

Juba, May 2020

TO: The United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

THROUGH: Benjamin Moore, South Sudan Peacebuilding Fund Coordinator  
and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

FROM: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human  
Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) and United Nations  
International Children's Fund (UNICEF)

SUBJECT: Assessment of impact of COVID-19 and mitigating measures for "*Breaking the Cycle of Violence - rehabilitating justice and accountability mechanisms*"

## Background

COVID-19 is affecting most of the world, including South Sudan. The Government of South Sudan started taking preventive measures as preparedness for a national outbreak in March 2020. Measures that have been taken since then include curfews, shortened working hours for public institutions, bans on social gatherings, limitations on the number of participants at meetings, and closing of schools. In addition, the government closed its borders, both by air and road, preventing local and international travel. Programme delivery will likely be affected the and mobility of project staff is expected to be restricted.

Since the government of South Sudan began to put in place preventative and preparedness measures against the outbreak of COVID-19 within the country, the Technical Working Group (TWG) – consisting of the recipient organizations and the RCO – has convened meetings to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project "*Breaking the Cycle of Violence - rehabilitating justice and accountability mechanisms*". The aim has been to ensure project continuity and quality through the revision of work plans and by adjusting our implementation strategy to the new context, whilst ensuring safety first and the respect of the "do no harm" principle.

The Technical Working Group was briefed by the Peacebuilding Coordinator in the RCO on the guidance issued by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) on the possibilities to re-purpose funds designated to outstanding activities, postpone activities, or consider a combination thereof.



## Summary

The TWG has considered how its implementation methodology and activity design could be revised in order to remain feasible and relevant during the COVID-19 outbreak in South Sudan, whilst ensuring the achievement of the overall objective. The context-specific modifications do not affect the substance of activities, but instead take into account carrying out activities remotely rather than in-person, convening meetings – when necessary and appropriate – with key actors remotely or individually or in smaller groups in respect of social distancing measures.

Moreover, the implementation of certain activities involving international and/or domestic travel, as well as in-person meetings with project stakeholders, has either been revised through alternative implementation methods or will be postponed, as the Government has imposed restrictions on entering South Sudan, movement within the country and social gatherings. In fact, both the UN and its partners are experiencing challenges in delivering services to beneficiaries due to the restrictions, which prevents carrying out certain activities as originally planned.

While some activities have been postponed, preparations for the implementation of other activities will continue as planned or through alternative strategies, in respect of the “do no harm” and “safety first” principles. The revised implementation activity strategies will in some cases require extended timeframes in respect of social distancing measures, several local COVID-19 restrictions and international standard operating procedures.

Additionally, in light of the current circumstances and restrictions, the public sector’s limited working hours and COVID-19 priorities (among others) are likely to impact the level of collaboration and contributions from relevant governmental officials and other key stakeholders. In addition, limited access to technology across the country poses numerous challenges, not only to identifying alternative implementation strategies, but also to valuable collaborations with local actors, now more dependent on online meetings and remote working, among others.

The assessment of impact on outcomes is further outlined below, and a review of the activities is detailed in the localized work plans. The adaptations aim at maintaining the project’s objectives and pursuing the relevance of its outcomes in the new context.

## Review of outcomes:

**Outcome 1 – The engagement of children and youth in the target communities of Aweil, Juba, Bor, Pibor and Bentiu in dialogue and trust building mechanisms has increased and leads to a reduction in violence and conflict.**



**Expected Outputs. 1.1** Strengthened local networks of survivors for peace dialogues with local communities and political elites in the target communities of Aweil, Bor, Pibor, Bentiu and Juba. **1.2** Improved access to justice in the target communities of Aweil, Bor, Pibor, Bentiu and Juba.

**Adjustments:** Most of the activities under this outcome have been *modified to the evolving context*, while some assessed to be *postponed*. Activities such as developing IEC materials, holding consultations to identify and mobilize survivors to join networks and dialogue forums to consult members of the local population and build their capacity to dialogues, are planned as modified to the context. Examples of activities that need to be postponed include international consultancies which require entering South Sudan as well as movement within and between states; awareness raising events and trainings requiring bigger gatherings and/or movements.

**Outcome 2 – Target communities in Aweil, Juba, Bor, Pibor and Bentiu have enhanced trust in the formal law enforcement system leading to a stronger social contract between the state and its children and youth**

**Expected Outputs: 2.1** Fair trials and detention provided for children and youth of the target communities in Aweil, Juba Bor, Pibor, Bentiu and Juba. **2.2** Enhanced capacity of justice actors in Aweil, Juba Bor, Pibor, Bentiu and Juba.

**Adjustments:** Under this outcome, the implementation of the majority of the activities have been modified to the current context. Mainly, the revisions entail performing tasks remotely, or through consultants or contractors on the ground which can perform some tasks or adjust the tasks to be in line with the restrictions issued by the government. This is applicable for activities such as providing technical support to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, activities related to legal aid services (including developing a legal aid scheme together with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs), as well as activities on the construction of facilities.

## Conclusion

Due to the COVID-19 situation the review of the implementation methodology for the different activities has resulted in a revised implementation strategy suitable for the current evolving context, taken into account the restrictions and the respect of the “do no harm” and “safety first” principles. The implementation of most the activities will be able to continue, however with a modified implementation strategy, which in some cases will possibly extend the necessary timeframe of the activity implementation. The main change of implementation modality is to carry out possible tasks remotely, rather than in-country or/and in-person. The implementation of activities requiring bigger gatherings and movement into South Sudan and within states have been assessed necessary to postpone.