

Preface

FRAGILE CONTEXTS IN A FRAGILE WORLD

Fragility is affecting millions of lives every day across the world. Whether due to inequality, poverty, illness, violence or injustice, it speaks directly to people's experiences and sense of vulnerability. It often draws the line between prosperity and survival and in the most extreme cases, life and death. The burden of fragility most often than not falls disproportionately on already vulnerable and marginalised groups, those who are "the furthest behind". In addition, fragility cannot always be attributed to responsibility – for example, those most exposed to the impact of climate change are often the least responsible for it.

To leave no one behind means acknowledging that the causes of fragility are complex, interconnected, and often deep-rooted within the most affected countries and communities. As the world tackles the dual public health and economic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, a focus on fragility is now more necessary than ever before. The spread of the virus across the globe has aggravated and multiplied issues of fragility across countries and regions, contributing to mass unemployment, increased poverty, heightened inequalities, political unrest and rising gender-based violence. For many countries, such issues and grievances are pushing them ever closer to conflict, exacerbating existing tensions and compromising the task of "building back better". For those already experiencing

violence and conflict, prospects of peace and stability have become more distant due to the pandemic. Moreover, these challenges come at a time when peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts are fragmented and uncertain.

The *States of Fragility 2020* report underlines that putting people at the centre of the fight against fragility should be the starting point. Fragility undermines our sense of well-being and people's legitimate aspirations for education, health, community, representation, peace and security in clean and sustainable environments. There are no one-size-fits-all options in fragile contexts. Addressing fragility issues requires an approach based on local needs, priorities and resilience. To be effective, policies applied to address fragility should be informed by the systems and interactions that lie at the core of the fabric of society, and should involve all actors. Responding to fragility, preventing conflict, and building resilience and peace are a collective task. It is everyone's responsibility.

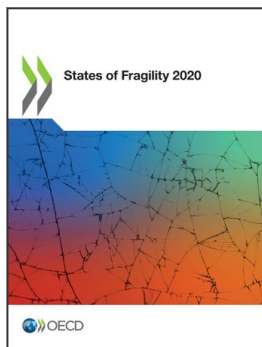
We have reached a turning point: The current crisis is challenging the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. One year into the "decade of action", we must focus our efforts on delivering on those ambitions while also taking fragile contexts into account. Responding effectively to the impact of COVID-19 and addressing pre-existing challenges such as climate change, inequality and polarising politics means responding to fragility, renewing faith in a shared vision and adapting our approach

to the current reality. In this context, States of Fragility 2020 makes an urgent call for collective action: OECD governments and their development agencies need to continue supporting countries and communities in fragile contexts by protecting ODA, supporting access to other sources of financing, promoting policies adapted to fragile contexts and prioritising partnerships at every level. As we continue to fight the

worst health, economic and social crisis in nearly a century, now is the time to step up our collective efforts to address fragility and set our sights on a fair, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future in a post-COVID world.



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