

Quarterly Progress Update on the Multi-Year Appeal

Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

1 April to 30 June 2017



United Nations
Department of Political Affairs

DIPLOMACY. PREVENTION. ACTION



Prevention: Setting the Agenda

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) continued to support United Nations political engagement in **Myanmar** after the closure of the Office of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar. Through extra-budgetary funding (XB), DPA was able to undertake in-depth analysis of the political complexities and the evolving situation in Myanmar, which informed the visit of Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča on 24-26 May and promoted engagement with the Government and other interlocutors at the highest levels. In addition, as part of the overall United Nations response to the request for technical assistance in the implementation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, DPA deployed experts on security from DPA mediation support staff and the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers to participate in a Technical Needs Assessment with the national Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC). The technical mission worked in close collaboration with the Peace and Development Adviser and a wide array of national and international partners to identify the capacity needs of the JMC in order to fulfil its monitoring, verification and conflict resolution mandate under the ceasefire agreement. The mission was an opportunity to build trust, credibility and a working relationship with the national partners.

Following the change of power in **The Gambia**, the UN has continued working on a coordinated response to support the Government of The Gambia and the transition process. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohammad Ibn Chambas, has been visiting Banjul on a monthly basis to consult with relevant stakeholders and guide the efforts of the UN Country Team under the leadership on the UN Resident Coordinator. Thanks to XB funding, UNOWAS deployed an expert to support the development of a Transitions' Bill which will be introduced in Parliament for approval in the near future. In addition, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNOWAS and the UN Economic Commission for Africa organized a retreat for Cabinet members, chaired by President Barrow, from 5 to 7 May to focus on enhancing

collaborative leadership skills and improving communication among Cabinet members. On 19 May, XB funding was used to quickly respond to the Office of Presidency's request for support in strategic communications, with the deployment of a strategic communications expert to Banjul. The consultant continues to work closely with the Presidency and the Ministry of Information and Communication to enhance the government's capacity to effectively communicate its priorities to the population.

As part of the UN political engagement in the lead-up to the 8 August 2017 general elections in **Kenya**, a joint DPA-UNDP-Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Director-level mission took place from 12-15 June. The mission recommended the strengthening of United Nations preparedness ahead of the elections, including increased support to Kenyan peace messaging and human rights monitoring (including the Kenyan National Human Rights Commission), and strengthening capacity for good offices, should it be requested. The mission also recommended that the UN's efforts be guided by integrated political, human rights and security analysis.

In **El Salvador**, XB funds enabled DPA to continue its support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Benito Andión, to facilitate dialogue. During the six months of his tenure, which came to an end on 4 July, the Special Envoy conducted five missions to the country to engage with the main political, economic and social leaders in El Salvador to craft a dialogue proposal. In June, the Special Envoy presented the Secretary-General with his proposal for the next phase of the dialogue process. This new phase, embodied by a "Group to Support Political Dialogue in El Salvador", formally began on 7 July with the first meeting of that body. XB funds continue to be instrumental in supporting this new phase, which is expected to continue through the first half of 2018.



Crisis Response and Resolution

In May, the United Nations Special Envoy for **Syria**, Staffan de Mistura, held another round of intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva on the basis of a Security Council-approved agenda of political transition issues guided by resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva Communiqué. His office established a consultative process for experts from the negotiating delegations of both the Syrian government and opposition platforms to examine technical issues and identify commonalities to better prepare for the formal negotiations. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to host the International Syria Support Group's task forces on ceasefire and humanitarian access, and facilitate the participation of Syrian women and civil society through the Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room. In addition, the Office of the Special Envoy provided technical expertise to the Astana talks convened by the guarantor countries - Iran, Russia and Turkey - to implement the 30 December 2016 ceasefire. XB resources have been critical to deepening the political process, covering for example, the direct costs of the rounds of negotiations and supporting the holding of technical sessions. In addition, XB funds have continued to support the Syria Inter-Agency Task Force and its Working Group to improve the United Nations' preparedness to respond if and when a political agreement is reached by the parties. The focus of this second phase is to ensure a common understanding of the UN's expected role for post-agreement Syria and its preparedness to implement the plan.

In **Yemen**, XB funding allowed the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to maintain updated analysis of the military and security dynamics based on regular consultations with a diverse group of Yemeni and international interlocutors, including representatives of the principal belligerents, as well as current and former government, military and security officials. This analysis complemented the development of draft security arrangements for Hudaydah and Taiz along with a mapping of armed formations in Taiz and the South. These mapping exercises are critical to reach viable agreements in the security sector and to sup-

port their eventual implementation. The Office of the Special Envoy, in coordination with international partners, also assisted with preliminary assessments for eventual Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) measures. These assessments help in building international consensus on the required national and regional planning mechanisms to support future DDR programming.

Given the unpredictable nature and volume of requests for United Nations good offices and mediation efforts, the **Rapid Response System** continues to be an indispensable tool to ensure the Department is able to respond quickly and effectively to the fast evolving international context. In the first six months of the year, the Department approved more than twenty Rapid Response requests amounting to \$1.7 million, with expenditures totalling \$1.4 million. By way of example, during a time of political tensions in a complex environment in **Guinea Bissau**, SRSR Touré requested urgent surge support for his political facilitation and coordination efforts for the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) roadmap and the Conakry agreement. Thanks to Rapid Response funding, DPA was able to deploy an international consultant to provide expert advice to SRSR Touré and the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS) about entry points for the United Nations related to the ECOWAS mediation. The Consultant formulated frameworks of engagement, strategic assessments and options papers for enhancing the impact of SRSR's good offices, and provided timely analysis of internal ECOWAS dynamics. The consultant also contributed to the successful engagement of UNIOGBIS and international partners' with political stakeholders, which led to the broadening of constituencies for peace involving women, youth and faith-based, as well as traditional leaders and representatives of the academia. The consultant also reached out to ECOWAS and the African Union at the working level, which helped unite positions of the sub-regional and regional partners to moderate prevailing tensions and preventing the outbreak of violence.



Investing in sustaining peace

In **Colombia**, XB funding strengthened DPA's capacity to support the UN Mission in Colombia in verifying the completion of the laying down of individual weapons by the FARC-EP on 27 June. This represented a major stride forward in the implementation of the peace agreement and demonstrated, once again, the parties' strong commitment to achieving peace. XB funds also allowed the Mission to deploy technical expertise to support the verification of the destruction of weapons caches, a time-consuming and delicate task that is crucial for building confidence in the process. At the request of the parties, the Security Council established on 10 July a follow-on United Nations Mission mandated to verify FARC-EP reintegration, as well as implementation of security guarantees for former FARC-EP combatants and conflict-affected communities. Successful implementation of the reintegration phase will be crucial to consolidate peace in Colombia. This mandated verification mission will be an important factor in building trust in the process and supporting the parties in their efforts to meet their mutual commitments. DPA's planning capacity, supported by XB funding, made an instrumental contribution to the process of preparing, in very close coordination with the SRSG and the mission in the field, the Secretary-General's recommendations to the Security Council on the follow-on verification mission.

At the request of the government of the **Solomon Islands**, DPA helped strengthen the government's capacity to lead inclusive dialogues to address the underlying causes of the conflict; support women's participation in political processes; facilitate youth engagement; and support the development of a comprehensive reparations framework. Thanks to XB funding, DPA has periodically deployed a mediation expert on gender and inclusive facilitation processes to add capacity to the UN Pacific team. DPA, working closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and UNDP, supported inclusive dialogues in three key provinces and assisted the Government in its preparations for the National Dialogue held on 19-20 June. The National Dialogue ended successfully with a final communiqué, which will constitute

the basis for further United Nations engagement to sustain peace in the Solomon Islands.

The provision of **UN electoral assistance** at the request of Member States remains a priority for the Department. In the second quarter of 2017, DPA received 5 new requests (11 in total since the beginning of the year). XB funding continues to be instrumental in responding to these requests, as well as in the provision of capacity building support to a number of regional organizations. For example, at the request of the **Papua New Guinea** Election Commissioner, and with the endorsement of the Papua New Guinea government, DPA deployed two election experts to assist in the coordination of international observers to the Papua New Guinea elections conducted from 24 June to 8 July. More than 100 international electoral observers from more than 12 observer groups, including the Commonwealth and the Melanesian Spearhead Group, were in the country. The United Nations electoral experts compiled and distributed background information to the observation groups, organized briefings and trainings before deployment, liaised with relevant authorities to ensure international observers got access to polling stations, and provided logistical support to the observers. Observers widely commended this work. The Government and Parliament to be formed through these elections will play a critical role in the final stage of the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.



Women, Peace and Security

DPA's Gender, Peace and Security Unit provided advisory, technical, and operational support to the Department's peacemaking work, including to peace processes. Thanks to XB funding, DPA supported a workshop in Scotland for the **Syrian Women's Advisory Board to the Special Envoy for Syria**. The workshop provided an opportunity for the Board to better prepare for the intra-Syrian negotiations on the political transition process. XB funds also allowed DPA to commission a study on the inclusion of women and civil society in the UN-led political process in Syria. The expert consultant attended a round of talks in early June at the request of OSE-Syria and carried out extensive interviews with members of the Women's Advisory Board. The study gathered lessons learned from efforts undertaken since 2013 by the Special Envoy, DPA staff and other partners, and has been used to inform current efforts to include women and civil society in the UN-led political process for Syria.

From 1-3 May, DPA's utilized XB funds to conduct the **12th Gender/Women Peace and Security (WPS)** training for staff from headquarters and field missions, including for Peace and Development Advisors deployed in non-mission settings. The training helped build staff skills to address gender/WPS, including conflict-related sexual violence, in DPA's prevention and peacebuilding efforts. It also focused on ensuring the incorporation of a stronger gender perspective into the Department's work in conflict analysis, mediation and preventive diplomacy. Over the years participants have consistently provided positive feedback about the usefulness of this training in terms of their increased awareness of gender mainstreaming good practices and strategies to promote the effective and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and conflict prevention efforts.



Expanding partnerships with Member States and regional organizations

The partnership between the United Nations and **African Union (AU)** continues to grow. The Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson convened the **first UN-AU Annual Conference** on 19 April at United Nations Headquarters. The meeting brought together senior leadership from both organisations and was a landmark occasion to further enhance this partnership. The meeting culminated in the signing of the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The framework seeks to facilitate efforts towards a more predictable and systematic collaboration between the two organizations; help develop a shared understanding of the root causes and drivers of conflict in Africa; and promote convergence in decision-making as much as possible.

The **UN Liaison Office for Peace and Security in Vienna**, supported with XB funds, continues to

ensure effective coordination between the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Liaison Office also services the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS), enabling the effective channelling of support and best practices of the three departments to the OSCE Secretariat on a broad range of peace and security issues. The Liaison Office also contributed to fostering closer cooperation with Vienna-based UN entities, such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). A key achievement in April was the facilitation of an agreement between the OSCE and DFS that provides OSCE with access to the UN procurement system. This will result in significant savings for OSCE when procuring large number of equipment purchased both for Headquarters and their field missions. OSCE is the second regional organization to benefit from this type of agreement with the UN (the African Union being the other).



Strengthening UN system-wide collaboration

DPA XB funds provided catalytic funding for joint projects in support of Resident Coordinators under the **Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention**. For example, joint assessment missions and analysis exercises were held in Cambodia and Guatemala to inform the UN's strategic engagement. In Timor-Leste, it provided analytical and advisory support to the UN Resident Coordinator's office and UNDP Election Adviser ahead and during the Parliamentary elections. In the second quarter of 2017, the Joint Programme has deployed new Peace and Development Advisers (PDA) to Cambodia, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji-Pacific and Guyana and Suriname. Upcoming PDA deployments are planned for Burkina Faso, Guatemala, Jordan, Mauritania, South Caucasus, The Gambia, Venezuela, and Yemen; while the PDA function in Cameroon and Niger will also welcome new incumbents. On 19 June, the first partner event of the Joint Programme gathered over 40 Member States, United Nations' partners and civil society. It provided an opportunity to discuss the achievements of the programme in strengthening partnerships for conflict prevention. The event was co-

chaired by DPA and UNDP, with a keynote address by the Deputy Secretary-General who characterised the Programme as *"an important contribution to the Secretary-General's vision for prevention"*.

DPA, together with the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF), held a workshop on the Horn of Africa from 12-13 June to take stock of the political, economic, and human rights trends in the region. The goal was to brainstorm on the role that the United Nations can play in the Horn of Africa, taking into consideration the geopolitical dynamics in the Gulf region and the Red Sea dynamics. The event brought together key actors of the United Nations system, PDAs from the region, as well as a senior consultant to the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. The workshop touched upon country-specific and regional security trends, analysed the multifaceted internal challenges faced by the Horn countries (such as identity, rising extremism, human rights violations, displacement, migration, youth unemployment, gender gap, environmental degradation), and considered the contributions of and challenges faced by regional and sub-regional organizations.



Ensuring organizational effectiveness

DPA is undertaking a **mid-point review of its 2016-2019 Strategic Plan**. This internal review is a stock-take exercise of progress to date. It will be used to inform the revision of the Department's upcoming 2018-2019 Results Framework to ensure that indicators and targets fully capture the scope and breadth of DPA's undertakings across its strategic objectives. Furthermore, the review will help the Department develop a Theory of Change to articulate its work.

The Department is also rolling out the **Enterprise Risk Management** (ERM) across its 2018 XB projects. The overall objective is to support more effective risk identification and mitigation planning in delivery of critical XB-funded activities as well as to enable greater and more regular management oversight.

XB funding supports the implementation of DPA's **2017 Training Strategy** that provides staff with adequate learning opportunities to enhance their performance. In May, DPA piloted the course "Drafting Political Analysis" in partnership with the United Nations Office of Human Resources Management. The training offered tailored support to strengthen the political analysis and drafting skills of 21 participants (6 men and 15 women). Three more courses have been scheduled this year at headquarters and in the field.

In cooperation with DPKO, DPA organized a two-day **workshop on e-analytics**. The workshop followed the Secretary-General's call for integrated analysis and strengthening the early warning capacities of the United Nations. Multiple experts from the technology field, as well as from the Secretary-Gener-

al's flagship innovation initiative "Global Pulse", discussed key considerations and challenges related to data analysis in the Middle East. Participants from political and peacekeeping missions, as well as various United Nations' partners, were equipped with concrete tools and methodologies to carry out open source data analysis and integrate evidence-driven analysis of peacemaking initiatives and peace operations into their regular workflow.

Finally, DPA produced a short **documentary film** on the role of the United Nations, in particular DPA and

UNOWAS, in supporting along with ECOWAS and the AU, the people of Burkina Faso as they sought to ensure that the democratic transition in the country sparked by the ouster of long-time ruler Blaise Compaore remained on track. The film aims to address the perennial difficulty of illustrating the work of conflict prevention. The documentary, funded entirely by voluntary contributions, is being distributed in the West African region and globally via DPA and DPI channels. It is available at the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=t6dbiQCoXoY

Financial snapshot

From 1 January to 30 June, the Department received contributions from 16 donors amounting to \$12.2 million. In addition, the Department has \$6 million in the pipeline thanks to annual and multi-year agreements, and requests its partners to help DPA meet the \$27 million funding target outlined in the 2017 Update to the Multi-Year Appeal available at:

<http://www.un.org/undpa/en/funding>

In the second quarter of 2017, DPA welcomed Mexico and Iraq as new donors. Since 2013, DPA's efforts to expand a broad and diversify donor base have been met with success having welcomed twenty new donors in total.



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