

Summary of SURAGGWA's Approach to Conflict Risks

*****further details are in ESMF Appendix 9*****

FAO's commitment to integrating conflict resolution and peace-building in SURAGGWA

Agriculture, natural resources, food security and nutrition can be sources of peace or conflict, crisis or recovery. Particularly in fragile, conflict-and violence affected (FCV) contexts, FAO is dedicated to making sure that our work avoids contributing to divisions, disputes and violent conflict, and does no harm. Where possible, positive contributions to local peace related to the Organization's mandate should be identified and supported, as first formalized in 2018 in the [Corporate Framework to Support Sustainable Peace in the Context of Agenda 2030](#).

Integration of different types of conflict risk in SURAGGWA project design

The SURAGGWA project is designed to facilitate a major paradigm shift by building ecological and climate resilience across eight Sahelian countries that are extremely vulnerable to climate change - while at the same time making a major contribution to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration in restored land. Most of the conflict risk is associated with Component 1, land restoration. For the choice of its specific restoration sites during the inception phase, the project will avoid areas characterized by **violent conflict** to ensure that the project can be implemented effectively and efficiently. With the restorable land area estimated at more than 100 million ha, and a project objective of 1.4 million ha, this should be eminently feasible.

Additionally, the project takes into consideration the fact that climate change is a potential driver of social conflict in the project areas, and through a community-based and participatory approach to land restoration across communities, project activities will strengthen inter-community collaboration and management of commonly identified lands for restoration, thus mitigating potential social conflicts arising from land restoration activities.

In countries where there has been **recent political upheaval**, FAO strictly follows high-level UN guidance, including: (i) respecting UN-imposed sanctions; (ii) following UN instructions re interruption of the implementation of "non-critical" activities. Currently, none of the 8 SURAGGWA countries are subject to any UN sanctions. The only country with a "UN criticality programme" is Niger, but nearly all emergency, resilience and rural development activities are considered high-priority by the UN, and activities that would be temporarily suspended account for less than 10% of the country's budget for the SURAGGWA project, i.e. less than 1% of the overall project budget.

Handling of conflict risks during SURAGGWA project implementation

As detailed in the Full Proposal (FP) and the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), the project will invest in preventing and resolving conflicts among and within communities, which are one of the main risks to the success of the project. Therefore, conflict assessment, prevention and management are a key element of the project implementation mechanisms chosen, especially for Component 1, land restoration (see Annex 6, ESMF, especially its Appendix 9, "Conflict assessment, prevention and management").

Investments in improving land and natural resource management get to the heart of what many communities in the Sahel view as both their most pressing human security concerns, and the factors that contribute to persistent conflict and competition. The project's investments in land restoration and support to related smallholder value chains will thus contribute not just to climate change mitigation and adaptation, but also to community-based peace-building.

Conclusions

In recent years, FAO has developed corporate tools, guidance and training on context analysis, conflict sensitivity and sustaining peace. These guides and tools have been jointly developed with Interpeace, a global peace-building organisation, after extensive field-testing and feedback. FAO plays a leading role in UN-wide initiatives combining climate change and peace-building efforts, see e.g. the 2023 thematic review on climate security and peace building at:

https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/climate_security_tr_web_final_april10.pdf

This provides FAO with the capacities and tools to ensure business continuity and adaptability in the face of external political or social conflict risks arising during project implementation.