A New Approach for the Sahel

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SUMMARY

The Sahel has the capacity to be a massive disruptive force, stimulating fresh pressures of migration and extremism, unless it is addressed by a comprehensive plan of action. There is a ticking time bomb waiting to go off in the Sahel. The G5 countries --comprised of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger-- face multiple, interconnected challenges, including poverty and high population growth, weak government and growing extremism. These elements constitute a combustible situation, which could have dire ramifications for their fast-growing local populations and the wider world. The region requires improved support by the international community, which is why we are calling for a new Compact for the Sahel. In this briefing, we outline the main factors stressing the region; reviews aid effectiveness in fragile states and closes with recommendations for a new approach to the region. Key to this will be focusing on implementation; many policy and development plans have been drafted over the years, but all too often this has not been delivered. It is time for this to change.

The recommendations are for: multilateral donors and partners who have proven their ability to be more effective in fragile states; for bilateral donors who struggle with implementation challenges; and for national governments in the Sahel and fragile states elsewhere who for the first time can see empirical data that shows them in which fragile states donors are best and worst in terms of key aid effectiveness principles.

THE SAHEL: UNDER THE WEIGHT OF ITS PROBLEMS

The Sahel countries are buckling under the weight of a host of 'fragile state' challenges: **conflict and the spread of radical extremism;** poverty and humanitarian needs; explosive population growth; climate change and food security; governance; migration and human trafficking.

Conflict and the Spread of Radical Extremism

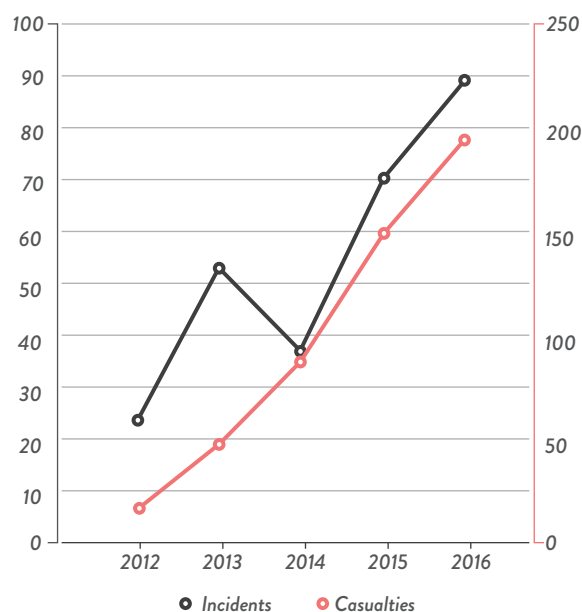### Extremism is on the rise and on the move

Niger, Mali, and Chad rank in the Global Terrorism Index's top 30 countries impacted by terrorism.[1] Violence and growing state militarisation are the results, with thousands driven from their homes in search of peace and stability. The UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, MINUSMA, is already one of its deadliest live missions. Fatalities caused by Al Qaeda terrorism have increased 12-fold in the last four years (See Table 3), while the region has also seen a number of ISIS attacks. Alongside the threat posed by the ISIS-affiliated Boko Haram, the recent merger of the four main al-Qaeda linked groups in the region – al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Murabitoun, Macina Liberation Front, and Ansar Dine – into a single entity earlier this year, increases the likelihood of further violence. Regional responses have focused heavily on security, at a cost to broader development needs.

The G5 Sahel joint force (FC-G5S) came a step closer to commencing its counter-terrorism mandate following a visit by the French President, Emmanuel Macron to the Malian capital, Bamako, on 2 July 2017. During the meeting, France's recently-inaugurated Head of State met with the Presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger who have together pledged to create a transnational military force to counter the burgeoning threat of Islamist extremism permeating across the expanse of the Sahel.[2] The French government has pledged an estimated eight million Euros, 70 tactical vehicles
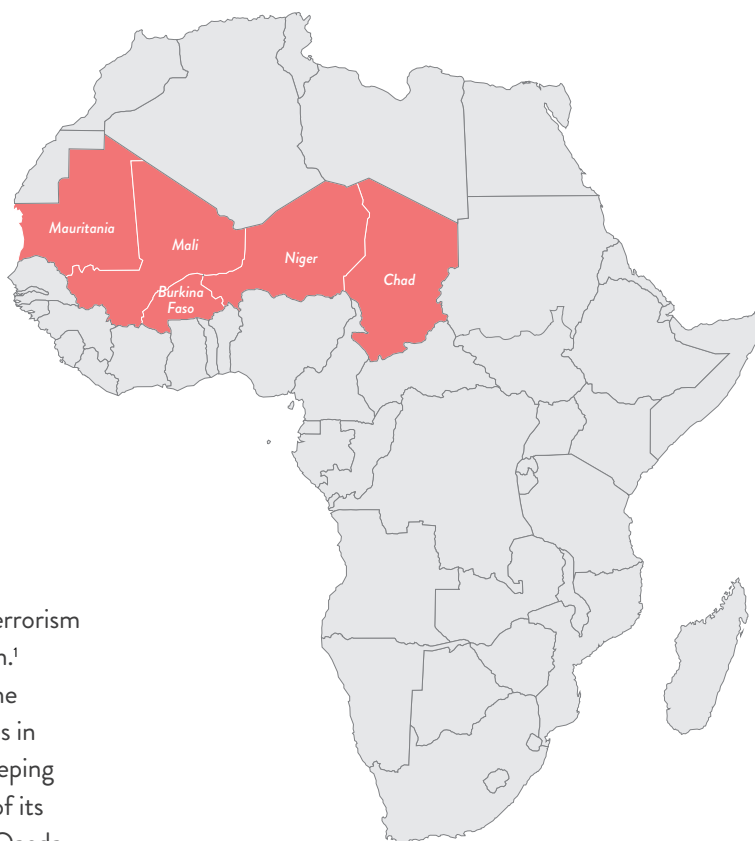
and – via its existing Sahel-wide Operation Barkhane counter-terrorism initiative – ongoing operational and logistical support to the FC-G5S. A further 50 million Euros in funding has also been pledged by the European Union, with the amount expected to be matched by the participating Sahelian countries. The stated contributions, however, fell well short of the estimated 600 million Euros purportedly required to

FIG. 1 Violence by Jihadi Groups in the Sahel

● Incidents   ● Casualties

1 http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf

2 http://www.religionandgeopolitics.org/sub-saharan-africa/africas-2017-terrorism-outlook

fund the security initiative.[3] Outside of Europe, the US response to the region is also largely military and security-focused – with significant military investment in Niger in particular, and the ongoing support to the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). The emphasis placed on securitys is necessary, but insufficient to stabilise the countries and drive development forward.

Poverty and Humanitarian Needs
The scale of the challenge will out-run traditional aid

The G5 countries collectively rank at the bottom of the United Nations' Human Development Index (see Table 1), telling the tale of a region with unrealised potential generated by poverty, inequality, low levels of educational attainment and violence.

TABLE 1

Country	HDI rank, out of 188 (2015)*	Multidimensional Poverty Index	Education (expected years of schooling)	Employment to population ration (% ages 15 and older)
Niger	187	0.584	5.4	62.9
Chad	186	0.545	7.3	67.6
Burkina Faso	185	0.508	7.7	81.1
Mali	175	0.456	8.4	60.6
Mauritania	157	0.291	8.5	32.5
Nigeria (for comparison)	152	0.279	10.0	53.1
Algeria (for comparison)	83	N/A	14.4	39.1

"Human Development Report, 2016," United Nations Development Programme, available online at http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report

Explosive Population Growth
A population explosion is expected by 2050

In the case of the G5 countries, demography is destiny. At issue is exploding population growth without the food, water, jobs, economic opportunity, infrastructure or security to support it. The G5 countries have a current population of 78.4 million; in 2030 it will increase to 118.2 million; in 2050, to 204.6 million, more than 250% growth. (See Table 2).

Niger has the highest birth rate in the world, with more than 7 children per woman. There will be a youth bulge, with young people needing jobs that are currently in short supply.[4]

TABLE 2

Country	Population mid-2017	Population mid-2030	Population 2050*
Burkina Faso	19.6	28.9	48.4
Chad	14.9	22.2	36.8
Mali	18.9	27.5	44.8
Mauritania	4.4	6.1	9.0
Niger	20.6	33.5	65.6

"2017 World Population Data Sheet," Population Reference Bureau, available online at http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2017/2017-world-population-data-sheet.aspx

Climate Change and Food Security
Drought cause multidimensional crisis

Population growth will further stress the natural environment in the Sahel, which is prone to climate change-induced droughts that generate soil degradation, crop failure, food insecurity, conflict, and migration, as desperate populations leave their homes to find daily sustenance. A recent report by the United Nations Security Council indicated the following: "Despite larger than-average harvests in 2016 in much of the Sahel, approximately 30 million people are facing food insecurity, 12 million of whom are in need of emergency food assistance, and around 4.7 million children under the age of 5 years are severely malnourished."[5] These dynamics are playing out in a region that is heavily reliant (more than 80%) on pastoral and agricultural activities.

Furthermore, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned a report that found that climate change will contribute to terrorism and aid in recruitment efforts by violent extremists.[6] The report asserts that groups will use climate change-induced

3 Ryan Cummings, "Sahel: Is the G5 Ready for take-off?" Center on Religion and Geopolitics, 24 July 2017, available online at http://www.religionandgeopolitics.org/counter-extremism/sahel-g5-ready-take-0

4 Tony Blair Institute for Global Change paper, The Jobs Gap http://institute.global/news/jobs-gap

5 United Nations Security Council, S/217/563 "Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel," 30 June 2017, available online at https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/58468

6 Adelphi, "Insurgency, Terrorism and Organised Crime in a Warming Climate," commissioned by the German Foreign Office, April 2017, https://uploads.guim.co.uk/2017/04/20/CD_Report_Insurgency_170419_(1).pdf

food and water scarcity and natural disasters to exert control over local populations.

Governance
Weak capacity underlies and drives instability

The governments in the region are overwhelmed. They lack the skills, structures and systems to cope, while some face issues of legitimacy. Government's grip is also impeded by geography: almost all of the countries in the Sahel occupy huge expanses of land – Chad alone is bigger than France and Germany together – and central governments struggle to control large swathes of their own territory. Large spaces and a lack of capacity also mean that borders are porous, which leads to strong spill-over effects of instability and extremism.

The fact that by any measure these countries categorised as 'fragile states' are found to be under-performing in terms of government effectiveness, is not surprising – fragile states by definition are assessed by the World Banks CPIA index as having low levels of government effectiveness. All five countries are in the lower third on the World Bank's indicator for government effectiveness, which measures "perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies."[7] (See Table 3). The question is – 'what is being done to build resilient institutions in fragile states and how?'

TABLE 3 [8]

Country	Gov't Effectiveness (rank)
Chad	6.73
Mauritania	13.94
Mali	17.79
Niger	30.77
Burkina Faso	31.73
Nigeria (for comparison)	16.83
Algeria (for comparison)	35.15

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7 World Bank Group, "Worldwide Governance Indicators," available online at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home

8 "Worldwide Governance Indicators" World Bank, available online at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home

Migration and Human Trafficking

Together, the factors outlined above have fueled migration both within and outside the Sahel, leaving these populations vulnerable to drug and human traffickers, criminal activity, and radicalisation. Many of these migrants stay within the belt of the Sahel. According to the UN, "143,500 Malian migrants and refugees are being hosted by Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. Around 243,000 of the estimated 700,000 people living in the Diffa region of the Niger are internally displaced persons, refugees or nationals of the Niger who have returned from Nigeria."[9] But many migrants go to North Africa; and some make the perilous trip to Europe. As Jill Filipovic wrote in The Guardian recently "By 2020, some 60 million people from sub-Saharan Africa are expected to migrate to North Africa or Europe because of desertification alone, and that number will only grow larger through the subsequent decades."[10]

For European countries, this migration has become not just a humanitarian crisis but a political one. Parliaments and prime ministers have been forced to come to grips with the harsh reality of the complex challenges affecting the region, but unless significant measures are taken as a matter of urgency, a lose-lose situation is on the horizon. The reality is that if development continues without state-building in Africa, migration will increase – right now many people are too poor to leave. As Paul Collier finds in his book Exodus – and others have shown elsewhere – the poorest are not the majority migrants, creating a spiral where the skills and people most needed are drained from countries not quite stable or developed enough to retain their populations.[11]

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9 United Nations Security Council, op. cit., p. 6.

10 Jill Filipovic, "Will Africa's Great Green Wall Discourage Migration to Europe?" The Guardian, 19 July 2017, available online at https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jul/19/will-africas-great-green-wall-discourage-migration-to-europe

11 See Clemens CGD Does Development Reduce Migration? Working Paper 359

AID EFFECTIVENESS AND FRAGILE STATES

Respect, Coordination and Volatility
The donor view

Effective governance is what differentiates successful from unsuccessful countries. But the evidence shows that when it comes to fragile states – including those in the Sahel – donors are not abiding by their own aid effectiveness principles. They are failing to build institutional resilience, which is part of what states need to withstand various pressures and shocks. And where they are failing most prominently is in the places it is needed most. In a comprehensive, data-driven study from 2007 to 2014, the Brookings Institute found that donors consistently perform worse in fragile states than stable countries on measures of their commitment to agreed-upon aid effectiveness principles. This is true even when considering only the aid practices that should be fully applicable in any setting, not just stable countries. The study looked at three factors themes in detail.

The Methodology

The study used ten indicators first presented in Chandy, Seidel, and Zhang 2016[12] to measure aid effectiveness in fragile states. Many alternative sets of indicators reward donors for giving to stable countries with good governance, which is by definition impossible in fragile states. Other indicators reward aid practices that are not appropriate in fragile states, such as the use of government budget support. The indicators chosen avoid both of these common pitfalls by emphasizing behaviors that are independent of the quality of governance in in the recipient country.

The indicators relate to three common themes that emerged from past collaborative efforts to identify donor best practices in fragile states.[13] These are 1) showing *respect* for countries' programming, systems, and staff; 2) working in *cooperation* with other donors; and 3) being a source of *stability* to recipient countries. With these overarching goals in mind, the following ten indicators were used:

Respect for countries' programming, systems, and staff

1. Reported on budget.
2. Use of public financial management systems, controlling for system quality
3. Avoidance of Project Implementation Units (PIUs)
4. Use of programmatic aid, excluding budget support

Cooperation with other donors

5. Joint activities
6. Aid through others
7. Multilateral aid
8. Multi-bi aid

Stability to recipient countries

9. Predictable funding
10. Avoidance of aid volatility

Data on them is drawn from the Paris and Global Partnership monitoring surveys and the OECD Development Assistance Committee's International Development Statistics.

The methodology used was to identify donor performance on the ten indicators above. Then standardized scores for each donor's performance in each recipient country on each indicator were calculated. These scores were then averaged across all donors in each country, weighting by the share of total country programmable aid (CPA) from each donor, to calculate overall donor performance for each recipient. The sample of recipient countries includes all countries that have appeared on the World Bank's fragile state list at any point between 2007 and 2014 for which we have sufficient data.[14]

The data-driven statistical analysis methodically ranked donor performance in these principles in fragile states and compared them with their performance in stable states. The reports shows that the US and France have some room for improvement. The UK is the strongest performer of the big bilateral donors, but still lags behind Denmark, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands and Italy.

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12 https://www.brookings.edu/research/aid-effectiveness-in-fragile-states/

13 See especially OECD 2007 and G7+ 2011

14 See methodological note at the end for details on the sample selection.

TABLE 4 Standardized Donor Scores for Overall Effectiveness[15]

Country	Fragile Score	Stable Score	Fragile Premium
Denmark	0.47	0.26	0.21***
Canada	0.34	0.25	0.09
Sweden	0.33	0.36	-0.02
Norway	0.32	0.28	0.04
Netherlands	0.26	0.31	-0.05
Italy	0.17	-0.09	0.26***
United Kingdom	0.10	0.29	-0.19***
Japan	0.09	0.01	0.08**
Australia	0.07	0.03	0.05
World Bank	-0.02	0.11	-0.13**
Global Fund	-0.06	0.26	0.31***
Asian Development Bank	-0.07	0.07	0.15*
Germany	-0.09	0.02	-0.12***
EU Institutions	-0.11	0.12	-0.22***
United Nations	-0.13	-0.11	-0.01
Switzerland	-0.21	-0.06	-0.15**
Spain	-0.23	-0.13	-0.10
GAVI Alliance	-0.33	-0.19	-0.13***
Belgium	-0.46	-0.09	-0.37***
African Devlopment Bank	-0.47	-0.16	0.31***
United States	-0.49	-0.22	-0.27***
France	-0.56	-0.03	-0.53***
Total	-0.13	0.04	-0.17***

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The relative performance of donors in fragile states is important, but it will only matter if it leads to a change. What it clearly shows is donors' need to improve their performance in fragile states and, in some cases, pool funds with other donors who are more effective in order to improve outcomes on the ground.[16] The discussions that can lead to this change can start at the country level.

15 Chandy, Seidel, Zhang (2016), 'Aid effectiveness in Fragile States: How bad is it and how can it improve?" https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/global_121616_brookeshearer.pdf

16 Studies recommend, in order of most cooperative to least: giving to multilaterals; non-core multilateral aid (i.e. multi-bi aid), which is money given to multilaterals but designated for a specific region/country/purpose; silent partnerships and delegated cooperation agreements; conducting research activities etc. jointly with other donors.

Respect, Coordination and Volatility
The recipient country view

Governments at the receiving end of these donor relationships need to know how donors are performing in their own country compared to others. This information gives governments in fragile states information that can help them influence donor behaviour. To facilitate this, the Tony Blair Institute conducted its own analysis of the data to find out where donors collectively are following good practices and where they are not. Or put simply, which countries are the 'luckier' ones, where on the whole there is slightly better and more respect for country systems, better donor coordination and less aid volatility.

The ranking shows that, as a collective, donors perform best in the Solomon Islands and worst in Kiribati. Or put another way, donors are more respectful of country systems, coordinate with each other better and provide greater stability in the Solomon Islands than in Kiribati.

TABLE 4 Fragile States Ranked by Donor Performance

Rank	Recipient Country
1	Solomon Islands
2	Yemen, Rep.
3	Sierra Leone
4	Madagascar
5	Chad
6	Malawi
7	Cote d'Ivoire
8	Bosnia and Herzegovina
9	Nepal
10	Laos
11	Mauritania
12	Cameroon
13	Burundi
14	Togo
15	Haiti
16	Tajikistan
17	Nigeria
18	West Bank and Gaza Strip
19	Sudan
20	Dem. Rep. of the Congo
21	Liberia

22	Timor-Leste
23	Congo, Rep.
24	Vanuatu
25	Afghanistan
26	Central African Republic
27	Cambodia
28	Mali
29	Guinea-Bissau
30	Kosovo
31	Gambia
32	Papua New Guinea
33	Tonga
34	Sao Tome and Principe
35	Comoros
36	Kiribati

Findings

The study shows that when it comes to respecting countries' programming, systems, and staff and providing a stable source of funding – two of the major ways donors can partner responsibly with recipients -- donors have a long way to go. Take for example how donors do in terms of 'respect' – this means things like donors' use of public financial management systems and providing programmatic aid, excluding budget support. In this ranking (not shown here), donors do this less well in all the Sahel countries, with all coming in the bottom half of the 36 countries we studied (at 18 - Mauritania, 21- Mali and 29- Chad).

In order for these findings to be of greater use, however, both donors and recipients need to ask:

- What common factors (if any) are there amongst countries at the top and bottom of the ranking?
- What role do governments play?
- What might other external factors be?
- And vice-versa where is performance is lowest, and what explains it?

Given growing bilateral and multilateral interest in the G5, these questions take on added significance. An accurate assessment of these governments' capacities is critical for usefully directing any donor assistance.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The donor community needs to change its behavior with respect to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger if it is to assist these governments in meeting the demographic, climate change-related, security, and migration challenges they face.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that the international development community needs to evolve in how it deals with recipient governments, assisting them to govern and develop strong institutions. The principles of partnership, mutual accountability and institutional resilience are acknowledged as of primary importance, but implementing the policies that flow from these principles has proven challenging and resulted in a yawning gap between rhetoric and reality.

Implementation is not a minor issue, it is the *issue*. We can no longer afford to draft sound policy and fall at implementation hurdles, or complain it is difficult and revert to old ways. A laser focus on addressing and innovating to solve implementation challenges is needed. There are examples of very basic solutions that can solve significant shortcomings in public service delivery and governance, such as text based feedback mechanisms implemented in the Punjab, Pakistan, where citizens receiving day-to-day public government services can immediately feedback incidences of corruption or poor service to a central complaint centre, initiating a response within 8 hours.[17] And of course, as more advanced technologies become mainstreamed and cheaper, context-specific adaptation can yield monumental results in public service delivery and citizen engagement, targeting the structural causes of fragility.[18] Our recommendations

17 See https://www.pitb.gov.pk/cfmp, https://www.punjabpolice.gov.pk/miracles_have_started_to_happen

18 For example:
i. Drones to improve rural health and education delivery (UNICEF Malawi, https://medium.com/@unicef_malawi/drones-re-mote-school-highlights-the-challenges-of-rural-education-38ae-d2c84015),
ii. Mobile monitoring and payments to increase reliability and supply of water in rural areas (http://reachwater.org.uk/blog-can-mobile-mon-itoring-deliver-drinking-water-security-to-africas-rural-poor/) or to coordinate waste management that otherwise leads to disastrous health and safety outcomes (http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/project/mo-pa-using-data-improve-waste-management-mozambique/),
iii. the use of behavioural insights instead of collateral to secure loans for entrepreneurs (http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/135511467803640433/pdf/106751-WP-P158947-innovationwin-nersbookscreen-OUO-9.pdf)

focus on these roadblocks – and opportunities.

Recommendations for Multilateral Donors and Partners

Multilateral donors and partners have proven their ability to be more effective in fragile states, than bilateral donors.[19] Based on that fact, we propose two approaches:

i.   Europe, the USA and Arab allies in the Gulf pool funds and or expertise to develop a compact with one or more countries that is closely coordinated with and complementary to the MCC compacts. Mutual accountability is the key principle, expressed as monitoring and enforcement.

ii. Multilateral donors increase public-private partnerships, leveraging additional funds in constrained environments.

Recommendations for Bilateral Donors Who Struggle with Implementation Challenges

Bilateral donors as a collective have demonstrated that in terms of some of the aid effectiveness principles that impact the development of strong capacity (respect, coordination and volatility), they perform worse in fragile states. However, performance is mixed, with some donors performing better than others. The politics of development, reform and stabilisation in fragile states presents unique challenges for bilateral donors facing short timeframes for 'results', results which require many years, decades and certainly require more adaptive management. Currently donors focus on results and this may seem wise, but it is not necessarily the right metric given the short timeframes used. Instead donors need to and can shift to a system where they use results delivery to build states which can by themselves in time deliver results, and donors should do this - even when at times it sacrifices some results. We propose three approaches:

i.   Donors double-down on 'state-craft'. This means new approaches to engaging with political settlements and participating elites; a shift in priority-setting to deal with the right issues first (JS said something about fixing budgets first

before rule of law stuff in political settlements); and a more evidence-based approach to the development of democratic principles – inclusivity, reconciliation and democratic participation all must be driven by context not dogma, and ultimately these democratic principles have to be grounded in economic development across multiple and competing power factions if meaningful political plurality is to be fostered.[20]

ii. Donors focus on supporting the development of managerial capacity in conjunction with delivery, by using results to build states – embedded, government-led etc. This should include strategic communications, which is often a missing piece in developing a new and more productive relationship between citizen and state.

iii. Donors reframe their role in the world – from an increasingly stretched humanitarian responder, to a forward-looking investor who can expect returns in terms of: countries graduating from aid dependency; greater global security; reduced migration; and a more equitable global system. Within this framing, a longer and more realistic timeframe can be balanced by donors no longer being the principle actor in development. Working in partnership with private funders can be valuable, as philanthropic institutions, private and state-owned companies can sometimes make the long-term commitments that most governments find politically difficult.

Recommendations for Progressive Government Leaders in Fragile States

Leaders and national governments in fragile states now have access to empirical data which shows them where donors are at their best and worst in terms of abiding by key aid effectiveness principles. The plethora of initiatives must also be addressed. The variety and number of aid and external initiatives that governments face is bewildering, burdensome, and often counter-productive, requiring government capacity to be diverted for coordination, alignment and multiple reports.

19 Chandy, Seidel, Zhang (2016), 'Aid effectiveness in Fragile States: How bad is it and how can it improve?" https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/global_121616_brookeshearer.pdf

20 See Khan, Mushtaq (2010), 'Political Settlements and the Governance of Growth-Enhancing Institutions', http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/9968/

Development practitioners have seen the gap in some countries between the actual capacity of administrative systems to implement even the most routine tasks, and the wishful thinking of donors about the pace of progress. This gap can be small, but when it is wide, it leads to premature loadbearing that places huge stresses on systems that will only weaken or collapse. This is the risk in many fragile states and in the Sahel.

To address these challenges, we propose three approaches:

i. Progressive leaders should align government around one vision, one national plan – this should be inclusive (taking account of regional and sub-national dynamics) and be the basis for a compact that is a comprehensive response to the range of challenges the G5 countries face and tackle the issues the leaders of these countries have identified as most pressing: security reform; institution-building and good governance; economic development; counter-extremism; and, critically, education for girls. None of these can be addressed in isolation; the international community must work in a concerted and coordinated way on all. The Compact should also be tailored for each nation, based on the needs of the countries themselves. It should be built in the spirit of partnership and mutual accountability, balancing obligations and support and learning from other initiatives, such as the MCC, which is already active in the region.

ii. Progressive leaders should focus on identifying critical implementation barriers and calibrate the load (of delivery, reform, coordination, capacity building). This means being clear where extra and long-term implementation support is needed and sourcing the right assistance (for example embedded nationals and internationals working in national institutions to build civil servant capacity such as in Rwanda's strategic capacity-building initiative (SCBI)).

iii. Progressive leaders where useful, should favour regional cooperation, when it can also help reduce the burden. The governments of the Sahel are showing the way forward, working together. An example is the February 2017 agreement by the Presidents of the Sahel to increase joint military training, intelligence sharing, and logistical infrastructure against terrorism and drug trafficking. Regional approaches to development issues such as infrastructure, cross-border economic development, etc. should be included.

A new path forward can be created, a path where Sahelian governments forge the right kind of partnerships to build effective governments that can tackle their own challenges and, in time, transition away from aid. At the most fundamental level, the people of these nations have the same desires as us in the West: for peace, stability, good health, education and the opportunity for meaningful work. It is the only vision of the future which works for us all.