

2016

**STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING IN
FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES**

PARIS21 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fragile states lagged in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) reporting for all 8 objectives. On average, fragile states trailed behind non-fragile states by 18%.¹ These countries face specific challenges related to not only the insufficient production of general data but also the inexistence of specific data relevant to their own challenges. National statistical systems (NSS) in fragile states often suffer from the brain drain of officials, lack of training, inadequate facilities and equipment and difficulty in safely accessing some geographic areas.

The implementation of any project, including statistical development, is thus subject to more bottlenecks in these countries. The composite nature of the wide array of challenges in fragile states, whether they are related to institutions, security, government stability or lack of resources, makes it difficult to quickly achieve results in these countries. Long term investment, at the centre of any statistical capacity building activity, is even more crucial in fragile states.

Over the last fifteen years, PARIS21 has been at the forefront of statistical development. Our partners regularly ask how we approach fragile states and what they can learn from our experience. At the same time, the Global Development Agenda is currently undergoing a fundamental change driven by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This change creates increased demand for data that will entail additional challenges for fragile and conflict-affected states in particular.

In the first part, this work aims to define the specific nature of fragile and conflict-affected states and situations and to describe how statistical capacity building can help address the drivers of fragility. The second part summarises PARIS21's past activities in and with states affected by conflict and fragility, and explains the strategic approach PARIS21 will take towards statistical capacity building in these countries over the 2016 – 2020 period.

Drawing from past experience and looking into a future shaped by the 2030 Agenda, this paper therefore may be understood not only as a strategic outlook, but also as a model approach to statistical capacity building in fragile states, including the selection of statistical development activities to be undertaken, their modality of implementation, and the partnerships they require.

¹ OECD, [Fragile States Report 2014: Domestic Revenue Mobilisation in Fragile States](#)



1. THE NEXUS BETWEEN FRAGILITY AND STATISTICAL CAPACITY

1.1 WHAT IS A FRAGILE STATE?

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “a fragile region or state has weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions, and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society. Fragile regions or states are also more vulnerable to internal or external shocks such as economic crises or natural disasters. In contrast, more resilient states exhibit the capacity and legitimacy for governing a population and its territory.”² However, the concept of fragility is often understood differently and varies depending upon various criteria. This strategy provides a contextual review of the idea of fragility and a recommended approach in dealing with statistical development.

Fragility affects a wide range of countries and economies. It is an issue of universal character that can affect all countries, not only those traditionally considered “fragile” or conflict-affected. Fragile states include countries that are recovering from conflict and embarking on peace and state-building processes (e.g. Liberia, Myanmar and Timor-Leste). They also include countries that are experiencing long-term insecurity, recurrent crises or localised conflict (e.g. the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Yemen), or high levels of criminality and violence (e.g. Pakistan). They encompass a range of situations where governments have solid administrative structures but where political exclusion combined with lack of economic opportunities fuel tension and violence. This is the situation in countries such as Egypt, Libya and North Korea, as well as across entire regions such as the Maghreb and the Sahel. In Mali, these characteristics are compounded by an armed rebellion. Fragility can be found at the sub-national level; affect some people, institutions and services and not others; and it can have a regional dimension.³

Fragility is an important issue to deal with for the international community as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 – “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” – is designed to address this challenge.

Many fragile states and economies have made important strides toward reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but as a group they have lagged behind other developing countries. For example, nearly two-thirds of those now considered fragile are expected to fail to meet the goal of halving poverty by 2015.⁴

² OECD, [Fragile States Report 2014: Domestic Revenue Mobilisation in Fragile States](#)

³ OECD, [Fragile States Report 2014: Domestic Revenue Mobilisation in Fragile States](#)

⁴ OECD, [Highlights of the States of Fragility Report 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions](#)



The concept of fragility allows us to understand a wide variety of situations and circumstances, including countries in crisis, countries at war, reconstruction contexts, humanitarian and natural crises, and situations of extreme poverty, while it also takes into account issues of prevention.⁵

The characteristics of fragile situations are defined into different categories⁶:

1. **Failure of the rule of law:** Impunity, court rulings are not upheld, legislation is incoherent, civil servants abuse power, principles of international law (human rights, use of force) are not respected
2. **State authority:** State has no control over national territory, basic services are not delivered, civilian leaders have little or no control over the army, civil servants are paid irregularly or not at all, state cannot collect enough domestic revenue, state is not able to absorb international aid efficiently, state has poor control over international aid, etc.
3. **Illegitimate or non-inclusive state:** Arbitrary use of power, no democratic control, absence of opposition parties, leaders are corrupt, etc.
4. **Weak economy:** High and persistent poverty, widespread unemployment and underemployment, weak and unstable economic growth, economy highly dependent on raw material exports, inability to attract private investment, etc.
5. **Fragile society:** Poorest and most vulnerable populations are marginalised (social programmes lack delivery), low rate of education and training, strong and recurring ethnic and social tensions, etc.
6. **Other issues:** Regional conflict, environmental vulnerability, exogenous shocks, climate change, conflicts in neighbouring countries and possibly armed incursions, terrorism, etc.

The African Development Bank Group used the following criteria to identify countries and regions according to the degree of fragility:⁷

- Category 1
 - Harmonised list of fragile situations by multilateral development banks; targeted qualitative fragility assessment; presence of armed conflict in the state's territory; presence of violent political uprisings
- Category 2
 - Risk of spill-over from neighbouring conflict; increasing trend and/or sudden onset of governance problems; high risk of sustained social/political unrest
 - Declining trend in policy and institutional performance and/or presence of important non-political drivers of fragility
- Category 3
 - Relatively low risks of violence or societal breakdown; relatively high capacity of social and political institutions to manage challenges within a legitimate/inclusive framework

⁵ [FRAGILE STATES AND SITUATIONS OF FRAGILITY: FRANCE'S POLICY PAPER](#)

⁶ [FRAGILE STATES AND SITUATIONS OF FRAGILITY: FRANCE'S POLICY PAPER](#)

⁷ "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa and for the Transition Support Facility", December 2014



1.2 HOW CAN STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING FRAGILITY?

Although seldom at the centre of post-conflict reconstruction or unstable states resilience programmes, statistical development can actually contribute to reducing fragility. We highlight five ways it achieves this.

1. *By building a stable state through the establishment of strong institutions, in particular the national statistical office (NSO)*

- Government presence and legitimacy is essential in new or re-emerging states and improves their resilience, in particular in the form of public administration. National statistics create capacity and tools that benefit other states activities, such as civil registration, land registration or urban planning. Official statistics also create indicators of state performance and strengthen democratic processes by building a social contract between the state and its people.

2. *By fostering whole-of-government linkages through the co-ordinating role of the NSO which works across all public institutions*

- The movement from isolated silos in public administration to formal networks helps address complex problems that call for collaborative responses. National coordinated authorities, such as NSOs, bring together key stakeholders across ministries and agencies, define shared needs, identify potential gaps and redundancies in implementing strategic goals, guide government innovation and leverage shared solutions in service delivery. Given the mandate as the NSS coordinator, the NSO can contribute to this effort.

3. *By strengthening governance through the introduction of evidence to policy making*

- Evidence based policy (EBP) advocates for a more rational, rigorous and systematic approach. The pursuit of EBP is based on the premise that policy decisions should be better informed by available evidence and should include rational analysis. This is essential in ensuring that evaluation of strategy and policy take place, key perspectives are included, policy ideas are tested, policies are public-orientated, and that quality, accuracy, objectivity, credibility, and relevance prevail in decision-making.

4. *By helping address inequality and fostering inclusive growth by providing data on the “invisible” and most vulnerable, which are often sources of conflict in fragile states*

- Collect and analyse data about vulnerable populations so that their needs are heard and their rights protected: Reliable data on abuses of state power can help citizens hold governments accountable and mobilise pressure for change.
- Robust nationwide data – particularly when disaggregated by age, gender, income and geography – can provide critically important information for both aid donors and fragile state governments that seek to assess developmental needs and to target assistance more effectively and equitably.



- More robust, timely and quantitative data is needed to measure progress towards agreed security and development goals and their associated targets and indicators.
- The initial location on the fragility spectrum of the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States could in principle serve as an approximate baseline against which to measure or estimate their progress towards achieving resilience.
- The development and security challenges that confront fragile states are determined by their unique historical, cultural and political circumstances – a concern shared by many development researchers who rely on qualitative methods. Country-level indicators of progress can be designed to take the unique circumstances of fragile states into account; common indicators – by definition – cannot. Hence the need to obtain specific data.

5. *By providing data on issues that create fragility, such as disaster risk, and thereby help develop coping strategies*

- A key element to any adaptation strategy is accurate, timely and comprehensive data on the various aspects of disaster risk management, in particular to build early warning systems and a better disaster response infrastructure. A recent example is when Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu in March 2015, the country [carried out comprehensive damage assessments](#) using a technology mix of drones, satellite imagery and GPS devices. This helped gather data on different topographical aspects that were not only useful to better prepare for future disasters, but also for other government programmes such as coastal management initiatives.
- Adequate data can also help with the on-going relocation of communities, for instance. This is a process which has already started in many affected islands and is starting to be [used to predict and monitor population displacement after earthquakes](#) such as the one in Nepal.

2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR STEPPING UP PARIS21 ENGAGEMENT

2.1 ADDRESSING THE CAPACITY GAP IN A NEW CONTEXT

The objective of engaging in fragile situations is to build a stable state with strong institutions and good governance, a strong economy with sustainable economic and inclusive growth, jobs, peace and security.

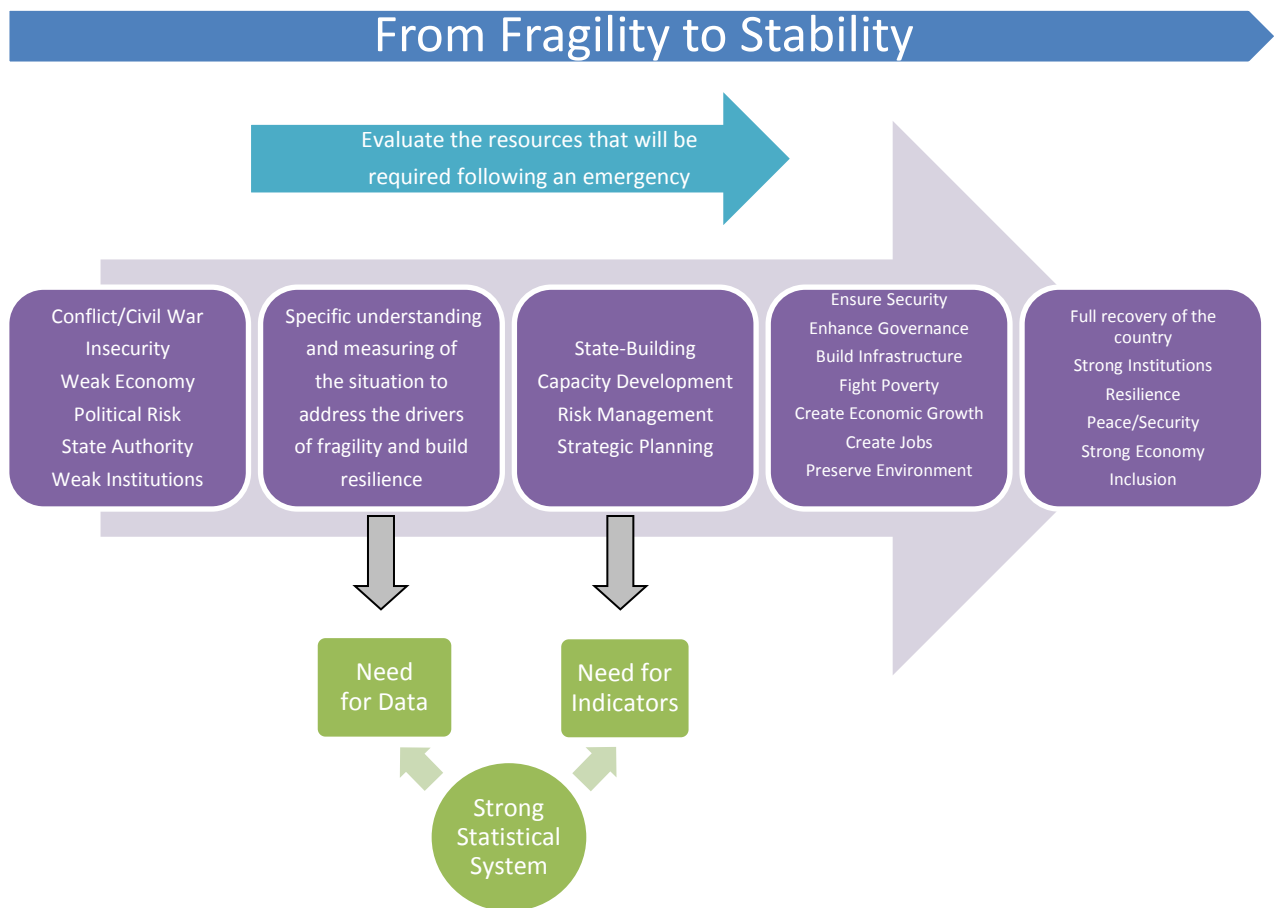
Dealing with the fragility of a country is no less complex than the fragility itself. Given that fragility has diverse origins and drivers, we must conduct an analysis of the specific situation in which the country finds itself in order to design a strategy and implement an action plan.

An overview of the World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator clearly shows that stable countries score better than fragile ones. In terms of statistical capacity, fragile states have an average score of 49.5 out of a maximum 100, lower than that of stable states, which is equal to 70.5. All countries together (both fragile and non-fragile) reach an average of 68 in terms of statistical capacity. Half of fragile states (16)



score below 50 while half of stable states (58) score above 72.3. The Palestinian Authority has a statistical capacity of 83.3 and is the only entity ending up in the last percentile (80-100) of the Statistical Capacity Indicator. Fifty-four per cent of fragile states score in the 40-60 range and 24% of them score in the 20-40 range.

FIGURE 1: Statistical capacity's place in dealing with fragile situations



Fifty-four per cent (18) of fragile states are in Africa. They recorded an average of 60 for the Statistical Capacity Indicator while stable states in Africa (36) have an average score of 64. Thirty-six per cent of fragile states in Asia Pacific (12) recorded an average of 49.63 for the Statistical Capacity Indicator while Haiti, with a statistical capacity of 41, is the only fragile state in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The weak statistical capacity of fragile states poses challenges that will be aggravated by the new UN Development Framework. Fragile countries already lagged behind in their ability to report on the MDGs, but will have even bigger difficulties to capture their progress on the 169 targets that are included in the SDGs. Although not all of these targets are relevant for the majority of fragile states, it is clear that NSOs in developing countries face an increased complexity through the SDGs



Making fragile states fit to measure these targets, and in particular those that affect them substantively, will therefore be an important aspect of ensuring that no-one is left behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2.2 PAST PARIS21 ENGAGEMENT WITH FRAGILE STATES

The role of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) is to promote the development of statistics in developing countries, both in fragile and stable countries. PARIS21 has been working over the years with a number of fragile states and has renewed this commitment in its adopted 2016-2020 strategy.

Activities conducted in 2015 in fragile states include:

- **NSDS Process:** Burundi, Madagascar, Togo, Zimbabwe
- **NSDS Guidelines Training:** FS Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu
- **NSS Assessment:** Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau
- **Micro data Outreach Workshop:** Côte d'Ivoire, Kosovo
- **National workshop Journalists and statisticians:** Mali
- **NSS Coordination Skills Training:** Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan
- **Horn of Africa Data Initiative:** Somalia, Somaliland, Yemen, Sudan
- **Accelerated Data Programme Regional Assessment:** Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Togo

2.3 PROPOSED APPROACH FOR FRAGILE SITUATIONS

PARIS21's strategy for 2016-2020 is based on the pillars of advocacy, co-ordination and monitoring, knowledge sharing and innovation incubator, and technical support, with a specific approach to fragile states.

Although PARIS21 already supports a number of fragile states through various work streams, future activities will be more targeted, based on the types of fragility that characterise each state.

- ***Recovering from conflict and embarking on peace and state-building***
 - Advocacy of quality statistics for effective policy and initial situational assessment
 - Provide sectoral strategy for administrative data, civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and subnational data to identify localised pockets of fragility to be addressed
 - Capacity building programme to empower NSO staff in strategic planning and data collection, particularly following a possible fluctuation in personnel during a conflict
 - The NSDS should fit with the national development plan/Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, regardless of its **duration**. If there is a short-term recovery/reconstruction plan, a shorter NSDS action plan should be undertaken. Where some fragile states lack a development plan, the NSDS will need to be built separately.



- **Weak institutions**

- Build a strong statistical system: Develop a statistical value chain from institutions (Statistical Act, National Statistical Council, etc.) to the use of statistics.

Moreover, some best practices are needed in order to have a successful engagement with fragile states:⁸

- Taking into account the local context
- Co-ordination of multiple donors
- Building in flexibility and adaptability
- Combining state-building activities with community empowerment, helping to strengthen the state's legitimacy, particularly following a civil war

Contribution of the Informing a Data Revolution project to improving capacity in fragile states

The data revolution project led by PARIS21 showcased a set of innovations adapted to fragile states that can be used to enhance the generation, use and dissemination of statistics. Some of these innovations are:

- [E-Governance \(Data Management\) Disaster Management-Inmarsat \(Humanitarian Response\)](#)
- [Tracking Population Movements-Karolinska Institute \(Humanitarian Response\)](#)
- [Question Box-Open Mind Initiative \(Skills Development\)](#)
- [RapidSMS-UNICEF \(Use of Alternative Data Sources\)](#)
- [Mobile phone data collection \(Mobile Data Collection\)](#)

2.4 PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

PARIS21's proposed activities for fragile states are aligned with its 2016-2020 strategy. These activities include:

PARIS21 workstream	Type of support
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for funding for statistics during the post-conflict donor roundtable to support statistics as a tool necessary to collect information for the emergency reaction in the fight against poverty
Co-ordination and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring and evaluation on a more regular basis in-country and for the long-term process of capacity building in collaboration with regional organisations ▪ Work with relief organisations to track displaced populations and provide information about their estimated support to the humanitarian response ▪ Create strong partnerships between government, civil society, private companies, NGOs, etc., through a working group for co-operation during a disaster

⁸ [Operationalizing Experience: Donor Approaches to Service Delivery in Fragile States](#)



Co-ordination and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create a platform to make data available to organisations and contribute to co-ordination on the ground▪ Review the Statistical Act to allow a country to export data to another country or regional platform for backup in a risk situation▪ Improving CRVS
Knowledge sharing and innovation incubator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Development of regional strategies▪ Support to the development of disaster risk statistics: The role of the NSO in catastrophes (<i>e.g.</i> Typhoon that hit Vanuatu)▪ Identification of data approaches that can alleviate the situation and be useful in recovery (<i>e.g.</i> role of regional organisations such as Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC); putting in place critical indicators designed to monitor recovery), identification in the innovation inventory of innovations used for emergency response (<i>e.g.</i> use of aerial photography; how is damage assessed statistically; how can recovery be measured)▪ Improve the granularity of data collection in order to have indicators disaggregated by sex and by administrative areas (region, department, city, village, <i>etc.</i>). This could be informed by an expert group set up to identify data gaps that are identified as a source of fragility▪ Best practice write ups on common issues pertinent to countries in data collection; methodology and building local support and regional support▪ Share best practices on the use of satellites to track population movement and to provide information about change over time and space▪ Promote the use of new areas of data collection, particularly useful in covering conflict-affected regions that are difficult to reach:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mobile phone users (<i>e.g.</i> through the promotion of public-private partnerships)○ Social network users▪ Mapping of regions in fragile states for surveillance, especially those that are exposed to disaster
Technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assist countries in producing core statistics on a regular basis, in particular the minimum set of economic statistics outlined by the Global Inventory of Statistical Standards of the United Nations Statistics Division▪ Assist countries in the development of human resources following potential brain drain▪ Regional data archiving: Use regional platforms to backup and protect data in case of instability. These regional centres will support and monitor surrounding areas that may be considered in crisis (<i>e.g.</i> AFRISTAT in Africa, South Pacific Commission (SPC) in the Pacific, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in South Asia, <i>etc.</i>)▪ Developing special guidelines for data management in fragile situations (data archiving and dissemination; off-site data back-up; external



Technical support

support for website management; and a snapshot of indicators for institutional purposes)

- Development of a Rapid Reaction Plan in case of instability in the country
- NSDS training in-country (not at regional level) in order to take the country context into account and address specific issues related to fragility
- Update regularly the section on fragile states in the NSDSs Guidelines in order to take country specificities into account

2.4.2 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES RELATED TO FRAGILE STATES

In the programming and implementation of activities in fragile states, the following will be taken into consideration:

- **Supplementary costs:** Given the inability to travel to some fragile states, trainings will often be undertaken offsite, generally in a neighbouring country or in one where there is a cooperation agreement with the NSO (*e.g.* a recent training of NSDS stakeholders in Afghanistan was conducted in India). These additional costs will need to be accounted for.
- **Difficulty of monitoring in-country:** In the event of travel restrictions, monitoring activities related to the project will need to rely on in-country representatives, *i.e.* national representatives drawn from beneficiary groups (users of statistics and selected producers)
- **Resident donors:** The involvement of resident donors can be useful in some cases for following up on the implementation of specific activities as well as for conducting jointly funded seminars and trainings (*e.g.* public dissemination fora)
- **Identifying national consultants/coordinators:** Analytical work will rely on the selection of national consultants who will report to PARIS21 task managers and in some cases an international expert. Selection of the national consultant will be co-ordinated with the NSS mandating authority.
- **Sustained engagement:** The variety of bottlenecks to statistical development in fragile states requires the multi-year involvement of PARIS21. Activities in one country might require planning over several years of PARIS21's programme of work.
- **Network of experts:** PARIS21 will be set up a network of experts (organisations and local experts) active in fragile states to develop specific modalities of intervention in those states.



ANNEX I

The states considered fragile in this document are those listed by the harmonised list of the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and African Development Bank (AfDB) for 2015.

Fifty one per cent of fragile states are African countries and 55% of fragile states are classified as low income countries.

TABLE 1: Classification of fragile states by income group

Regions	Income level		
	Low income	Middle Income	
		Lower middle	Upper middle
East Asia and Pacific (6)	Myanmar*	Kiribati*, Micronesia Fed States, Solomon Islands*, Timor-Leste*	Tuvalu*, Marshall Islands
Europe and Central Asia (2)		Kosovo	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Latin America and Caribbean (1)	Haiti*		
MENA (5)		Syrian Arab Rep., Palestinian Authority, Yemen.*	Libya, Iraq
South Asia (1)	Afghanistan*		
Sub-Saharan Africa (17)	Burundi*, CAR*, Chad*, Comoros*, DRC*, Madagascar*, Eritrea*, Guinea-Bissau*, Liberia*, Mali*, Sierra Leone*, South Sudan*, Somalia*, Togo*, Zimbabwe	Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan*,	
Income Level: Total (and %)	18 (55%)	10 (30%)	5 (15%)

Source: HARMONISED LIST OF FRAGILE SITUATIONS FY15 of WB, AfDB and ADB

*Denotes a fragile state that is also defined as a least developed country (LDC) as of 2015.



ANNEX II

For the NSS Peer Reviews, the following agencies could be considered:

- Fragile states departments of regional multilateral development banks (e.g. AfDB Transition Support Department)
- United Nations Population Fund
- United Nations Children's Fund
- G7+
- World Bank Global Center on Conflict, Security, and Development

TABLE 2: Fragile states and other developing states

Groups	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Total countries
Fragile States	24.3	83.33	49.5	50	13.83	33
Other developing states	31	95.7	70.5	72.33	14.55	117
All states	24.3	95.7	68	69	16.9	150

Source: Authors' own calculation, 2013, North Korea is not included.

TABLE 3: Fragile States and Statistical Capacity Indicator

Categories	Africa (18 countries)	Asia & Pacific (12 countries)	Eastern and South Europe (2 countries)	Latin America and Caribbean (1 country)	Total
20 – 40	Somalia, South Sudan, Libya, Eritrea	Micronesia Fed. States, Kiribati, Tuvalu	Kosovo		8 (24%)
40 - 60	Sudan, Comoros, Liberia, Dem. Rep. Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Central African Rep., Sierra Leone	Syrian Arab Rep., Iraq, Myanmar, Yemen Rep., Afghanistan, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands		Haiti	18 (58%)
60 - 80	Chad, Madagascar, Togo, Mali	Timor-Leste	Bosnia and Herzegovina		6 (15%)
80 - 100		Palestinian Authority			1 (3%)

Source: Author's own calculation, 2014, North Korea is not included, Fragile States Harmonised list 2015.