overhead costs and slow procurement procedures (also in terms of managing multi-donor trust funds). Evaluations find that UNDP has made important refinements and improvements in human resources and procurement in recent years, with clear evidence that the organisation can now respond quicker and more effectively to requests for assistance in the wake of conflict and disasters.[103] However, this remains a point of attention and discussion with donor countries, as in part the high fiduciary rules and regulations applied by UNDP are a result of donors calling for zero-tolerance to corruption for instance, or not allowing for risk-taking. The Dutch Stability Fund is referred to by interviewees as an example of good donor practice in this regard, as it has higher risk-tolerance rate.

UNDP has been found to have made positive contributions to the harmonisation of UN procedures and the strengthening of national coordination capacity. A positive development in this regard has been that the system of UN Resident Coordinators is increasingly perceived to be in support of the entire UN system in country, and not just UNDP. The actual quality of the RCs is still highly dependent on individual skills and capacities; something UNDP continues to work on.[104]

In order to be more efficient with its funding, to prevent overlap and even internal competition over resources, and most importantly to deal with the trend of increasing earmarked contributions at the expense of core contributions, UNDP has set up four new funding windows through which partners can contribute to supporting country-level efforts to achieve the SDGs. The four windows will focus on sustainable development and poverty eradication; climate change and disaster risk reduction; governance for peaceful and inclusive societies; and emergency development responses to crises and disasters, followed by early recovery. The objective is to have fewer and better-linked funding windows, which are managed together in order to increase efficiency and reduce transaction costs.

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[101] Yang, S.X. and H.K. Logo, *UNDP South Sudan Access to Justice and Rule of Law project – Mid-term evaluation report*, 2015, p.6

[102] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47) / UK Department for International Development, *Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, London, 2013 (see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multilateral-aid-review-assessment-of-united-nations-development-programme-undp) / Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), *UNDP 2012 & UNDP 2015-2016* – see: http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/?hf=10&b=0&r=%2Bf%2Fmopan_organisation_en%2Fundp&l=en&sl=mopan_v2_assessment_package&s=score

[103] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.xiv / Briefel, D. Kunzman, *Assessment of UNDP's funding mechanisms for crisis prevention and recovery – Trac 1.1.3 and Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery*, 2014 / Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47)

[104] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47) / UK Department for International Development, *Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, London, 2013 (see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multilateral-aid-review-assessment-of-united-nations-development-programme-undp) / Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), *UNDP 2012 & UNDP 2015-2016* – see: http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/?hf=10&b=0&r=%2Bf%2Fmopan_organisation_en%2Fundp&l=en&sl=mopan_v2_assessment_package&s=score

This will allow for greater integration in programming and effective responses across the development continuum.[105]

4.3.2. Peacebuilding Fund

The administrative management of the PBF, under the responsibility of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, is assessed very positively. The operational management of the Fund by the Peacebuilding Support Office is also judged as mostly positive, with two remarks. First, PBF's business model calls for a "light footprint" in-country. It relies on UN coordination staff, supplemented by PBF staff and external consultants, to carry out its coordination and support work. In reality, this model is only viable if headquarters staff provide high quality support and guidance, improve and expand the guidance materials, provide training and dissemination in their use, and perform important "surge capacity" functions. A key concern is that the PBF staff at headquarters is already stretched thin. Yet there are also calls for the amount of work to be done at PBF headquarters to increase. In this context, the review sees expanding the almost skeletal PBF headquarters staffing as an essential element for continued success and as a cost-effective investment. Yet, the Fund's donors are not willing to increase the funding for this.[106]

Second, the current financing model and yearly variations in the level of new donor funding make it very difficult for the PBF to plan and carry out sustained headquarters functions and field support. The Fund is highly dependent on a small group of key donors – including the Netherlands – most of whom do not have a standing annual contribution to the Fund. The Netherlands for instance decides on its contribution on an annual basis (leaving open the option not to provide support) on the basis of results achieved, the way in which the Fund dealt with identified risks, and the liquidity needs of the Fund.[107] While this approach provides the Netherlands with the opportunity to put more pressure on the PBF if needed to work in a more results-oriented manner, it also means that the Dutch contributions have been highly unpredictable. This undermines the capacity of the PBF to set up and implement a solid planning.[108]

4.3.3. UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme

The evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) Programme finds that PBEA management, knowledge management and implementation support improved over time, following the hiring of programme management staff and the establishment of a regional support office.[109]

The resource allocation process between donors, UNICEF headquarters and UNICEF Country Offices was found to be mostly efficient, reasonable and transparent. Nevertheless, the evaluation states that in terms of moving forward, alternative funding models such as a rigorous competitive proposal based selection process with opportunity for self-nomination and context specific accountability plans may be more suited to peacebuilding work.[110] Also, the evaluation finds that utilization and management of funding was not as efficient as it should have been, mostly due to the fact that donor accountability and accountability for funding decisions was at the global level, while accountability for results was decentralised.[111]

Overall, it is stated that even though UNICEF is well-positioned to engage in peacebuilding work based on its mandate and institutional strengths, the organisation needs to navigate sensitivities, identify entry-points, focus resources on high risk environments to achieve scale and emphasise the primacy of context specific programming. Questions are posed in relation to the sustainability of the programme; a concern that is strengthened by the fact that its main donor – the Netherlands – has

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[105] See: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2016/01/25/helen-clark-statement-to-the-first-regular-session-of-the-undp-executive-board.html
[106] Kluyskens, J. and L. Clark, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund*, 2014, p.xvii
[107] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Internal Assessment Memo UN Peacebuilding Fund 2012-2015*
[108] Kluyskens, J. and L. Clark, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund*, 2014, pp. xv-xvii
[109] UNICEF Evaluation Office, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) – Outcome evaluation*, 2015, pp. xiii-xiv
[110] Ibid, p.xiv
[111] Ibid, p. xv

not committed to providing follow-up funding.[112]

5. Assessment of UN as systemic partner for Security & Rule of Law policy

5.1. Introduction

The Security & Rule of Law policy brief underlines two added values of the multilateral framework over the bilateral framework when it comes to dealing with issues in the field of peace, security and development. First, reference is made to the convening power of multilateral organisations. Specifically in relation to the UN it is stated that the organisation has the ability to call for action on behalf of fragile and conflict-affected states and to facilitate action by spreading risks. The UN also provides a forum for political mobilization – for instance through the Security Council and through the Peacebuilding Commission. Second, reference is made to thought leadership and coordination. The UN is perceived to be able to encourage the exchange of best practices, and expected to provide the leadership needed to link initiatives in the political, security, humanitarian and development spheres. In other words, the UN is expected to strengthen coherence across the system of international engagement.

5.2. The UN as a convening power for action

The UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) was supposed to play a central role in strengthening the UN's convening power in the field of peace, security and development – as natural counterpart to the political leadership in the field of peacekeeping as provided by the UN Security Council. However, the 2015 review of the PBA is very critical about the level in which the PBA actually managed to play this role thus far (as described in chapter 2 above). When the PBA was designed, the expectation was that the Peacebuilding Support Office would function as the expertise centre on peacebuilding within the UN Secretariat, supporting the coordination and agenda-setting provided by the Peacebuilding Commission. However, the PBA review finds that both PBSO and the PBC have not yet been able to fulfil these roles successfully. This is partly related to the fact that the PBC has been politicised in relation to the Security Council, which has negatively affected its functioning.[113]

The Peacebuilding Fund on the other hand does play an important role in strengthening the UN's convening power, by supporting and encouraging the wider UN system to come together around a shared peacebuilding strategy. For instance, the Fund's 2014 evaluation finds that the PBF's ability to fund peacebuilding actions that relate to the overall mandates of DPA-led Special Political Missions (SPMs) can and has added to the credibility and capacity of these missions. DPA and PBF are exploring (together with UNDP) how they might increase the number of Peace and Development Advisors (with expertise in politics, peacebuilding, and post-conflict development), providing much-needed help in the development and coordination of PBF programmes, while giving DPA a greater field presence across a wider range of countries. And DPKO staff expressed interest in continuing to collaborate with PBF on projects that would help address gaps in DPKO-related programmes, as well as in having PBF promote and fund politically sensitive actions that DPKO supports but cannot fund. There was also widespread agreement that PBF funding can be useful at the closing of a UN Mission and assist with the transition.[114]

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[112] Ibid, pp. xiv-xv

[113] This is mostly the result of the fact that the PBC initially was used by Member States as a political counterweight to the Security Council – and that, when it became clear that the PBC had little to no influence over the Security Council's agenda, PBC got bogged down in bureaucratic and technical procedures and drifted away from its original objective to function as a diplomatic forum. On the other hand, this is the result of that fact that PBSO has not been able to position itself well in the power struggles between DPKO, DPA and UNDP as main actors in the field of peace, security and development. PBSO is too small and has too little 'standing' (as a result of poor leadership, both within PBSO in the early days and by the previous Secretary-General of the UN). See: Advisory Group of Experts, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, New York, 2015 / De Coning, C. and E. Stamnes (eds.), *UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The first 10 years*, London, 2016

[114] Kluyskens, J. and L. Clark, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund*, 2014, pp.xiii-xiv

As a system-wide organisation, UNDP is generally appreciated for its convening power and contribution to international policy dialogues.[115] UNDP is found to play a vital role in the United Nations peacebuilding architecture at field level, with a capacity to operate 'at scale' across multiple programme areas, before, during and after the outbreak of conflict. UNDP is well positioned to ably serve as an integral partner in peace operations, providing coordination (via the UN Country Team), programme management and technical expertise, especially during transitions to peacebuilding and post-conflict development.[116]

On the basis of the mid-term review of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections (2014), and the HIPPO review (2015), one can conclude that progress has been made in terms of integrated mission planning (as one of the core elements of a coherent UN approach towards peace, security and development). Also, progress is noted in terms of strengthening the role of the Resident Coordinator (RC) at field level (coordinating the UN development efforts in country), specifically where through a more strict division of roles and responsibilities the RC is no longer seen to be biased towards UNDP. These are positive first steps to which the Netherlands has contributed, that require follow-through in the coming period.[117]

When taking into account country-specific evaluations (as for instance of the LOTFA in Afghanistan, and the SSRF in South Sudan), one can state that UNDP has effectively promoted dialogue between government and civil society at national and local levels. By engaging a wider range of stakeholders, this has enabled a broadening of the constituency for peacebuilding and improvements in programme design in priority areas.[118]

UNICEF finally has not been been playing a convening role in the field of peace, security and development. As a system-wide organisation in the field of development, this is also not immediately expected of the organisation. By supporting the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme, the Netherlands first and foremost aimed to strengthen the conflict-sensitivity of UNICEF's operations in conflict-affected settings, and for the organisation to explore and determine its added value in the peacebuilding arena. This did not lead to UNICEF taking on a stronger convening role in this field; as stated before, the programme did not manage to create strategic partnerships in the area of education and peacebuilding and to contribute to greater UN coherence in this field.[119]

5.3. The UN as a thought leader and system coordinator

UNDP has positioned itself as knowledge broker and center of expertise in the field of peace, security and development, and underlines its neutrality, long-term engagement and broad coordination role as key assets in being the lead organisation in this field. BCPR played a key role in this regard – specifically at field level. The CPR-TTF evaluation finds that BCPR's support of UNDP Country Offices has resulted in stronger conflict sensitive programming.[120] Even though this so-called 'surge capacity' was predominantly aimed at strengthening UNDP's own programming, it had – taken into account UNDP's coordinating role at field level – as a side effect that the wider UN system benefitted from the expertise provided.[121] With the disappearance of this dedicated capacity after the recent reorganisation, it remains to be seen if UNDP can continue to live up to these expectations. Due to

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[115] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47)

[116] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.ii / Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47)

[117] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013 / High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, *Uniting our strengths for peace – politics, partnerships and people*, New York, 2015 / Van de Goor, L. et al., *Independent Progress Review on the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections*, New York, 2014

[118] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013, p.xiv / UNDP, *Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) – Annual Progress Report 2014*, 2014 / Barnes, S. et al., *South Sudan Recovery Fund, Round 3: UN Joint Stabilization Programmes – Outcome Evaluation*, 2015

[119] UNICEF Evaluation Office, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) – Outcome evaluation*, 2015, pp. x-xv

[120] Briefel, D. Kunzman, *Assessment of UNDP's funding mechanisms for crisis prevention and recovery – Trac 1.1.3 and Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery*, 2014

[121] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Evaluation UNDP support to Conflict-Affected Countries in the context of UN Peace Operations*, New York, 2013

its in-country presence in over 160 countries – and more than 60 conflict-affected and fragile settings – UNDP remains an important source of information for donor countries. [122]

The 'surge capacity' role is increasingly being taken over by PBSO in relation to PBF funded activities. This is accomplished through temporary PBF (or PBSO) missions to the field, and many field respondents asked to receive more support of this kind. However, in its current set-up – calling for a "light footprint" in country, as described above – it is not likely that the PBF can strengthen and expand this support. [123]

In terms of system-wide learning and agenda setting in the field of peace, security and development, the PBC and PBSO were supposed to play a key role – but they haven't lived up to that yet, as described above. However, with active programmes in over 22 countries, the PBF has one of the most extensive information databases existing in the peacebuilding field. It also has important links with the PBSO Policy Branch and the PBC Lessons Learned mechanism. PBF's growing emphasis on Monitoring and Evaluation also positions it well as a knowledge resource. Thus the PBF evaluation finds that the PBF should both increase its internal Knowledge Management capacities and actions as well as play a stronger leading role in Knowledge Management in the peacebuilding field. [124]

UNDP has been actively involved in both the development of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (in collaboration with the Netherlands actually, as both acted as co-chairs of the OECD/DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility), and in the implementation of the New Deal. In this implementation, UNDP has been taking the lead at field level in developing the country-specific New Deal frameworks – i.e. conduct of conflict analysis and development of overarching list of priorities and action plan (the Compact), including an M&E framework. It remains to be seen now how the New Deal will relate to the roll out of SDG agenda at field level, and the upcoming operationalization of the sustaining peace agenda. However, as UNDP has played a leading role in developing the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 16, and is now the lead coordinating agency in relation to the implementation of the SDGs, it is to be expected that UNDP will continue to play at least one of the central roles in these processes.

UNICEF finally cannot be considered to be a thought-leader in the field of peace, security and development. The Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme did contribute to further strengthening knowledge on the linkages between education and peacebuilding, but this knowledge has not been sufficiently linked to other on-going initiatives. In fact, UNICEF was perceived by key UN entities in this field – most notably UNDP – as a competitor, rather than a partner. [125]

6. Overall assessment and conclusions

This review set out to produce a descriptive analysis of the broader UN and Dutch efforts in the field of Security & Rule of Law, as well as an analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of those efforts to which the Netherlands provided a financial contribution or had a direct political interest. Overall, one can conclude that these efforts have contributed to achieving results in the field of peace, security and development, and that the Dutch engagement with the UN has been in line with its policies.

The Dutch policy approach vis-à-vis the UN's role in the field of peace, security and development has in essence been consistent over the last decade or so. The UN is perceived to be the global leader and coordinator in this field, having a legitimate mandate to lead and coordinate international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The Dutch efforts vis-à-vis the UN have been consistent in underlining the need for the UN to become better coordinated and more effective in operationalizing this role.

A total of 52% of the Dutch SRoL expenditures in the period 2012-2015 is channelled through multilateral organisations, and 35% of those expenditures are channelled via the UN. Specifically,

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[122] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *UNDP scorecards 2011, 2013, 2015* (see footnote 47)
[123] Kluyskens, J. and L. Clark, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund*, 2014, p.xvii
[124] Ibid, p.xvi
[125] UNICEF Evaluation Office, *Evaluation of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) – Outcome evaluation*, 2015, pp. x-xv

the Netherlands has managed to support UN efforts (and achievements) in the areas of human security and a functioning rule of law – two of the key objectives of the Dutch SRoL policy. Using the UN as a channel to achieve results in these fields makes sense given the fact that the expected added values of the UN as a channel are relatively high for these objectives (specifically economies of scale, access, risk and burden sharing).

For a long time, the Netherlands was considered to be one of the lead donors in the SRoL field (together with the UK and the Nordic countries), both in terms of financial importance and in terms of thought leadership. Particularly in the period 2008-2011, the Netherlands has led international efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations, underlining the importance of leadership by the UN – both in practical terms (e.g. allowing for risk sharing, pooling of resources, strengthened coordination and coherence) and in terms of moral/political leadership (acknowledging that all engagement in conflict settings is inherently political and high-risk). In the period 2012-2015, the Dutch efforts vis-à-vis the UN were influenced by two contextual factors: the occurrence of the financial crisis, and a changing political landscape in the Netherlands (with a diminishing support base for development cooperation in general, and the UN – and other multilateral organisations – specifically). As a result, the policy approach was adjusted to allow for a focus on a limited set of thematic priorities (the spearhead approach). And across the board, expenditures were cut – both in terms of staff capacity in the Ministry, and in terms of core support for UN organisations. What is interesting is that this sharpening of focus and budget did not lead to a sharpening of the expectations vis-à-vis the UN. The SRoL policy brief contains the same expectations vis-à-vis UNDP for instance as the 2008-2011 fragile states strategy. And while the SRoL policy brief states that core contributions will be cut, to be – at best – replaced by earmarked contributions, the expectations in terms of UN coherence and an integrated approach remain – whereas those types of issues require non-earmarked, flexible support. By increasingly earmarking contributions (at the expense of non-earmarked contributions), donors – including the Netherlands – are inadvertently contributing to the further fragmentation of UN efforts in the field of peace, security and development – whereas further coherence is actually required.

The Netherlands has channelled the bulk of its UN SRoL funding through UNDP – which is in line with the SRoL policy. In general, these activities are assessed as being effective, though mostly at output level; the main challenge remains how to get to longer-term results and impact in fragile and conflict-affected settings (though that is a challenge that applies to all international engagement in such settings, given the complexity and challenging nature). In terms of efficiency, the evaluations do not provide a clear cost-benefit analysis. While it is stated that UNDP has invested in strengthening its financial management procedures, still overall the organisation is found to be rather slow and lacking sufficient capacity (specifically at field level). Interviewees refer to the difficulty of UNDP being the 'agency of last resort' in combination with its tendency to say 'yes' first, and think about how to actually undertake activities second. Also, UNDP's procurement rules and regulations are notorious in terms of being cumbersome and time-consuming. The fact that many of these rules and regulations are actually required by UNDP's donors (who are working with risk-averse parliaments), places UNDP in a bit of a 'catch-22' type of position, and underlines the need for UNDP to develop less cumbersome procedures in collaboration with its donors.

Overall, evaluations find that UNDP needs to strengthen its capacity to conduct conflict analyses as the basis of their SRoL programming. Two elements are considered to negatively impact on this: 1) the lack of standard operating procedures; and 2) the lack of expertise and capacity within UNDP Country Offices. BCPR's surge capacity used to fill this gap up to a certain point. This is where the recent merger of BCPR with the Bureau for Development Policy – and the fact that the specific field of expertise covered by BCPR is now 'mainstreamed' in the organisation – is disconcerting. Time will have to tell what the results of this reorganisation will be, but the Netherlands has indicated that it is sceptical. The surge capacity of PBSO (related to the PBF activities) can only partly fill the gap that is created, due to constraints to the in-country 'footprint' the PBF is allowed to have (as driven by its donors). This has to be a topic of further conversation between the UN entities and the Member States – particularly those that act as donors to these entities: the need to strengthen field capacity and to re-think existing assumptions about required resources to allow for effective and efficient engagement in the field of peace, security and development.

In the period 2012-2015, the core contributions to UNDP decreased substantially, but this has been partly compensated by an increase in 'soft' earmarked contributions over the same period. These contributions were mostly channelled via BCPR (most specifically the CPR-TTF and the Global Rule of Law Programme). The Netherlands has maintained its track record of being an innovative donor, specifically by earmarking part of its contribution to UNDP's Global Rule of Law Programme to be programmed in collaboration with DPKO (under the Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections). As such, the Netherlands is forcing UN agencies to work together across the different pillars and increase their effectiveness. Along the same lines, the Dutch contribution to the PBF can be seen as an effort to stimulate cross-pillar cooperation in the UN system. And the support to UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme can be seen as an effort to not only strengthen the engagement of a more traditionally development oriented UN organisation in the field of peace, security and development, but to also encourage this organisation to work together with other UN organisations active in this field (a result that was not achieved in the end, partly due to the 'one-off' type of funding, partly due to the fact that UNICEF was perceived by UNDP mostly as a competitor rather than a partner).

The review provides a mostly positive picture in terms of the extent in which the UN provides the assumed added value as implementer of SRoL activities (i.e. scale, neutrality, expertise). As noted above, there is a clear need to strengthen the field-level SRoL expertise. Also, it is fair to note that in many conflict-affected settings, there is also no viable alternative to the UN – most local organisations are not capable of adhering to the donors' requirements in terms of fiduciary rules and regulations, and the need to show results. Also, taking into account security constraints and issues of access, the UN is most often the best placed and most suitable channel for international support. It is for this reason also not very useful, nor relevant to simply 'compare' the multilateral with bilateral aid channel in conflict-affected settings; it is the complementarity of the multilateral channel to the limited capacity of the bilateral channel that is indispensable – the channels ought to strengthen each other and are not mutually exclusive.

In terms of the assumed added value of the UN as convening power, this is where the limited scope of this review comes into play as it does not take into account the work of (and actions towards) the Security Council – arguably the most relevant convening power in the field of peace, security and development (which is facing its own challenges in the current day-and-age). Yet, the review finds that the SRoL supported activities have contributed up to a certain extent to strengthening the collaboration across the UN pillars – as such strengthening the overall convening power of the organisation. Overall however, it is fair to state that the UN continues to require a more coherent and more strategic approach to peace, security and development – something that is expected to be taken on by the new Secretary-General in rolling out the sustaining peace agenda in combination with SDG implementation. The main challenge will be to come to a clear and balanced division of labour across the peace, security and development pillars, where a main challenge for UNDP will be to identify a sharp focus and set clear priorities so as not to step into the 'agency of last resort' trap again.

It is in this process that there is an opportunity for the Netherlands (also taking into account the upcoming seat in the Security Council) to re-position itself as one of the lead Member States in the field of peace, security and development; a position that was somewhat lost due to the fact that the overall cut backs in contributions have not been accompanied by a further sharpening of priorities and expectations vis-a-vis the UN, which respondents say has undermined the Dutch 'profile' in the UN.

Annex 1 – List of organisations represented by interviewees

Organisation	Specification
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department (DMM) Netherlands Embassy in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia Netherlands Embassy in Bamako, Mali Netherlands Embassy in Juba, South Sudan Netherlands Embassy in Kabul, Aghanistan Permanent Mission to the UN in New York Social Development Department (DSO)
New York University	Center on International Cooperation
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Evaluation Office Former Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme staff
UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)	OROLSI HIPPO Review staff
UN Department for Political Affairs (DPA)	Mediation Support Unit Policy and Mediation Division
UN Development Group (UNDG)	Development Operations Coordination Office
UN Development Programme (UNDP)	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Team Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy Conflict Prevention Team Crisis Response Unit Development Impact Group Inclusive Political Processes Team Independent Evaluation Office Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Team Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O) Responsive and Accountable Institutions Team Rule of Law, Justice, Security and Human Rights Team UNDP CO South Sudan UN Systems Affair Group
UN Member States (Permanent Missions in NY, plus HQ)	Australia Canada Norway Sweden Switzerland United Kingdom
UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)	Peacebuilding Fund Policy Branch