

PRESS RELEASE

LAS-Japan-UNDP Policy Roundtable: Development partnerships vital for conflict prevention and peacebuilding

New York City, 21 April 2022 – Representatives of UN agencies and Arab think tanks and civil society organizations discussed the increasing challenges that conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts are facing in the Arab region and explored ways to strengthen partnerships in this challenging field—at a policy roundtable, which the League of Arab States (LAS), the Government of Japan (GOJ) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted today, virtually.

“Advancing the Sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda requires coordinated efforts and close synergies between institutions, local and national actors to enhance coherence across the triple nexus (Humanitarian – Development – Peace). Also fostering strong partnerships at the national, regional, and international levels will support member states in enhancing peace and strengthening institutions in line with SDG16” said Ambassador Hossam Zaki, Assistant Secretary General of the League of Arab States.

Roundtable panelists discussed how international and regional institutions, national governments, and development actors can better coordinate efforts and improve cooperation to address bottlenecks, to ensure the successful implementation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmatic interventions.

“Today’s roundtable would provide a good opportunity for promoting a better understanding of peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts, and it would be wonderful if this roundtable will be of some help to strengthen the multi-layered cooperation between Japan and the League of Arab States”, said Ambassador Hiroshi Oka, Ambassador of Japan to Egypt.

The roundtable highlighted the importance of coordination between humanitarian, development, and peace-building efforts, in supporting conflicted affected countries, and how such coordination can be enhanced on the ground. Panelists argued for the need for holistic, cross-sectoral development approaches that engage various groups of actors to bring about social cohesion and transformation for preventing relapses of violence and building sustainable peace.

“The challenge of attaining sustainable peace is growing as we speak. The global pandemic has compounded challenges. And now, the crisis in Ukraine further exacerbates the situation, especially as the region is so dependent on food imports,” said Dr Khalida Bouzar, Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director for Arab States, UNDP. “Investing in development is at the core of the peacebuilding agenda and sustaining peace. Development gains, when inclusive and sustained, can contribute to preventing conflict, speeding recovery, and ensuring that once peace is achieved, it can be sustained”.

Roundtable discussions underscored mounting challenges and increasing uncertainty in the region, particularly in fragile countries emerging from conflicts or still struggling with violence. Recovery and reconstruction efforts in these countries are facing both short and long-term obstacles. The roundtable reiterated the need to reinforce partnerships to safeguard development progress that has been achieved to enable those countries to continue move towards sustainable development.

Today’s virtual roundtable was the seventh in the high-level dialogue series co-hosted by the tri-partite partnership since 2019, following the successful conclusion of the first Arab-Japan Political Dialogue held in September 2017. The series of roundtables aims to enhance cooperation between Japan and Arab countries, establishing a policy dialogue platform to address development priorities and concerns for the Arab region.