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PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM
THROUGH PROMOTING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Global meeting
14-16 MARCH, 2016, OSLO, NORWAY

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Preventing violent extremism

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The Global Meeting on 'Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity', organised by UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre and the Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support was held in Oslo on 14-16 March 2016. The meeting brought together 135 people from forty-seven countries who work in government; development agencies; civil society, including youth organisations and women's networks; academia; media; and the law enforcement and security communities to discuss experiences, lessons learned and approaches related to the prevention of violent extremism.

The meeting was held under the Chatham House Rule, and this report accordingly does not refer by name to individuals or institutions (either in the main text or quotation boxes), except for interventions that are otherwise publicly available. The organisers have not sought formal endorsement of the report by participants and present instead an 'Organisers' Summary'. Except for the section specifically covering UNDP's approach to preventing violent extremism, the report does not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP, the UN or its member states, but only the discussions at the Global Meeting.

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'Violent extremism increases fragility, it weakens communities, and it fuels migration.'

Norwegian State Secretary Tore Hattrem

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PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE - INTRODUCING THE GLOBAL MEETING

In March 2016, more than 130 practitioners, academics, government representatives, and activists met in Oslo to discuss the prevention of violent extremism. Violent extremism has grown to become a global challenge - threatening and instilling fear and suspicion in people of all creeds and backgrounds in virtually every corner of the world. The Global Meeting, hosted by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) and the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, focused on exploring the paths that lead individuals and groups to commit acts of violent extremism. It explored the diverse and complex causes and conditions that initiate and sustain this action - from global narratives of injustice and prospects of a better and fairer life - and afterlife - to local, often legitimate, grievances relating to discrimination, repression, marginalisation, lack of opportunity, and hopelessness.

At the meeting we reminded ourselves that nobody is born a terrorist and that the task at hand therefore must be to identify and address the underlying drivers of violent extremism. We did so while also acknowledging the importance of geopolitics, national politics and local politics in driving violent extremism. We reconfirmed our commitment to 'the business of hope' and pledged to pursue the long-term societal transitions - socioeconomic opportunity, good governance, inclusion, justice, and dialogue - that help prevent violent extremism from gaining a foothold in the first place.

> 'We should all agree that when security authorities need to respond, we have in fact already failed in our longing for peaceful existence. When we're forced to respond through security measures, it is because we have failed to deal with the factors that lead first from alienation to radicalization, and then from radicalization to acts of mass violence.'
>
> Magdy Martínez-Solimán, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

We took as a starting point our context today- a world where people and ideas travel with unprecedented ease and speed - and the urgent need to design better models for governing diverse societies. We confirmed that tolerance is not enough - we need to appreciate and embrace diversity. Freedom from fear and freedom from want set the bar too low when competing against violent groups promising purity, prestige and power.

The United Nations and its Member States responded to developments in the world around us through the creation, in 2005, of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and in 2011 of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), both in the Department of Political Affairs. In December 2015, the UN Secretary-General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and in January 2016 UNDP finalised its corporate strategy on *Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity - A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism*. Having validated the strategic approach and focus at the Global Meeting in Oslo, UNDP will now proceed with developing and implementing a global program on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as described in the concluding chapter of this report.

The adoption last year by the broader UN Membership of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and namely Goal 16 to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, marked another critical recognition of the drivers of violent conflict and extremism. The universal targets under SDG 16, aimed at reducing violence; ensuring access to justice; reducing organised crime and corruption; developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making; and protecting fundamental freedoms, provide a useful platform for, and commitment to, the global efforts to address the drivers and push factors of violent extremism.

In this context and with this new commitment in place, I strongly believe we need to show that what we have to offer is stronger, more trustworthy and more compelling than what violent extremists offer. We need to stress the potential for growth, opportunity and security in societies that are at peace with themselves and offer spaces for dialogue as well as platforms for the non-violent resolution of conflicts and grievances. We need to stress the individual and collective power of understanding, respecting, embracing and empathising with our fellow human beings.

Achieving this requires a collaborative effort between development actors, security sector actors, and decision-makers, as well as the communities and individuals affected by violent extremism. The Global Meeting and this report play a part in that process of identifying how development actors can contribute to offering alternatives to violent extremism and help address its root causes.

Magdy Martínez-Solimán
UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and
Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

Principal messages from the Global Meeting

The Global Meeting on 'Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) by Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity' held in Oslo in March 2016 was an opportunity for global development actors to engage in in-depth discussions of their role in preventing violent extremism. This report presents key points from the many conceptual and thematic discussions. Its principal messages are presented in summary here:

⇨ **Current trends and characteristics of violent extremism and efforts to prevent it**

- Efforts to prevent violent extremism must acknowledge the primacy of politics. Political decisions and developments at global, national and local levels are key drivers of violent extremism.

- Efforts to prevent violent extremism can be profoundly counterproductive if they curtail basic political, human and civil rights.

- There is a need to avoid focusing exclusively on religious extremism, but to consider the full range of extremist discourse and behaviour.

- Violent extremism is not new, but the challenges we face today are more complex owing to globalization of the problem and spillover effects across borders.

- Local grievances can be rapidly and easily manipulated into violent extremism through modern communication technology and the ease of travel.

- The nexus of fragility, conflict, migration and violent extremism is complex and worrying. The number of states showing severe strains – and thus possibly providing fertile ground for violent extremism - is increasing.

⇨ **The role, comparative advantages and constraints of development actors in preventing violent extremism**

- Prevention is not an alternative to security actors' responses; it complements those efforts and reduces the need for them.

- Development partners must focus on understanding and addressing the root causes of violent extremism as part of a prevention agenda.

- Much is already known about the drivers of violent extremism from a range of fields. While more context-specificity is needed, evaluation of violent extremism can benefit from comparative analysis, especially drawing on decades of criminology research and radicalisation studies.

- Extensive knowledge and experience of what works and what does not work already exists in the field of preventive programming - what is certainly needed is better local contextualization.

- Low levels of funding for prevention (including gender considerations) indicate the securitised nature of current approaches to addressing violent extremism.

- Development actors must navigate a highly securitised space around PVE. They also have to work with partners uncomfortable in the (often politicised) domain of PVE. Pragmatic language and honest partnerships are therefore needed.

⇨ **Development actors must develop and sustain partnerships with key stakeholders**
- Young people are not the problem; they are part of the solution. Violent extremist groups often target the young because society has failed to make them feel safe, acknowledged, empowered and included.

- "Radicalisation" is not necessarily a problem. It can be a force for good when the urge for social change has positive, peaceful and constructive outlets.

- It is essential to recognize and support the vast majority of young women and men who reject violent extremism and work for peace.

- Women play a critical, yet often disregarded role in understanding, preventing and responding to violent extremism.

- Participation and leadership of women and women's organisations in strategy development and programming to address violent extremism is critical, but funding remains inadequate.

- Moderate religious leaders and interfaith networks should be supported and strengthened to confront narratives exploiting their own traditions to promote violence, hatred and division, and should address inflammatory rhetoric within their institutions.

- Women of faith have compelling and alternative religious, historical and cultural narratives and visions to offer.

- The governance community, including donors, needs to strengthen independent, free and protected media as a component of good governance strategies and in support of non-violent, free and inclusive dialogue.

⇨ **Critical next steps for development actors to enhance PVE programming**
- There is an urgent need to break with professional exclusivity and apply an inter-disciplinary approach to PVE throughout the programming cycle.

- A 'PVE lens" should be applied in order to develop explicit policy guidance establishing a normative framework for PVE programming anchored in human rights compliance.

- In the design and implementation of PVE programmes communities should be engaged to reflect the context-specificity of violent extremism dynamics and the need to draw on and reinforce local, endogenous PVE mechanisms.

- Regional approaches and strategies are important in reflecting the transnational nature of violent extremism.

- Development actors and donors must support countries that successfully prevent violent extremism and avoid creating a perverse incentive by targeting only those countries where violent extremism arises.

- The global discussion on PVE now needs to be contextualised at the regional, national and community levels, and significant investments must be made in analysis, evidence-generation and documentation.

Past and present – tracing the history of preventing violent extremism

A globalised threat thriving in fragile and conflict-affected states

Although violent extremism is a global challenge and concern, and more than forty countries have experienced at least one terrorist attack, it is a fact that violent extremism thrives particularly where state authority is weak. In the 'epicentres' of violent extremism, thirty-four groups are now affiliated with Daesh, accounting for thirty-eight thousand fighters from 120 countries (including 32,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria). While Daesh is still the world's deadliest terror group in terms of both civilian and military casualties, in 2014 Boko Haram actually murdered more civilians (6,500), in Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon. Violent extremist groups especially prey on – and challenge the legitimacy of - failing or collapsed states by offering competing 'services' spanning security, justice, social welfare and employment, and intangible but crucial elements of recognition, identity, and community. Out of twenty-three countries in conflict, 17 are also experiencing violent extremism; and eighty-eight per cent of all terrorist attacks have occurred in countries involved in violent conflict. There thus seems to be a strong link between conflict and fragility on the one hand and the growth of violent extremism. With 59 countries at risk of instability in 2016, the breeding ground for violent extremism is accordingly expanding. Geopolitical action, or inaction, pushing countries into fragility or collapse is therefore of particular concern.

> **'** It has become much easier to translate local grievances into violent extremism organized by transnational if not global groups.

Local and global financing and recruitment strategies

Global developments have shaped violent extremism. Following a decline in state sponsorship of armed groups, violent extremist groups increasingly rely on private sponsorship, including from 'diaspora communities'.

The use of social media and a globalized media landscape have made it easier to construct and subscribe to narratives of global injustice and thus to create or join a 'cause' regardless of location.

Local drivers for Boko Haram in Nigeria
Research has found that Boko Haram recruits don't feel they belong to the nation. They told researchers: "We don't know what it means to be a Nigerian. I'm Muslim, I'm Hausa. I'm Yoruba." The last thing they say is "I'm Nigerian". To explain their grievances they point to corruption, that resources are in the hands of elites and to widespread disparities between groups and regions.

As other drivers of violent extremism, researchers have also identified that religion and ethnicity has become politicized, that there are no effective conflict resolution mechanisms in place, and that youth have limited opportunities in life.

The many foreign fighters in Daesh and Boko Haram demonstrate the ease with which transnational (if not global) groups can translate local grievances into violent extremism. In the past, local grievances might have given rise to armed groups which, - if they resonated with the local population's needs and objectives, would slowly grow in strength until ultimately challenging ruling elites. Peace agreements could be brokered, and the root causes of conflicts addressed.

Conflict and peacebuilding dynamics have changed as, in general, violent extremist groups do not seek peaceful settlements accommodating their demands. Their claims are fundamentally non-negotiable, uncompromising, and they apply an 'all or nothing' logic. In many parts of the world, local grievances are used to recruit for violent extremist groups or to encourage individuals to carry out violent attacks independently. These networks or groups offer a sense of belonging and serve as a valve for turning personal perception of marginalization, disenfranchisement, trauma, crime and ineptitude into collective, destructive action.

> Violent extremism recognizes no borders, no cultures, no religions, or ethnic groups. It is a phenomenon that affects us all, and it can only be tackled by us all. No country is immune.
>
> Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism

Politics and power as drivers of violent extremism

Political decisions and actions at all levels might fuel violent extremism
Since political decisions and developments at the global, national and local levels are key drivers of violent extremism, efforts to prevent it must acknowledge the primacy of politics. Geopolitical dynamics have at times led the international community to turn a blind eye to states' engagement in human rights abuses; deliberate marginalisation and discrimination; and even sponsoring of violent extremism. In Nigeria, for example, widespread perception of electoral corruption and money politics has led to low voter participation among youth and minority groups; violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram have capitalized on the wide gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots'. In Afghanistan, elections and political access have come to be seen as means for personal enrichment and entrenchment of vested interests. Violent extremist groups leverage this sense of grievance to win over ordinary Afghans.

> ❝ The old and ever current debate between liberty and security is relevant, precisely because in some countries, the VE agenda has been abused to suppress political opposition or ideological dissent. The Special Representative on Terrorism has alerted us not to lose 'the valuable rights and freedoms of our citizens in the rush to find new measures to protect them'.
>
> Magdy Martínez-Solimán, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

State collapse, power vacuums or illegitimate political settlements are therefore all key drivers of violent extremism. Development actors must guard against imagining that their own interventions can take place in isolation from political decisions and events. Indeed, efforts to prevent or counter violent extremism have themselves been abused to curtail and undermine basic rights. PVE has often been conflated with counter-terrorism, with unintended consequences when governments use 'national security' as a pretext to silence opposition, abuse human rights, limit media freedom, and crack down on civil society.

The importance of 'doing no harm' in responses to violent extremism
It is a well-known tactic of violent extremist groups to generate a spiral of state repression, leaving populations squeezed between them and hostile, intolerant governments. In a number of countries the fight against violent extremism has often been used explicitly to justify state suppression of civil society organisations through detentions, assassinations, revoking licenses, etc., and violent extremist groups are quick to exploit the vacuum that results.

> ❝ We cannot talk about 'prevention' without addressing State role in fomenting radicalization through application of heavy-handed approaches and oppressive policies. The population is squeezed between intolerant governments and intolerant extremists.

Development actors must therefore always apply 'do no harm' principles to PVE interventions to ensure that these reduce the risk of recruitment for violent extremism rather than indirectly and unintentionally increasing it: 'getting it wrong' can mean aggravating the problem rather than solving it. To prevent this, development actors need to invest carefully in the design of PVE programmes. Because donors and recipient governments often push for quick results, development actors must engage all partners in establishing a shared understanding of the need for cautious and evidence-based design. PVE strategies must be exceptionally principled - anchored in the rule of law, fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law. Impartiality and neutrality must be maintained, as it is from this that the UN System derives its legitimacy, access, and relative safety and security.

Prevention as the main focus for development actors

The role and space for development actors in preventing violent extremism

Changes in the narrative around violent extremism - from anti-terrorism to countering violent extremism to preventing violent extremism - relates not merely to nomenclature but indicates a genuine shift in approaches. The shortcomings of a purely reactive securitization approach have required development actors to adopt a longer-term focus on the root causes of violent extremism before it emerges. But prevention alone is not an alternative to security responses; it complements these efforts and reduces the need for them. While CVE should make it more difficult to translate grievances into violence, PVE should help to channel the urge for change into constructive and productive activities.

> There is a broad array of push and pull factors responsible for driving violent extremism. These are influenced by local, national and regional dynamics.
>
> Norwegian State Secretary Tore Hattrem

That said, development actors must acknowledge that violent extremism is closely related to security and that security authorities have legitimate concerns about external interference in their work. At the same time, many security actors have realized that responding to and countering violent extremism deals with symptoms, not with root causes, and hence does not provide long-term solutions. The PVE agenda provides an opportunity to review and refine the development-security nexus. Development actors have clear comparative advantages in tackling root causes of conflicts. Where there is significant recruitment to violent extremist groups, security actors may increase surveillance and intelligence work; development actors might try to understand what drives people to embrace violent radicalism in the first place, and design programmatic interventions accordingly.

Bridges are increasingly being built across the 'security-development divide'. The transition to PVE has involved a number of critical shifts in focus, approaches and modus operandi in affected countries :

- Partnerships have been broadened beyond security actors to include all actors involved in strengthening local resilience to violent extremism.
- The time horizon has shifted from a short-term reactive mode to a longer- term focus on addressing systemic drivers of violent extremism.
- Focus has shifted from events to 'non-events', i.e. from security incidents to ensuring the absence of such incidents.
- Efforts have shifted from addressing the symptoms to working on the root causes of violent extremism.

> The opportunity to be healthy, to become educated, to be productive, to have one's identity acknowledged, and to be protected from harm and injustice are fundamental human rights. If these rights are denied, and one really has nothing to lose, it's not strange that the promise of rescue, retribution, and reward seems tremendously appealing.
>
> Magdy Martínez-Solimán, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

Understanding paths to violent extremism

An individual's or group's path towards embracing violent extremism can involve a range of external factors including geopolitical developments; demographic change (for example large youth populations); economic pressures of climate change; migration; social and mass media proliferation; the flow of small arms; state collapse; etc. But responding to such external factors with indiscriminate violence also involves an individual, emotional and psychological transformation relating to personal experience, perceptions and beliefs. Research shows that individuals at risk of recruitment to violent extremism often:

- Feel unable to resolve disputes peacefully and find it difficult to embrace diversity (owing to a culture of violence and intolerance);

- Have experienced - or fear -abuse from the institutions in society holding the monopoly of violence and detention;

- Do not feel listened to or engaged;

- Feel humiliated, disrespected and unrecognised (formally and/or informally);

- Feel disillusioned with the state and its governance and responsiveness;

- Perceive social inequality favouring specific groups (other than the one the individual belongs to) - groups that also benefit from impunity;

- Experience a lack of opportunity in terms of education, livelihood, and income; and

- Experience a lack of meaning, identity, belonging, and cultural acknowledgment.

Not all individuals with such grievances embrace violence. The combination and magnitude of grievances, however, combined with personal experiences and the influence of violent extremist narratives can push or pull individuals into embracing violence as a legitimate means of redress. When specific groups witness a combination of horizontal inequalities and stigmatisation, the risk of radicalisation and violent behaviour increases.

Action points for development actors to consider:

- Acknowledge the risk of efforts to counter/prevent violent extremism which curtail the human rights and civil liberties of individuals and communities, for example in the form of punitive or insensitive national counter-terrorism legislations.

- Recognize that increased engagement of development actors on PVE will therefore require explicit policy guidance with regards to the normative framework and human rights compliance as well as on related risk assessment and risk management.

- Ensure that advocacy in support of PVE reaffirms basic UN principles and values, including international humanitarian law.

Partnerships as the basis for advancement

The challenges of operating in a securitised space
Owing to the multifaceted sources and causes of violent extremism, development actors need to work alongside of – or form and sustain strong and comprehensive partnerships with - a range of people, including security authorities.

> ❝ It takes a network to defeat a network.

Development actors have a critical role to play in intervening at different stages of the radicalisation process before a criminal act is committed. Once a criminal act is committed, security and law enforcement actors take over and will often work with other partners only if they find it directly beneficial to do so. If disengagement and/or reintegration should be possible, development actors can also play a role.

Development actors have to navigate and operate in a highly securitised space around PVE, often with very firm lines delineating where prevention stops and national security responses begin. It is therefore important that development actors recognize these constraints and have a good understanding of the objectives, nature and perceptions of security actors.

The challenges of context
Development actors must also implement their programmes alongside, and often in partnership with, civil society organisations uncomfortable with entering the politicised domain of PVE. Civil society organisations may assume a significant risk simply by associating with or being funded by international organisations, especially those working on 'violent extremism'. Consequently, it may often make sense to devise more palatable descriptions of PVE . Explicit references to programming as 'PVE' may attract unwanted attention from violent extremist groups themselves and stigmatize target groups. Framing PVE with an alternative vocabulary of social cohesion, dialogue, co-existence, reconciliation, etc. would not aim to deceive partners or beneficiaries but merely reflect the fact that much of the programming involves 'traditional' development, human rights and good governance while addressing root causes of violent extremism.

If in some contexts partners prefer to avoid explicit framing of programming as PVE for political reasons, this does not necessarily mean that they have no interest in addressing drivers of violent extremism.

> ❝ Effective PVE programming partnerships must primarily focus on strengthening local and endogenous capacities for PVE and strengthen community resilience to violent extremism.

Building partnerships at the local level
Effective programming partnerships must primarily focus on strengthening local and endogenous capacities for PVE and community resilience to violent extremism. In some contexts there may be a specific role for development partners in organising and facilitating partnerships between formal government institutions and

formal and informal civil society structures. In particular, it is important to establish structured spaces of dialogue between development and security actors at the national and local levels. Where the state is hostile towards civil society organisations or when civil society organisations function as proxies for political and/or economic interests, development actors need to be particularly cautious and strategic in how they establish and manage their partnerships.

In order to identify, manage and leverage the local partnerships needed to prevent violent extremism, development actors must invest in analysis to understand the local context, trust-building processes with partners, and capacity development of endogenous structures. This activity includes developing the resources and capacity of trusted individuals within communities, such as women leaders, religious scholars, youth group leaders, and traditional leaders. Provided with the right technical and financial resources, such individuals and groups can educate their communities on PVE and develop community-specific strategies for actively preventing violent extremism at the local level. The critical factor here is the nature of local formal and informal authorities, i.e. their ability to provide peer-to-peer support (and pressure), positive role models, and mentorship through existing familiarity, authority and trust. In the following sections, selected stakeholders with a critical role in PVE are described in more detail.

Action points for development actors to consider:

- Develop a viable model for coordination of security and development actors on the ground including through integrated planning and programming if this can happen in the context of basic UN principles and values, including international humanitarian law.

- Focus on local interventions and engagement at community level will require scaling up partnerships with civil society actors.

The role of youth as agents of positive social change

Today's generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known: half of the world's population is under the age of 30. Seventy per cent of them live in Africa and the Middle East, two regions often roiled by violent conflict and violent extremism.

> **"** In many of the countries struggling with violent extremism, youth groups are working to prevent violent extremism by mobilising at-risk youth and offering positive outlets for the desire for social change.

Young people may experience identity crises and quests for meaning that have no positive outlets; exclusion or alienation from traditional decision-making processes and institutions; and stark socio-economic inequalities in employment, income, housing, and access to basic social services. In Somalia, for example, young people are disenfranchised from the current presidential-election process: because the country is emerging from a long period of violent conflict, potentially destabilizing elections were postponed, and an interim President would be chosen by a process empowering the various clans and sections - local customs place decision-making in the hands of elders. Youth are also excluded from local peace councils and are thus left out from local conflict resolu-

tion mechanisms. In Kenya, young people complain about difficulties in obtaining ID cards. This is a particular grievance for members of minority groups, who are asked to prove their Kenyan citizenship when applying for IDs. Extremist groups take advantage of such grievances to further the division between state and society.

Jihadism is associated almost exclusively with men under the age of twenty-five in regions with large youth cohorts. The very names of some movements reflect this demographic: Al-Shabaab means Youth; Taliban means Students; and Boko Haram means loosely that Islam forbids foreign or 'Western' education. These and similar groups often operate in the wake of state collapse or by exploiting pockets of instability or absence of 'state extension'. Alienated and traumatised ex-combatants, returning to communities that now shun them, are particularly susceptible to recruitment as they look elsewhere for community, recognition and meaning.

Youth as positive agents of change
A fundamental principle for development actors involved in PVE and conflict prevention should be to see youth not only as potential troublemakers but also as an important - and often untapped - force for peace. Youth radicalism can be, and has often been, a critical force for progressive social change. Radicalization (as a youth phenomenon) is also about the search for identity, belonging, and recognition. In the quest to 'remake the world', young people may find in radicalization an appealing counter-culture at odds with the status quo. Because radicalism (and potentially violent radicalism) often results from disappointed idealism, development actors can look for energies that have been hijacked by extremists and divert them towards a more positive political awakening.

> **'** It is important to remember that youth radicalism can be, and has often been, a force for good.

Of course, progressive social change tends to begin on the peripheries of the mainstream and is often considered radical to begin with. Radicalism simply means accepting beliefs and ideas that fall outside mainstream views in a given society. The goals of many women's, LGBT and civil rights movements were initially (and in some places still are) regarded as radical and even criminalized before their acceptance within mainstream discourse. Political apathy and procrastination can be at least as problematic as radical thinking. The challenge facing development actors is to channel the desire for change into constructive, non-violent and inclusive activities and approaches. And it is important to recognise that young people's views are not limited to issues directly affecting themselves. To include youth in decision-making and the achievement of societal change is therefore a critical strategy to prevent their recruitment for violent activities.

Action points for development actors to consider:

- Channel young people's desire for change into constructive, non-violent and inclusive activities and approaches.

- Bring new evidence on the contribution of young people as role models in preventing violence, conflict and violent extremism and support and promote new positive narratives on young people's role in PVE.

- Use UNSC resolution 2250 to hold Member States and all relevant stakeholders to account on their commitment to involve young people in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels, including in peace processes and dispute resolution.

- Leverage and support existing PVE efforts undertaken by youth groups, movements and organisations.

Both UNSC Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, and the Amman Youth Declaration recognize the powerful role and potential of young women and men as agents for peace within their societies. The resolution represents a key normative framework to hold Member States to account on their commitment to involve young people in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels, including in peace processes and dispute resolution. The Secretary-General's Plan of Action on PVE echoes the same call to integrate youth into decision-making and to support youth's participation in activities aimed at PVE. The Plan of Action's call for national action plans should provide a unique opportunity for development actors to support governments in their efforts to translate their commitments into practice and to establish meaningful partnerships between states and young people.

These efforts should draw on existing initiatives. In many countries youth groups are working to prevent violent extremism by mobilising at-risk youth and offering positive outlets for young people longing for social change. In Somalia, youth disengaging from Al-Shabaab can enrol in reintegration programmes focussing on trauma healing, livelihood skills and development of new positive relations within their society - programmes that are also run by young people. In a youth-led initiative in Pakistan, groups in all parts of the country have demonstrated the power of peer-to-peer education, positive role models and mentorship as effective PVE tools to help change the mind-sets of at-risk youth and to promote peace activism, social tolerance and non-violence.

Gender aspects of preventing violent extremism

As in any other field involving individual choice and agency, local social structures and societal change, women play a critical role in understanding, preventing and responding to violent extremism. As the focus in the fight against violent extremism transitions towards prevention-focussed interventions at the community level, there is an urgent need to re-examine the role of women in these contexts.

> **Behind every potentially radicalized man, there is a mother, wife, or sister he will call on.**

Strengthening the role of women in formal and informal mechanisms to prevent violent extremism
This re-examination should include a focus on strengthening interaction with women's civil society organisations regarding the impact of security intervention, improving community-level security presence, and supporting the inclusion of women at senior levels of national security architectures where now they are virtually absent in many countries. While women are more active than men at the grassroots level in the area of sustaining peace, they are often denied their rightful place in formal institutions of governance and peacebuilding at national and global levels, which privilege men with a counter-terrorism or security background. Gender analysis of security-related decisions and interventions is needed to recognize new dimensions of violent extremism and how to prevent it. Further, women need to be supported politically, financially and technically to expand their roles in community peacebuilding and reconciliation as well as in formal mechanisms and institutions at the highest level to mitigate the risk of further entrenching the securitization of the work on preventing violent extremism. Many national counter-radicalization strategies, for example, have yet to spell out a specific role of women. When women do not have a seat at the decision-making table, gender-specific dimensions of violent extremism are often ignored, and PVE efforts are mainly or even solely targeted at men and boys. While men unquestionably constitute the majority of violent extremists committing criminal acts, prevention efforts need to address all stakeholders who influence - positively or negatively - the path towards violent extremism.

> **While men unquestionably constitute the vast majority of violent extremists committing criminal acts, prevention efforts need to address all stakeholders influencing, positively or negatively, the path towards violent extremism.**

Consequently, security sector reforms must include gender awareness, as well as ensuring the recruitment and retention of women in senior positions in security institutions. In support of such efforts, the possibility of establishing national forums of female security personnel to discuss peace and security issues with women's organisations should be explored. Such forums could also focus on enhancing collaboration between women in elected and appointed office with women at the grassroots level in order to amplify women's voices in PVE-related discussions. In Kyrgyzstan, the UN is supporting community security through establishment of discussion platforms at the community level, which bring together people across ethnic and religious divides, marginalized youth, the police, and women and girls to discuss their respective security concerns, including radicalization and hate speech.

Women enjoy significant influence in informal structures at the community level that are often disregarded owing to the focus on formal structures and authorities as entry points for programming and dialogue. The call in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action for Member States to develop national PVE plans represents an opportunity for women to be engaged in shaping preventive approaches and strategies - bringing to bear their specific views, competencies and experiences. If women are not included, critical perspectives on the drivers of violent extremism are missing and negative societal structures are reproduced. For example, in Iraq, one important but neglected structural cause for violent extremism is the legal framework around marriage, which has resulted in thousands of unrecognised children deprived of formal rights and legal status. Growing up with bleak prospects for their lives, such youths may later be easy prey for extremist groups.

The roles of women in preventing violent extremism
At the 'meso-level', women are in many environments denied the opportunity to play important 'early warning', 'early response' and mediation roles. In most countries, male elders and male religious leaders assume responsibility for key PVE interventions at the community level. This is particularly problematic as women are often the first to detect the spread of extremism. At the same time women are often seen as 'non-polarizing' at the community level and are therefore uniquely positioned to engage in early warning and early response mechanisms.

In some instances when women have been included in PVE efforts at the community level, the results have been positive. In Kenya, for example, women have played a strategic role in contributing to community policing approaches by building trust between security actors and local communities. To empower the engagement of women in PVE efforts at the grassroots level, women's organisations need simple tools and skills training combined with recognition by the government and local authorities that women are indispensible if PVE efforts are to be sustainably successful.

Drawing on existing women-led efforts
Development partners can work with existing PVE networks led by women, such as Sisters without Borders in Kenya, a platform that brings together women working in PVE at the community, regional and national levels. The share of development funding allocated to PVE programming implemented by women's organisations appears to be small - although no fewer than eight Security Council resolutions recognize the role of women in peace and security.

Despite limited resources and profound risks, local women-led NGOs and community-based organisations have developed innovative approaches to address violent extremism. Through, for example, the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), women's organisations are connecting independent local and nationally rooted women-led organisations across regions and globally. WASL brings together women's rights and peace practitioners, organisations, and networks actively engaged in preventing extremism and promoting peace, basic

rights and pluralism. They engage in prevention and de-radicalization with those vulnerable to recruitment, offer interpretations of religious and cultural tenets that uphold equal rights and coexistence, and aim to hold political and religious leaders accountable for doing their part to prevent violent extremism.[1]

Men have an important part to play in supporting women's role in PVE. In Kenya, a 'Wise Men Movement' was formed to recognize male champions; religious leaders are particularly important in this context. The media also play a critical role in promoting more positive narratives about women. While there are hundreds of cases of women risking their lives to promote peace across ethnic and religious communities, their stories have often not been disseminated by the media and remain largely unknown.

Action points for development actors to consider:

- Support and strengthen existing women's organisations and networks to play their peacebuilding and reconciliation roles in formal mechanisms and institutions at the highest level of government.

- Engage women-led organisations already active in this area in the design and delivery of national PVE plans bringing to bear their specific views, competencies and experiences in shaping the preventive approaches and strategies.

- Work with existing women's networks and support male champions to promote the role of women in PVE, including with and through religious authorities.

Interfaith dialogue and understanding

In recent years the most widespread forms of violent extremism have associated themselves with religious narratives, blurring the cause-and-effect relationship between religion and violent extremism.[2] Indeed, research shows that religion itself is seldom the main or dominant driving force of violent extremism.   But specific religious interpretations are evidently used as a pretext for justifying the translation of grievances into violence.

> In many countries, faith has also been used as an instrument of the State to exercise social, if not even direct and political, control over society.

While opposition to violent extremism has brought together moderate religious leaders, some may be ill equipped to deal directly with it, lacking, for example, gender sensitivity and conflict sensitivity skills. In such instances there is an obvious need that development actors can fill. The dominance of patriarchal traditions that de facto relegate women to a secondary role also hinders effective PVE measures for all the reasons listed in the preceding section. Although 'counter movements' promoting the equal standing, value and authority of women exist within all religious traditions, these often have limited power and influence. When working with faith based organisations, development actors should promote gender equality and inclusivity.

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[1] www.WASLglobal.net
[2] Hearing on the causes and consequences of violent extremism and the role of foreign assistance. Statement for the Record Submitted by Andrea Koppel, Vice President for Global Engagement and Policy, Mercy Corps, Friday, April 15, 2016.

Religious freedoms and the role of the state and external actors

Recent research shows that tolerance for religious diversity is shrinking around the world. In many countries, faith has been used as an instrument of the state to exercise social - if not even direct and political - control. In some countries the state often controls - formally or informally - religious institutions. As a consequence, religion becomes a domain for targeting political opponents, even if they belong to the same religion or sect. Freedom of religion is a universal right, and while the religious arena cannot and should not be regulated directly, governance structures and oversight mechanisms may be improved in order to dilute radical preachers' influence over vulnerable people. In Sub-Saharan Africa, missionary activities have at times divided communities (and society more broadly), and religious institutions have reinforced illegitimate power relations. A recent push, for instance, to define Liberia constitutionally as a Christian nation has enraged other religious groups in a country where religion has otherwise not been a driver of conflict in recent years. Elsewhere the movement of religious leaders across national (and cultural) boundaries has created difficulties for communities already juggling with the pressures of multiple identities. Cameroon was highlighted as a positive example, where most madrassas today play an important role as 'social regulators'. A government-run system monitors curricula in order to promote peace and tolerance.

Financing of religious institutions is often a source of tension, especially where it can be interpreted as a sign of external interference in local conflict. Funding of certain forms of Salafi Islam is one example; diasporas' funding of religious institutions that exacerbate local conflict is another. Conversely, the potential of moderate religious institutions to promote peaceful co-existence and prevent violent extremism remains untapped in many contexts.

Promoting interfaith dialogue and positive religious narratives

Religious leaders should confront narratives from their own traditions that promote violence, hatred and division. There is also a need to work proactively to promote peaceful and moderate alternatives to (violent) extremist interpretations. Religious leaders may wish to revisit sense of 'entitlement' to claims of pre-eminence or exclusivity in the light of harmful social and political consequences. Key opinion-makers, whether religious or political, should ensure a public discourse that precludes the stigmatisation and alienation of any religious group.

> There is a need to go beyond mere condemnation and proactively work to promote peaceful and moderate alternatives to (violent) extremist interpretations.

Interfaith initiatives hold tremendous potential for supporting dialogue across communities. Religious leaders themselves can sign peace agreements. Interfaith initiatives can support mediation and conflict resolution, facilitate reconciliation, explain misunderstandings of Scripture, contribute to 'early warning' and 'early response', develop peaceful counter-narratives, and promote critical (and inclusive) thinking in religious institutions. In Nigeria, community-level inter-faith initiatives have facilitated dialogue in the northeast part of the country, where Boko Haram has been seeking to drive communities into religious division and conflict.

Development actors should work more closely with religious authorities with the potential to support co-existence and dialogue. Development actors must become better at working with moderate religious forces and supporting interfaith dialogue initiatives.

The role of media in preventing violent extremism

Winning the 'information battle' in fragile and conflict-affected states

The governance community, including donors, needs to consider strengthening free and independent media as an integral component of good governance strategies. Fragile and conflict-affected settings are often characterized by a fracturing of media environments in which media are government-controlled, entirely commercially focussed, or increasingly cater to specific linguistic, ethnic and religious communities. Credible national media outlets can counter misinformation, serve as a unifying force and provide a neutral platform for dialogue and for voicing grievances.

> The most effective media support strategies against violent extremism are similar to those that underpin effective governance, i.e. supporting the development of a free and independent media.

Violent extremists seeking to command loyalty and promote division make heavy investments in media. In what has been described as a 'tsunami of propaganda' both at local and global levels, extremist groups have disseminated hundreds of thousands of videos and photos online. Through such campaigns they have managed to establish media platforms and channels that effectively associate global narratives of injustice, marginalisation, oppression and the right to revenge with references to local grievances and frustrations. Despite this success, governance strategies in support of media have been largely marginal, thereby leaving the media space in the hands of violent extremist groups.

Applying the right strategies to support free, independent, capacitated and protected media

Recent research indicates that support for media strategies must be carefully designed in order to be effective. Evidence indicates that a range of strategies that do not work include a) controlling media in the name of preventing terrorism (partly because controlling media enables corruption, which in turn fosters radicalisation); b) using politically anchored counter-narratives or counter propaganda, which is often seen as partial, dishonest and condescending; c) strategies that seek to persuade or 'message' rather than inform; and d) media content that does not reflect a range of public opinion and diverse (including angry) voices.

The most effective media support strategies against violent extremism are similar to those that support democratic governance. What should be supported is development of free, protected and independent media that serve the broader public, build trust and reflect diverse perspectives; provide a platform for women and

youth, and focus on their roles as peace builders; are capable of acting to check power and deter corruption; enable independent dialogue and debate especially across fracture points in society; and that engage young people through public debate and dialogue.

As an example, the internationally supported programme 'Sema Kenya' (Kenya speaks) produced and broadcast all over Kenya, including during the run-up to the most recent general election, has fostered informed public debate that engaged youth. It has created a safe space for open and robust discussions including political leaders and local communities. During the election campaign, a range of rival leaders met head to head for the first time to engage in cordial discussions of potentially divisive topics. Debates were informed by research on local issues of concern to a given community and thus focussed the discussion on what candidates intended to do rather than on criticising what others had or had not done.

There is a need to generate further evidence on what works and what does not in media development for PVE in fragile contexts. Development actors, researchers and policy makers need to work together to support this.

Finally, development actors must throw all their efforts and legitimacy behind initiatives to protect journalists and their independence. Free and fair media can exist and be effective only if journalists are free from fear of repression and harm.

Action points for development actors to consider:

- Consider media support an integral part of good governance strategies.

- Support the development of a free and independent media and refrain from trying to control the media or use it for politically anchored counter-narratives which has proven too often to be counter-productive.

- Exert all possible effort to protect journalists and their independence from threats, violence and interference.

Programming considerations

Reflecting on PVE throughout the programming cycle and the for context-specificity
To advance the programming of development actors in the field of PVE, each phase of the programming cycle - from analysis to implementation to evaluation - can benefit from reflecting specifically on PVE. This section presents key discussions from the Global Meeting structured around the continuum of analysis and planning; design and implementation; and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

> " Many of the dynamics involved in becoming a part of a criminal group are similar to those that push individuals into violent extremist groups.

Violent extremists are exceptionally nuanced in their strategies for developing recruitment and motivational strategies tailored to specific local conditions and grievances. While, as previously discussed, there are broader global pull mechanisms at play, local push mechanisms and drivers are very context-specific. Development actors' programming must be equally informed by local circumstances and generally focus on succeeding locally (given development actors' limited influence over geopolitics and global narratives). It is therefore critical to avoid 'copying and pasting' PVE programmes from one context to another but to be mindful of ethnic, political and religious nuances across and within countries.

> " Prevention requires that we take a deep look at what type of transformative change is needed in our societies.

A key message from the meeting was that the global discussion on PVE now needs to be contextualised at the regional, national and community levels.

Drawing on what we know, what we have tried and what others have done
Real and perceived grievances are drivers of violent extremism, but they are also the programmatic entry point for development actors. Many prevention-focussed programming interventions are neither novel nor distinct from traditional development interventions. Examples include support for political inclusion, strengthening institutional accountability, media development, crime prevention, enhancing access to justice, ensuring socio-economic opportunities, etc. Viewing these interventions through the lens of PVE, allows development actors to refine and re-calibrate programming. Whether a PVE lens requires us to do things differently, do different things or simply continue doing good development programming is a central question for this area of work, and one for which meeting participants had various answers.

There was broad agreement that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Development practitioners can learn a lot both from taking a holistic look at the work they are already doing and from drawing on experiences from other disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, media, political economy, religious studies, crime prevention etc.

Crime prevention in particular offers an exceptionally relevant body of research and evidence. Many of the dynamics involved in individuals' becoming part of a criminal group or gang (the search for community, identity,

economic gain, etc.) are similar to those that push them into violent extremist groups. The same can be said about methods to support disengagement from criminal groups and violent extremist groups. One significant difference involves support for radical social change: PVE efforts need to take specific dynamics into account and help to support meaningful alternatives, and constructive and positive outlets for this motivation, which is often anchored in legitimate indignation and grievances. Specific and complex socialisation processes and emotional and psychological factors influence each individual. From a programming perspective there is consequently an urgent need to break professional silos and domains and apply an inter-disciplinary approach.

Strengthening social cohesion to withstand violent extremism

A fundamental guiding principle for this work is the focus on strengthening horizontal and vertical cohesion i.e. cohesion between individuals and groups but also between communities and individuals and the state, the specifics of which will again depend on regional, national and local contexts.

Horizontal cohesion programming focuses on dialogue, cooperation, trust-building, and conflict resolution mechanisms while vertical cohesion programming might focus on improving the responsiveness of authorities, strengthening transparency and accountability, ensuring equitable access to societal resources, guaranteeing that abuse and misconduct by public authorities are penalized, etc. Besides these relational aspects, there are various ways in which development actors can help cultivate the agency, resilience and skills of individuals to prevent violent extremism. These may include trauma healing, formal and informal education, skills development, activities aimed at empowerment, and work aimed at developing a 'culture of peace'. In designing programming, development actors should ask themselves how they could support positive social change at different levels with the entry points and tools available.

Potential programming entry points for development partners

In terms of defining the focus of PVE programme implementation, Global Meeting participants discussed how development partners might engage constructively:

a) Assess the conditions and identify the drivers of violent extremism specific to relevant local, national and/or sub-regional contexts, in consultation with key stakeholders.

b) Assist with the development of national and sub-national strategies and Plans of Action for PVE (possibly using different terminology), incorporating options for effective development interventions.

c) Scale up partnerships with civil society actors including identifying relevant CSO partners and supporting them through small-grants facilities, capacity development and networking.

d) Support dialogue and conflict prevention, for example by engaging religious leaders to promote tolerance and understanding in communities or by providing spaces for voicing grievances in a non-violent manner.

e) Promote inclusive and equitable governance, human rights and the rule of law in line with SDG 16.

f) Empower youth to become agents of positive social change by giving them a voice and developing their capacity to engage constructively in discussions about society (not just youth questions).

g) Promote gender equality and empower women to take on roles in PVE at all levels of society.

h) Promote reflection on ways of strengthening vertical and social cohesion as well as individual agency and capacity.

i)   Promote critical thinking and global citizenship through formal and informal education and reinforcing digital literacy.

j)   Support media development to ensure free, independent and critical media.

k)   Generate employment for at-risk youth and ensure that all individuals have decent prospects for their future.

Guiding principles for development actors' PVE programming
At the Global Meeting, participants discussed other key principles for development actors' PVE programming, which are briefly described in the remainder of this chapter.

There was a strong call for developing a method to assess and screen programmes through a 'PVE lens'. Overall questions could include :

• Is programming addressing perceived or real injustices relating to identity groups?

• Is programming addressing root causes relating to historical and socio-cultural grievances?

• Is programming establishing positive, constructive and non-violent outlets for the desire for social change?

• Is programming helping to reinforce social cohesion at one or more levels of society?

• Is programming sensitive to local drivers of conflict and extremism?

• Are programming objectives responding to what have been identified as local drivers of violent extremism?

Needless to say, such questions need to be elaborated in further detail as well as contextualised to resonate with local conditions.

It is necessary to engage communities in the design and implementation of programmes reflecting the context-specificity of violent extremism dynamics; and to draw on and reinforce local, endogenous resilience mechanisms towards violent extremism. As previously described, youth and women are particularly critical stakeholders in this effort.

Programmes will often benefit from applying a regional approach, ideally drawing on regional PVE strategies reflecting the transnational nature of violent extremism.

Programming staff may also want to distinguish between PVE-relevant and PVE-specific programming, where the former seeks to integrate a PVE focus into existing programming as a secondary objective while the latter aims directly to achieve PVE objectives.

> The region is vast and diverse and any meaningful analysis of violent extremism must be well contextualized at the national and local levels. If we are going to succeed, we are going to succeed locally.

In order to avoid creating a perverse incentive by supporting only countries where violent extremism manifests itself in serious security incidents, development actors and partners must also acknowledge and support countries that successfully prevent violent extremism. The same point applies to communities and individuals. For example, when the international community engages primarily with 'trouble-makers' among youth, it sends

a message to the majority who are not creating trouble but share the same quest for identity, meaning, and belonging. It is critically important as part of the preventive agenda that development actors allocate sufficient resources to support the majority of peaceful and progressive stakeholders.

Addressing the 'measurement conundrum' of successful PVE efforts

Participants highlighted the 'measurement conundrum', i.e. that PVE efforts are deemed successful when nothing happens and when individuals who might have otherwise been recruited into violent extremist groups instead channel their desire for social change into peaceful and constructive activities. To demonstrate successful PVE interventions development actors, in collaboration with academia, must better define some level of causality between root causes of violent extremism and actual recruitment and mobilisation for violent activities. Such causality will often be complex and multifaceted. A better understanding of the drivers of violent extremism will nonetheless help development actors and other partners focus their efforts. It will also help substantiate claims of PVE successes in contexts where strong drivers of violent extremism are present.

> There is a need to engage communities in the design and implementation of the programmes reflecting the context-specificity of violent extremism dynamics and the need to draw on and reinforce local, endogenous resilience mechanisms towards violent extremism.

This requires that development actors continuously and systematically collect and analyse evidence - before, during and after implementation of PVE programmes. As an example, participants stressed that the rapid radicalization observed in recent years in the Maldives showed the importance of conducting in-depth research and monitoring fast-changing societal dynamics before radicalization turns into violent extremism. The Maldives have become a top (per capita) provider of foreign fighters to Syria, surprising development actors in the country who had failed to pay close attention to profound socio-economic trends re-shaping Maldivian society.

Owing to the multi-dimensional nature of violent extremism there is a need, as discussed above, for multi-disciplinary analysis, monitoring, evaluation and research efforts. Therefore, strong partnerships must be formed and sustained between the donor community, development actors, security actors and academia, and research efforts should be anchored locally to support a better understanding of local conditions. This will also help ensure an adequate level of conflict sensitivity in the interventions.

UNDP in the PVE field

UNDP's approach to PVE aims to address two related trends: the rise of violent extremism, and the governance of increasingly diverse and multi-cultural societies. At the heart of UNDP's approach is a belief that better governance in diversity will lead to societies better prepared to deal with violent extremism. Its approach is laid out in detail in the background document for the Meeting.

UNDP believes in the need to revise and adapt governance systems to ensure peaceful coexistence of different groups in pluralistic and multicultural societies. Tolerance and respect for diverse cultures are at the heart of the new sustainable development agenda. Preventing violent extremism is about strengthening vertical and horizontal cohesion in society as well as helping local actors reinforce their resilience to conflict and division.

UNDP advocates the continuing transition from countering to preventing violent extremism and the bridging of the 'security-development divide'. UNDP thus looks at PVE from a development and governance/peacebuilding perspective to complement sometimes necessary, but often insufficient, security approaches. Many root causes of conflict relate closely to UNDP's mandate: shortcomings in development; failures of governance; failures of conflict resolution mechanisms; absence or weakness of early warning and response systems; etc.

> **'** Due to migration and globalization, we need to revise and adapt governance systems to ensure peaceful coexistence of different groups in any given pluralistic and multicultural society.

UNDP is tackling these root causes by promoting tolerance and respect for diversity, political and economic empowerment, and reduction of inequalities through a broad range of approaches, initiatives and activities. Its analysis, presented in its approach paper, argues that these must include:

1. Promoting **a rule of law and human rights-based approach** to PVE;

2. Enhancing the **fight against corruption**;

3. Enhancing **participatory decision-making** and **increasing civic space** at national and local levels;

4. Providing **effective socio-economic alternatives to violence** for groups at risk;

5. **Strengthening the capacity of local governments** for service delivery and security;

6. **Supporting credible internal intermediaries** to promote dialogue with alienated groups and re-integration of former extremists;

7. **Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment**;

8. Engaging **youth in building social cohesion**;

9. **Working with faith-based organisations and religious leaders** to counter the abuse of religion by violent extremists;

10. Working with the media to **promote human rights and tolerance**;

11. Promoting **respect for human rights, diversity** and a culture of global citizenship in schools and universities.

The road ahead for UNDP's work on PVE

UNDP's approach will have two main components. One focuses on research and lessons learned, policy dialogues and advocacy. The Global Meeting confirmed (and was in itself an example of) UNDP's role as knowledge broker - facilitating the sharing of lessons learned and experiences. The other component constitutes an action-oriented agenda for programme support including a PVE grants mechanism targeting a group of 25-30 countries in Africa, the Arab states , Europe and Asia.

> UNDP also recognises the need for a partnership strategy that matches its engagement strategy with selected target groups.

At the country level, UNDP's response will take three forms:

1. Analysis and adaptation of UNDP's existing portfolio of projects through applying a PVE lens, when relevant.

2. The design of new catalytic projects to support PVE.

3. The launch of fast-track projects needed to address immediate challenges.

Much of the work UNDP already undertakes in the domains of development, good governance and rule of law falls into the first category and may simply benefit from strengthening the focus on identifying PVE outcomes. UNDP also already undertakes a range of more specific PVE interventions. Examples include social cohesion programming in Pakistan and reintegration of prisoners and former combatants in Somalia. PVE-specific initiatives will benefit from the new grants mechanism - as will the fast-track projects to address immediate challenges.

UNDP also recognises the need for a partnership strategy that matches its engagement with selected target groups. Looking at PVE from a development perspective requires UNDP to target the public at large and not only individuals or groups on the brink of embracing violent extremism. In parallel, however, UNDP will need to adopt more specific approaches that target groups at genuine risk of violent radicalisation.

Given the cross-border effects and global nature of violent extremism, the scale of the PVE agenda requires long-term investment for transformation as well as well-coordinated regional approaches.

> While we aim to promote the values and principles of tolerance and respect for diversity, we need not forget that identity politics and geopolitical interests often drive violent extremism.

While UNDP aims to promote the values and principles of tolerance and respect for diversity, it is important to recognise, as highlighted elsewhere in this paper, that geopolitical interests and political decisions and priorities often drive violent extremism. It will remain important for UNDP as an institution to have a sound understanding of the political economy of violent extremism within and between countries, in order for its PVE interventions to be effective.

The newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals and especially Goal 16, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, provides an excellent global platform for UNDP to strengthen and expand its development-focussed efforts to prevent violent extremism.

UNDP stands ready to support the implementation of the 2030 agenda. Building peaceful, just and inclusive societies is an important component of that global commitment. Achieving that objective will require us to work closely with partners at the global, regional, national and local levels to address the drivers of violent extremism. In a peaceful, just and inclusive society, there is neither room nor reason for violent extremism to exist.

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PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM
THROUGH PROMOTING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT,
TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY