

Joint public hearing
of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development (AWZ) and the
Subcommittee on Civilian Crisis Prevention and Integrated Conflict
Management
on the topic of: “Development cooperation with fragile states”
to be held on 12 June 2013, from 9.00 hrs to 11.00 hrs
in the Paul Löbe Building, Room E.800

I. Introduction

No consensus exists at international level on the definition of fragile states. Yet, it has become abundantly clear that these states pose special challenges to the international community. According to the OECD, the risk of pervasive poverty becoming entrenched over the next decades is particularly high in the fragile states. The 2011 World Development Report points out that none of the states categorised as fragile or affected by armed conflict has managed to meet a single one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), or is likely to do so in the foreseeable future. Their dilemma lies in the existence of numerous deficits, which occur in varying intensities and combinations and interact to hinder improvements. The lack of effective institutions is central to the nature of fragile states. In addition to this, the following characteristics can be observed: limitations on the state's monopoly on the use of force, due to war, civil war or post-conflict situations; lack of national consensus within society and mistrust of the government; lack of institutions and procedures for peaceful conflict resolution; restrictions on civil society; lack of legal certainty; limitations on physical safety; violence; refugees and internally displaced persons, sometimes in large numbers; restricted framework for economic activities; poverty and food insecurity.

A consensus exists regarding fragile states on a number of points:

- They are increasing in number.
- Poverty and suffering are particularly widespread.
- Development cooperation in such states takes place in a context in which the conditions for development must first be created.
- There is a lack of proven concepts and instruments to tackle the problems which exist.
- Action in the areas of development policy, and foreign and security policy needs to be coordinated. Yet, so far, no sufficiently tried-and-tested concepts exist.
- Negative effects often impact on the whole region or even the whole world.

- In many cases, conflicting interests in the region and beyond are affected and have to be included in solutions to the problem.
- In some cases, one or more external forces become involved in the conflict and further hamper its resolution.

International organisations, academics and national development-policy institutions have, particularly since the end of the “Cold War” and the beginning of the “War on Terror”, identified the issue of fragile statehood as an important challenge and endeavoured to characterise the phenomena which exist and find possible solutions. Numerous studies and concept papers have now been compiled and considerable experience gained with development-policy interventions in fragile states. Nevertheless, a consensus on successful policy concepts is still absent.

The hearing is intended to give the Members of the Bundestag an overview of thinking on fragile states and the current state of discussions concerning intervention options, as well as provide an opportunity for discussion on the options for action of German development, foreign and security policy.

II. Structure of the hearing

The hearing will be divided into two parts.

Part 1 (45 minutes)

Analysis of fragile states and the obstacles to their development

One expert will be asked to provide input for this introductory part, in which the characteristics of fragile states and definitions of fragility – as opposed to stability and security – are to be presented. Specific obstacles to development in fragile states, which do not exist in more stable states, or only to a lesser extent, should be listed and their impacts assessed.

Expert

Professor Tobias Debiel, Professor of International Relations, Foreign and Development Policy, University of Duisburg-Essen

Part 2 (75 minutes)

Concepts for policy action vis-à-vis fragile states

Three contributions are planned. First, an academic should provide a brief overview of concepts for development policy vis-à-vis fragile states. This should include both theoretical considerations and assessments of the practical experience gained by major international organisations (e.g. United Nations, World Bank, OECD, NATO and the European Commission), as well as influential intervening states (e.g. USA, People's Republic of China, United Kingdom). Following on from this, the issue will be examined in depth from the perspective of two representatives from implementing organisations.

Experts:

Dr. Gabi Hesselbein, London School of Economics and Political Science, Crisis State Research Centre, Development Studies Institute

Dr Almut Wieland-Karimi, Director of the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF)

Wolfgang Heinrich, Expert on Peace Policy, Bread for the World

III. Organisation

Time allocated to experts' introductory statements: 10 - 12 minutes.

Experts and other interested organisations are asked to submit written position papers prior to the hearing in order to provide the Members of the Bundestag with information in advance.

The written statements by the experts will be made available on the Committee's webpage.