Chapter 2
The "Fragile States" Agenda in the Post-2015 Development Framework: Significance and Caveats

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1. Introduction

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remains painfully slow in fragile states. This is a widely noted observation from MDG progress monitoring and has been recognized as an important lesson for designing the post-2015 development framework. As Sapkota and Shiratori (2013, 16) have pointed out, fragile states[1] comprise all of the four low-income countries that are currently not on track for any of the MDGs targets and all but one of the 12 low-income countries that have achieved or are on track for only one MDG target. World Bank (2011) has estimated that no fragile or low-income countries affected by armed conflict[2] have achieved a single MDG. Clearly, accelerating development progress in these countries is necessary to further reduce and eradicate poverty in the post-2015 era.

However, to fully illustrate why they are slow in achieving MDGs and how these countries and the international community as a whole can enhance their development, a more careful understanding of the nature of fragile states is necessary. This chapter aims to examine various definitions and conceptions of what is now commonly referred to as "fragile states" and to identify challenges as well as some hidden issues behind the concept, thus suggesting some ways to incorporate these key perspectives into the post-2015 development framework.

2. "Fragile states" and achievement of MDGs

As it is widely recognized that the most fragile and conflict-affected

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1. Fragile states as defined in the OECD's list from their 2011 report (OECD 2011).
2. World Bank classifies the countries with CPIA lower than 3.2 as fragile states. Conflict here is defined based on the Uppsala Conflict Database Programme dataset for 1991-2008.

countries are likely to achieve few or indeed none of the MDGs, the fragile states agenda is one of the central issues in discussions on the achievement of MDGs and the designing of the post-2015 development agenda framework. People in so-called "fragile states" have also been active in advocating that their special circumstances be incorporated into the global development agenda. Leaders of the 18 self-nominated fragile states[3] have created a group called 'g7+', which contributed to the creation of the "New Deal" agreement at the Busan High Level Forum in 2011. Nations in the g7+ group promote the establishment of the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) that help them monitor their progress towards peace and development. Their assertion of the difficulties of fragile states in achieving the MDGs has received a regular attention. This chapter aims to summarize how fragile states are lagging behind in achieving the MDG targets, and to critically review the usefulness of the fragile states concept in discussions for the post-2015 development framework.

Variations in the definitions and classifications of "fragile states"

Despite widespread usage of the term, there is no consensus on the definition or classification of "fragile states". According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2007a) definition, "states are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population". Development assistance agencies and donors such as DFID, USAID, European Commission, German BMZ, AusAID, Asian Development Bank, have published their policy papers or strategies on fragile states, using their own definitions respectively. Researchers also suggested various definitions, depending on their concerns over these countries (e.g. Stewart and Brown 2009; Putzel and Di John 2012). However, so far, as the broadest definition with close-to-consensus agreement in the OECD, the OECD definition is the most often cited and is becoming a widely recognized definition of the term.

The methods for categorizing fragile states are also diverse, with the

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3. The 18 member states are Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, and Togo. For details of the g7+, please see <http://www.g7plus.org/>.

classification depending on the analysis and organization. World Bank classifies countries using the "Country Policy and Institutional Assessment" (CPIA), with scores of lower than 3.2 regarded as fragile states. Other organizations such as the Fund for Peace (Failed States Index), Carlton University (Country Indicators for Foreign Policy), and the Brookings Institution (Index of State Weakness) have attempted to create their own indices[4], reflecting factors they consider important for the stability of countries. OECD as an international organization does not create its own classification, but it combines several indicators to identify the fragile states for their own statistical purposes. OECD (2011) used the 2009 Harmonized List of Fragile Situations by the World Bank, African Development Bank, and Asian Development Bank and the 2009 Failed States Index by the Fund for Peace for its 2011 list. The 2010 list is based on CPIA by the World Bank, Index of State Weakness by the Brookings Institute, and the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) by the Carlton University (OECD 2010).

In addition to the lack of agreement on the country classification system at any given time, fragile state status can also change over time. Some countries move in and out of fragility, while others retain fragile state status for many years. In the five reports published by OECD (2007b, 2008a, 2010, 2011, 2012), 61 countries and areas have been listed as a fragile state at least once. However, less than half (27 countries) have appeared on the list in all the five reports. This variation over time can make the statistical analysis even more complicated.

In spite of such inconsistency on definitions and classifications of 'fragile states', researchers have constantly found slow MDGs achievements of fragile states. Harttgen and Klasen (2012) have examined if variation in

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4. For details, please refer to the following links respectively:
 · Failed States Index (Fund for Peace) <http://ffp.statesindex.org/>
 · Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (Carlton University) <http://www4.carleton.ca/cifp/app/ffs_ranking.php>
 · Index of State Weakness (Brookings Institution) <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2008/02/weak-states-index>

definitions of fragile states[5] differentiate the results of their achievement of MDGs, and have found that fragile states, by any definition, are substantially worse off than non-fragile states for a variety of MDG indicators. When comparing the levels of MDG achievements, with all the definitions they tested, fragile states show significantly poorer results, although the extent of the poor results varies depending on the definitions used. 'Long-term fragile states' and 'CPIA all categories' are correlated with particularly poor outcomes in most indicators, while 'conflict-affected countries' are relatively better than with other definitions of fragile states.

The variation in the fragile states definitions does not alter the general tendency of the group's slow development progress. Though the lack of consensus on definitions can reduce the precision of analysis for the purposes of academic study, the differences between various fragile states definitions are not as large as the gap between fragile states and non-fragile states.

Slow MDGs achievements of fragile states as a group

In discussing poverty eradication, many scholars have pointed out that poverty in the post-2015 era will remain mainly in fragile states. In one of the first papers to highlight the significance of the issue, Gertz and Chandy (2011) argued that, while 500 million people escaped from poverty between 2005 and 2010, poverty in fragile states[6] will become a serous concern in the future. Table 1 below illustrates the trend. Based on the same definition, Chandy and Gertz (2011), found that while only 20% of the world's poor lived in fragile states, in 2005, this share will exceed 50% in 2014. Furthermore, Chandy et al. (2013) have estimated the effects of various poverty reduction scenarios and predicted that the share of world's poor living in fragile states will rise to half in 2018 (from one third today), and nearly two-thirds in 2030. As Kharas and Rogerson

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5. Harttgen and Kasen (2012) applied the following 15 different categorizations of fragile states: CPIA (lower than 3.2 in 2008 CPIA), DFID list in 2007, OECD list in 2008, CIFP list in 2008, Conflict-affected states (between 2003 and 2007 based on the Uppsala Conflict Database Programme), failure list of Stewart and Brown (2009), All fragile (countries that are defined as fragile states in all the categorizations mentioned before this), LDCs, four CPIA sub-lists (four sub-categories in CPIA), CPIA all categories (countries that are included in all the four CPIA sub-lists), CPIA severe (CPIA score of less than 3.0 in 2008), and Long-term fragile (countries that always appeared on the CPIA list between 2003 and 2008).
6. They use the Failed State Index (FSI) issued by the Fund for Peace, and classify the countries in the "Alert" category (FSI larger than 90) as fragile states.

(2012) have pointed out, because poverty reduction in fragile states[7] is stagnant (while non-fragile states have consistently reduced poverty rates), the concentration of the world's poor in fragile states is becoming more and more acute.

Table 1: Share of world's poor by country category

2005

	LIC	MIC
Fragile	19.6%	0.9%
Stable	53.9%	25.6%

2010

	LIC	MIC
Fragile	23.7%	17.1%
Stable	10.4%	48.8%

LIC: Low-income countries / MIC: Middle-income countries (the World Bank's classification)
Source: Gertz and Chandy (2011)

Gertz and Chandy (2011) have not only pointed to the trend of increasing concentration of poverty in fragile states, they have also emphasized the changing nature of fragile states. While many fragile states are now obtaining middle-income status, poverty in fragile middle-income states will pose new challenges to international development. This growing share of poverty in middle-income countries is also under examination. Sumner (2012) estimated that, whereas 93.1% of the world's poor lived in low-income countries in 1990, this share had decreased to 29.1% by 2007. Sumner is hesitant to emphasize the significance of the poor population in fragile states, as he estimated that only 23.1% of world's poor live in fragile states while 60.4% lived in stable middle-income countries in 2007.[8] And yet , Gertz and Chandy (2011) have suggested that there will be more poor people in countries that are "middle-income but fragile or failed". These countries, such as Pakistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq, and Yemen, have very different characteristics from the LDCs or post-conflict situations. As they tend to be rich in natural resource endowments, resource management and inclusive development are major challenges in these countries.

Fragile states are lagging behind not only in terms of poverty reduction but also in various other development indicators. In their analysis of the achievement of the MDGs, Sapkota and Shiratori (2013) found that failure to meet MDG targets is most acute in fragile states, defined by OECD (2011). Among the 36 low-income countries, four countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, and Somalia) have not

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7. Using the same definition as Gertz and Chandy (2011).

8. Other 16.5% live in stable low-income countries.

achieved or are not on track for any single MDG target. Another 12 countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Haiti, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Togo, and Zimbabwe) have achieved or are on track for only one MDG target. Out of these 16 countries, 15, except Mali, are listed as "fragile states" in the OECD report (OECD 2011).

Using the same dataset as Sapkota and Shiratori (2013), several other observations[9] can be made. First, many fragile states lag behind not only in development progress according to the indicators but also in the availability of data. Among 45 fragile states (based on the classification by OECD 2011), only 21 countries have comparable data for the goal to halve the poverty (MDG Goal 1 Target A). Secondly, poverty reduction in these countries is slower than in non-fragile countries. Among 21 fragile states, only six countries (Sri Lanka, Cameroon, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Nepal, and Guinea) have halved poverty since 1990, and Uganda is close to achieving the goal. In comparison to the 51 non-fragile states, among which 37 countries have achieved or are close to achieve the goal of having poverty, progress in fragile states is much slower. Even worse, in six fragile states (Georgia, Yemen, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Guinea Bissau, and Nigeria), the poverty ratio has actually increased since 1990. Moreover, in another 24 fragile states without reliable statistics, the situation might be even more difficult. Thirdly, the countries that suffer most are often fragile states. There are only four countries whose primary school enrollment rates are less than 50%. Three of them (Eritrea, Sudan, and Democratic Republic of the Congo) are fragile states (the exception is Djibouti). Six countries (Haiti, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria) out of seven (Mali is the only exception) with a primary school enrollment rate of less than 75% rate are fragile states.

While the *World Development Report 2011* (World Bank 2011) concentrated on the impact of violence and conflict on development outcomes rather than fragile states, the analysis shows similar results. Nearly 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by fragility, conflict, or large-scale organized criminal violence, and no fragile or conflict-affected low-income countries have achieved a single MDG. They have identified the negative impact of violence on various development results. A country experiencing major violence between 1981 and 2005 had a poverty rate

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9. Analysis in this paragraph was made with the assistance of Jeet Bahadur Sapkota.

21 percentage points higher than a country that saw no violence. A child in a fragile or conflict-affected state is twice as likely to be undernourished as a child in another developing country, and nearly three times as likely not to be in primary school. Fragile and conflict-affected states and those recovering from conflict and fragility account for 70% of infant deaths, 65% of people without access to safe water, and 77% of children missing from primary school, excluding Brazil, Russia, India, and China (World Bank 2011).

Heterogeneity of relative progress in MDG indicators across fragile states

However, Harttgen and Klasen (2012) have also pointed out several weaknesses of grouping countries into a single category to be called "fragile states". They argue that, while it is clear that fragile states are performing more poorly in terms of MDG levels, their absolute and relative progress observed in MDG indicators is not, on average, worse than that of non-fragile states. If measured in terms of improvements in the MDG indicators between the base year (1990 or 2000) and 2008, there is little or no correlation between fragility and MDG progress. The reason that most will fail to reach the MDGs is due to the fact that their starting position was so low that the MDGs were very hard (if not impossible) for them to be reached by these countries in the first place.

In their analysis, although most definitions of fragile states are capable of indicating failure to achieve MDG targets, they are not good at identifying poor performers in terms of relative progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. In fact, there is a wide variety in the progress towards the MDGs of fragile states. While there are good performers such as Cambodia, Cameroon, Angola, Chad, Burundi, and Eritrea, countries such as Zimbabwe perform much worse than others. Given such heterogeneity within the group, Harttgen and Klasen (2012) have argued that it is not appropriate to use fragility as a criterion to allocate aid or develop uniform policy approaches.

Although there is clearly common pattern in which attainment of MDG goals is lagging behind in a particular group of countries often called "fragile states", these countries are not a homogeneous group with particular characteristics. Instead, their development progress is different for a variety of reasons. Therefore, while it is important to recognize that fragile states are lagging behind in MDGs indicators and

that they need special attention, it is also important to understand why each fragile state is lagging behind and how its unique characteristics can be addressed within the context of each country. The following section discusses suggestions to enhance such understandings.

3. Caveats to the fragile states concept

While fragile states are clearly being left behind in the achievement of the MDGs, each fragile state has its own reasons for slow development. As Leo Tolstoy's book *Anna Karenina* says, "happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."[10] Although the fragile states concept is effective in advocating the importance of ensuring that no country and no person is left behind, some additional considerations are necessary to find policy options to support these countries. This section discusses some caveats to the fragile states concept and suggests some ways forward in designing new approaches to the challenges of fragile states.

Diversity within the group of "fragile states"

One caveat to the fragile states concept is that countries are fragile for various reasons while the concept puts a great variety of countries into just one category. Though there are some variations across different definitions, most fragile state definitions include countries in which no authority can effectively control its territory, governments excessively limit the liberty of citizens, and governments are highly corrupt and ineffective. These different types of countries require different types of policy measures to improve their development effectiveness. Thus, in order to support fragile states more effectively, we need to first identify the reasons why each country is fragile.

One option to address this problem is to classify fragile states into several categories. Many scholars have proposed possible options for such categorization. Takeuchi et al. (2011) have looked at state capacity and legitimacy, the two central issues of fragile states in the OECD definition, and have attempted to categorize fragile states into two types. If states are not capable of delivering basic public services, it is difficult to build their legitimacy ("capacity trap"). If states are capable of

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10. Often quoted by Ricardo Hausmann in his explanation of the growth diagnostic theory (e.g. Hausmann et al. 2008).

controlling their territory, they may not feel the need to respond to people's shifting expectations, and risk losing their legitimacy ("legitimacy trap"). The two traps require very different approaches in terms of donor support for fragile states. Another approach was developed by Gravingholt et al. (2012), who suggested three criteria to classify fragility of countries: authority (monopoly of violence), capacity (to provide social services such as health, education, and water), and legitimacy (lack of political oppression). They proposed seven categories of countries based on these three criteria. With such categorization, donors can apply different approaches to, for instance, countries with low capacity and moderate authority and legitimacy (e.g. Ghana, Burkina Faso) and countries with high capacity and authority but low legitimacy (e.g. Tunisia and Egypt before the Arab Spring).

These attempts need to be further elaborated to identify the characteristics of each fragile state, thereby providing indications as to how donors should engage with the endogenous state-building process. As each fragile state has its own specific context, policy options, ideally, need to be adjusted differently in each country, but categorizations suggested by these scholars can be a useful entry point to such endeavors.

Sub-national issues that are hidden within non-fragile "states"

Another weakness of the fragile states concept is that it can only identify country-wide fragility, despite the trend of increasing incidence of sub-national violence and fragility. Parks et al. (2013) have demonstrated that although there are only a few fragile and conflict-affected countries in Asia, the region still faces various sub-national conflicts. In Africa, as Straus (2012) has pointed out, contemporary wars in the region are typically small-scale, fought on state peripheries and sometimes across multiple states, and involve factionalized insurgents who typically cannot hold significant territory or capture state capitals. World Bank (2011) has found that criminal violence and organized crimes are significant factors in Latin America, although the region has very few fragile states. Although there can be fragile situations or fragile areas in stable countries, they are not identified by any of the current definitions of fragile states.

In the post-2015 development framework, disparities within countries are important not only in terms of fragility but also in various

development goals. While disparities within countries are not captured in the MDGs framework, they need to be emphasized in the post-2015 development goals, given that there will be more poor people in middle-income countries. Some of the inequalities are correlated with fragility in sub-national areas because sub-national conflicts can hinder development progress in the area while inequality can be one of the causes of such conflicts. As sub-national fragility can become an obstacle for inclusive development, it needs to be more carefully addressed.

Insufficient attention to prevention

Finally, as countries are selected as fragile states mostly based on their present situation, attention to preventing future crises tends to be weak. Most of the fragility definitions and indicators are not aimed at preventing future crises, partly because they focus on measuring structural changes but also because they are unable to predict sudden incidents. For example, before the Arab Spring started in 2011, in the region, Yemen (15th most fragile in the worldwide ranking) was the only country listed in the "alert" category in the 2010 Failed States Index (FSI). Syria (48th) and Egypt (49th) were assessed as more stable than many African countries. Libya (111th), Tunisia (118th), and Bahrain (133rd) were estimated as even more stable. Though it is still unclear what the Arab Spring will mean for these countries' development, nevertheless, in dealing with risks of violent conflicts and other crises, it would be better to mitigate these risks and prevent tragic events and sufferings than to respond to crises posthumously.

While the fragile states definitions are often debated based on existing circumstances, efforts to overcome the fragility have to be prevention-oriented and incorporate long-term perspectives. As the frequent change of status for each fragile state suggests, countries can suddenly fall into fragility unless risks are effectively managed to prevent violent conflicts and severe crises. Policy debates by g7+, OECD/DAC, and others focus on state-building, (i.e. building of an "effective, legitimate and resilient states", OECD 2008b), to avoid violent conflicts and realize sustainable peace. Institution building and other policy measures are suggested as important elements for conflict prevention. Mine et al. (2013) suggest the interactions of horizontal inequalities, people's perceptions, and political institutions should be key considerations in

preventing violent conflict. In incorporating the fragile states agenda into the post-2015 framework, managing risks and building resilience should be considered as an essential perspective.

4. Lessons for the post-2015 framework

It is important to recognize that fragile states are not likely to achieving their MDG targets and they need special attention. However, as there is great variation among fragile states, careful attention needs to be paid in considering ways to support them. While all of them are lagging behind in reaching the MDG targets, there are a variety of different reasons for their slow development. In the search for better understanding of fragile states, the lack of statistics on these states remains a challenge. Basic statistics are often not available, particularly in severely unstable countries. It is important to improve the collection of statistical data as a foundation for better understanding.

While it is important to pay special consideration to difficulties of fragile states, it is also necessary to recognize that fragile states constitute a diverse group, in which contexts differ from one country to another. Given the wide variety within the group of fragile states, it is not realistic to think of a common policy option or a single set of goals appropriate for all the fragile states. More detailed categorization of countries may be an effective option to better adjust policy options to each country's context. There also needs to be a way to recognize the challenges of fragile situations in sub-national areas. Although disparities within countries are not captured in the MDGs framework, they are widespread and need to be addressed. Finally, more attention should be paid to preventing countries from falling into fragility through violent conflicts and crises. Building resilient societies that can manage risks of crises should be emphasized to prevent fragile situations.

Incorporating a fragile states agenda into the post-2015 framework does not necessarily mean creating a special category of countries but can rather imply an emphasis on context-specific, inclusive, and prevention-oriented approaches to addressing the challenges for each of these countries. In the discussion towards the establishment of a post-2015 development agenda, more attention should be paid at the global level to the challenges of fragile states. However, solutions for the problems in each fragile state should be sought within those states themselves to address particular challenges at the country or the local level.

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