

In conflict affected areas of the country, attention is also needed to address the short and long-term psychosocial impact of conflict over population, and particularly on new generations (children and youth). While mental health problems are one of the major direct consequences of the conflicts, treatment has been almost impossible due to the looting and damage of health centres and hospitals and the forced departure of many professionals. In addition, the implementation of the National Mental Health (2012) is full of challenges. All this makes very difficult to provide effective psychosocial support to conflict affected population, leaving a society with little possibilities for rebuilding their lives and very vulnerable to a recurrence of violence.

Access to justice by conflict survivors cannot be a forgotten subject in any dialogue and reconciliation process. It is critically necessary for bringing sustainable peace but also in the case of Ethiopia for tackling gender inequality, given the amount of women and girls who have suffered from sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) during conflict. In addition to the limited capacities, resources and understandings of the judicial sector, conflict survivors face multiple and compound obstacles in accessing justice, which often include cost-related barriers, revictimization, stigma and discrimination, and legal illiteracy.

In spite of the significant unmet peacebuilding needs in Ethiopia, there is a scarce number of actors with limited capacities working in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the country. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have traditionally suffered from a restrictive working environment, particularly in critical sectors such as peace and gender equality. However, the new CSO law and political context offer new opportunities for them to play a key role in facilitating and participating in dialogue processes at different levels, promoting peace education and culture among the Ethiopian society, and providing comprehensive support to the population with a gender and conflict-sensitive approach.

In this context, addressing the root causes of conflict, its consequences, and support inclusive and gender sensitive peacebuilding efforts is of crucial importance. Under these circumstances, it is vital that the EU ensures continued support to people in Ethiopia, in particular those most affected by the conflict. The current cooperation between the EU and the government of Ethiopia has been limited due to the ongoing conflict. Such a situation has also led to a delayed approval of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP).

The increasing needs of the communities living in the most vulnerable situations in Ethiopia, in particular girls and women, must be addressed promptly and translated into the need for Individual Measures. The use of these measures is appropriate as the EU is responding to unforeseen and increasing needs, and currently lacks the relevant programming document.

The Action is fully aligned with the current peace-building and dialogue initiatives launched by the government and other stakeholders, but also the 10-Year Development Perspective Plan (2020/21-2030/31). Moreover, it falls into the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs 10-year development plan, which includes strengthening the protection of women's and children's rights; ensuring women and youth participation and benefit in leadership and decision-making.

The present Action is also fully consistent and aligned with the European Commission policies, objectives and priorities. The action is aligned to the European Consensus for Development³, the Gender Action Plan III⁴ (especially its thematic area of engagement – integrating the women, peace and security agendas), the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030, and the EU vision of the future Africa-EU partnership as per its Communication "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa". Finally, it also contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ through the SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), which is also closely linked to SDG 5 (gender equality).

Following a EU shared vision of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, the Action will link up with the EU's past and ongoing interventions implemented by the EU Delegation, ECHO and FPI, through ensuring strong coordination and continuous exchange of information. In particular, there is a potential for

3 THE NEW EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT- JOINT STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION - 26/06/2017

4The Gender Action Plan III (GAP) 2020-2025 : https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184

⁵ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>