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USAID Policy and Programs in the Conflict Space

INCAF Gender and Statebuilding Policy Guidance

The International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) aims to improve the quality of international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states by developing a body of international standards, generating innovative thinking and approaches, and monitoring the performance of development actors. Key insights of recent work include:

- **Risk averse behaviour on the part of donors and implementing partners has been a critical obstacle blocking more effective use of aid in transition contexts.** To move from risk avoidance towards better risk management, donors need to start performing joint assessments of contextual risk; use collective or shared risk management arrangements; and simplify procedures for the release and delivery of aid.
- **Transition compacts** – light and flexible agreements between national and international partners - **offer a solution to many of the challenges of transitional contexts:** they link agreement on priorities with a strategy for how these priorities should be funded; and they allow for joint prioritisation between national and international actors and frequent reviews of progress, thus addressing donor concerns about capacity, legitimacy and risks of engagement, and ensuring mutual accountability.
- Global factors have a critical influence on conflict and fragility but are underestimated in both analysis and action. To reduce conflict and



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fragility donor countries and international organisations (including the G20, UNSC, OECD, IFIs, and International Dialogue) need to work to **improve the resilience of fragile states to the risks and opportunities of a globalised world**, including by sharing responsibility for managing global problems – such as drugs and unregulated arms and private security “services” – and for turning migration into a development opportunity.

- Integrating gender considerations into donor support to statebuilding can help advance gender equality and deliver improved development results. Doing so effectively calls for **a more politically informed approach to gender and statebuilding** that recognizes the links between gender related reforms and local power relations and is based on greater realism about how long changes takes – especially in situations where state institutions are weak.
- OECD INCAF work on monitoring resource flows has shown that **the face of fragility is changing**. Almost half of fragile states are now-middle income. In spite of this shift in income level, poverty remains concentrated in fragile states with half of the global poor expected to live in fragile states by 2015. At the same time the long trend of growth in ODA to fragile states is at serious risk.