



*Au service
des peuples
et des nations*

NOTE on UNDP's CURRENT AND PROPOSED PROJECTS FOCUSED ON EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT AND CREATING SOCIAL COHESION FOR YOUTH

I. Problem statement

Overall Context:

In 2015, Burundi experienced a sharp decline in its security situation following President Nkurunziza's decision, announced on 26 April 2015, to run for a third term in office. The announcement, which sparked a strong negative reaction from opposition, civil society and parts of the wider population, including popular anti-third mandate demonstrations, was further compounded by a failed coup attempt on 13 May. The political instability created by the coup attempt resulted in further protests and violence in the streets of the capital and an increasingly violent crackdown by State security forces. Following much debate and international attention, and three rounds of failed talks mediated by the UN, the African Union (AU), the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the East African Community (EAC) aimed at credible elections, Presidential elections were held in Burundi on 21 July 2015 and President Nkurunziza took office for a contested third term.

The results of the electoral process, which was boycotted by the opposition, have been met with concern on the part of the international community resulting in some partners freezing their direct budget support to the aid-dependent country and others still attempting to continue operations in a politically fragile environment. The country has since been marred in socio-political crisis which is gradually chipping away at the hard-won peace consolidation gains of the past 10 years, bringing the country on the brink of instability with serious consequences on its economy and its social fabric.

Since the beginning of the year and despite the high level visits paid to the country by the Security Council Members, the Secretary-General and a delegation of 5 Heads of African States, the overall political and security context in Burundi remains extremely fragile with several high-ranking military officers being assassinated in the past weeks and national forces that appear to be increasingly divided. Serious concerns have been expressed with regards to human rights violations committed throughout the country. It is against this background that the regionally mediated dialogue process between Government and its opposition is now showing timid signs of resumption after the 28th December 2015 initial meeting. The dialogue process is expected to kick start again in May 2016.

UNDP's response:

The international community has had to re-define the manner in which it engages in Burundi and within this context, UNDP has also identified the need to re-define its programmes to target the most vulnerable parts of the population. In this respect, the issue of youth and their social, political and economic rights has been identified as a key area of focus for programming going

forward that has the potential to create real peace dividends at the community level and stem the tide or potential for violence due to political manipulation.

Designing and preparing multiple interventions to support youth employment and social cohesion

The overall approach on youth is guided by the belief that if vulnerable youth in communities affected by violence have access to information, training and economic opportunities then they will help to drive a process of peace consolidation and lay the foundation for promoting peaceful coexistence, social cohesion and socio-economic development.

In this respect, UNDP is in the process of developing several project interventions around the question of youth employment and social cohesion all with the same aim of accessing particularly vulnerable youth in the current context and providing opportunities and alternatives to violence. In so doing, UNDP also has in mind the potential 270,000 people who fled Burundi since the beginning of the political crisis and who may return, whether willingly or forcibly, at any time and in any number. A sudden influx of returnees could potentially adversely impact on social cohesion within communities, particularly where issues of economic opportunities are concerned. For these reasons, programmes focused on youth and social cohesion play a key role for the sake of keeping the peace at all levels of society. Mindful of the potential for disputes that such return, along with the re-settling of IDPs might bring, UNDP, in parallel with the initiatives contained in this note, is also scaling up its work around legal clinics and legal assistance to the most vulnerable groups of population, in an effort to “nip emerging disputes in the bud” through free legal advice and mediation, before they escalate and trigger further violence within communities. More information on this topic is available through a separate concept note.

It is against the aforementioned background that UNDP has developed / is developing the following programmes:

- **UNFPA, UNDP and UNV joint programme on community security and social cohesion with youth affected by conflict:** The programme is a combined effort to provide safe and neutral spaces at the community level for youth to gather and share their experiences through music, play and theatre. The UNDP component however aims to identify the most vulnerable youth to participate in 3-month paid rehabilitation projects at the community level with a compulsory savings scheme that will be used to support youth to establish their own small enterprises, including through training and skills development. The intervention will reach 720 youth in three areas of Bujumbura in an initial phase but the objective is to expand the intervention into other areas of the capital and beyond. This joint programme is already fully developed and is supported by PBF funds. Any scaling up (to more youths and/or other areas of Bujumbura) will however require additional resources.
- **UNICEF, UNDP and WFP holistic approach and programme on emergency employment and psychosocial support to youth:** This programme is being designed around three main pillars of intervention that aim to provide a holistic approach through: i) emergency employment, ii) ‘play’ and sport to create opportunities for teambuilding and iii) psychosocial support and life skills. This programme is currently being developed and funding for it is to be mobilized.
- **UNDP project to support Youth to drive a process of conflict prevention and peaceful coexistence:** This project intends to support youth to become active participants in civic life through the creation of fora for dialogue amongst youth with different political views

as well as supporting youth to engage at commune level to participate in dialogue with others in an effort to contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building. The project will ensure that youth have the capability and capacity to drive a process for consolidation of peace and stability laying foundation for an inclusive, transparent system of governance promoting peaceful coexistence, social cohesion and socio-economic development through three main streams of work:

- Improved community structures to manage conflict and insecurity;
- Youth committees established to manage community rehabilitation through creation of short-term employment; and,
- Improved and diversified livelihood opportunities created.

This programme will be developed into a fully-fledged project once resources have been mobilized for it.

II. Main expected outcome:

In light of the above, the main expected outcome of these projects is to foster and maintain a space for young men and women in the current context of Burundi's instability to identify their specific goals and needs and to defend those needs in solidarity with one another regardless of social, political or economic differences. The purpose of the above interventions is to provide youth with an alternative to the violence and to provide social and economic opportunities that might not otherwise be possible in the current context. By providing these opportunities, it is hoped that young people can themselves become positive forces for change instead of being manipulated into participating in the current instability.