

6. Sustaining peace and sustainable development in dangerous places

Overview

Peace and development are continuous processes that require constant cultivation and may necessitate decades of effort before their benefits are realized. This chapter introduces current conceptualizations of peace and development, and how they relate to the new United Nations framework of ‘sustaining peace’. Relevant key events of 2016 and their implications for sustaining peace are considered in four sections.

Section I introduces the concepts of negative peace and positive peace and locates them on a spectrum ranging from violence to peace. It describes economic development concepts related to path dependency and expectations about the future to explain how security and peace objectives of the present may not always align with development objectives of the future.

Section II traces the development of the UN’s sustaining peace framework over 2016. After a brief introduction to the concept, the context for sustaining peace is described: pockets of violence concentrated in the world’s dangerous places; ongoing complex humanitarian emergencies; and limited capacities for preventing, responding to, managing and recovering from conflict. Sustaining peace is further linked to the sustainable development agenda and the principles of national ownership and inclusivity.

Section III examines several important mechanisms and events of 2016 in the fields of preventing violent extremism, humanitarian action, and the women, peace and security agenda. These fields reveal some of the mechanisms through which the concept of sustaining peace is being integrated into global peace and development practice.

The chapter concludes in section IV with discussion of the concept of conflict prevention. While prevention remains mostly aspirational, several developments in 2016 can be interpreted as investments in sustaining peace and possible paths for a positive peace, addressing the increasingly complex, interdependent and unprecedented challenges of sustainable development today.

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