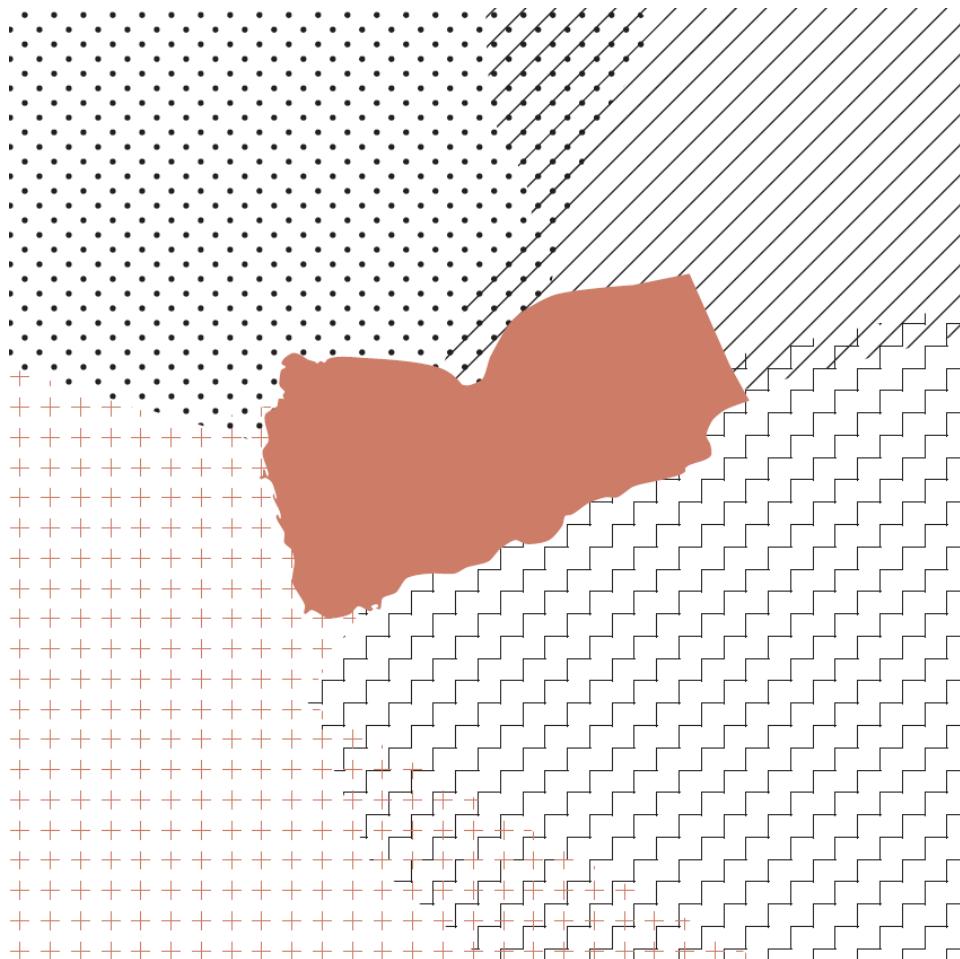# W O S C A P

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES

Recommendations for the EU's policy on Yemen: Report from the Sana'a policy roundtable

Political Development Forum (PDF) & Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)

Colophon

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EU'S POLICY ON YEMEN: REPORT FROM THE SANA'A POLICY ROUNDTABLE

A Network of People
Building Peace

Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

The Roundtable report Yemen was produced as part of the project "*Whole-of-Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*" (WOSCAP). It summarizes the aims and results of the Policy Roundtable that was organised by PDF, with support from ESSEC IRENE and GPPAC, on 23 July 2017 in Sana'a, Yemen. The aim of the roundtable was to engage with local and international representatives, regional organisations, local UN agencies and local stakeholders to discuss the case study conclusions and collect input for recommendations relevant to enhance the EU's capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on a set of policy recommendations developed by PDF. More information at www.woscap.eu.

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES

Recommendations for the EU's policy on Yemen

As a result of the current war in Yemen, the Political Development Forum identified the methodology of collecting the feedback on the recommendations on EU internal policy in Yemen[1], which is in two ways, sending emails to those who are outside Yemen and conducting a round-table meeting in Yemen for key stakeholders, taking into consideration the wide-representation of political and societal components to ensure various perspectives. Twelve relevant stakeholders have attended the meeting and they were so passionate discussing the recommendations, hence we have accomplished a successful meeting. For getting comprehensive feedback, we have sent emails; some participants were responsive, while a few of them were not.

This report briefly documents the discussion of the stakeholders attended the round-table meeting as well as the responses we got from emails so that the EU could further take measures to ensure coordination of partners involved and to be inspired of which methodology should optimize the impact of policy recommendations. This report follows the Chatham House rule.

To structure the discussion, the stakeholders were asked the following questions:

- Are the recommendations realistic/feasible?
- Do they reflect the lessons learned from the previous period in Yemen based on your understanding?
- Is there anything that was missed?
- Any feedback you might have?

The recommendations were presented one by one as stipulated in the meeting's agenda and discussion was followed in order to identify the pros and cons as well as to collect feedback on the above questions. The stakeholders approved that all the recommendations are needed and feasibly implemented, furthermore they believed that these recommendations reflected the lessons learnt that Yemen went through starting from the youth uprising and afterwards. The general arguments we got from stakeholders was that the recommendations were well developed apart from the fact that Yemen is suffering from war and no precise recommendation or policy was devoted to highlight the current war nor the EU's role in ending the war. Therefore, the stakeholders recommended that the EU has to develop an internal policy to be effectively involved in ending the war as a prerequisite to feasibly implement the seven recommendations. The stakeholders agreed that the implementation of these recommendations needs to be under the EU supervision and

---

[1] The recommendations document presented is available upon request (and is included in D5.5).

therefore the EU has to develop a mechanism of monitoring and supervising the policy implementation that ensures EU direct involvement. The stakeholders reasoned the chronological order of the recommendations; the recommendations need to be organized again on the principle of what is needed to be done first so that the EU could build a whole project of interventions based on tangible outputs to be taken further to the next stages. The stakeholders identified that the recommendation Nr. 4 should come first due to the importance of preliminarily locating Yemen within the EU's policy structures, so that the rest of recommendations will be based on it. Then comes the third recommendation to the second step for EU to use its leadership and capacity to supporting the enabling environment for peacebuilding and embedding democracy, which is considered to be the milestone towards stability. This might identify the EU measures to stop the war and conduct practical steps towards peacebuilding. Recommendation Nr. 5 is the last one as it concerns the EU outreach strategy. Having mentioned that, the EU needs to focus more on its communication strategy presenting their implemented projects in Yemen both internally and within the EU external partners so that they enhance synergies and avoid project duplications. One potential problem they perceived with these recommendations was that it may encourage further fracturing of the negotiation process. Right now, the EU is actively involved in mediation, so is the UK, so is Oman on occasion. Sometimes the Russians get involved and even the Chinese of late. What is missing is any coordinating mechanism for these various groups, especially a core team of regional and international players to carry the process forward – which is sorely needed in light of the absence of main international player (USA). A recommendation regarding tackling the economic and financial issues of Yemen need to be developed as this dilemma was a result of conflict and was not taken into consideration while developing the study though it was the major problem.

The stakeholders reflected on each recommendation, so we will briefly present the vital feedbacks that we got regarding each one.

Recommendation 1: Push for more meaningful representation for the post-2011 'newcomers' to the political arena by pressuring the parties to observe the NDC quotas for women and youth, and engage in consultations with marginalized groups parallel to the peace process.

This recommendation was the most important one for the stakeholders and the majority agreed that it is realistic and feasible to be implemented into programs. Despite the national dialogue outcome that guarantees quota for women (30%) and youth (20%), the international communities have not done anything in that regards to impose the quota at political and institutional level. The role played by women and youth should be emphasized and supported but they should not be pushed without being equipped with the adequate knowledge and skills to be effectively participating in political arena. Some of them argued that this policy is too general and not tailored geographically to represent the southerner's women and youth nor this policy is concrete in terms of how to do so. Hence, they recommend to conduct an assessment study to better come up with feasible program to undertake interventions. They also questioned how women and youth could be involved while Yemen is going through war and their participation by political parties is not of importance besides the priority at this phase

is not women and youth quota as it was in 2011. The most vital stage to enhance the quota for women and youth is when war ends and constitution is being revised so that they ensure their constitutional rights. They agreed that each party should be committed to apply women and youth quota provided that Yemen is in transition and stabilized. The stakeholders reach consensus that the marginalized groups should not be part of this recommendation as this one should only emphasize the women and youth, to avoid ambiguity and a vague recommendation. Marginalized groups have not been identified in the recommendation, so they questioned how to guarantee the societal and political inclusiveness without having a baseline study on marginalized groups. They agreed to exclude the marginalized groups and restrict this policy on women and youth.

Recommendation 2: The EU should regularly evaluate the shifting power dynamics on the ground, engage directly with local leaders and groups, and partner with the UN and other international stakeholders in doing so.

The stakeholders recalled the mistakes that happened in the representation of National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in a way that the most powerful representatives of the tribal/military structure were not included. In some ways, the NDC failed because there was not enough buy-in from the traditional elites, who proceeded to ignore and undermine NDC. That is why this recommendation is significant to evaluate and figure out the new faces and leaders with influence on the ground, especially outside of the capital who were excluded, from the south in particular. The international perspective is to take more time to allow grassroots selection of representation so that new leaders go to the conference with meaningful popular support, rather than new faces appearing as part of an internationally guided process. The stakeholders agreed that this recommendation is still valid, realistic and feasible to be implemented as there were marginalized groups and now they are the ones in charge of governing territories, i.e. Herak and Houthi. They argued that to engage with the local leaders at the current stage of war is complicated for EU, as the local communities have not positioned themselves as before the war. Some of them criticized the neglecting of such groups who now dominate the geographical territories and before their case was being advocated by the activists or/and local community leaders. They recommended to conduct studies for evaluating the shifting of power; one covers the South and the other covers the North. This would be to critically study these emerging groups and to what extent their issue is as serious as the stakeholders claimed, as now the southerners issue is not like before due to the fact that southerners deal with northerners as a minority and they take away their properties. Meanwhile the southerners believe that they have issues but national, regional, and international actors have not been responded to meet their demands, therefore they have merged into organized group (Herak). Therefore, the question raised was how could it be evaluated seriously, locally and really bring their concerns to the political tables.

Recommendation 3: The EU should use its leadership and capacity to support the enabling environment for peacebuilding and embedding democracy.

Besides what was recommended to prioritize this recommendation as the second one, the stakeholders identified the EU role to be a direct moderator as they enjoy the neutral reputation amongst national, regional and international actors. EU peacebuilding and democracy programs need to be aligned with human rights standards and focus on conflict and post-conflict programs. They recommended that the EU initiate fact-finding mission in Yemen for human rights violations and make the membership open for international actors who want to be a part of it. The EU could support developing best practices for peacebuilding and embedding democracy. Civil Society Organizations are implementing peace projects and they need more support to assist the community overcoming conflicts and enhance their contributions in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. EU has already invested in enhancing the capacity of many CSOs in Yemen, so it is recommended to continue supporting these CSOs when it comes to implementing peacebuilding and democracy projects. Embedding democracy requires well-defined approaches of doing so, particularly through tailored projects to assist introducing feasible democratic measures that do not follow the patterns of developed countries nor developing ones that enjoy the minimum standards of security and democracy, unlike Yemen, as it should be taken as an exceptional case.

Recommendation 4: Locate Yemen more concretely within the EU's policy and funding structures for the Middle East and increase coordination among member states.

As mentioned above, most of the stakeholders agreed that this recommendation has to be the first one, while the others argued that this recommendation is an extension of the third recommendation. This recommendation has to address Yemen today not based on the main report findings and recommendations, as nowadays we have variables that need to be taken into account. They suggested that the priority in this recommendation is the EU should consider whether to place Yemen with the Horn of Africa group instead of placing it within Jordan group, which would not cater better to Yemen's geographic location, social and political

make-up. They agreed that this recommendation is of importance. They advised the EU to figure out and know exactly how Yemen should fit into the EU policy making structure.

Recommendation 5: The EU should develop a stronger communications strategy to inform the public of its neutrality, values, and humanitarian/development support.

As already highlighted, the stakeholders agreed that this recommendation should be the last one; that also indicates the importance of such recommendation in a way that EU has implemented projects in Yemen previously, but the Yemeni citizens/CSOs didn't recognize these projects due to the EU outreach shortcomings. The stakeholders claimed that the Yemeni citizens have lost their trust in EU, hence the EU has to implement humanitarian and development programs in order to regain the trust back. They also added that the EU has to make sure to balance between sending and receiving messages, i.e. EU should receive feedbacks so that EU could undertake corrective measures, if needed. They emphasized on the role of the EU on humanitarian and development support based on their assurance that EU has no military or/and political interest in Yemen and that is why the EU is perceived as a neutral partner who could support Yemen in the conflict and post-conflict agenda. Recommendation for implementing conflict-sensitive communication program should be implemented amongst journalists and social media actors so that they convey the EU message impartially and in a credible manner. The EU also has to have three audiences to tailor their messages: 1) the EU member countries; 2) international community: and 3) Yemeni citizens; and it should better understand the needs of each audience to avoid ambiguity.

Recommendation 6: The EU should balance immediate humanitarian assistance with more sustainable livelihood and development interventions.

They suggested for EU to achieve sustainable livelihood and development interventions are to support local initiatives/ councils/ authorities as well as to create a partnership between citizens and local authorities. Moreover, the stakeholders emphasized on the equilibrium principle in order to avoid the failure of international organizations that only focus on immediate humanitarian reliefs and neglect sustainable development. They also proposed that the EU could implement security and stability measures and to build the public institutional capacities to enable them delivering sustainable services. The stakeholders were concerned about how the EU could do so and maintain the sustainability of livelihood and development interventions. Therefore, they suggested that the EU has to implement a direct supervisory mechanism so that the humanitarian and development support is being absorbed for the citizens' sake. That way the EU would also mitigate corruption happening in conflict and transitional phases. They suggested that the EU should support the civil society organizations at the national level. The southerners argued that the assistance and support are only directed to South. Thus, they prefer to have clear recommendation in that regards to ensure a given support to them particularly in terms of sustainable development, for which further support is needed in infrastructure and public institutional development for service accessibility. The current crisis that started in 2014 up to now, affected negatively the function of the

government and its ability to provide public services. Moreover, the legitimate government suggests to provide immediate humanitarian support as well as implementing sustainable development programs that contribute to solving some of the catastrophes such as implementing water and energy projects. As for the humanitarian assistance, they highlighted that the EU might use the Sphere handbook of the humanitarian charter. The EU has to keep monitoring the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, such as Cholera, and provide the needed humanitarian/ medical assistance on time to limit epidemics.

Recommendation 7: The EU should help strengthen state institutions, including through technical expertise, and should develop modalities to channel funds to local authorities.

The stakeholders wondered why good governance pillars were not highlighted under this recommendation. They clarified the on-going state institutional dilemma representing the absence of good governance principles and therefore the state institutions fail utilizing the technical assistance and corruption occurs. The EU has to be more specific in identifying state institutions; either they are the national institutional or local (district or provincial). Thus it is advisable for the EU to work with a formula to determine which ones to work with in what areas, as this will probably vary. They questioned how they could channel the funds to local authorities while there is no legitimate government on the ground. They agreed on the principle of first ending the war so that we have legal authority to channel the funds to distribute it to the local level. So, this recommendation is not realistic nor feasible at the current time, as we have a fragmented society. If imposed, the EU image will be damaged as each party will understand that the EU is not impartial. In spite of that, some of the stakeholders thought of creating local communities that undertake local projects so that we would mobilize the community and identify them in order to channel the fund apart from the government and local authority. For this recommendation to be feasible in the war scenario, the EU has to organize a conference representing the parities to conflict, societal components, youth, women, CSOs and local authority representatives to jointly implement the policy recommendation, reflected into state reform programs, and come up with a signed document obliging the parties under the EU supervision to implement this policy alongside its outlined project for each state sector, e.g. judiciary, education, health...etc at both national and local level. To provide the technical assistance, the EU has to implement a database on citizen's registry, so that support can be directed to the segment of communities. It would be also helpful later for the government in the form of the state.

Annex 1: AGENDA

<div dir="rtl">

مناقشة التوصيات بالسياسة الداخلي للإتحاد الاوربي في اليمن
أجندة عمل

الأحد الموافق 23 يوليو 2017

09:00	تسجيل والأفتتاح
09:15	تقديم البرنامج
09:30	**الجلسة 1:** مناقشة التوصيات (1، 2)
10:30	استراحة
10:45	**الجلسة 2:** مناقشة التوصيات (3، 4، 5)
12:00	استراحة للصلاه
12:15	**الجلسة 3:** مناقشة التوصيات (6، 7)
01:30	غدا
2:30	استخلاصات عامة
3:00	إنتهاء الاجتماع

</div>

Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
Discussion of Recommendation on EU Internal Policies in Yemen

Agenda

Sunday, July 23, 2017

9:00	Arrival and registration
9:15	introduction about the Programme WOCAP
9:30	**Session1:** Discussion of Recommendation 1 & 2
10:30	Coffee break
10:45	**Session 2:** Discussion of Recommendation 3 & 4 & 5
12:00	Break for prayers
12:15	**Session 3:** Discussion of Recommendations 6 & 7
1:30	Lunch
2:30	Conclusions
3:00	End of meeting