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# **Employment and Decent Work in Fragile Settings: A Compass to Orient the World of Work**

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**Oliver Jütersonke and Kazushige Kobayashi**

with Donato Kiniger-Passigli and Julian Schweitzer

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A joint initiative of the Graduate Institute's CCDP and the International Labour Organization

With the support of the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva

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*In memory of our dear friend Yusuf Mohamed Ismail 'Bari Bari',  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of  
Somalia to the United Nations and other international organizations in  
Geneva – a fearless human rights advocate and peacebuilder who had  
lent his support to this initiative.*

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## List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APRAS	Apprendre pour Reconstruire Ayiti Solide
ASECO	Améliorer Son Entreprise de Construction
CCDP	The Graduate Institute's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding
DAC	Development Assistance Committee, OECD
DSF	Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (German Foundation for Peace Research)
ESC	Enterprise Service Centers
EU	European Union
F2F	Fragile-to-Fragile (collaboration)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FSDR	Fragile States and Disaster Response Group, ILO
GERME	Gérer Mieux Son Entreprise
HRF	Haiti Reconstruction Fund
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organization
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility, OECD-DAC
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LED	Local Economic Development
JPR	Flagship Programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSC	South-South Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPBSO	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme

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# Foreword

Fragile settings have become a central concern to the international community. 1.4 billion out of the world's total population of seven billion people are estimated to live in situations of conflict and fragility. There, armed violence, exploitation, and underemployment are coupled with a multitude of man-made as well as natural risk factors to generate severe conditions of vulnerability. These constitute the most important obstacles to achieving internationally agreed development goals, whilst also depriving individuals and households of income-generating opportunities and socio-economic progress. How can governments, the private sector, civil society, and their international partners undertake activities to generate employment, protect rights, provide social protection, and promote social dialogue amidst chronic insecurity, weak governance, and socio-economic turmoil?

The present publication offers analytical orientation to make sense of one's surroundings and to carefully navigate employment and decent work activities amidst the hidden rocks and shallow waters of fragile environments. It does not provide a menu of programming options, but it does seek to do justice to the complexities of fragile settings by proposing a conceptual framework to better understand the exogenous and endogenous factors that drive the onset and exacerbation of fragility.

The fragility compass is the product of a yearlong reflection process that was undertaken in international Geneva and beyond, generously supported by the Permanent Representative of the Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva. A joint effort by the ILO's Fragile States and Disaster Response (FSDR) Group and the Graduate Institute's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), it involved practitioner communities of the ILO and the United Nations system, as well as other stakeholders from the world of work. More than 40 staff members based at the ILO's Geneva and field offices shared their experiences and thoughts during interviews and group discussions. Around 25 institutions and individuals from international organizations, the diplomatic community, and civil society subsequently took part in a consultation process, and provided their views and feedback on earlier drafts of this document.

Developing a brainstorming aid such as the fragility compass is not an end in itself – it is one step in a larger process. This particular step was, however, of significance because it brought together key actors and committed professionals on various occasions, all of whom underlined the importance of employment and decent work in fragile settings. The next step must now follow, namely the application of the knowledge we have systematized and generated for the benefit of those we strive to empower – the very people who live in fragile settings around the world.

Keith Krause, Director  
Centre on Conflict, Development  
and Peacebuilding

Donato Kiniger-Passigli, Coordinator  
Fragile States and Disaster Response  
International Labour Organization

Geneva, November 2015

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## Acknowledgements

This project report is the outcome of a collaborative reflection process that lasted from August 2014 to September 2015. It involved the Graduate Institute's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The overall aim was to stimulate constructive debate and knowledge exchange over the role and activities of the ILO and its partners – the “world of work” – in so-called “fragile” settings.

The initiative enjoyed the generous support of Ambassador Amanda Ellis, Head of Mission and Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva.

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Please note that for the sake of interview confidentiality, the names of the persons involved in the consultations have not been mentioned. Our apologies go to those individuals and their organizations we may have missed in the acknowledgements above.

# I. Introduction

In August 2014, the International Labour Organization's Employment Policy and Partnerships and Field Support departments, through the Fragile States and Disaster Response (FSDR) Group, began a collaborative reflection process with the Graduate Institute's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP). Kick-started by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO and the Secretariat of the g7+ group of fragile states in May 2014, the project sought to feed into on-going deliberations on the ways in which organizations from the world of work could, both institutionally and programmatically, position themselves and their sectors within the increasingly crowded field of international actors working on the interface between short-term crisis response and long-term peacebuilding and statebuilding agendas.

The project sought to provide analytical orientation to make sense of fragility from the perspective of employment and decent work activities. Destined for practitioners across the world of work, this report proposes a **brainstorming instrument with which to swiftly zoom out from specific programming technicalities in order to capture the wider picture**. It does not offer specific technical guidance or a portfolio of programming options.<sup>1</sup> Instead, this “fragility compass” is meant to complement a variety of existing, data-driven fragility indexes or models that work on the basis of numerous quantitative socio-economic and governance indicators. Of note are the fragility tools developed by the OECD-DAC earlier this year,<sup>2</sup> as well as the fragility spectrum launched by the g7+ Secretariat in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

The present report synthesizes the research and consultations undertaken over the past twelve months with the practitioner communities of the ILO as well as other stakeholders from the world of work, the United Nations system, the diplomatic community, and civil society. Overall, the reflection process sought to:

- Ascertain **the merit of the concept of fragility and its applicability** with regard to interventions targeting employment and decent work;
- Explore and elaborate on the **factors and triggers that drive fragility** in specific programming contexts, as well as on the possible range of employment and decent work interventions and collaborative responses these might require; and
- Offer analytical orientation, in the form of the **fragility compass**, as a quick, pragmatic **brainstorming aid** in the areas of employment and decent work in fragile settings.

The aim of this joint initiative has been to situate the research and consultations conducted as an integral part of an **evolving process** to develop and reconcile institutional understandings of the use and applicability of employment and decent work activities in fragile settings. The starting points for this initiative were two inter-related questions that have been at the heart of the ILO's current reflections on fragility:

1. How does the sudden or cyclical onset of fragility affect the world of work and in particular the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of employment and decent work activities; and
2. How can employment and decent work activities contribute to preventing, mitigating, and responding to fragility – and what might be basic assessment criteria for establishing which programming aspects need to be adjusted or supplemented accordingly?

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1 The standard reference document remains: ILO & UNDP. (2009). *United Nations Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration*. Geneva: ILO.

2 OECD. (2015). *States of Fragility 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions*. Paris: OECD.

3 Secretariat of the g7+. (2013). *The Fragility Spectrum. Note on the g7+ Fragility Spectrum*. Kinshasa: Secretariat of the g7+.

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Providing evidence-based answers and concrete guidance to these questions would have required detailed in-country analyses that were far beyond the scope of this initiative.<sup>4</sup> Instead, this document takes an exploratory approach that seeks to place the contemporary fragility debate into perspective. The report hopes to **provide a springboard for out-of-the-box thinking about strategic choices that actors such as the ILO have to consider when operating in fragile environments.**

## Process and Methodology

The project consisted of two phases. The first phase (September 2014 – January 2015) involved a textual analysis of publicly available as well as internal ILO documents related to employment and decent work activities in conflict- and disaster-affected settings. Many of these documents were compiled in a “resource basket” of more than one hundred reports, publications, evaluations, speakers’ notes, conference presentations, and other project-specific materials (see Annex). CCDP and FSDR also conducted interviews and group discussions with over 40 ILO staff members at headquarters and from field and regional offices.<sup>5</sup> Outputs from this phase consisted of an unpublished report on institutional perceptions and organizational practices for the benefit of internal ILO discussions, as well as an inception report, available upon request, which was widely circulated and presented at a public conference held at the Graduate Institute under the auspices of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform on 15 January 2015.<sup>6</sup>

The second phase (January – October 2015) involved external consultations with government representatives, development partners, UN agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The aim of these discussions was to map and organize contemporary practice on the theme of employment and decent work in fragile settings, and to serve as a sounding board and knowledge base for the elements of the fragility compass presented in this report. The reflection process is intended to complement and feed into a variety of on-going ILO activities, including the Revision of the Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation (1944, No. 71)<sup>7</sup>, the establishment of the flagship programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR), strategic decisions about a framework of action for ILO engagement in fragile states, an update of the ILO’s guide on the role of the organization in fragile and disaster settings, and sustained promotion of fragile-to-fragile (F2F) cooperation on the decent work agenda.

It should be emphasized that the research conducted was genuinely exploratory in nature, and did not intend to fill a preconceived data gap. The CCDP was tasked with ascertaining the ways in which stakeholders from the world of work perceive the role of employment and decent work activities in so-called fragile settings – in terms of the extent to which programming practice needs to adapt to fragility cycles, and with respect to the ways in which such activities are deemed to mitigate (or indeed exacerbate) the duration and intensity of crisis periods. The focus was on programming coherence and complementarity across institutional departments, sectors, and partner organizations, and on the levels and types of collaboration between headquarter staff and field offices.

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4 Fundraising for more sustained and detailed work on specific country contexts marked by periods of fragility is currently being pursued.

5 These interviews and group discussions were conducted face-to-face and remotely by Oliver Jütersonke, Kazushige Kobayashi and/or Julian Schweitzer.

6 For details see <<http://gpplatform.ch/invitation-towards-common-understanding-employment-and-decent-work-fragile-settings-15-january-2015>>.

7 ILO. (2015). *Report V (1) Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience: Revision of the Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No.71)*. Geneva: ILO.

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In this vein, the interviews and group consultations conducted, both with ILO staff members and externally, sought to capture the range of opinions, perceptions, and institutional practices related to “fragility”. The research team worked with flexible interview guidelines that were adapted to the identity of the interlocutor, as well as to the discursive patterns that began to emerge as the analysis proceeded. It did not seek to work with survey techniques that presuppose stable analytical categories and shared meanings on the part of the persons consulted.

## **Report Structure**

This document is comprised of five main sections. Following this introduction, Section II briefly discusses the ways in which the notion of fragility was introduced and consolidated upon in international development and peacebuilding circles. Drawing on recent debates about the cyclical nature of fragility, the section also explores the heuristic value-added of the term from the perspective of employment and decent work activities.

Section III then offers a tentative working definition of fragility by making the distinction between exogenous and endogenous factors and triggers that may drive the onset and exacerbation of fragility. The section introduces a basic risk analysis framework that may conveniently be used to differentiate between various fragility scenarios, as well as to capture context-specific changes over time.

Section IV focuses on the variety of intervention approaches related to employment and decent work, and discusses the resulting “fragility response parameters” in light of probable institutional constellations and modes of collaborative engagement – both within the context of tripartism, as well as across multilateral and bilateral development and peacebuilding efforts more generally. The section offers a succinct means of making sense of complex organizational dynamics within which programming decisions are made, all the while capitalizing on the theme of employment and decent work in fragile environments.

A concluding section briefly reflects on the aims and utility of this report. Rather than offering a blueprint, checklist, or menu of programming options, the report modestly seeks to provide analytical orientation to reflect upon the ways in which employment and decent work activities relate to – and in turn may influence – cyclical processes of fragility.

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## II. The Fragility Debate

Designing an effective intervention strategy in complex settings amidst multiple stakeholders and their respective interests is challenging at best. Between the recognition that every context is in some ways unique and the pernicious pursuit of a one-size-fits-all blueprint lies a range of attempts to sensitize development and peacebuilding interventions to a particular country setting. These attempts are structured by donor priorities, multilateral commitments and, not least, organizational decision-making constraints.

Without exception, all the experienced professionals who participated in this reflection process articulated this fundamental dilemma – with reference to the plethora of attempts to provide conceptual frameworks to make sense of the conundrum and provide guidelines for decision-makers and programming specialists on all levels. Yet many if not most of these attempts are perceived to be of limited utility, not least because the data-driven nature of what they are proposing requires staff member to amass large quantities of data to feed into all sorts of indicators – in and of itself a time-consuming and depoliticising move that risks downgrading development programming to a mere management technicality.<sup>8</sup>

This report proposes a rather different yet complementary approach that encourages the reader to step back from all the indicators and pause briefly for thought. What does it mean to “think fragility”, and what are the prospects and pitfalls of applying the term? What is specific about employment and decent work activities in so-called fragile settings, and how should we conceptualize the links between the two? This section begins with the current state of the global debate on fragility, followed by a set of brainstorming aids that are intended to guide such reflections (Sections III and IV). These do not intend to provide the technical solutions to complex decision-making and implementation challenges, but are meant to help articulate programming responses in fragile settings while remaining flexible and ready to adapt to changing circumstances.

### Rethinking State Fragility

Fragility has become one of the signature concepts in international development and peacebuilding circles over the past two decades.<sup>9</sup> In many ways, it represents the latest iteration of a security paradigm shaped by the centrality of human rights, and revolving around concepts such as human security, civilian protection, and the responsibilities of states to guarantee the basic rights of individuals residing on their territories. A host of international and regional institutions such as the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union, as well as a variety of UN and bilateral agencies, have fielded an array of terms to describe fragility – including terms such as “weak”, “failing”, “failed” and “collapsed” states. These categories can be located on a continuum, with weakness and failing contingent on the degree to which a state (or comparable territorial unit) is capable of fulfilling its essential functions of providing for individuals on its territory.

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8 One of the classic texts on this issue is Ferguson, J. (1990). *The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development”, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. For a recent discussion see Jütersonke, O. & Kartas, M. “The State as Urban Myth: Governance Without Government in the Global South,” in Schuett, R. & Stirk, P.M. (Eds.) (2015). *The Concept of the State in International Relations: Philosophy, Sovereignty, Cosmopolitanism* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 108-134.

9 Some of the points raised in this section were explored at length in Krause, K. & Jütersonke, O. (2007). “Seeking Out the State: Fragile States and International Governance”, *Politorbis* 42, 5-12; and Muggah, R. & Jütersonke, O. “Rethinking Stabilization and Humanitarian Action in ‘Fragile Cities’”, in Perrin, B. (Ed.) (2012). *Modern Warfare: Armed Groups, Private Militaries, Humanitarian Organizations, and the Law*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 311-327.

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According to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), for instance, fragile states suffer from "deficits in governance" and lack the "capacity or willingness" as well as the legitimacy to execute basic and inclusive service provision functions. Crucially, the OECD-DAC's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) has also broadened the optic to include "fragile states and situations," indicating that transnational and sub-state units can also be construed as ungoverned spaces and, potentially, "the most dangerous security threats" to international and national order.

Concerned with maintaining adequate space in which to administer assistance, bottom-up processes of policy formulation and programming have helped steer debates away from the normatively loaded concepts of "collapse" and "failure" to the more neutral and constructive notion of "fragility". The New Deal on Engagement in Fragile States, as advocated by the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected countries, echoes this terminological development and marks a shift in the global aid discourse. According to the g7+, fragility is thus defined as "as a period of time during nationhood when sustainable socio-economic development requires greater emphasis on complementary peacebuilding and statebuilding activities such as building inclusive political settlements, security, justice, jobs, good management of resources, and accountable and fair service delivery."<sup>10</sup> It does not emphasize weaknesses but instead highlights key areas where countries affected by fragility need to be strengthened. This emancipatory notion of fragility has also enabled greater South-South dialogue in the form of fragile-to-fragile (F2F) cooperation as championed by the g7+ and its partners.<sup>11</sup> In essence, the language of fragility highlights the fluid nature of governance, as well as the challenges and prospects faced by national and international actors seeking to promote peace and sustainable development worldwide.

While becoming more nuanced, contemporary understandings of fragility nonetheless continue to harbour a number of challenges and shortcomings for development practitioners. First, the distinction between fragile and non-fragile states has not provided sufficiently instructive guidance for field operations – so what if my country context has been labelled "fragile"; what concretely does that change for the work that I do? Originally, fragility was used as an evaluative label to indicate the extent to which a state is not successfully fulfilling its fundamental functions (e.g. provision of security and basic public goods) – and thus to inform intervention priorities by identifying those countries that are next to go "over the brink".<sup>12</sup> But soon the terminology became part of the programming language itself, and indeed was adopted by severely under-developed or conflict-ridden states to self-proclaim themselves as being in need of a qualitatively different, and possibly also more intense, involvement on the part of the international aid establishment. Yet it often remains unclear to the practitioner what, concretely, needs to be done differently in a setting that is labelled as "fragile" – as opposed to one that is verifiably suffering from under-development, poverty, bad governance, and/or conflict or natural disasters.

Second, the term fragility is most commonly associated with situations involving armed conflict, and in many respects the post-conflict, failing state of the 1990s is today's "fragile state" that is in need of "stabilization" (the flipside of this metaphorical coin).<sup>13</sup> Yet with most of today's violent deaths not occurring on the battlefield – nor, indeed, even in formally

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10 g7+. (2013) *The Fragility Spectrum*, accessible at: <<http://g7plus.org/en/resources/fragility-spectrum-note>>.

11 ILO. (2015). *Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and Decent Work: An ILO Perspective*. Geneva: ILO; Amorim, A., Dale, A., & Fakhri-Kairouz, C. (Eds.) *Social Solidarity and South-South Cooperation. A compilation of short South-South Cooperation articles for the 'Academy of Social Solidarity Economy: Social Innovation in the World of Work' (Johannesburg, 2015) – Good Practices*. Geneva: ILO.

12 See, for instance, the Fragile State Index annually presented by the Fund for Peace. The Fund for Peace. (2015). *Fragile State Index 2015*, accessible at: <<http://fsi.fundforpeace.org>>. It is interesting to compare this with the original Failed States Index ten years ago: Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace, "The Failed States Index", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 149 (July/August 2005), 56-65.

13 On this point see, for example, Duffield, M. R. (2001). *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security*. London: Zed books.

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recognized conflict zones – the focus on armed conflict may occlude more than it clarifies.<sup>14</sup> Many parts of the world suffer from high rates of armed violence that are comparable to those experienced at the height of many civil wars – should such contexts (e.g. Mexico or Honduras) be brought into the fragility fold? And if so, what would be the analytical and programmatic merit of doing so?

Third, and as was highlighted by the many discussions held for this project, the term “fragility” is increasingly being used to describe all sorts of intervention settings in both development and humanitarian circles – with concerns raised by many practitioners and analysts that in the process the label risks becoming the all-encompassing and substance-depleting buzzword. If fragility is synonymous with complex programming scenarios requiring a comprehensive, “all-of-system” international response, what is its heuristic added value? Claiming that a situation of under-development harbours fragility triggers may itself not be particularly useful – where it is useful is when there are shocks to the system that may require a different set of crisis mitigation and/or peacebuilding tools, as will now be outlined.

This report thus echoes recent attempts that have sought to revisit the notion of fragility in light of its increasingly diffuse usage in policy circles. Of note here is the OECD’s new publication of March 2015.<sup>15</sup> Entitled “States of Fragility”, it marks a dynamic transition from the conventional state-centred conceptualization and redefines fragility “an issue of universal character that can affect all countries, not only those traditionally considered ‘fragile’ or conflict-affected”. Similarly, the present report seeks to transcend the typical fragile/non-fragile distinction and calls for a focus on the *factors and triggers that drive fragility* – understood as a set of deep-rooted situational and contextual elements that may generate or exacerbate political instability and socio-economic vulnerability.

Furthermore, this report aims to enhance the practical value of the term by being *more selective, specific, and thematic*: instead of a holistic label of “state fragility”, it tackles fragility from the perspective of employment and decent work activities – thereby zooming in on the probable repercussions of fragility on household income, livelihoods, and the broader functioning of labour markets, as well as on the sector-specific elements that may need to be adapted and/or prioritized in the short and long terms. Finally, the research and consultations conducted for this project reconfirm that instead of conceptualizing fragility in linear terms (i.e. as the idea that a country can make developmental progress and thus eventual “graduate” out of the category), *fragility is a cyclical process* that often involves recurring episodes of amelioration and exacerbation.

Focusing on fragility should put the accent on the realities of the statebuilding process. The notion of *fragility is not synonymous with conflict and/or post-conflict situations, but seeks to capture the societal, political, and economic dynamics of prevailing or recurring vulnerability and instability*. A particular state or region may become more or less fragile with time; it may slide into conflict but then re-emerge, perhaps in a different form. Natural disasters, health pandemics, and other extraneous circumstances may exacerbate the situation further, as the stress on state and societal institutions increases. What this means from the perspective of employment and decent work activities will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections.

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<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. (2015). *Global Burden of Armed Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>15</sup> OECD. (2015). *States of Fragility 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions*. Paris: OECD.

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## Fragility and the World of Work

To a large extent, this project has been driven by a core assumption of the ILO and its partners, namely that ***a focus on employment and decent work can help break out of fragility cycles***.<sup>16</sup> Such thinking is also reflected by Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal 4 of the New Deal, which emphasizes the importance of “laying the economic foundations to generate employment and improve livelihoods” as part of its wider peacebuilding and statebuilding agenda. Recent evidence from the MENA region, for example, supports the idea that unemployment is likely to lead to societal instability, participation in illicit activities, and regime change through (at times violent) popular mobilization.<sup>17</sup> Equally important are the conditions of work – in the absence of opportunities to access formal employment and participate in social dialogue, poorly treated workers across the world have become local agents of socio-political change. Yet the question raised by many of our interlocutors has been the extent to which the reverse is equally true: does it make sense to talk of “jobs for peace”? If unemployment and harsh labour conditions lead to instability, could a proactive employment and decent work agenda mitigate fragility?

This report has no ambition to contribute a new empirical evidence base on this particular debate. Intuitively, however, such an assertion would seem to make a lot of sense: when populations of working age (and particularly youths) have access to decent work opportunities, they may be less prone to political mobilization and even armed violence (as was arguably the case with the emergence and increasing role of the *Jeunes Patriotes* in Côte d'Ivoirian politics since the late 1990s<sup>18</sup>). Similarly, stable jobs with adequate social protection coverage could generate societal peace and suppress the impulsive quest for short-term gain. Opportunities to express dissatisfaction through participation in social dialogue might also promote cohesion among constituencies and populations (especially minorities and other marginalized societal groups) and thus strengthen institutionalized conflict mitigation mechanisms and broader democratic processes. Yet despite growing evidence on the level of concrete initiatives and projects,<sup>19</sup> many donors and development practitioners continue to point to the lack of empirical support for the hypothesis that employment and decent work correlate positively with peace – at least on the macro-level.

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16 On crisis response by employment and decent work programmes, see Fedi, L. (Ed.) (2005). *Employment in Response to Crisis. An Analytical Report of the Research Project “Strengthening Employment in Response to Crisis.”* Geneva: Graduate Institute of International Studies and ILO CRISSIS. For a long-term perspective, see ILO. (1997). *Local Economic Development Operational Guidelines in Post-Crisis Situations*. Geneva: ILO.

17 A survey conducted for the World Development Report 2011 found that unemployment is one of the main reasons cited for why young people become rebel or gang members; see World Bank. (2011). *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

18 This is a complex topic that has so far received insufficient attention in the literature. The interested reader is invited to see Koné, G. (2014). *Les Jeunes Patriotes, ou la revanche des porteurs des chaises en Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan: Les Classiques Ivoiriens.

19 On youth employment and peacebuilding, see Izzi, V. (2013). Just keeping them busy? Youth employment projects as a peacebuilding tool. *International Development Planning Review*, 35(2), 103-17. On other existing case studies, see, for example, Blattman, C., & Annan, J. (2014). *Can Employment Reduce Lawlessness and Rebellion? A Field Experiment with High-Risk Youth in a Fragile State*. A Field Experiment with High-Risk Youth in a Fragile State. New York: Social Science Research Network; Date-Bah, E. (Ed.) (2003). *Jobs after war: A critical challenge in the peace and reconstruction puzzle*. Geneva: ILO; DSF. (2007). *Cooperating for Peace: Assessing the Role of Cooperatives for Providing Employment in Peace and Reconstruction Process. Summary Project Outline*. Osnabrück: Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (German Foundation for Peace Research); ILO. (2007). *Local economic development for employment generation, peace and security: approaches, tools, and good practices in the Philippines. Report of an ILO-SRO Manila Technical Workshop*. Geneva: Local Economic Development Department (LED), ILO.

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As one interlocutor stressed, however, this supposed lack of evidence should not serve as an excuse for inaction – nor indeed, for a reason to privilege other issue domains. A concerted effort is needed to close the identified knowledge gap, reflected in calls to enlarge and strengthen sustained collaborations with research institutions. Equally important is a more thorough examination of the long-term linkages between decent work and peacebuilding efforts (and indeed the role of employment-intensive, cash-for-work programmes and similar “quick impact” activities as peacebuilding tools), which has attracted insufficient attention from scholars and practitioners to date.<sup>20</sup>

For the purposes of this paper, *fragility may be understood as sudden and/or cyclical situations in which one or more exogenous or endogenous risk factors exacerbate pre-existing or emerging political instability and socio-economic vulnerability. From the perspective of the world of work, this translates into the extent to which labour market actors are no longer able to provide and/or access employment and decent work opportunities.*

The important question is then not so much whether employment and decent work always leads to peace or not, but under what conditions the employment and decent work agenda may help to mitigate the factors and triggers that drive fragility – and how, in turn, this agenda may have to be adapted and supplemented in light of changing fragility dynamics.

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<sup>20</sup> In order to fill this evidence gap, the ILO, together with the PBSO, UNDP and the World Bank, is currently undertaking a study to measure the “Impact of Employment Programmes on Peacebuilding”. Results are expected in 2016.

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### III. The Fragility Compass

The previous section outlined key trends in the current global debate on fragility. This section and the next provide analytical orientation with regard to employment and decent work activities in fragile settings. It does not intend to provide concrete technical solutions to implementation challenges, nor precise strategies for complex decision-making. The aim is to understand the fragile setting in order to articulate programming responses accordingly, all the while remaining flexible and ready to adapt to changing circumstances.

#### Initiating the Fragility Compass

In light of the above discussion, “thinking fragility” essentially means undertaking a concise and ad-hoc conflict analysis – hopefully in as participatory a manner as possible, in collaboration with national actors – that can set the scene for programming decisions as the fragile situation evolves. What Jeffrey Sachs once referred to as “clinical economics” may provide us with a useful starting point.<sup>21</sup> In any disease, there are symptoms and causes. For instance, symptoms of influenza may be high fever and joint pains while its major cause is a virus infection. In this case, the objective of clinical diagnosis is to find remedies to symptoms (such as antipyretics and painkillers) while simultaneously prescribing medical solutions to repel the fundamental cause.

Our fragility compass is analogous to this. **Mass unemployment**, for instance, *can be a symptom of fragility but not fragility itself*; its more fundamental cause might be the persistence of local-level conflict, the absence of appropriate labour market policies, or dysfunctional labour governance institutions. In this case, devising a broad employment programme may be a remedy to ameliorate the symptom, but would not tackle the root cause of the issue. Likewise, prescribing a “conflict resolution package” without attempting to remedy the symptoms might well be equally ineffective. It is precisely these types of reflections that this report encourages.

Two concrete examples can be given at this stage. The first concerns the current refugee crisis in the Middle East, especially concerning the mass flow of refugees from Syria and Iraq into neighbouring countries. As one interlocutor pointed out during the consultation phase, Turkey has welcomed almost twice as many refugees as Lebanon (the figures are around 1,9 and 1,1 million respectively),<sup>22</sup> yet the destabilizing effect of these populations on the Lebanese state and society has arguably been much more pronounced – not least because of differences in the number of refugees relative to the size of the overall population (approximately 25% in Lebanon and 0.3% in Turkey) and territory, as well as the intensity of historical ties between respective societal groups and the capacity of the host state to quickly absorb a high number of new labour market entrants. A mass influx of refugees or migrants is *per se* not a trigger of or contributing factor to fragility in the host state; whether or not it is remains largely dependent on the broader socio-economic and political setting.

Another example is contemporary Madagascar. There, the donor community and aid agencies continued to perceive the persistent crises on the island as predominantly related to extreme poverty and malnutrition, with the result being that little work was undertaken to identify and tackle conflict drivers and underlying fault lines in society.<sup>23</sup> In other words: because violent conflict on a massive scale never broke out, a conflict resolution or peacebuilding lens was not systematically applied to the context, despite a series of destabilizing regime changes.

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21 Sachs, J. (2006). *The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time*. London: Penguin Books, Chapter 4: Clinical Economics.

22 See <<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>>.

23 This was one of the main findings of Jütersonke, O. & Kartas, M. (2010). *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) for Madagascar*. Geneva: CCDP.

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Aid agencies thus continued to pursue “business as usual”; had they turned to a fragility compass of the sort proposed here, they may have quickly uncovered a number of **risk factors** that fell outside of the confines of standard development thinking.

## Using the Fragility Compass

### *Differentiating Exogenous and Endogenous Factors in Fragile Settings*

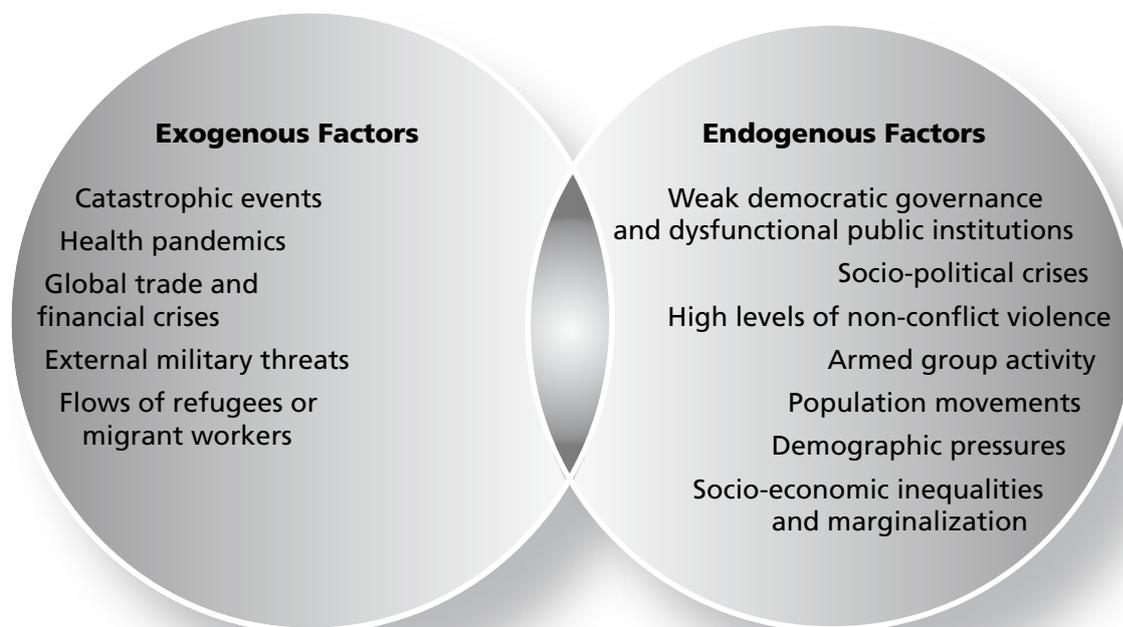
Based on a review of the policy-practitioner literature on fragility, as well as on insights from the interviews and group discussions conducted for this project, we emphasize the need to differentiate between **exogenous and endogenous factors** that contribute to the onset and/or exacerbation of fragility (see Figure 3-1). This distinction, and an awareness of the complex interplay across such factors, may have a significant bearing on the range of possible (and adequate) policy and programming responses.

**Exogenous factors** are those that are predominantly beyond the control of a particular state. They include (but are not limited to) one or a combination of the following:

- Catastrophic events, including sudden and slow-onset disasters such as droughts, desertification, earthquakes, tsunamis, and hurricanes (these may or may not be related to environmental degradation or climate change);
- health pandemics such as the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa;
- global trade and financial shocks, including financial and debt crises, fluctuations in commodity prices, and concomitant economic repercussions;
- external military threats, ranging from cross-border incursions to full-scale invasion, by both state forces and non-state armed groups; and
- flows of refugees or migrant workers, and the resulting strains on labour markets, social protection systems, and societal as well as state institutions.

In contrast, **endogenous factors** refer to those factors that stem primarily from specific contexts within a particular state (and are related to its territory, population, and institutions). They include (but are not limited to) one or a combination of the following:

- weak democratic governance and dysfunctional public institutions – this can include state-societal structures that are too weak (lack of institutional capacity) as well as those that are too strong or unaccountable (rampant corruption, authoritarianism, or dictatorship);
  - socio-political crises, ranging from contested elections and social unrest, to mass mobilization, regime change (popular uprising or coup d’état), rebel insurgency, and ultimately civil war;
  - high levels of non-conflict violence, including high rates of homicide, criminal violence, and domestic and gender-based violence (e.g. in Central and Latin America);
  - armed group activity such as rebel insurgencies, terrorism, and organized crime;
  - population movements ranging from the internally displaced to urban-rural migration flows;
  - demographic pressures, and in particular youth bulges and the resulting strains on labour markets, social protection systems, and societal as well as state institutions; and
  - socio-economic inequalities and marginalization, including high rates of structural, cyclical, and seasonal unemployment patterns.
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**Figure 3-1. Exogenous and Endogenous Risk Factors**

In reality, the line between exogenous and endogenous factors is often blurred: an endogenous political crisis, for instance, may itself have been triggered by exogenous factors such as a massive influx of refugees or migrants from neighbouring countries. It is important to note that some factors (such as migratory flows, population movements, or catastrophic events) have both exogenous and endogenous characteristics and can be mutually reinforcing when combined.

A good example to illustrate this last point is climate change, which is predominantly an exogenous factor in the sense that even the most capable governments might not have the ability to stop or slow down its progress by themselves.<sup>24</sup> However, large-scale forced migration as a result of deforestation, for instance, can be a consequence of failed domestic governance: here, it becomes more difficult to distinguish the impact of climate change from the effects of weak governance capacities. Nonetheless, exogenous and endogenous factors in our analysis are akin to the external and internal factors in the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) analysis used in business circles.<sup>25</sup> Here as well, the distinction between external and internal factors is ambiguous, and it remains helpful to distinguish factors that we can control to some extent from factors that we can not.<sup>26</sup> The distinction made above reflects the same logic of analysis.

24 On the ILO's response to climate change, see ILO. (2011). *Local investments for climate change adaptation: Green jobs through green works*. Bangkok: Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO.; Harsdorff, M., Lieuw-Kie-Song, M., & Tsukamoto, M. (2012). Towards an ILO approach to climate change adaptation. *Employment Working Paper* No. 104. Geneva: ILO.

25 Initially developed by the Harvard Business School, SWOT analysis is a strategic thinking tool to formulate collaborative strategies.

26 The ILO seeks to address the consequences of the country's decade-long insurgencies by promoting socio-economic development among displaced and marginalized rural communities through the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE). The case of the Philippines is thus also an example that shows how measures to tackle endogenous and exogenous factors driving fragility can be integrated.

For present purposes, it is important to distinguish causes of fragility from empirically observable symptoms, as well as from underlying socio-economic and political dynamics and possible conflict drivers. A societal manifestation of fragility factors may thus be a collective narrative fuelling ethnic tensions or religious strife, but that does not render “ethnicity” or “religion” a factor driving fragility. It is crucial to differentiate between political, economic, and societal factors that combine to negatively affect institutional structures and state-society relations, and the causes that are hypothesized as being the “source of the problem” of fragility.

The analytical framework proposed herein emphasizes the need to employ a broader definition of fragility that goes beyond the notion of “state fragility” or “fragile states.” **Crises frequently occur across borders, and “pockets of fragility” can even exist in stable countries.** Such a broadened “fragility lens” facilitates the analysis of the above-mentioned factors or triggers driving fragility at local, national, and regional levels, and allows us to make sense of crises such as the spread of Ebola across West Africa, the destabilization of Chad and the Central African Republic as a result of, *inter alia*, the Darfur conflict, or the complex linkages between large-scale violence in Mexico and transnational trafficking of narcotic drugs in Latin America.

### ***Making use of the Fragility Compass***

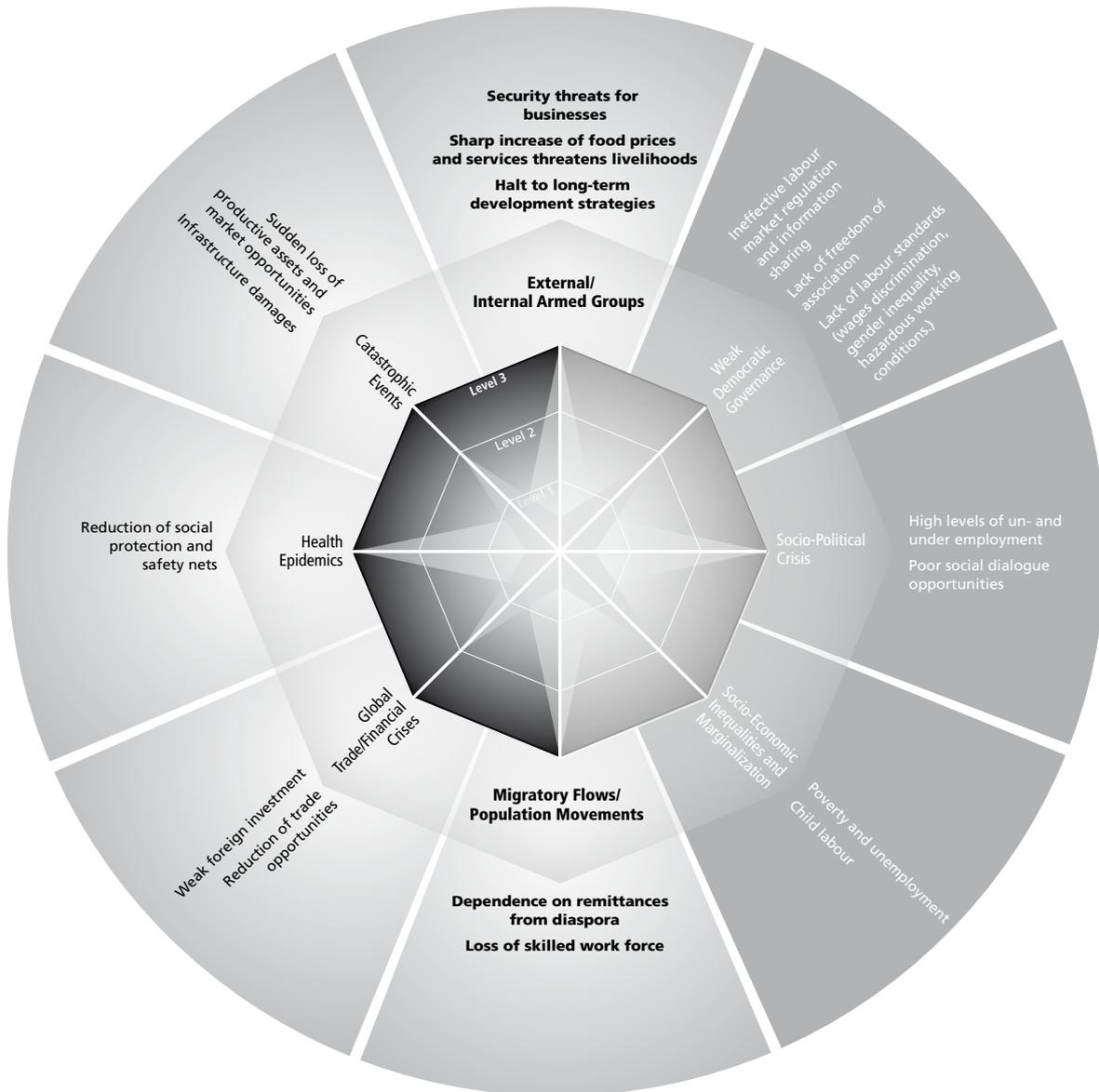
How do we fit this multitude of factors into a more comprehensive situational analysis? According to our background research and stakeholder consultations, it would appear reasonable to reduce these fragility drivers into **eight major “composite” contributing factors**: catastrophic events, health epidemics, and global trade or financial crises (typical exogenous factors); weak democratic governance, socio-political crisis, and socio-economic inequalities and marginalization (typical endogenous factors); as well as external/internal armed groups and migratory flows/population movements (that can have both exogenous and endogenous dimensions).

Moreover, we propose to think of different levels of **intensity** regarding each of these contributing factors, where we simply assume three levels ranging from the weakest, Level 1, to the strongest, Level 3. Our purpose here is not to assign measurable intensity scores to each situation, but instead to provide an analytical lens to distinguish fragility drivers manifested at different levels of intensity.

A high level of intensity assumes a stronger impact on employment and decent work. Therefore, the fragility compass posits a link between fragility and rights to work, as well as between fragility and rights at work (see Section IV below). Taken together, Figure 3-2 presents a simple yet powerful risk analysis framework to diagnose fragile settings and their impact on employment and decent work activities.

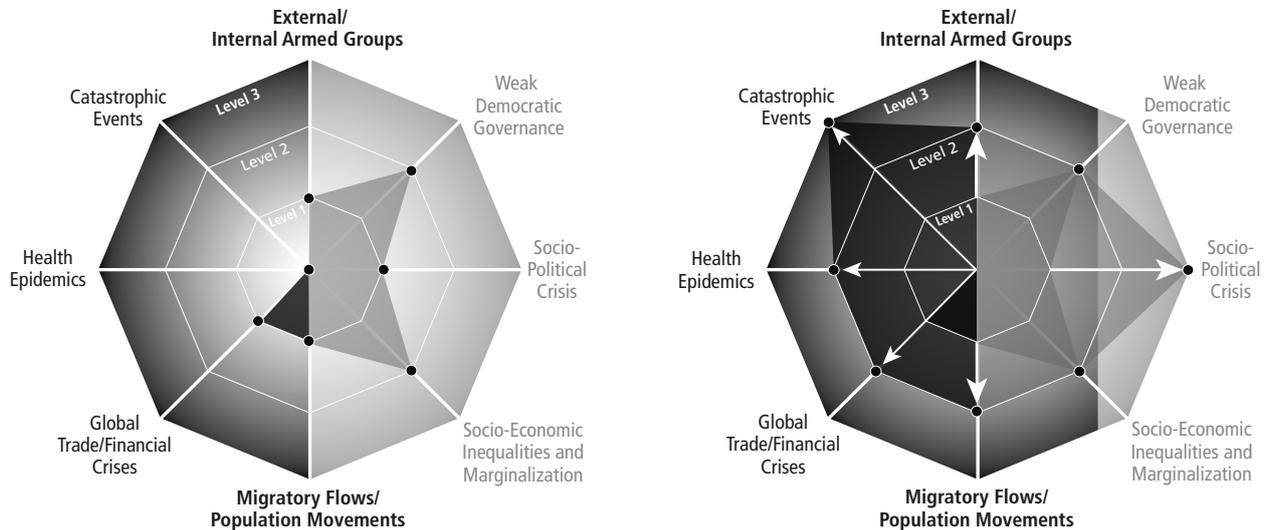
Factors/intensity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
External/Internal Armed Groups	Minor disturbances	Major threat	Existential security threat
Migratory Flows/ Population Movements	Low	Medium	High
Catastrophic Events	Minor damage	Major destruction	Catastrophe
Global Trade and Financial Crises	Low	Medium	High
Health Epidemic	Limited epidemic	Epidemic	Pandemic
Socio-Economic Inequalities and Marginalisation	Low	Medium	High
Socio-Political Crisis	Social Unrest	Widespread violence	Civil war
Weak Democratic Governance	Limited state capacity and/or accountability	Dysfunctional or authoritarian state	Collapsed state or dictatorship

**Figure 3-2. Fragility Compass**



**Identifying Fragility Multipliers**

The analytical distinctions outlined above allow us to break down the complex phenomenon of fragility. To illustrate: the primary international response to Haiti’s catastrophic earthquake in 2010 was conducted under the rubric of disaster relief, and a series of emergency aid programmes were implemented. However, it became rapidly clear that the earthquake was the “final push” that tipped already frail governmental institutions into total ineffectiveness. In other words, what seemed to be an archetypical natural disaster response actually entailed combating weak domestic governance structures. Likewise, the health epidemic that emerged shortly after the earthquake was deeply rooted in the country’s inadequate sanitation infrastructure. In essence, the fragility compass enables us to understand the **fragility multiplier effect** – where the worsening of one fragility driver (in terms of intensity) actually exacerbates other factors simultaneously. This effect is illustrated below using the risk analysis for Haiti before and after the onset of the earthquake in 2010.

**Figure 3-3. Risk Analysis for Haiti, 2008 and 2010**

Of course, the risk analysis will be deemed too arbitrary by some – and indeed not everyone will produce the same octagon: one might argue, for instance, that the intensity of socio-political crisis after the earthquake should be on Level 3 instead of Level 2. Yet producing measurable indicators is not what we are suggesting here. Instead, the risk analysis enables us to understand the interplay between different contributing factors. The resulting “mind map” may highlight that an employment generation programme in Haiti in 2010 could have been thought of as not simply constituting a project for post-disaster job creation, but a job creation project *under the constraints of* weak domestic governance and exacerbated socio-political crisis. The more the programming context is taken into account – within the limitations of donor priorities and aid agency dynamics – the greater the chances of designing an intervention that has the greatest bearing on the fragile situation it seeks to address. Hence the importance of determining to what extent a project takes peacebuilding objectives into account (as opposed to the analytically more ambitious question of whether or not a particular intervention has contributed to sustainable peace).

Liberia is another case that highlights the complexity and multiplicity of factors that trigger and drive fragility. Most recently, the 2014 Ebola crisis in the West African region emerged as an additional dimension to the fragility of state institutions and critical infrastructures in the country, and constitutes a typical example whereby an exogenous factor that is largely out of the government’s control (in this case a health pandemic) has exacerbated preexisting instability and vulnerability. Thus an exogenous shock can be amplified by the presence of certain endogenous factors such as weak governance mechanisms or dysfunctional public institutions. The Ebola crisis also demonstrated that an externally-driven setting of fragility requires a qualitatively different response and adaptation from the world of work – in this case, for instance, the promotion of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) practices with employers’ and workers’ associations to minimize the occupational exposure to Ebola, in combination with Local Economic Development (LED) strategies to counter the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic.

Ultimately, the central purpose of the fragility compass is to serve as a convenient and swift brainstorming aid to prompt such reflections and help practitioners navigate their way towards a more refined understanding of the situational context, develop an appropriate strategy, or review existing programming responses. It does not amount to a comprehensive exercise of “assigning” fixed values of fragility to each country or setting, as such an attempt would not be compatible with our conceptualization of fragility as a rapidly changing process.

## IV. Fragility Response Parameters

Section III focused on analysing the context of intervention programming by introducing the fragility compass. Building on the analytical insights gained, and drawing in particular on the interviews and consultations conducted, this section now discussed the relevance and configuration of different employment and decent work activities in fragile settings. We do so by introducing the **fragility response parameters** – an exercise to increase awareness of the inter-institutional constellation through mapping existing and/or emerging projects in fragile environments.<sup>27</sup>

### From an Agency-Centred to a Project-Based Framework

Recent years have witnessed a converging process whereby humanitarian organizations are looking for a longer-term impact of their life-saving missions, while development agencies are increasingly moving into what used to be considered an exclusively humanitarian domain (including early recovery activities).<sup>28</sup> Faced with a growing number of so-called “protracted crises” (e.g. Somalia, Iraq or Afghanistan),<sup>29</sup> the line between the humanitarian and development spheres is becoming increasingly blurred. A concomitant trend is heightened competition for project funding: more and more operational actors are now attracted to the “quick-fix” solution as a way of demonstrating tangible results in a relatively short time span – which, in turn, positively feeds back into more funding and operational sustainability. Possibly, this was why the “Cluster Approach” adopted since the international intervention in Haiti has at times encountered operational obstacles: it ignored an organizational imperative to “select and focus” on the projects that can bring about visible and easily measurable positive results in the short-run.

Despite these trends, the question of agency identity remained a central topic for discussion among the practitioners who participated in our reflection process. But perhaps the debate as to whether the ILO or any other international stakeholder is predominantly a humanitarian or development agency may be somewhat of a moot point.<sup>30</sup> Instead, ***a more pragmatic unit of analysis might be a particular activity or project initiative***, which can be placed somewhere along the spectrum of short-term emergency response and long-term capacity/resilience building.

This spectrum, however, is itself not without analytical ambiguity – how short is “short-term”, in light of the fact that the average duration of a UNHCR camp is 17 years and OCHA’s humanitarian efforts in Somalia have been on-going for 25 years? ***A more fundamental issue here is how we develop an integrated transition from quick-fix activities to more sustainable solutions in fragile settings.***

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27 For a UN guideline in this regard, see ILO & UNDP. (2009). *United Nations Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration*. Geneva: ILO.

28 An interesting example in this regard is the WFP, which was initially created as a development agency but has been gradually transformed into a humanitarian agency through its emergency food provision programmes. Today WFP operates with its dual mandate of development and humanitarian missions, in stark contrast to FAO.

29 FAO. (2010). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises*. Rome: Food and Agricultural Organization. See especially Chapter 3: “Countries in protracted crisis: what are they and why do they deserve special attention? Common features of countries in protracted crisis”.

30 Some of our interlocutors pointed to the resilience agenda as a convenient means of transcending the humanitarian-development dichotomy altogether. Tellingly, the OCED-DAC’s recent “States of Fragility 2015” report also calls for a move “from fragility to resilience”. However, many of the persons consulted were of a contrasting opinion, warning that the notion of resilience also harbours the risk of having development work slide into the crowded “saving lives” field, thus potentially impinging on the institutional and programmatic space of humanitarian assistance. Needless to say, much of this debate is over budget allocations and institutional turf.

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As reiterated during the consultations, it is the lack of a coherent intervention framework to cultivate long-term resilience to fragility that is partly the reason for the growing list of protracted crises – ***resilience is a crucial component in every fragility response***.<sup>31</sup> Otherwise, as our conception of fragility as a recurring cycle highlights, interveners need to return repeatedly to the same field sites; or worse, are never able to exit from the vicious cycle at all.

## The Variety of Intervention Approaches to Employment and Decent Work

Our interlocutors repeatedly emphasized that short-term, quick-impact activities need to be strategically linked to more long-term, self-sustaining development solutions. Echoing the UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration (2009), this debate also relates to the critical aspect of prevention – namely how we can ensure that programming actually minimizes the possibility of fragility recurring in the foreseeable future.

In this regard, the project team identified two complementary yet distinctive approaches to employment and decent work in fragile settings that emerged from discussions with practitioners. The first goes beyond mere employment creation, and guarantees ***rights at work***, extends social protection coverage, and promotes social dialogue. This includes monitoring and marshalling equity, equality, and other fundamental rights of workers. Indeed, a massive employment generation programme that pays no attention to the condition of the jobs provided runs the risk of actually heightening the tension in the community where such a programme is implemented. The other approach promotes ***the right to work*** and primarily aims to provide immediate income-generating opportunities to vulnerable populations – it thus builds on the assumption that creating immediate employment for the widest range of constituencies should be a priority for international stakeholders.

These two approaches are often presented as a trade-off between quality and quantity of employment – if we aim to provide mass-scale employment, we need to be ready to compromise the quality of these jobs, and if we aim to generate “decent” jobs, probably the scale of job creation would remain rather small. Some practitioners from the world of work find the quality-quantity distinction misleading, and there are indeed grounds to assert that the argument represents somewhat of a “false dichotomy” – that is, we may not be able to simplistically determine what the “best and only” approach to employment and decent work in fragile settings might be. ***We need to be cautious not to fall into the trap of the false dichotomy and presume we need to choose between a high quantity of low-quality jobs and a low quantity of high-quality jobs***. Instead, a more critical question is how synergies may be created in order to deliver a result that jointly builds on the comparative advantage of each approach and gradually combines quantity with quality.<sup>32</sup> At several junctures, there may be projects of mass employment creation that also intend to address the question of decent work conditions.

In an ideal world, interventions should be creating a large quantity of high-quality jobs; however, the specificities of fragile situations make it particularly difficult to determine how best to achieve this. Most projects do not have the luxury of funding to support such large-scale interventions and are placed in a situation where they are compelled to choose their priorities. The trade-off dynamics capture this dilemma, and this is why ***collaborations among***

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31 Focusing on the capacity building of local governance institutions, the collaborative network of different UN organizations led by the ILO has strengthened the ability of local governments to deliver public services. Throughout the joint programme, an emphasis was placed on employment-intensive works, the promotion of employment-led local economic development, and the spread of so-called “peace dividends”. ILO. Somalia Country Profile. Accessible at <[http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/countries-covered/somalia/facet/lang-en/index.htm?facetcriteria=TYP=Project&facetdynlist=WCMS\\_221323](http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/countries-covered/somalia/facet/lang-en/index.htm?facetcriteria=TYP=Project&facetdynlist=WCMS_221323)>.

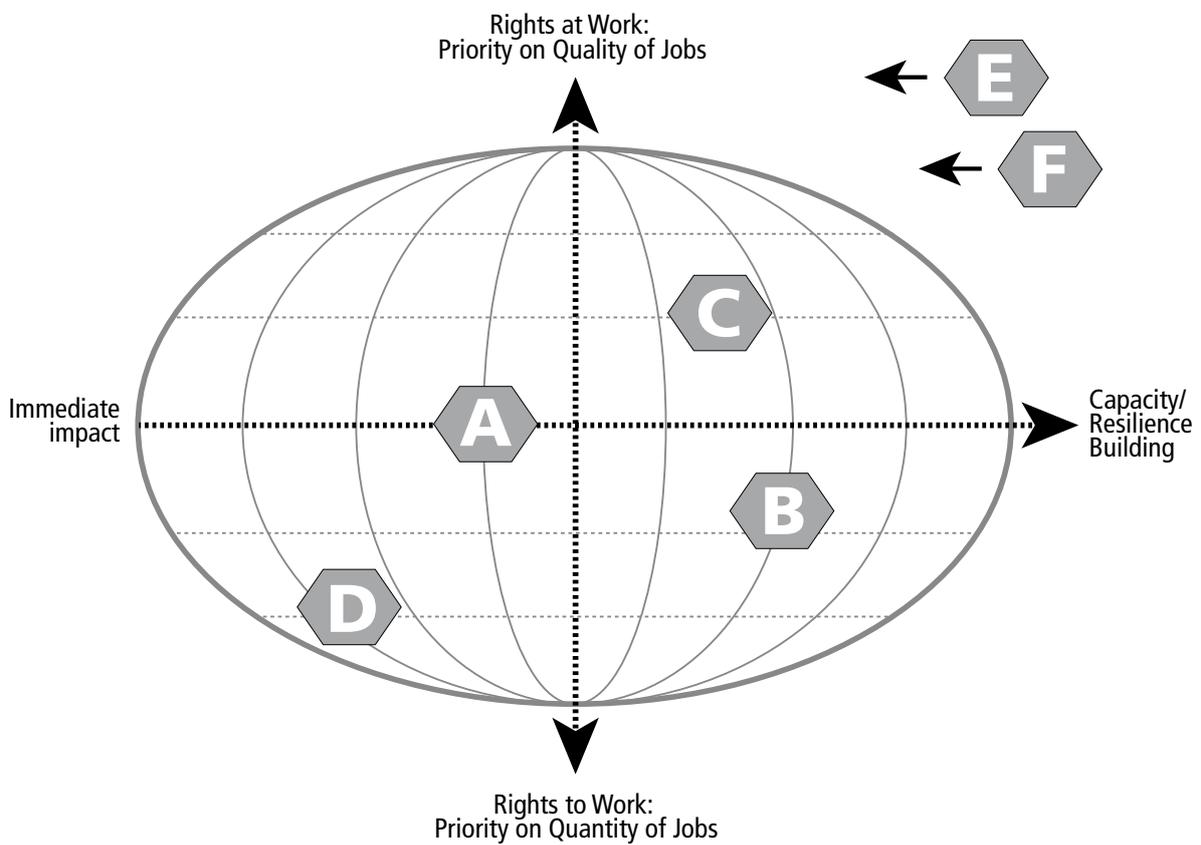
32 A good example of this combined approach is the EIIP programme in Haiti. See ILO’s EIIP programme page <<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/countries/americas/haiti.htm>>.

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*and between projects with different priorities ought to be promoted.*<sup>33</sup> It urges us to take a wider view on *the constellation of projects in fragile settings with varying approaches.*

Integrating the two aspects of project duration and project priority results in a typological mapping exercise presented below. Our key finding is that it makes less sense to debate which of these diverging views are more legitimate or operationally instructive: a more constructive question would be about *how we can combine these different approaches to create more effective fragility response parameters on the part of national and international actors* – working closely, as does in particular the ILO, with local constituencies (government, employers, and workers).

**Figure 4-1. Fragility Response Parameters**



<sup>33</sup> For instance, ILO's work in Afghanistan included: gender mainstreaming, skills training, small and medium enterprises support, empowerment of vulnerable populations through employment, capacity building of governmental and non-governmental sectors, and enhancement of social security. See ILO. (2014). *Decent Work Country Programme: Afghanistan 2010-2015*. Accessible at: < <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/countries> > .

This is also where the issue of partnerships comes in.<sup>34</sup> Partnerships need to be strategically designed in a way that complements the missing elements in other on-going projects.<sup>35</sup> Note that our argument is not that all agencies should be subscribed to both long- and short-term, quality-focused and quantity-focused projects. This would certainly be an unrealistic proposition given that any organization is bound by financial and operational constraints. Rather, the figure above should be used as a brainstorming aid to place one's project(s) in a wider fragility optic and thus potentially facilitate programming negotiations. The figure encourages the designer of a massive emergency job creation project, for instance, to extend his or her reflections on how the project can ensure the quality of employment generated by the intervention, as well as how it intends to contribute to longer-term development.

### Applying the Fragility Response Parameters – the Case of Haiti

The differentiation between, on the one hand, immediate impact projects and longer-term capacity/resilience-building projects, and, on the other, between rights-to-work and rights-at-work approaches, resonates with the majority of programming practitioners. Ideally, our projects should “strike the right balance” and adopt “an integrated approach” that incorporates the best elements of both perspectives. In reality, however, this is rarely feasible, with staff members compelled to rank priorities and make choices under a wide variety of operational and institutional constraints, including security risks and budgetary limitations. On top of such organizational issues, every fragile situation is inherently – and overwhelmingly – complex. In cases of transition and post-conflict states, performing all functions adequately in the short and medium term may not be possible – the state will continue to “fail” in fulfilling some, if not all, of its functions. This means that practitioners in the field are likely to face multiple policy issues simultaneously, making it even more difficult to select and focus coherently.

In such circumstances, how should we reconcile short-term needs and long-term visions? Our tentative *fragility response parameters* are developed precisely to address this complex challenge. Here we use the term parameter in order not to give the impression of providing a portfolio of intervention and programming options (which we do not deliver on in this document), but merely in the sense of providing an overarching mind map for discussions among stakeholders of the world of work. It is based on the assumption that ***rather than relying on a central coordination mechanism, programming decisions can be informed by mapping the institutional constellations that respond to a common fragility context.***

Figure 4-2 presents this mapping approach by placing five projects in response to the earthquake in Haiti onto the parameter matrix. For instance, if you are implementing an immediate job provision project (e.g. a project on debris management), you need to be aware of other projects with different priorities and orientations, such as skills training of micro entrepreneurs, the elimination of child labour, and the enforcement of labour standards, i.e. the construction of a business services centre, South-South cooperation (SSC) against child labour, or a better work programme (see Box 4-1 below for project descriptions). Positioning your own project along the two axes (although this is again a rather subjective exercise) may enable you to discover missing elements in your intervention and ultimately supplement it by linking your projects to other initiatives.

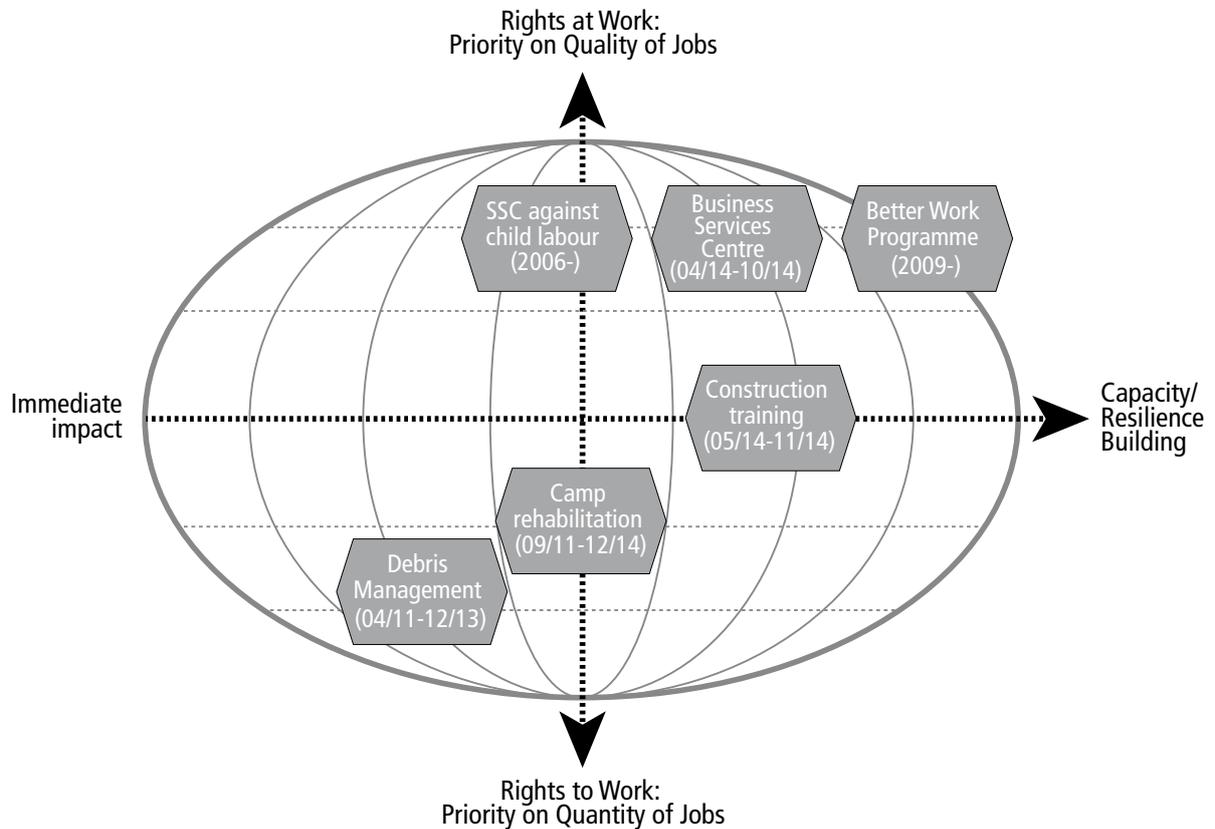
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34 For a detailed exploration of partnerships in this context, see Calvi-Parisetti, P. & Kiniger-Passigli, D. (2006). *Partnership in crisis response: Experiences and prospects for enhanced ILO capacity*. Geneva: Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, ILO.

35 Note that partnerships can be built between international organizations as well as between international organizations and local institutions. A case in point is Timor-Leste, where the ILO's engagement began at the end of 2001, primarily through the process of assessment missions undertaken by the UN transitional administration. At the time of independence in 2002, Timor-Leste began its state-building work in the face of an extremely weak system of domestic governance, as well as significantly damaged infrastructure. The ILO has participated in the state-building project from the very beginning, through embedding its staff into local institutions. This “embedded approach” became the key trait of the ILO engagement in the state-building of Timor-Leste: instead of dispatching short-term project officers, the approach aimed at embedding international staff directly within national institutions, thus promoting the integration of national and international efforts to more effective governance.

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Figure 4-2. Fragility Response Parameters (Haiti)



This is a strategic exercise for two reasons. First, while it does not pre-determine which projects should be linked together, it compels us to envision how we should design and initiate partnerships in the area of employment and decent work in fragile settings, **in order not to work at cross-purposes while at the same time maximizing the synergies of simultaneously on-going projects.**<sup>36</sup> Unlike the Cluster Approach, this project-focused framework promotes a decentralized decision-making process (as is predominantly the case in responses to fragility) while highlighting limits and possible shortcomings of project implementation. The case of Haiti is again illustrative here because it represents an example combining the immediate concern for employment creation and income generation for local populations, with long term capacity/resilience building such as reinforcing labour standards and/or promoting earthquake-resistant construction techniques.

<sup>36</sup> It goes without saying that existing principles such as “do no harm” should also be taken into account.

**BOX 4-1****Case Study: Employment and Decent Work Projects in Haiti**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Debris management in support to the return of the earthquake-affected population to their communities in Port au Prince.

**DURATION:** April 2011 – June 2013

**FUNDED BY:** Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF)

**IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:** UNDP and UN-Habitat

**OBJECTIVE:** Improve the economic situation of the residents of the urban areas affected by the earthquake by supporting reconstruction and economic development.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** GERME/ASECO (Gérer mieux son entreprise/Améliorer son entreprise de construction) training cycles for the organization/strengthening and training of income and employment generating units (existing or new micro-enterprises) oriented to engage in the process of debris removal, processing and recycling, and commercialization of the resulting products.

Development of Enterprise Service Centers (ESC) that recreate a market environment to better prepare entrepreneurs to progressively transform their working units into sustainable micro-enterprises or cooperatives, and to develop their business. The ESC is a multi-service structure providing a site of production, equipment rental services, technical and business management training and consulting services for market research and for the formalization of economic activities. The concept has been tested, refined and systematized over the last few years to make it replicable.<sup>37</sup>

**PROJECT TITLE:** Earthquake-resistant construction training in Haiti

**DURATION:** May 2014 – June 2015

**FUNDED BY:** British Red Cross

**OBJECTIVE:** Provide safe and sustainable housing solutions to improve the living conditions of the population and to qualify workers to participate in the rebuilding process of their neighborhood and obtain government certifications.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** APRAS (Apprendre pour Reconstruire Ayiti Solide) training cycles to increase the number of professionals in construction by strengthening the technical training of foremen, skilled workers, and semi-skilled workers based on government standard norms in seismic- and cyclonic-resistant constructions.

ASECO training cycles to reinforce the management capacity of small construction entrepreneurs.

Awareness raising events for the residents of the target neighborhoods to encourage a better understanding of the principles of earthquake-resistant construction.

**PROJECT TITLE:** South-South Cooperation to eliminate child labour

**DURATION:** 2006 – 2014

**FUNDED BY:** The Government of Brazil

**IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:** Viva Rio

**OBJECTIVE:** The project aims to promote the socio-economic development of vulnerable youths through the elimination of child labour and promotion of decent employment for youths in the Bel Air and Cité Soleil areas of Port-au-Prince.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** The project supports the improvement of vulnerable youth employability and entrepreneurship, and facilitates their access to decent jobs. Democracy and citizenship values are also disseminated and promoted within the targeted communities.

A training course for teenagers in Haiti supported by the Brazilian NGO "Viva Rio" was developed.

The National Tripartite Committee against Child Labour was established to initiate the consultation process necessary to define the list of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the formulation of a National Plan against Child Labour.<sup>38</sup>

37 ILO. (2013). *Relancer l'emploi à travers le processus de reconstruction en Haïti. Rapport de capitalisation présentant les réalisations du BIT dans le cadre du projet commun des Nations Unies de "Gestion des Débris": Promotion de l'emploi et recyclage des débris*. Port-au-Prince: ILO.

38 ILO. (2015). *Brazil's Contribution to the ILO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy: An Overview*. A report prepared for IX Brazil-ILO Annual South-South and Triangular Cooperation Meeting. Geneva: ILO.

**PROJECT TITLE: The Better Work Haiti programme****DURATION:** since 2009**FUNDED BY:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland, and others**IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:** International Finance Corporation (IFC)**OBJECTIVE:** Driving sector-wide, sustainable improvement in adherence to national labour law and core labour standards, and strengthening business competitiveness in Haiti's garment industry.**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** Establishment of worker-management health and safety committees is helping to make positive changes in Haiti's factories.

Assistance to enterprises in order to improve their practices based on core ILO labour standards and national labour law.

Courses on International Labour Standards to help employer and union representatives to develop systems and skills on social dialogue in the garment sector.

**PROJECT TITLE: Rehabilitation of 16 neighborhoods and voluntary return of families from 6 associated camps and Rehabilitation of the Champ de Mars area****DURATION:** September 2011 – September 2015**FUNDED BY:** HRF and the Canadian International Development Agency<sup>39</sup>**IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:** IOM, UNDP and UNOPS**OBJECTIVE:** Provide sustainable housing solutions to support the return of displaced people from the camps to their places of origin through the reconstruction and improvement of houses and urban space (services promoting social cohesion).**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** APRAS training to qualify construction actors to participate in the reconstruction process respecting the norms and standards set by the government for earthquake- and cyclone resistant structures and buildings.

GERME and ASECO training and ESC approach scaled up to reinforce the management and technical capacities of small construction enterprises.

Skill training for the provision of services ("petits metiers") in the neighborhoods.

**PROJECT TITLE: Rehabilitation of the neighborhoods of Fort National and Bel Air through the activation of an Enterprise Service Center****DURATION:** April 2014 – July 2015**FUNDED BY:** United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)**OBJECTIVE:** Support existing actions towards the reduction of community-based violence by facilitating the employability of youth through professional training (aimed at obtaining State certification and at creating sustainable and decent jobs) for the production of construction materials and the rehabilitation of public infrastructures.**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** Reinforcement of the capacities of youth through theoretical and practical training on production of construction materials and rehabilitation techniques.

Reinforcement of the capacities of youth through enterprise management training (GERME/ASECO).

Creation of micro and small enterprises in the construction sector through the services provided by an ESC offering technical and structural support and encouraging the transition to formality of informal economic activities.

<sup>39</sup> The organization was renamed Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development in 2013.

The proposition for a project-focused perspective is critically relevant for several reasons. First, the existence of inter-agency collaboration *per se* does not guarantee the presence of strategic communication as a fragility response mechanism. For instance, in Figure 4-1, Agency X may be implementing Project A and Agency Y may be initiating Project B. While these two agencies might develop a very closely aligned collaboration model, this partnership does not address the question of how to link their project outcomes to a long-term capacity/resilience agenda, or to an alternative perspective on labour standards. Shifting the focus of analysis to concrete activities, in contrast, is useful for highlighting missing elements. As one of our interlocutors stressed, ***devising the effective communication strategy in fragile settings is just as important as the programming activities themselves.***

An equally crucial virtue of the project perspective is that it allows us to move beyond standard institutional categories, such as international organizations, NGOs, the state, the private sector, and so forth. Government reforms are no longer the exclusive competence of public institutions, while NGOs and actors from the private sector are increasingly engaged in initiatives that are strikingly similar to those implemented by major international organizations.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of the identity of the “intervener”, the project activity can be mapped onto the fragility response matrix.

It is worth emphasizing again that the fragility response parameters are intended to be a thought-provoking exercise, rather than a definitive once-and-for-all blueprint. Some on-going projects implemented under the theme of employment and decent work are, of course, difficult to categorize along the continuum between immediate responses and longer-term capacity/resilience building. Nonetheless, the framework is relevant as a brainstorming aid and enables actors from the world of work to:

1. position their project vis-à-vis similar or complementary initiatives;
2. explore the diversity of approaches taken with respect to employment and decent work activities;
3. recognize prospects for collaboration across agencies and project partners; and
4. identify missing elements and/or necessary adjustments to the existing project portfolio.

## **Cyclical Entry Points and Characteristics of Interventions**

The fragility response parameters constitute an *inter-agency* framework. When we consider the timing of the intervention, however, another perspective on *intra-agency* dynamics is needed. Our reflection process found that not all responses to fragile settings are specifically tailored to these situations – and indeed, they do not need to be. First, while some projects are specifically designed to address fragility, “standard” projects related to employment and decent work may also harbour the potential to contribute positively to the prevention and/or mitigation of fragility, since these projects promote sustainable income and societal stability. Second, many of the tailored projects are not generated from scratch the moment the onset of fragility is observed – as most fragile settings demand international organizations to dispatch a rapid response, these projects are by and large designed as an adjusted variant of pre-existing interventions and add-on projects. For example, ILO engagement during the U.S.-Afghan War period was limited in its scope but since 2003, the ILO has played a significant role in the reconstruction/prevention phase by implementing the regular package of initiatives that contribute to social dialogue and societal stability. The case of Afghanistan indicates that “normal” intervention policies can also be adapted to address the challenges of fragile

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<sup>40</sup> When it comes to operations in areas of high security risks (for instance, in Libya), private firms might have more extensive information about the security situation on the ground and have a much more attuned sense of risk than an international organization that is just about to enter the field. A project-based strategic collaboration may enable practitioners to share information more quickly to address a common fragility challenge. In addition, moving away from the overly macro-categorization such as “the private sector” widens our gaze and thus our prospects for fragility response partnerships – in reality, the private sector is comprised of a wide array of small and large businesses, including multilateral corporations, state-owned companies, financial institutions, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and local family firms, to name a few.

settings, particularly where social cohesion and governmental capability are weaker than in other states.<sup>41</sup>

With the focus on both specific and non-specific intervention tools, it is also important to note that interventions tailored to fragile settings can be further distinguished by the **timing of the intervention** (see Figure 4-3 below).<sup>42</sup> Standard or non-specific projects are those implemented regardless of the onset or exacerbation of fragility (although some operational constraints and obstacles might impose themselves). These projects mark important continuity in addressing fundamental issues of employment and decent work. Moreover, interventions specifically designed to address fragility can be categorized by the relative period in which they are most likely to come to fruition: (I) prevention, (II) period of fragility, and (III) post-fragility.<sup>43</sup> An important emphasis in this framework is on the **multiple entry points for intervention**, in terms of commencing programmes before, during, or in the aftermath of fragility.

Period I refers to the time prior to the onset of fragility. These may be standard settings of development and poverty alleviation, where early warning systems for fragility are of significance.<sup>44</sup> Period II begins with the onset of fragility, and priority is given to tools that seek to minimize negative societal repercussions and/or avoid an exacerbation of the situation. Period III is then the post-crisis setting, in which different types of interventions are drawn upon to foster a speedy recovery, long-term reconstruction, and an avoidance of the recurrence of fragility. The analysis thus emphasizes the cyclical nature of these periods and situations that are far from constituting a linear process towards “graduating” from fragility.<sup>45</sup>

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41 ILO. (2012). *Afghanistan: Time to Move to Sustainable Jobs: Study on the State of Employment in Afghanistan*. Kabul: ILO Afghanistan Office.

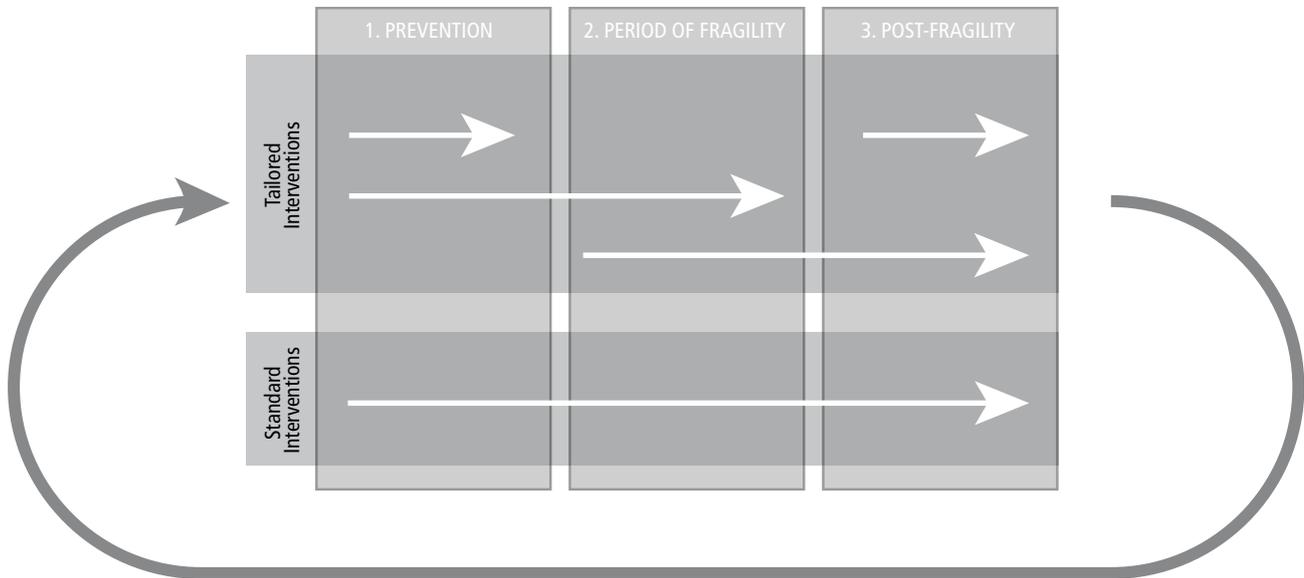
42 This approach does not run contrary to the three-track approach articulated by the *United Nations Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration*, but provides a complementary perspective to analyze contemporary projects. While the UN language focuses on *themes* (stabilization, local reintegration, and transition) and *intensity of programmes*, the framework outlined here stresses two other important aspects (cyclicity of fragility and contributing factors to fragility), strictly for the purpose of classifying and categorizing the materials included in this desk review.

43 In the language of the UN, (I) “prevention” is compatible with *prevention/mitigation, preparedness, and resilience* situations, (II) “period of fragility” equals *response* situations, and (III) “post-fragility” corresponds to *recovery* periods.

44 On the importance of early warning system, see ILO. (2005). *Strengthening Crisis Prevention through Early Warning Systems*. HEI-ILO Research Programme on Strengthening Employment in Response to Crises, Volume 3. Geneva: InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, ILO.

45 Both in Haiti and the Philippines, the programmes on employment and decent work have contributed to multiple phases (prevention/recovery) of intervention while enhancing local infrastructure and building the capacity of various actors engaged in the field. In the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, an emergency employment programme was set up to ensure that people are not left vulnerable or exploited.

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**Figure 4-3. Cyclical Entry Points for Intervention**

Not all effective responses should be tailor-made; indeed, most projects the ILO implements in fragile countries were not designed as fragility-response interventions, but rather as standard ILO projects, as regularly implemented in developing countries. Nor do we say that all standard projects should be seen in light of fragility responses. The framework provided here suggests that both tailored and standard initiatives entail significant potential to help address the complexities of fragile environments, and in consequence there are multiple entry points to consider.

The fragility response parameters presented in this section have considered three key dimensions in thinking about employment and decent work in fragile settings: (1) **the project approach** (priority on quantity of jobs or priority on quality of jobs); (2) **the timing of interventions**, and (3) **the setting of interventions** (whether the project constitutes a tailored response or an adaptation of a standard initiative). As we have emphasized, financial, situational, organizational, and human resource constraints make it extremely challenging to address these dimensions simultaneously. In other words, in an ideal world we should be able to design a “mega project” that addresses both the issues of quantity and quality, in all phases of the fragility cycle, and including both tailored and standard interventions. In reality, this is hardly the case. This is why the fragility response parameters can provide useful guidance to identify missing elements in one’s projects, which can be complemented by partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders in the world of work.

## V. Concluding Reflections

This report sought to provide brainstorming aids to make sense of the fragility debate from the perspective of employment and decent work programming. Section II began with a literature review and conceptual exploration of the fragility terminology by proposing to define fragility as a cyclical process that often involves recurring episodes of amelioration and exacerbation. It also stressed that the notion of fragility is not synonymous with conflict and/or post-conflict situations, but is driven by the societal, political, and economic dynamics of prevailing or recurring vulnerability and instability. This discussion sought to provide practitioners from the world of work with the backdrop to contemporary global debates, and to situate daily programming activities on the theme of employment and decent work within such a broader setting.

Section III differentiated endogenous and exogenous factors that drive fragility. These factors were transposed onto a simple risk analysis framework in order to generate the Fragility Compass. A key purpose of looking into the factors fuelling fragile environments was not to ask whether employment and decent work always leads to peace and resilience, but to investigate under what conditions the employment and decent work agenda may help to mitigate the factors and triggers that drive fragility – and how, in turn, fragility dynamics could have a (presumably negative) bearing on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of programming activities.

The situational analysis in Section III then led into the fragility response parameters (Section IV), consisting of a project mapping exercise and a multiple entry points framework. These encourage an awareness of the positioning of projects vis-à-vis similar or complementary initiatives. It aimed to sensitize institutional perspectives to the diversity of approaches taken with respect to employment and decent work activities.

Two guiding questions (see Section I above) lay at the heart of this initiative. How does the sudden or cyclical onset of fragility affect the world of work and in particular the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of employment and decent work activities? How can employment and decent work activities contribute to preventing, mitigating and responding to fragility – and what might be basic assessment criteria for establishing which programming aspects need to be adjusted or supplemented accordingly? To stimulate reflections on these questions, ***this report conceptualized fragility as sudden and/or cyclical situations in which one or more exogenous or endogenous risk factors exacerbate preexisting or emerging political instability and socio-economic vulnerability. From the perspective of the world of work, this translates into the extent to which labour market actors are no longer able to provide and/or access employment and decent work opportunities.***

There is more than one way to approach the pressing challenges presented by the onset or recurrence of fragility. Initiatives such as the ILO's upcoming flagship programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience highlight that ***employment and decent work activities can contribute to preventing, mitigating and responding to such situations when implemented across the spectrum of immediate impact and long-term resilience building in an institutional constellation covering rights-to-work and rights-at-work approaches.***

This report attempted to encourage reflection about where we stand in the enlarging and increasingly crowded world of work (***knowledge orientation***), to what extent we are “on the same page” in our day-to-day activities (***situational analysis***), and how best we can navigate through the challenging environments together with our colleagues and institutional partners (***building partnerships and sustained collaboration***). By providing food for thought to the ILO, its constituents, and international partners from across the world of work, the ultimate aim has been to stimulate engagement with the global fragility debate, and to inspire the refinement and development of employment and decent work activities at the country level.

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