Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment

Guidance Note

January 2021

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01 WHAT is a Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment?

This note provides guidance on how to conduct a conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity risk assessment.

A **conflict analysis** is an examination of the various **levels** and **types of conflicts** that exist in a given context. It offers an overall picture or "factual" snapshot of the conflict **the causes/drivers/triggers of the conflict** and the **main actors** involved, including through a gender lens. It also analyses the **drivers of peace** and what connects people across divides.

A conflict sensitivity risks assessment looks at how WFP programming could become caught up in conflict dynamics. While the security team is charged with minimising the risks that the conflict poses to WFP (staff, assets, resources, access to communities etc.), a Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment is mainly concerned with minimising the chances of *WFP inadvertently having a negative impact on the dynamics of the conflict*, including by exacerbating divisions and tensions. It also explores how WFP can identify and capitalise on **opportunities to contribute to social cohesion and peace**. Critical to these aims is the inclusion of perspectives from a range of actors, including from girls, boys, women and men in any context. As explained later in the guidance note, several teams, units and functional areas within WFP already analyse conflicts, to varying degrees. While these analyses tend to focus on identifying risks to WFP, this guidance focuses on conflict analysis specifically for Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment (CSRA), i.e. risks that WFP might inadvertently have a negative impact on the conflicts they seek to mitigate. The conflict analysis conducted for will be highly relevant to units and teams other than programme. Maximum participation across the WFP Country Office (CO) is therefore strongly advised.

The guidance is structured around **three building blocks**:

a. Conflict Analysis – section 6

b. Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment – section 7

c. Mitigation measures – section 8.

What is a conflict? What conflicts are this guidance concerned with?

Conflict is a system of competitive interactions between two or more parties (individuals, groups, states etc.) who pursue mutually incompatible goals, or compete for the same goal. Conflicts can be pursued violently (war, terrorist attacks etc.), or non-violently (litigation, mediation etc.). WFP is concerned with **Armed Conflicts** involving two or more parties who have resorted to mass violence in pursuit of their goal; **AND Latent Conflicts** where structural or other drivers of conflict have not been resolved, and at the same time have not reached the surface and escalated into actual confrontation or violence. At minimum, conflict sensitivity analysis should be undertaken in contexts affected by openly violent armed conflicts, as well as in fragile contexts affected by political instability and civic unrests. For further explanation of commonly used peace and conflict terminology please *see the WFP Glossary of conflict Sensitivity, Peace Building and HDP Nexus terms.*

02 WHY conduct a Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment?

Conflict is a well-recognised driver of hunger. Therefore, WFP's ability to achieve its food security goals are intrinsically linked to conflict dynamics, as well as to efforts to build sustainable peace. The 2020 Nobel Prize was awarded to WFP specifically in recognition of the organization's role in "bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict". The lack of robust conflict analyses can leave WFP blind to the realities of conflicts, as experienced by the women, girls, men and boys WFP aims to assist. Such conflict in-sensitivity can lead to poorly designed interventions that fail to build on opportunities to contribute to peace or address the causes of conflict and can even inadvertently trigger or exacerbate tensions.

At the very minimum, WFP must avoid having a negative impact on the contexts in which it works (do no harm). WFP does not operate in a vacuum. On the contrary, WFP is often called to work in some of the most politically unstable contexts in the world. Maintaining impartiality, independence and neutrality can become a significant challenge in such circumstances, especially as food insecurity is often tied to some of the most potent drivers of structural violence[1] and conflict. WFP regularly faces situations where food assistance runs the risk of being politically instrumentalized and used by governments or armed groups to their advantage. **A strong risk assessment can significantly assist WFP staff to navigate the sensitivities of operating in complex emergencies, inform decision-making at programmatic level and ultimately to adhere to the Humanitarian Principles.**

Conflict sensitivity is a mandated obligation for WFP, as outlined in the 2013 policy ***WFP's Role in Peacebuilding in Transition Settings***.[2] The Policy states that conflict sensitivity should be a foundational minimum standard for any WFP activities in conflict or post-conflict settings. In June 2020, WFP also committed to adhere to the **OECD DAC Recommendations on the Humanitarian- Development-Peace Nexus**, which obliges WFP to ensure that all activities are conflict sensitive. These commitments are operationalised in **WFP's Conflict Sensitivity Minimum Standards**.

03 WHO should conduct a Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment?

Every **Country Office (CO) and Sub-Office (SO), Regional Bureau (RB)** should have staff able to:

• **Conduct a conflict analysis and CS risk assessment**, and/or

• **Supervise an external consultant/institution** to conduct a rigorous and participative conflict analysis and CS risks assessment.

Conflict analyses to identify CS risks should be led by the programme team in order to ensure there are close ties to the design and adjustment of operations, the various components of the programme cycle and in turn the findings are reflcted into the Country Strategic Planning (CSP) process. Success however will dependent on COs ability to cultivate an atmosphere of inclusivity, with all personnel, functional areas and cooperating partners encouraged and empowered to contribute relevant information or perspectives. Relevant information for an accurate analysis can often come from unlikely sources.

If the analysis is undertaken at **COUNTRY – MACRO LEVEL** jointly with other agencies contributing to the **Country Context Analysis** and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework or led by WFP to inform the **Country Strategic Plan (CSP)** design, the **Head of Programme (HoP)** leads the process, in consultation with the Emergency coordinator- when applicable- and the CD and Head of Security[3]. The HoP establishes the scope of the analysis and the CS risks assessment, appoints staff (if a conflict analyst or conflict advisor is in place at CO or RB level) or, if necessary, contracts a consultant/organisation to undertake the analysis. The HoP, in consultation with the Head of Security and the CD, oversees the process, ensures inclusivity, provides quality control and approves the final report. The Compliance Officer will be involved to discuss the inclusion of the identified CS risks in the risk register.

If the analysis is undertaken at **LOCAL – MICRO LEVEL** to inform the CSP planning/**activity design**, the **Head of Sub/Field Office** (HoSO – HoFO) leads the process, in coordination with her/his supervisors in CO, the head of security and the RB. The HoSO establishes the scope of the analysis, appoints staff (if a conflict analyst or conflict advisor is in place at CO or RB level) or, if necessary, contracts a consultant/organisation to undertake the analysis. The HoSO – HoFO, in consultation with the Field Security Officer, oversees the process, ensures inclusivity, provides quality control and approves the final report. The HoP is kept informed.

For the **frequent updates** necessary to keep the analysis relevant, the lead is taken by the **activity manager and implemented by a programme/policy officer**, with the support of RB or HQ if necessary. While led by programme, **conflict sensitivity concerns ALL parts of WFP operations** and will require the active involvement of procurement, logistics, human resources, field security, transport and all other functional areas.

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[1] The inequalities built into the socio-political system. For example: unequal access to legal rights, political power or economic opportunities.

[2] https://newgo.wfp.org/documents/update-on-wfp-peacebuilding-policy

[3] The HoP will work with the Head of Security to ensure alignment between the conflict sensitivity analysis and the acceptance-oriented elements integrated into the Security Risk Management report (SRM)/ad hoc SRM for WFP activities. In addition, inputs from WFP Security analysis and WFP FSOs/UNDSS on actors mapping can guide the actor mapping process integrated into the conflict sensitivity analysis process.

Who should get involved in a CA and CS risk assessment?

(the list below is not definitive and needs to be adapted to each context / CO / programme)

Internal stakeholders:

• Management: CD-DCD;

• Programme: HoP, CO programme policy officers, HoSOs/HoFOs, programme policy officers in AOs or SOs, food monitors, conflict analysts, protection/gender/AAP advisors with the support of RB humanitarian advisors, relevant regional senior staff;

• Access focal point, and Emergency Coordinator/EPRO

• VAM and monitoring staff

• Head of Security and Security Officers, regional security analyst + inputs from the Threat and Risk Service (TRS)/ Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC)

• Compliance Officer

• Operations – Human Resources; Supply Chain / logistic officers

• Conflict analysts in the Analysis and Early Warning (AEW) team

• And any other relevant WFP staff

External stakeholders:

• Government/Ministries representatives at national and local level/ local authorities (governors, majors)

• Cooperating Partners (e.g. activity manager, field and monitoring staff etc.)

• NGOs and SCOs

• Service providers, including frontline staff (e.g. nurses, doctors, teachers etc.)

• Local public, traditional authorities / elders and community leaders

• Leaders of youth, women and other community groups

• Faith leaders

• Politicians/elected representatives

• Academics and think tanks

Similarities, differences and overlaps with the analyses conducted by Protection, AAP, Gender, Security, Access and Emergency teams.

Borrowed from medicine's Hippocratic Oath, "do no harm" has become a core ethical doctrine of the humanitarian sector, challenging humanitarians to take responsibility for the full impacts of their work. Under the umbrella of DNH, Conflict Sensitivity seeks not only to avoid inadvertently making things worse, but to truly understand the impact of aid on power structures and patterns of violence. As well as Conflict Sensitivity, DNH has inspired innovation around issues like **Humanitarian Protection, Gender Mainstreaming, Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) and staff security**.

Common ethical foundations mean that there is significant overlap in the types of contextual information that is relevant for several/all of these issues. Aspects of Conflict Sensitivity are already included in the WFP's **protection, accountability and gender policies** and are already applied by staff in the field. SGBV, for example, is not only a Gender and Protection issue but can also have significant Conflict Sensitivity repercussions. While the **protection and accountability teams** are concerned with **minimising the potential negative impacts of WFP assistance on beneficiaries** (e.g. how aid may render civilians more vulnerable to attacks), this guidance adds a new lens by looking at **minimising the impact of assistance on the overall conflict dynamics**.

Every WFP CO in a complex emergency also has security and access strategies, as well as dedicated staff responsible for analyzing the impact of conflicts on WFP operations. Their work helps WFP to negotiate access, generate community acceptance and keep beneficiaries, staff and assets safe. W**hile security staff focus on contextual risks**, building on the UN Security Risk Management manual (SRM)[4], this guidance draws attention to programmatic risks, i.e. the risks that WFP poses to the conflict, by inadvertently worsening divisions, tensions and conflict dynamics.

Likewise, the Programme Division Access Unit focusses on supporting and creating access strategies. Conflict analysis and actor mapping is central to their work, though they approach their analysis from the perspective of humanitarian access, whereas this guidance focuses on WFP's impact on contexts.

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[4] Security Risk Management (SRM) is a United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) analytical process for assessing the operational context of the UN in order to identify the risk level of threats that may affect UN personnel, assets, premises and operations on the basis of which, security management decisions are made. http://www.unicefinemergencies.com/downloads/eresource/docs/programme%20criticality/SRM%20Manual%20Dec%202015.pdf

The Analysis and Early Warning Unit (AEW) in the **Emergency division**/HQ, meanwhile, mainly focuses on analysing any conflict (local, national, or regional) whose scale requires a substantial increase in WFP's level of preparedness and response. The unit explores current and potential future developments in the conflict dynamics, political instability, civil unrest and how they could affect WFP operations or rising humanitarian needs. Building on and complementing these existing forms of conflict analysis, this guidance focuses also/mainly at a micro – activity level and assesses specific programmatic risks.

Much of the contextual information relevant to each functional area in WFP is also relevant to others. There is therefore a great opportunity to pool conflict analysis resources at all levels of the organization. Conflict Sensitivity builds on existing context analysis within WFP. However, whereas policy concepts like Gender, Protection, AAP and security interpret DNH from the perspective of avoiding harming beneficiaries or staff, Conflict Sensitivity is concerned with minimising the potential negative impacts of WFP assistance on conflict dynamics. If programme staff can tap into ongoing analyses there are **possibilities to use security, Gender, AAP and Protection information to bolster Conflict Sensitivity efforts**.

04 WHEN to do a Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment?

A robust, evidence-based and up-to-date analysis of the context in which WFP operates should underpin all its strategies, policies, programming and advocacy. This is particularly urgent when engaging with active armed conflicts but also important in unstable environments where latent conflicts run the risk to evolve into violence.

Undertaking the analysis has **underpinning relevance to each stage of the CSP programme cycle:**
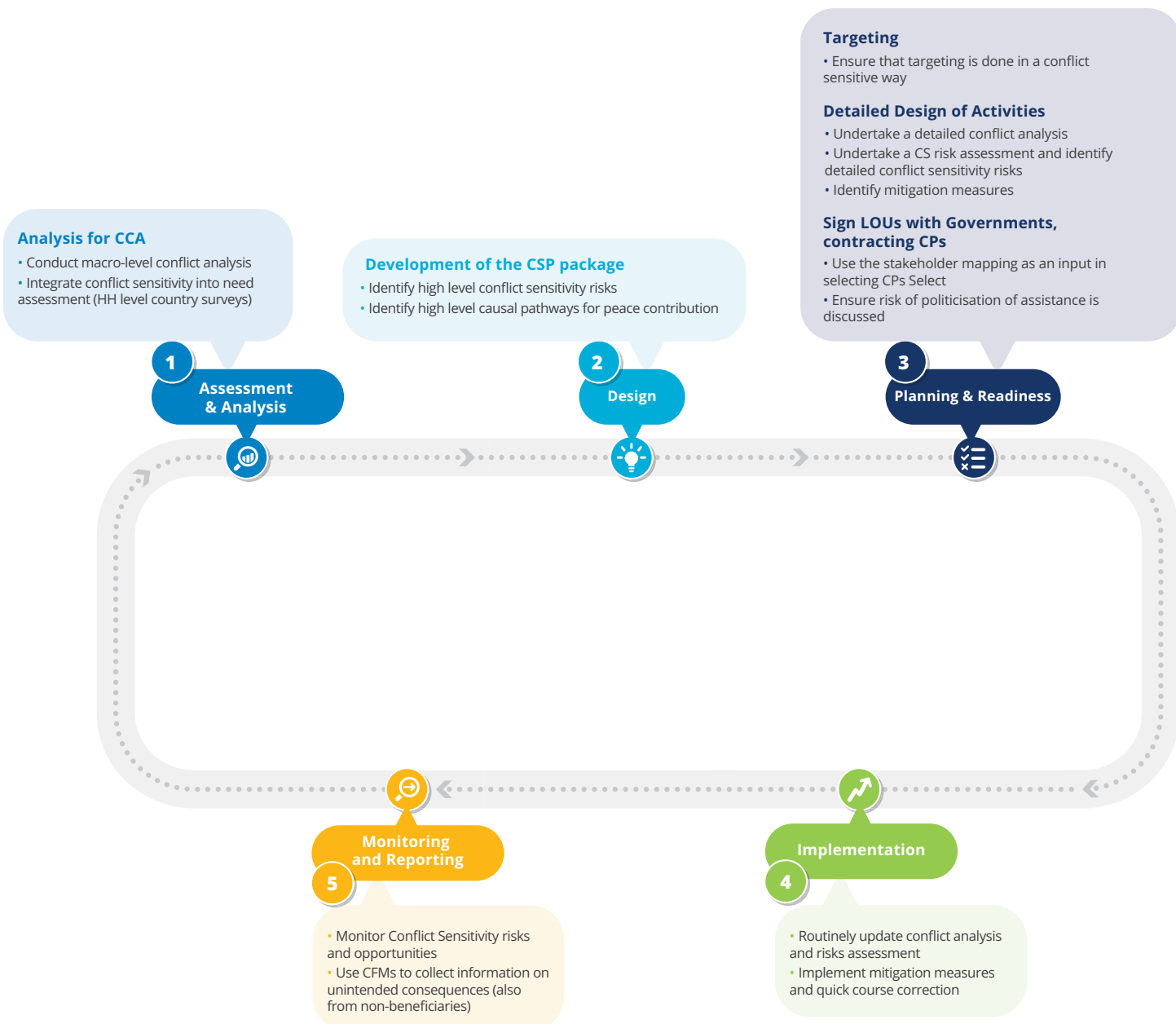
1. **Assessment and Analysis:** WFP should undertake, or contribute to, **macro level conflict analysis and integrate CS risks in comprehensive needs assessments**, in collaboration with UN partners for the Common Country Analysis (CCA). A macro level conflict analysis might mainly rely on existing UN, WB and other multilateral – bilateral agencies' analyses and focus on national dynamics and higher-level risks, complementing existing data with aspects related to food security[5]. WFP COs should ensure that subsequent formulation of UNSDCF's strategic outcomes SDG2 and 17 includes contribution to peace, from a food security angle. The process of conflict analysis should start well in advance allowing for appropriate time to inform the drafting of the CSP.

2. **CSP Design:** The conflict analysis will underpin the integration of CS in the CSP package, more specifically in the:

   a. **Line of sight:** Integrating CS and peace contributions in the formulation of Outcomes, Output and Activities;

   b. **Partnership Action Plan (PAP):** Ensuring that the plan is rooted a detailed stakeholder analysis to identify potential conflicts of interest or actors with overt or covert links to political stakeholders;

   c. **Supply Chain Matrix:** Ensure that vendors are included in the stakeholder analysis to ensure that WFP is not accidentally engaging with vendors who are directly or indirectly contributing to tensions or other conflict drivers;

   d. **M&E Plan:** Measurements for CS risk assessment and contribution to Peacebuilding (where applicable) are included in the plan.

3. **CSP Planning:** At activity level, undertake a **more detailed analysis of local conflict dynamics and an in-depth assessment of CS risks**. The process should rely on secondary/primary data analysis and be participative, engaging an appropriate number of relevant internal and external interlocuters. For each CS risk identified, mitigation measures should be put in

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[5] As CCA and CSP are formal public documents that might need to use a neutral language to gain the approval of government partners. It is important that a confidential parallel internal process take place take place to make sure that CSPs are based on more accurate understanding of the context's opportunities and risks. Arguably it is in this internal process where programmes, operations and security jointly discuss the context and agree on what WFP should versus what it can do under current circumstances.

place.

4. **CSP Implementation:** Conflict analysis become **quickly becomes obsolete and should undergo frequent and routine updates**, being treated very much as a 'living document'. While the frequency of the formal updates should be included in CO plans, discussion on the development of the conflict should be embedded in regular teams' meetings and become a habitual practice.

5. **CSP Monitoring and Reporting:** Identified CS risks should be included in the risk register and regularly monitored, featuring in monthly internal reports, in Mid Term Reviews and in the Annual Country Reports.

Targeting
• Ensure that targeting is done in a conflict sensitive way

Detailed Design of Activities
• Undertake a detailed conflict analysis
• Undertake a CS risk assessment and identify detailed conflict sensitivity risks
• Identify mitigation measures

Sign LOUs with Governments, contracting CPs
• Use the stakeholder mapping as an input in selecting CPs Select
• Ensure risk of politicisation of assistance is discussed

Analysis for CCA
• Conduct macro-level conflict analysis
• Integrate conflict sensitivity into need assessment (HH level country surveys)

Development of the CSP package
• Identify high level conflict sensitivity risks
• Identify high level causal pathways for peace contribution

1 Assessment & Analysis

2 Design

3 Planning & Readiness

5 Monitoring and Reporting
• Monitor Conflict Sensitivity risks and opportunities
• Use CFMs to collect information on unintended consequences (also from non-beneficiaries)

4 Implementation
• Routinely update conflict analysis and risks assessment
• Implement mitigation measures and quick course correction

05 HOW to do a Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment?

Undertaking a conflict analysis to assess CS risks involves 4 key steps:

1. PLANNING

» Agree on **the objective, scope, internally or externally commissioned analysis, oversight committe, methodologies, resources, timeline and final output**

2. DESK REVIEW

» **Desk review** plus **possible Key Interlocutor Interviews (KII)** with staff and **Cooperating Partners (CPs)** to build an understanding of the conflict and start identifying current and future CS risks

3. PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

» **Primary data (KIIs, FGDs, Surveys) collection and analysis** to fill gaps in conflict analysis and risks assessment

4. VALIDATION WORKSHOP

» **Final workshop** to engage participants in a participatory analysis (e.g. stakeholder mapping), validate findings and discuss mitigation measures

STEP 1 - Plan and get ready for a conflict analysis and CS risks assessment

Staff members who lead conflict analyses should encourage participation and discussion from colleagues from **ALL** functional areas and **agree on**:

- **The objective** of the conflict analysis and the CS risks assessment: Establish why they are needed, who the audience is and what would be its practical use (e.g. to inform a CSP design, an activity (re) design; etc.).

- **The programmatic and geographical scope of the conflict analysis and the CS risk assessment:** Establish what programmes / activities the analysis will focus on, what operational aspects will need to be included (e.g. procurement, HR etc) and the geographical reach (e.g. regional, national, provincial, communities, etc).

- **Internal or externally commissioned analysis:** Establish whether the process will be conducted internally, led by a focal point in the CO and/or RB/HQ (if a specialist resource is available – **i.e. conflict analyst or advisor**) or by an **external consultant/organisation** contracted by the CO. *NB - the process is as important as the final product: The lessons of an analysis stick with the audience much more if they themselves were involved in drawing them up.*

- **Overseeing Committee:** Establish who **oversees the analysi**s. If the analysis is commissioned externally, appoint an **internal focal point/liaison** to facilitate the work of the consultant(s). Agree on the **role of the RB** (e.g. the regional humanitarian advisor involvement/support) **and of HQ** (e.g. Peace and Conflict team in PRO-P, if relevant AEW in PRO-D etc.). Based on the CO, RB and HQ capacities and availability, the overseeing committee could be a mix of staff from different levels of WFP.

- **Methodology:** Agree on whether the analysis will involve only a **desk review/secondary data analysis** or, if time/resources/ conditions allow, also **primary data collection**; on the **sources of information for the desk review**; on methods for primary data collection (quantitative surveys, qualitative KIIs, FGDs etc) and sources (e.g. staff, cooperating partners, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, local authorities etc). All data must be sex, age and disability disaggregated. Agree on when a final **validation workshop** or at very least a presentation and discussion of findings (in case a workshop is not feasible) can take place.

- **Available resources:** Agree on who is funding the conflict analysis and the CS risks assessment and what resources are available.

- **Timeline:** Depending on time and resources available, the analysis could take anywhere from a week for a quick scan (e.g. for sudden onset emergencies) to up to few months for an in-depth and participative analysis for longer-term "changing lives" or protracted "saving lives" operations. *For an example of a timeline please see here*.

- **Final Output:** agree on the form of the final output (e.g. length and outline, intended audiences, presentation, languages etc).

The final plan should be included in the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for the analysis. These TORs should be annexed to any external consultant's contract. *For an example of TORs please see here*.

*NB: **Any conflict analysis relies heavily on existing secondary data**. A limited number of interviews with key interlocuters might be needed to fill specific information gaps. **The conflict sensitivity risk assessment, on the other hand, largely relies on primary data collection** from staff, cooperating partners, communities, government representatives and other key interlocuters. Often the **two objectives can be addressed in the same fieldwork.***

Gender Perspectives in Conflict Analysis, Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment.

During the last two decades **gender has been recognised as one of the most important considerations in programme design, implementation and monitoring**. This has stemmed from the realisation that both **humanitarian crises AND humanitarian/development operations affect girls, boys, women and men differently**. This is particularly true in situations of armed conflict, where the experiences of gender groups can differ greatly. **Women, men, boys and girls can often be victimised by the conflict differently**: women can be sexually assaulted and mutilated, men executed, girls kidnapped as camp slaves and boys turned into child soldiers; with many individuals experienced several or even all of these. Gender and age profile very much dictates how an individual experiences war, with gender being the single biggest determinant of a person's agency in and out of conflict. **It is therefore essential for WFP focal points and/or external consultants conducting conflict analysis, to consider different gender perspectives, and capture information on lived experiences**.

Different gender groups can also have starkly different perspectives on conflict drivers, dividers, connectors and even root causes. Any conflict analysis that does not take a **diversity of perspectives** into consideration is therefore incomplete. **Particular attention should be paid to the intersectionality of ethnicity, language, religion, political persuasion, age and class with gender**. Understanding these perspectives can not only highlight potential CS risks, but also help WFP identify potential contributions to peace that might not be as apparent to analysts focusing exclusively on the socio-political/military/economic aspects of armed conflict.

The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action (updated 2019) shows that mainstreaming gender perspectives from the outset provides a more accurate understanding of the context and meet the needs of the population in a more targeted way, based on how different groups experience the crisis. The **WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020)** commits WFP to mainstream gender considerations in all interventions, including by collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by sex and age, and by understanding and meeting the needs, interests and abilities of different groups.

STEP 2 - **Desk review - Secondary data collection and analysis**

The CO focal point for the conflict analysis and the CS risk assessment should establish contact with relevant colleagues, collect and save contributions and other relevant materials on a dedicated internally and/or externally accessible space. *Please see here for a suggested list of documents.*

The CO focal point or the external consultant should analyse the collected information using the guiding questions outlined in sections 6 and 7. Crucially, this set of questions **must be specifically tailored to the context and programme in question** (e.g. some questions might need to be taken out or added, while wording may need to be adapted etc.).

Outputs of the desk review: The focal point or consultant will produce a **first draft of the conflict analysis and the resulting CS risk assessment report** and identify the **information gaps that will need to be filled in step 3**.

STEP 3 - **Primary data collection and analysis**

Missing information can be collected through a mix of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (Key Informants Interviews - KIIs, and Focus Group Discussions - FGDs) methods. Using the guiding questions outlined in sections 6 and 7, the consultant or in-house focal point should decide on the appropriate mix of these methodologies according to the context.

- **KIIs:** The focal point should map out key contributors to the analysis (pls see box 2). **Specific sets of questions should be formulated for each group.** A **mix of male and female contributors** can provide a diversity of perspectives that will enrich the analysis. In the case of an external consultant, the WFP focal point /liaison should assist by identifying and establishing contact with potential interviewees.

- **Focus Group Discussions:** If communities are accessible, **FGDs can be arranged with different groups** (e.g. women's, elderly and minorities' groups, male and female youth, persons with disability, and minority groups, farmers, other livelihoods groups, non-beneficiaries etc.) who can all provide diverse perspectives on the context. **Specific sets of questions should be designed for each group** and, if necessary, **monitors should be trained to facilitate the FGDs and capture information**. If necessary, KIIs with a selected number of beneficiaries and/or non-beneficiaries can complement the FGDs. Crucially, **if it is not appropriate to discuss contentious issues in FDGs, KIIs alone should be used**.

- **Surveys:** A **standalone survey** can be utilised or, after appropriate discussion with colleagues, relevant questions can be **included in regular RAM/M&E surveys** (e.g. HH surveys, post distribution monitoring, etc). The surveys will be delivered by RAM/M&E staff and the data analysed by the focal point, consultant and/or task force. Surveys can target staff, beneficiaries or other relevant interlocuters.

NB: The importance of a diversity of methods and perspectives. Whenever possible, sample groups for KIIs and FGDs should include proportionate representation from across the gender and ages spectrums. This will not only increase the representativeness of the final report, but also its accuracy and relevance. In situations where such inclusion might raise protection issues for those involved the DNH principle should be applied to selecting participants. In such cases, perspectives from excluded gender (or other) groups should be sought out by alternative means. In using different methodologies and including a diverse range of views/perspectives (gender, age groups, minorities, etc.), personal biases can be mitigated, and findings can be triangulated (the rigorous validation of information through diverse and reliable sources).

- **Output of the primary data collection:** The consultant or WFP focal point will produce a **second draft of the report encompassing the results of both the conflict analysis and the CS risk assessment and** including a list of risks to be included in the CO's risk register and subsequently tracked.

STEP 4 - **Validation workshop**

The consultant or conflict specialist should organise a **workshop to present, discuss and validate the draft report on the conflict analysis and CS risks assessment report**. The workshop can double as **a participatory analysis (e.g. stakeholder mapping and analysis) of the findings**. One essential component of the workshop is the **collective discussion on WFP mitigation measures**. Depending on the context, attendance will be open to an appropriate **mix of internal and external participants**. Securing high level participation, including by senior staff is crucial to get political buy in and action on findings. In order to close the information loop, **communities and local actors** (as well as all actors involved/consulted) **should be informed of the outcome of their involvement**, in a conflict sensitive way as the analysis will likely bring up sensitive issues.

FINAL OUTPUT - REPORT

Based on the feedback and participatory analysis from the workshop, the consultant and/or WFP focal point will generate the final report, which should include:

- **The conflict analysis**

- **The CS risk assessment**

- **A list of identified risks to be included in the risk register and recommendations for mitigation measures**

- **A plan for the design and implementation of mitigation measures.**

The report should be written in an accessible style with **ALL staff** in mind and should not exceed 30 pages length.

Below is a suggested outline of the report. *Please see here for a suggested outline of the Final Report*.

Sensitivity of the information gathering process.

The process of conducting conflict analysis is itself sensitive. Conflict analysis research should be conducted with great sensitivity towards confidentiality, local culture, political realities and the safety of those who engage in the process. In some extremely tense contexts, the difference between gathering conflict analysis data for humanitarian programming and gathering data for military intelligence can be a blurry and arbitrary line. WFP staff should take great care to **avoid the appearance of gathering information for purposes other than humanitarian programming**[6].

Any conflict analysis will contain information that is potentially sensitive on some level. Drafting and disseminating the report can therefore be a delicate matter and is itself an exercise in Conflict Sensitivity. Staff conducting a WFP conflict analysis should work under the assumption that their output will be freely accessible to all parties. They should take care to mainstream the Humanitarian Principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Operational Independence throughout their work and thereby avoid potentially jeopardising WFP's staff or humanitarian access.

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[6] For more information on best practices for protecting participants and interlocutors please see part V.J of the OHCHR Guidance on Commissions of Inquiry and Fact-Finding Missions on International Human Rights and International Law
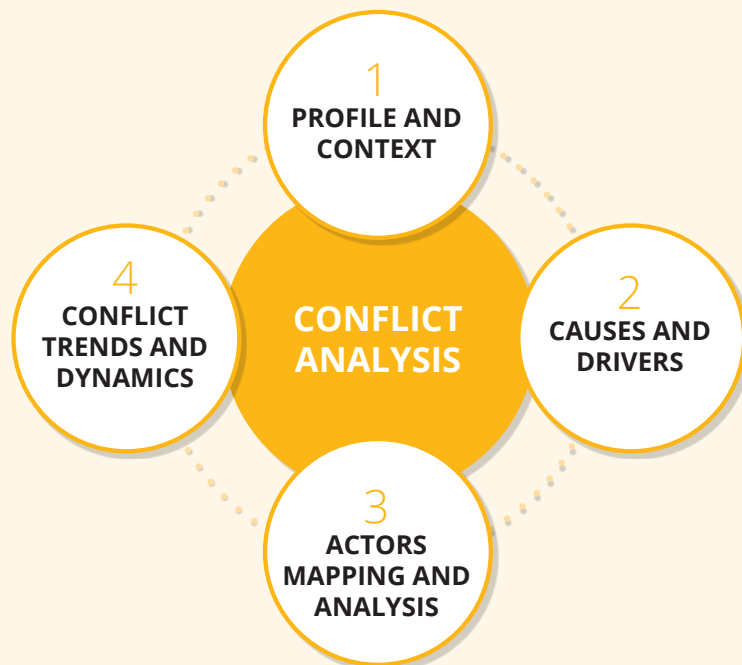
GUIDING QUESTIONS for the Conflict Analysis

This guidance adopts a **question led approach** and suggests sets of generic questions that should be covered in the conflict analysis and the CS risks assessment. These are **not definitive lists** and **need to be adapted to the specific context** and programmatic area.

The **aim of a conflict analysis** is to establish an accurate understanding of the conflict and involves **four steps**: Analysis of **1) the profile and context of the conflict(s), 2) the causes/drivers of the conflict(s), 3) the actors involved and their relationships 4) the dynamics and possible future trends / scenarios**.

The analysis should examine **all levels and types of conflict**, from local disputes and rivalries to direct violence between state and non-state armed groups. A conflict analysis should be undertaken in **any context where overt violence or latent tensions risk escalating into violence**.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS
- 1 PROFILE AND CONTEXT
- 2 CAUSES AND DRIVERS
- 3 ACTORS MAPPING AND ANALYSIS
- 4 CONFLICT TRENDS AND DYNAMICS

NB: The basic process is the same for conflict at the national/macro level, as it is for community-level disputes.

6.1 Profile and Context of Conflicts

What is the **profile of the conflict**? What is the context shaping the conflict?

Guiding questions on the analysis of the history of the conflict.

- What are the main characteristics of the conflict or instability?
  - Who has grievances with whom, and about what?
  - How long have these grievances persisted?
  - Are there local/provincial/national/regional/ international dimensions?
  - How has the conflict progressed from latent to armed conflict (election>protests>rioting>guerrilla attacks>open fighting)?

- What are the tactical modi operandi of different belligerents?
- Are there links to international ideologies (free market capitalism/nationalism/communism/religious extremism etc)?
- How intense is the conflict (numbers of killed and displaced; methods of violence; timeline of events)?
- Are food security factors influencing the conflict (land/grazing rights, seasonality linked to harvesting, lean seasons etc)?
- What is the impact of conflict on food security?
- Who are the people targeted or impacted by the conflict(s)?

6.2 Root/Structural Causes of Conflict; Drivers of the conflict/Drivers of Peace and Connectors and Dividers

• What are root/structural causes of the conflict?
The **'Root Causes' of conflict are the historical, systemic or foundational factors** built into policies, structures and the fabric of society, that provoke initial tensions and motivate actors to resort to violence. These might include unequal access to political and economic opportunities; deficiencies in legal or human rights; perceived cultural, sectarian, class or ethnic disparities etc.

• What are the drivers of conflict?
'Drivers of conflict' are **events, trends or behaviors that sustain or intensify tensions between groups**. Though often linked to the more substantive root causes of a conflict, drivers can differ in scale and impact. For example, war profiteering, power struggles within groups, control over natural resources or conflict in a neighboring region can all act as conflict drivers even when the root causes may have been aspirations of independence etc. Drivers often change and evolve during a conflict. For example, an illicit trade in drugs might emerge, grow and even dissipate during a conflict, 'driving' the conflict to different degrees at different times.

• What are the drivers of peace?
'Drivers of peace' are **events, trends or behaviors that decrease tensions between groups**. These could be shared values & interests of groups involved in the conflict, shared experiences between groups, respected actors and representatives in the area, existing and well-functioning and trusted dispute resolution mechanisms, etc. Like drivers of conflict drivers of peace can also change and evolve during a conflict. For example, religious or cultural movements which may grow to be powerful force for peace as a conflict progresses.

• What are Triggers?
Triggers are incidents or events that initiates or accelerates the outbreak of a conflict with deeper root/structural causes. Trigger could include assassinations, political/corruption scandals, verdict in a public trial etc).

Root causes, Drivers and Triggers

Root Cause: Unequal access to economic or political power between different (identity) groups in a community.
Driver: Increased presence of politically aligned armed militias to ensure "access" to economic and political power. Inciting rhetoric in local media. Increase in official or unofficial checkpoints and key infrastructure throughout the area.

Trigger: Disagreement at a checkpoint when one group detained a rival commander for refusing to pay a "road tax".

What is a Divider: A term to describe sources of tension within a context. These could include competing values and/or interpretations of history, language, ethnicity, disparities in economic or industrial opportunities, land rights etc. Influential and controversial leaders and symbolic figures can also act as dividers.

What is a Connector: A term to describe capacities for peace within a context. These could be values, experiences, language and/or interests of parties to the conflict. It could also include shared physical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, transport networks etc. Respected actors and representatives can also act as connectors, as well as well-functioning and trusted dispute resolution mechanisms, etc.

Questions to guide the analysis of the root/structural causes and drivers of conflict

Political

• What is the government's capacity/interest to deliver services, and do services vary between different regions/communities?

• Is the state's presence or legitimacy contested by any groups? Where and why?

• Are there tensions between formal and informal/traditional systems of authority?

• Are corruption, extortion and patronage systems creating grievances? How, where and why?

• To what extent is the government inclusive and open to listening to all citizens 'demands?

Economic

• What are the causes of economic inequalities?

• Which groups are the most affected?

• What are the sustainable livelihood opportunities available to the most excluded groups?

Social

• Why do some groups experience exclusion, and what are their grievances?

• What role does identity play in the conflict (ethnicity, religion, language, political affiliation etc)?

• How are tensions between groups manifested (including between host communities and IDPs/refugees)?

Environment

• Is access to, and management of, natural resources (water, timber, precious stones, oil/gas, illicit narcotics etc) a cause of tensions?

• Is land use a source of tension?

  • Is it related to seasonality or worsen in certain periods?

• Is climate change (e.g. reduced agricultural yields, reduced water etc) driving tensions?

Capacities for peace

• What connectors are present (common language, religion, culture, schools/clinics/social services, markets, trade, common workplaces, intermarriage, common infrastructure, wells etc)?

• Are there functioning and trusted conflict resolution systems in place (formal/informal mechanisms that people use and consider legitimate)?

• What of the above root/structural causes and drivers of conflict of peace are specifically related to food security?

Gender perspective on all root causes AND drivers are essential for the accuracy of the analysis.
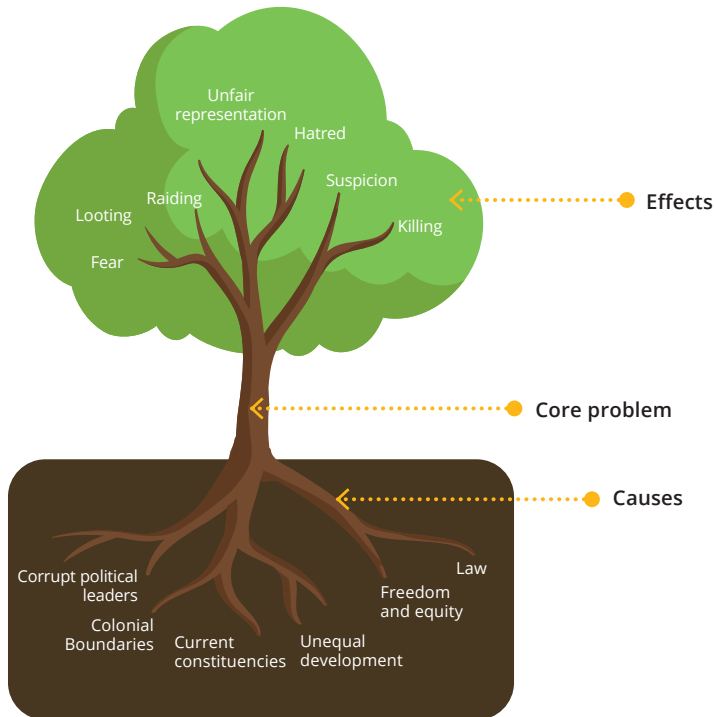
Going deeper on conflict analysis – participative analysis of the causes of conflict

The conflict tree tool can be used to facilitate a participative discussion that *draws on the knowledge and experience of staff, CPs, communities and other relevant stakeholders*. It can be a useful visual aid, with the trunk and big branches representing the main problem(s), the roots representing the root/structural causes of those problems, and the branches and twigs as the visible effects & consequences.

Sources: Fisher et al 2000 in Herbert 2017

Diagram labels: Unfair representation, Hatred, Suspicion, Raiding, Looting, Killing, Fear — **Effects**; **Core problem**; Corrupt political leaders, Law, Freedom and equity, Colonial Boundaries, Current constituencies, Unequal development — **Causes**

6.3 Actor mapping and analysis

An **actor** is a person, a group or an organisation potentially or actually involved in a/the conflict or impacted by it.

• Who are the main actors involved in the conflict?

An **actor mapping exercise** should encompass a wide **range of relevant players** coming from the public, private, civil society and international sectors, including, for example:

- **The military** (senior officers; different branches & units; allied militias etc)
- **National and local authorities** (police, political leaders, ministries, municipalities, etc)
- **Political leaders & party representatives** (local and national leaders, influential supporters, business associates etc)
- **International Actors** (UN agencies, ICRC, NGOs etc)
- **Civil society groups** (cultural, sporting, **youth and womens' rights groups** etc)
- **Non-state armed groups** (leaders; different units; affiliated supporters etc)
- **Traditional Authorities** (elders, clergy, tribal leaders, educators, women's/youth leaders etc)

A visual tool can be used to **1) sort the actors** according to their capacity to influence the conflict (a bigger circle corresponds to greater influence/power), **2) position them on a chart** showing how they are connected; **3) analyse the nature** of their relationship by using different types of lines connecting the circles (e.g. straight line indicates a close relationship; double line an alliance; zig-zag line a conflict; double line across a single line a broken relationship, dotted line an informal relationship etc).
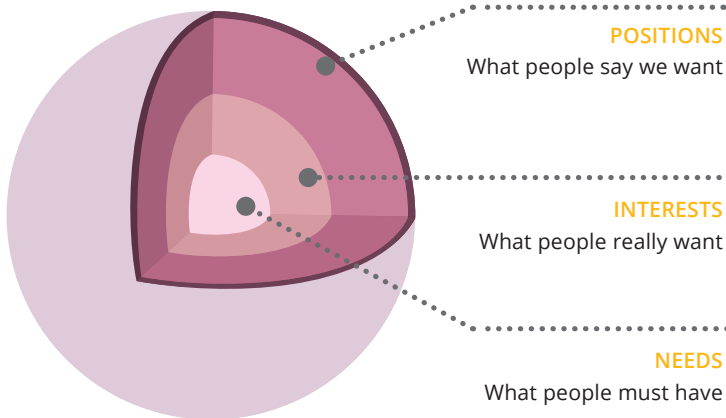

Sources: UNSSC Conflict Analysis Handbook
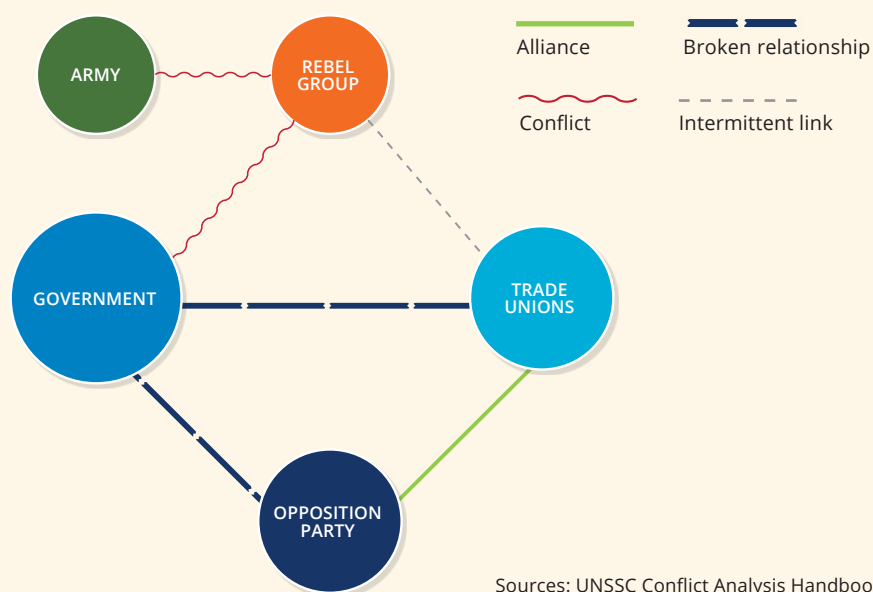
Guiding questions for the analysis of actors

• **What are the actors' public positions/agendas (what they say they want); their actual interests (what the really want); and their needs (their non-negotiable bottom lines)?**

Example:

  • **Public positions and agendas**: Re-establish security and rule of law; access to services and livelihoods; equality between groups etc.

  • **Interests:** Autonomy; control over natural resources and/or economic opportunities; political/economic domination etc.

  • **Actual needs:** Prestige; benefits from the war economy; local political power; reparations for historical grievances; political/physical survival etc.

• **What resources and capacities do different actors have to impact the context either positively or negatively?** (e.g. weapons, manpower, local legitimacy, ability to influence and/or mobilise communities; alliances/cooperation mechanisms; etc.)

• **Which actors could be considered spoilers** (individuals/groups that actively seek to undermine conflict resolution)**?**

• **Which actors could be considered connectors?** (e.g. people calling for non-violence, actively supporting negotiation/peace processes, local justice mechanisms, youth or women's groups etc)

• **How do gender issues impact the outlook of key actors?**

  • Does gender affect how key player interact with each other?

  • Can these differences be exploited to promote connectors & drivers for peace?

POSITIONS
What people say we want

INTERESTS
What people really want

NEEDS
What people must have

Going deeper on conflict analysis

When the actor analysis in done in a participative way, a visual tool can be used to complement the above proposed questions. The **"Onion Methodology"** to explore positions, interests and needs of actors.

Sources: UNSSC Conflict Analysis Handbook

6.4 Analysis of the current conflict dynamics and trends

The last section of the conflict analysis attempts to predict possible evolutions in the conflict by identifying reoccurring triggers, entrenched and escalating dynamics, tipping points and, most importantly, opportunities for conflict transformation and breaking the cycle of violence.

Professional and trained analysts from the Security Analysis Unit, the and Analysis and Early Warning Unit (AEW) and the Peace and Conflict team in HQ can directly support COs in identifying likely evolutions of conflict dynamics and their potential impact. Critical documents include Critical Election Map, the EW Watchlist and the SRM. Support on specific scenario planning is available on request.

What are the likely future scenarios of the conflict?

Guiding questions on the analysis of the conflict dynamics

• What are the **short-term and long-term trends** of the conflict?

• How are the **conflict(s) evolving** or **likely to evolve?**

  • Are tensions and violence escalating/deescalating, spreading to new areas or reducing, engaging new actors or transforming?

• Are there potential **triggers of the conflict** *(e.g. elections, completion of a new dam restricting water access, increasing cattle's raids, outbreak of disease, oil price collapse, large-scale and rapid displacement from a disaster in a nearby community, etc.)***?**

  • Are any of these triggers **frequent or cyclical/seasonal?**

• Why/how are tensions becoming more salient, inciting people to mobilise and eventually take on the risks inherent in **escalating a dispute to violence?**

NB: Depending on the identified factors/elements, monitoring will rely to varying degrees on security and emergency reports (DTM, flash/RRM alerts, EWSs in-country, ACLED data, HQ early warning and analysis team, for country-wide analysis).

07

GUIDING QUESTIONS for the Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment

Building on a robust understanding of the conflict generated by the conflict analysis, this section focuses on identifying the **Conflict Sensitivity Risks (CS Risks) to WFP** by analysing how **its programming could become inadvertently caught up in conflict dynamics**. A CS risk analysis will involve assessing:

A) The risks that the context might have a negative impact on WFP - **contextual risks** (e.g. security risks to staff & assets, no access to communities, negative perceptions of UN/humanitarian community etc)

B) The risks that WFP might inadvertently have a negative impact on the context and end up creating or exacerbating divisions, tensions and violence – operations and **programmatic risks**;

C) The **opportunities to support 'connectors' and contribute to the prospects for peace**.

In WFP's **Enterprise Risk Management Policy the strategic risk category (1.3.1 conflict) covers conflict risks**.

However, the section largely refers to **corporate contextual risks**, i.e. risks to WFP's operations or WFP itself. Contextual risks are mainly monitored by security teams with regular updates. However, **how WFP's operations might inadvertently cause risks to populations has largely been ignored**. There is an instinctive and tacit **understanding of programmatic risks among many staff**, but this intuition **needs to be formally framed into trackable programmatic risks**. This is the purpose of the Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment.

Identifying such programmatic risks involves a detailed analysis of WFP operations. Taking a **question-led approach**, all WFP activities should be probed and examined through a Conflict Sensitivity lens. Crucially, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' template for the CSRA, instead **the questions asked in such an analysis must to be tailored to each specific operation and context**.

7.1 Targeting

When targeting and prioritization[7] is carried out with little regard to local power relations and/or engagement with community members (beyond official leaders), there is a serious **risk of the political manipulation of lists of beneficiaries** with consequences for the **perceived legitimacy of WFP actions**. Crucially, when **targeting coincides with conflict cleavages, humanitarian assistance can actually undermine stability, fuel grievances and ultimately exacerbate tensions** between targeted and non-targeted groups (different clans, genders, age groups, classes, IDPs and host communities etc.). Finally, perceived or actual unfair targeting could result in hostility towards WFP and CPs staff.

Guiding questions on targeting – *to be adjusted and tailored*

- Could targeting result in disproportionate benefit **to any ethnic, religious, tribal, gender, political etc group** to the exclusion of others?
- Could t**argeting coincide with key divisions in society/existing conflict(s)**?
  - Could targeting create or exacerbate existing grievances/tensions (e.g. within or between communities, between host and IDPs/refugees communities, between gender groups)?
- Is there a risk that targeting exercises could be manipulated and potentially lead to breaches of impartiality?
- Has the **targeting been done in a participatory and transparent way**?
  - Have the targeting criteria and beneficiary lists **been communicated adequately to both the targeted and non-targeted communities**?
  - Have they been **understood and accepted**?
- Has the process created **tensions with local governance structures** (e.g. local authorities, traditional leaders, service providers, etc).
- Has targeting previously led to grievances, tensions or conflict?

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[7] WFP Targeting and Prioritization Operational Guidance Note

7.2 **Working with/through the government and other local actors**

While having a government led approach should be favoured, WFP operates in many contexts in which host governments are themselves parties to the conflict(s). **In contexts where authority is contested, or official power structures are perceived to favour or repress elements of society, WFP could inadvertently provide a significant strategic advantage to host governments by cooperating too closely**. While the consent of host governments is critical for WFP to function, staff should also be aware of the dangers of the **politization of assistance**, the reinforcement of harmful **patronage systems**, and the **perpetuation of existing inequalities**. In such instances WFP staff must carefully consider how their operations could actually contribute to increasing grievances.

Guiding questions on working with/through local actors – *to be adjusted and tailored*

- How might the intervention **unfairly benefit some groups over others or marginalise/exclude any group?**

- How could **programme resources be captured by elites** to promote/reinforce their own positions of power (e.g. by taking credits for WFP assistance)?

- How could the intervention **generate or exacerbate tensions** or **fuel existing power struggles** (e.g. economically benefiting one group over others through tenders and contracted roles in value and supply chains, etc.)?

- **Could WFP undermine either its own legitimacy or the state-citizens social contract, in the short or long-term, by delivering directly without government cooperation?**

- How l**egitimate (or contested) are the state or not state actors that WFP work with?**

  - By engaging with them, could WFP reinforce their legitimacy and conversely undermine the legitimacy of other actors?

- Do **the authorities** WFP works with have any political, religious, tribal or other identity-based affiliations that could undermine their representativeness?

  - Could working through local actors, including authorities, be (fairly or unfairly) viewed negatively by communities and undermine perceptions of **WFP's neutrality**?

- How can existing transport infrastructure (road/rail/river networks etc.) lead WFP to inadvertently favour operating in certain areas over less accessible areas?

- Has a **"red line" been established** and conditions agreed under which delivering aid activities would breach humanitarian principles and WFP should withdraw?

  - Have relevant staff, partners, donors been included in discussions of such red lines to ensure unity of message?

Example: **Conflict Sensitivity risks connected to efforts of government to direct aid**

In one case the host government insisted that a WFP Country Office refrain from distributing food in areas controlled by opposition groups. When WFP did not comply, the government retaliated by broadcasting messages over national radio that WFP was supplying opposition combatants, putting WFP staff and partners at risk of attack. After failed negotiations and a heated confrontation with a government official, WFP chose to withdraw from the area. Conflict Sensitivity demands that WFP be aware, not only of governmental red lines, but also of the likely repercussions of crossing them. WFP's approach to such red lines should be made on a case-by-case basis based on solid analysis of the context and a balance of the Humanitarian Imperative, Conflict Sensitivity and the Humanitarian Principles.

7.3 Community engagement (with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries)

Community engagement processes and mechanisms are at the centre of a participatory and locally led approach. Establishing **easily accessible** community **Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs)**[8] is a WFP standard practice and an effective way to build trust and maintain good relationships with communities. However, in order to avoid reinforcing community inequalities and marginalisation, it is important to go **beyond the louder voices**, identify and incorporate trusted sources of information and engage the most vulnerable/marginalised groups and individuals in any context. This requires WFP staff to understand local populations and demographics, including inter and intra community tensions. Overly relying on local community leaders for feedback, for example, is likely to result in their biases seeping into programming and the reinforcing of their preferred approach to WFP assistance. To the extent possible, WFP should actively engage non beneficiaries/neighbouring/ host communities, including via CFMs, to assess any negative impacts or other inadvertent outcomes in the immediate and wider contexts

Guiding questions on community engagement – *to be adjusted and tailored*

- How can WFP effectively engage communities in **all stages of the programme cycle**?

- What **community engagement mechanisms** are most effective and culturally appropriate for capturing the concerns of **targeted and non-targeted**?

  - How inclusive are these mechanisms and how can the most relevant perspectives be included?

  - Have accommodations for linguistic, literacy, gender, cultural etc. sensitivities been made to encourage inclusivity and ensure representativeness?

- How can WFP ensure that the **trusted sources of information** are properly included?

  - Is information gathered from local communities, including via CFMs, feeding into CO and SO-wide triangulation of contextual information?

- What do **CFMs need in order to provide beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries with a safe space to channel possible conflict sensitivity concerns and if necessary challenge WFP staff/CPs and local authorities?**

Example: Conflict Sensitivity risk related to poor community engagement

A WFP assessment team came across a group of children singing a made-up song that translated as *"The white cheats the People with a single malwa"* (a malwa is a commonly used unit of weight for cereals). The team discovered that the song was revealing commonly held sentiments among communities in the area that had received GFD of feeling cheated/deceived by humanitarians broadly and WFP specifically. Further discussions with communities highlighted the lack of representatives from local ethnic groups among WFP staff. This meant that there were often insufficient local language speakers among the WFP team (or even none at all on occasions), making communicating with WFP very challenging. Some felt that WFP was more interested in communicating with military/political officials than with the community. In some instances, efforts to obtain more information were treated dismissively by the GFD team. The assessment team identified mitigation actions, including ensuring adequate language capacity within all field teams, and enhancing communication and information sharing protocols, including conducting outreach through non-WFP-related community events such as church services.

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[8] For more information on how to ensure the functionality of CMFs, please refer to the CFM standardisation guidance

7.4 Access to land and other natural resources

Disagreement over access to, and control of, natural resources (water, farming and grazing land etc.) is often **a common source of local and sub-regional conflicts, especially between farmers and herders/sedentary and nomadic populations**, in contexts where mechanisms for constructive dialogue are not in place. Even at a governmental level, the management of natural resources is often contested between rural/urban and centralised/decentralised agendas. In such contexts, FFA, resilience and other WFP interventions run the risk of exacerbating tensions by inadvertently entrenching unfair control of, or access to, natural resources.

Guiding questions on natural resources – *to be adjusted and tailored*

- Are there disputes over governmental plans for resources that may shape the context in which WFP operates?
  - Are there tension between central and local governments' objectives for the area?
- How could WFP's intervention **exacerbate tensions over access to and/or control of natural resources**?
  - **Who benefits from project outputs and who loses out?**
- How could the project inadvertently **favour one group's access to natural resources or rural infrastructures over an other's** (e.g. disputes over access to water between farmers and herders)?
- How could enhanced infrastructure create risks for communities (e.g. enhanced opportunities for predation by armed actors), or increase the likelihood of confrontation between armed actors locally?
- How could the project reinforce **unfair traditional distribution/management of resources (land, water etc.) that favour local elites** or certain groups over others?
- How could the project contribute to **addressing inequalities embedded in traditional land distribution modalities** and reduce related tensions?
- Are there issues that drive the unequal access to resources that WFP will not be able to impact (e.g. housing, Property Laws, government policies, lack of identification documents amongst groups)?
  - How can these be accounted for/ mitigated in the programme design?
  - Can WFP play a role in dealing with these inequalities by sharing relevant information with actors better situated to address them?
- How could the project **undermine the effectiveness of existing natural resource management mechanisms**?
  - How could the project build upon these?

> **Example:** **Conflict Sensitivity risks connected with FFA**
>
> One WFP CO recently undertook the construction of roads and bridges to link farming communities to markets. However, it soon emerged that the infrastructure was also of significant strategic value for both the government and rebel forces for moving troops and military hardware. A rapid Conflict Sensitivity risk assessment was conducted, identifying significant military interest in the infrastructure. One military commander even threatened to block construction unless the roads directly served his military logistic operations. The assessment also highlighted that existing bridges had been rendered unusable by previous military movements, and in one case had even been a military target. In addition, the assessment identified that revitalized transport infrastructure created risks of teak smuggling, a "checkpoint economy" and of land grabbing in areas newly accessible by road. The need to engage the logistics and engineering teams in recognizing the Conflict Sensitivity implications of infrastructure interventions became very apparent.
>
> Risks relating to direct military interest in humanitarian programmmes are difficult to mitigate, as they tend to evolve quickly, in line with military and strategic developments. Luckily, the CO's Conflict Sensitivity risk assessment, even if it was undertaken after the commencement of the programme, allowed WFP to pivot away from work which would have negatively impacted instability in the area.

7.5 Urban Conflict Analysis

More than half of WFP's operations now take place in urban areas,[9] reflecting increasingly common trends of urbanisation, migration and prolonged displacement in modern emergencies. While many of the difficulties of working in urban environments are also present in rural settings, the concentration of populations in urban contexts magnifies the complexity of the challenge. Three factors appear to play a key role in shaping urban violence:

1. Demographic stressors, especially the emergence of a large share of unemployed or underemployed male youth population, frustrated by the lack of economic opportunities.

2. Socio-economic inequalities among groups (based on their ethnicity, religion, language, origins etc).

3. Low capacities of state actors to provide services, housing, security and livelihoods opportunities and the subsequent emergence of alternative non state groups (at times armed and illicit) competing with formal institutions as providers for, and protectors of, local communities.

Unrest, neighbourhood rivalries, organised and unorganised crime, vigilantism, riots etc. are forms of violence often associated with non-state (possibly armed) groups in urban settings.[10]

Influxes of IDPs and refugees into urban areas puts additional pressure on service providers and communities. **For the IDPs and refugees themselves, moving into urban settings raises multiple intersecting risks**, including: **(a) landlessness; (b) joblessness; (c) homelessness; (d) marginalisation; (e) food insecurity; (f) loss of access to common property resources; (g) increased morbidity; and (h) loss of social capital; (i) discrimination.**[11]

Furthermore, many of those who migrate (or are displaced) to cities do so because of the instability they experience in more rural settings. In doing so **they carry inherited perspectives on the conflict from "before", while also being immersed in an environment with both new conflict dynamics and new manifestations of the old conflict dynamics**. It is therefore important to have a specific approach to unpacking these highly complex dynamics and to assessing risks with great care in order to ensure conflict sensitive activities.

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[9] WFP is increasingly focusing on urban programming and policies/ tools have been developed starting in early 2000s: the 2002 WFP Urban Policy, the 2004 WFP Urban Operational Guidance Note, the 2015 Adapting to an Urban World Programme and finally the soon to be released Urban Policy on the response to COVID 19 in urban areas.

[10] United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, Preventing urban violent conflict.

[11] See Jennings et al., (2014).

Conducting a conflict analysis and a CS risk assessment of an urban or semi-urban environment **follows the same logic and priority questions noted throughout this guidance note**. However, the analysis needs to account for the double-conflict context of the inherited and the new conflict dynamics within urban settings. Risk factors that often influence urban conflict and its potential to descend into violence include: **Population density, poverty, inequality, youth population bulges, youth unemployment, legacies of conflict and governance failures, etc.**

Guiding questions on urban contexts – *to be adjusted and tailored*

- Who are the **key identity groups** (religious, political, ethnic, linguistic, etc) in the area?
  - How do these identities impact the hosting of IDPs and refugees?
  - Are these identities creating barriers (or bridges) to inter-group relations, integration and social cohesion?
  - Are IDPs perceived as a threat to the host community, and if so, How?
- What are the **root causes and drivers of vulnerability** for both the **target population and surrounding communities**?
- What are the **comparative vulnerabilities between local populations and "newly arrived"** (IDPS & refugees), and how are they manifested?
- Who are the **main state and non- state actors engaging** with the affected population?
  - What are their agendas, interests and capacities?
- Do all groups have equal **access to the labour market/incomes generating opportunities**?
  - What groups are most vulnerable?
  - Which groups are in competition and for what?
  - Is this competition creating rivalries and tensions?
- Who are the **key service providers and what are their capacities**?
  - When official institutions fail to provide core services, are other groups seeking to fill the institutional vacuum(s)?
  - How do they do so?
- Do all groups have equal **access to social services**?
  - Which groups face the higher barriers to access (including IDPs & refugees)?
- How might **socio-political tensions from elsewhere transition to active conflict** in an urban setting?
  - What is the tipping point (including gender norms) between public dissatisfaction and unrest/violence?
- Could the project **exacerbate tensions over access to, and control of, economic opportunities, including participating in the programme activities/beneficiary selection, or through any sub-contracting agreements**?
  - Who benefits from project activities and how they are sourced/implemented, and who loses out?
  - Are there any "rival/other" groups to be considered in the assessment?
- Could the project **favour one group over the other in providing access to benefits**?
  - **Could it be perceived to be doing so**?
  - Could this put beneficiaries or their businesses/assets at additional risk?
- Are there any aspects of WFP operations that may help institutionalise negative power hierarchies?
  - Could the **project reinforce or even create unequal systems that favour** (or even create) **local elites or certain groups over others**?
- Are there issues that drive local tensions that WFP will not be able to impact?
  - How can these be accounted for/mitigated in the programme design?
- Are there existing **mechanisms for conflict resolution**?
  - How could the project **undermine or support these mechanisms**?
  - How could the project build upon these?
  - How is social cohesion "managed"?

7.6 Procurement

Procuring and transporting food and other in-kind products into a context characterized by limited resources can contribute to entrenching unfair power structures, impact the local market and generate other risks. While WFP commitment to **sourcing locally** can boost the local economy and possibly benefit small farmers or other vulnerable sectors, it can also runs the **risk of inadvertently embroiling WFP in conflict dynamics and war economies**.

Likewise, WFP must carefully select service providers for all of its activities, from massive CBT projects down to the provision of office catering and cleaning services. Embedding a Conflict Sensitivity dimension in the due diligence process is essential to **ensure that WFP does not accidentally procure the services of groups or individuals known to be engaged in the conflict and jeopardise its Neutrality, Impartiality and Operational Independence**. When, for lack of alternatives, it is not possible to categorically exclude a risk, the procurement process must make the necessary provisions to ensure that the said risk is strictly managed and constantly monitored.

> **Guiding questions on procurement – *to be adjusted and tailored***
>
> - If **sourcing locally**, do suppliers or service providers have any **links (perceived or real) with any conflict parties or any of the causes or drivers of conflict**?
>   - Could working with certain suppliers/service providers contribute to tensions?
>   - Could WFP's selection of suppliers/service providers be perceived as biased?
> - If **sourcing internationally**, is WFP attracting criticism for **not supporting local economies**?
>   - Is WFP transparent about the reasons for not procuring locally?
>   - Does WFP provide feedback to all local suppliers that are not awarded contracts?
> - In either context, is there a risk of the procurement process being seen as **biased towards one group, contractor or population, or contributing to negative or exploitative power structures**?

7.7 Staff' and Cooperating Partners' capacities, experience, image and acceptance

WFP and CPs' staff behaviour has implications for how WFP is perceived and accepted by communities and other stakeholders. CPs are selected based on their ability to access target populations as well as their connections to networks of power/decision makers. Consequently, a sound understanding of conflict dynamics is crucial in order to mitigate risks of exacerbating divisions, fuelling mistrust towards WFP and putting staff, assets and CPs at risk.

> **Guiding questions on staff and CPs – *to be adjusted and tailored***
>
> - Are WFP or CP staff **aligned**, or perceived to be aligned, **with any conflict actor** (e.g. political party, religious or ethnic group, etc)?
> - Could our WFP's relationship with local or national government, sister agencies, CPs or other partners affect WFP's acceptance within communities?
> - To what extent do WFP and CPs staff **reflect the diversity** within the community?

- Do WFP & CP staff behave appropriately in the field, **modelling behaviours that promote accountability, inclusion, respect and tolerance**?
- Are WFP & CP staff visibly mainstreaming the Humanitarian Principals into all aspects of their work?
- Do **CPs have the commitment and capacities to undertake or use existing conflict analysis**?
  - Are they **able to monitor and adjust programme for conflict sensitivity**?
- **Are there incentives in place for CPs to implement and report on conflict sensitivity**?

Example: Conflict Analysis for Humanitarian Outcomes

When the majority of international humanitarians fled war-torn Somalia in the 1990s, one agency managed to remain in the devastated agricultural heartland of SW Gedo, delivering millions of US dollars in much needed aid. Their success was down to their understanding of the context based in solid conflict analysis. **International staff understood that while they were seasoned humanitarians, they knew little about the local context.** They immediately set about **hiring qualified national humanitarians who were familiar with the socio-political context**. These new colleagues were then diligently consulted on both conflict analysis and programme design. In contrast, one senior Somali staff member of a much larger and better-known agency insisted that:

"There were no consultations with Somali staff about the operation. We were not asked … what we think. They [the international staff] believe that every Somali is part of these factions… There were no meetings with Somalis working at [agency name] … Nor were we ever consulted about political issues."

The agency also sought out the perspectives of both beneficiaries and local community leaders, reinforcing positive power structures, instead of threatening them. The insights gained in these consultations were used to ensure that programmes did not inadvertently play into harmful conflict dynamics or the war economy. In this way, the agency-built trust with communities and a reputation for competency and understanding the context. This approach also demonstrated the agency's value, making it less of a target for immediate gain. In fact, local leaders even protected the agency over the years as a valuable and integrated community asset.

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[12] Rapid Operational Conflict Risk and Prevention Tool | WFPgo

7.8 **Routine Conflict Analysis updates**

A conflict analysis can **quickly become dated**, so it is critical to **regularly update existing analysis**, with the timing of reviews based on the local context – for some more stable and protracted contexts, **annual or biannual reviews might suffice**. However, in more **fluid complex emergency setting Conflict Analysis should become part of the daily routine of WFP staff** to ensure that identified risks and mitigations are still accurate and relevant. Trends and developments in conflict dynamics should be carefully and continuously monitored, and their impact on Conflict Sensitivity risks should be constantly considered. The **lead is taken by the activity manager** and implemented by a programme/policy staff. However, **Conflict Sensitivity is the responsibility of all staff**. Support from the RB or HQ is available if necessary. Below is a list of suggested questions that need to be adapted to the context and programme.

Guiding questions for routine updates context analyses and CS risks assessments

- What are **key observable factors/elements that WFP needs to monitor to stay abreast of the conflict(s) going forward** (e.g. numbers of cattle raids, increased influx of IDPs, military developments in neighbouring areas, meetings of the local informal justice council, etc.)?

- What are the **current trends** in the conflict?

  - Have there been any recent developments (e.g. intensifying/decreasing violence or expansion to new areas)?

  - Is it engaging new actors?

  - Are recent developments linked to national or regional dynamics?

  - Are the conflict drivers or any other relevant factors transforming? How?

- What are the **likely triggers**, or combination of factors/actors (e.g. upcoming lean season, draughts, contested election etc.) that might lead to an increase in violence?

  - How do they impact food insecurity?

  - How are they likely to be impacted by WFP programming?

- Have the conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in place been affected by the recent changes (e.g. functioning and people access etc.)?

- Are there current and future **windows of opportunities for contributing to peace**?

- What are the most likely **future scenarios** in the conflict?

- What **impact are current and possible future scenarios likely to have on WFP**?

  - Are there any new emerging CS risks?

  - How will previously identified CS risks be recalibrated?

- Is there any need for **course corrections**?

  - What are the possible mitigation measures that can be put in place?

- Are there any new context, programmatic or operational indicators that should be monitored for Conflict Sensitivity risks?

MITIGATION MEASURES for Conflict Sensitivity Risks

Once a conflict analysis has identified Conflict Sensitivity Risks, they should be integrated into the CO's risk register. Each WFP CO must then decide on the appropriate measures to take to mitigate these risks. In many cases, the correct path will not be obvious, and COs should carefully consider the pros and cons of their options before deciding on their next steps. **Decisions on the most appropriate mitigation measures should be made on a case-by-case basis** and should be guided by the overarching Humanitarian Principles which provide the ethical foundation for the entire sector.

*N.B. The **humanitarian principles** prescribe that WFP's assistance be provided in a way that respects people's life, health and dignity (**humanity**), and on the basis of need alone, without discrimination (**impartiality**). To be able do so, WFP commits not to take sides in a conflict or controversies (**neutrality**), and delivers assistance in a way that is independent of the interests of political or military actors (operational independence).*

"Humanitarian Principles and Access: WFP Decision-Making Case Studies"

Conflict Sensitivity mitigation measures can be as varied as Conflict Sensitivity risks.[12] There is no one-size-fits all approach. Instead, CO **staff should rely on the results of the conflict analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Risk Assessment as well as on their own experience and best judgement** to choose the appropriate mitigations measures. Different **Conflict Sensitivity risk mitigation measures come with trade-offs** and dilemmas that can not only impact WFP's commitment to the Humanitarian Principles but could also lead to more Conflict Sensitivity risks.

For example, sharing sensitive information with potential political/military/strategic uses in an effort to promote Conflict Sensitivity could backfire, resulting in parties to the conflict using the data to gain a military advantage. Even a seemingly proactive Conflict Sensitivity mitigation and security measure like deconfliction (informing parties to a conflict on the locations and movements of staff and assets to avoid accidental targeting) can have unforeseen consequences as belligerents could use that information to deliberately target, instead of avoid, humanitarian staff and/or assets.

> ### The Humanitarian Imperative vs Humanitarian Principles
>
> The **'Humanitarian Imperative'** is valued concept among humanitarians. It insists that ALL human suffering should be confronted, regardless of circumstances, and that nothing should override this principle. It implies both the RIGHT to receive and to offer humanitarian aid. As such, the Humanitarian Imperative provides a non-negotiable, 'full stop' argument for humanitarian action, as well as an inspiring call-to-action. Nevertheless, humanitarian action, however well-intentioned, can in some instances prolong and exacerbate conflict. The ultimate goal of humanitarianism is to save lives and staff should be remain vigilant for occasions when prioritising the Humanitarian Imperative over Conflict Sensitivity can precipitate more harm than good. This paradox lies at the centre of Conflict Sensitivity.

8.1 **Conflict Sensitive Decision Making**

Making decisions on Conflict Sensitivity mitigation measures requires the ability to understand, predict and manage possible tensions between the Humanitarian Imperative and the Humanitarian Principles. **The fact that WFP does not have any political intent does not mean that its work does not have any political impact**. Whenever possible WFP must address the Humanitarian Imperative while abiding by the Humanitarian Principles. This is not always straightforward.

The examples in the box below show the process and considerations in choosing between mitigation measures. The decision-making process should be anchored in a **robust understanding of the context and related risks**, and careful considerations of all **available options**. In most cases, there will not be a perfect solution; clarity about the pros and cons of each option and having a sound **rationale** and ethical foundation underpinning decision-making is important.

The **first example** raises some of the problems generated by **engaging with non-state armed groups (NSAG)**. Opening lines of communication with a non-state armed group might have a pay-off in terms of humanitarian access, but could also provide the group with legitimacy, thereby bolstering their political/military position and actually exacerbating tensions. While abiding by operational rules imposed by NSAGs could guarantee access, it might also undermine WFP's commitment to neutrality and independence, particularly in the eyes of other actors and members of local communities.

The **second example** focuses on the dilemmas that WFP can face in **working with host governments**. In some cases, governments who are themselves a party to the conflict, may seek to manipulate/force WFP to deliver aid in certain areas or to certain groups to bolster their political/military strategy. While acquiescing to such demands would allow WFP to meet the Humanitarian Imperative, it might also lead to a significant advantage for one side and breach WFP's commitment to Neutrality and Impartiality. Similarly, accepting host government assistance on access, security, logistics etc. can also alienate other parties to conflicts and ultimately jeopardise access to entire areas. While not always recognised as such, humanitarian access is very much a Conflict Sensitivity issue. Any context in which humanitarians have been locked-out will invariably see humanitarian needs rise, along with tensions/violence as those needs go unmet. Humanitarians also have a mitigating impact on violence with perpetrators reluctant to engage in atrocities in front of witnesses.

The **third example** highlights the difficulties of **addressing food insecurity in areas where communities are divided not only by ethnicity, religion, language etc but also by lifestyle**. Many WFP COs have experience operating in areas where tensions, and even open violence, pervade between pastoralist and farming communities. "Grazers vs Growers" competition over land and water rights is common across the world. Meeting the food security needs of both communities without disadvantaging either requires great sensitivity, particularly as they have such opposing ideas of ideal solutions for their communities.

In all such complex scenarios, WFP should be guided by Conflict Sensitivity and Do No Harm.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR DECIDING ON MITIGATION MEASURES
(on examples about engaging with Non-State Armed Groups)

Working with Non-State Armed Groups

DECISIONS

Whether or not to **accept conditions on operations** imposed by an NSAG

Background:
• Good communication between NSAG and WFP

• WFP takes over responsibility from humanitarian organization which withdrew

• NSAG suddenly imposes conditions on WFP

OPTIONS DECISIONS TAKEN & RATIONALES

Whitdraw from the whole area controlled by NSAG
• Operational independence and neutrality
• Fear to set a precedent by giving in

Accept conditions and continue delivery
+ Donor pressure to deliver
+ Partner pressure because of common logistics
- Taxes would support war economy

OUTCOMES

Difficulty to reestablish contact with NSAG for years

Unmeet needs, **food security deteriorates**

Working with host governments in situations of armed conflicts

How to work with a host government controlling food distributions to **ensure independent assessments and impartial assistance.**

Background:
• WFP supports a government-led assistance program
• Severe droughts causes high malnutrition levels among non-dominant group
• Government formally denies needs, WFP not allowed to undertake needs assessment
• WFP needs to address issue with impartiality

Convince the government of detrimental economic implications of neglecting non-dominant group
• Collaboration with other agencies and donors to deliver coherent message
• Limited attention from WFP leadership

Strategy partially worked and the government increased support, but it was not uniform

Donors not prepared to withhold development assistance

No access to independent assessments and monitoring

Establish dialogue on principles with a highly operational focus
+ Risk that the government would not be receptive
- Not standing up for principled assistance might impact future negotiations with government

Examples taken from the "Humanitarian Principles and Access: WFP Decision-Making Case Studies"

Addressing Food Insecurity While Mitigating Tensions

How to address the very different needs of communities in competition without provoking tensions between them.

Background:
In a community experiencing both food insecurity and violent tensions between farmers and pastoralists WFP sought to address the specific needs of both communities without antagonising the other. Whereas pastoralist required grazing rights and unfettered access to water sources, farmers required control over both land usage and irrigation systems to raise crops.

Open dialogue channels with representatives from all sides to identify how the food security and livelihoods needs of both communities can be met without disadvantaging others.

FFA projects identified that advantaged both communities:

• Large scale fencing project to protect crops from grazing livestock

• Well serviced and easily accessed waterpoints for herds.

• Reduction in violence due to inclusive approach to meeting the stated needs of each community without disadvantaging either side.

Use WFP FFA and resilience programming to promote food security. Drawbacks:
• focus on settled communities
• focus on strategies that reward best practices in farming and land management.
• Assets favour farmers over herders (well locations etc)

Use general emergency programming like GFA and CBT to respond to food security needs. Drawbacks:
• No long-term strategy
• No impact on future livelihoods prospects
• No contribution to peaceful relations between groups

Once decided upon, **the mitigation measures chosen and implemented must be regularly monitored and readjusted** as needed. As conflict dynamics evolve, the effectiveness of mitigation measures will also fluctuate. What was an effective mitigation measure six months previously might be made irrelevant by changes in the context.

Ceasing Operation

Crucially, if CO's find themselves in a situation where other mitigation measures cannot sufficiently address the Conflict Sensitivity risks, **WFP must reserve the "nuclear" option of ceasing operations**. Such a severe mitigation measure should obviously be reserved for the most extreme of circumstances. However, unpalatable it may be, situations do arise where WFP must decide between continuing operations that are contributing to violence or are being heavily manipulated for strategic advantage and halting operations entirely, leaving people in need.

WFP staff should remember that their **commitment to the Humanitarian Imperative does not always outweigh their obligation to Do No Harm**. Again, CO senior staff should rely on the results of the Conflict Analysis and the Humanitarian principles, as well as their own experience and best judgement, to decide on the best course of action.