

# Remarks by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim at Launch of the Joint UN-World Bank Study, Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict

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**Launch of the Joint UN-World Bank Study, Pathways for Peace: Inclusive  
Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict at the United Nations General Assembly  
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**As Prepared for Delivery**

It's an honor to be here with Secretary General Guterres as we advance our work together to prevent violent conflict. This agenda has been at the core of the United Nations' mission since the very beginning. But the realities of the world today demand that we urgently renew our efforts, working together as an entire global community to do more, and do better.

The joint UN-World Bank study, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, is an important step. This endeavor was a first for our two institutions, and it had the strong support of the global community, benefiting from many partners who provided valuable insight.

As a development institution, the World Bank Group is putting prevention first to build a less violent, more stable, more resilient world. We know that violent

conflict is one of the greatest impediments to sustainable and inclusive growth. We estimate that by 2030, over 60 percent of the global poor will be concentrated in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence. Unless we tackle this challenge, we cannot achieve our goals to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity, nor the Sustainable Development Goals. In our work around the world, we have been reminded time and again of the human tragedy of conflict and its heavy toll on long-term development efforts. We have worked to address its impact – including helping the forcibly displaced, and managing health epidemics and famine – but there is more we can do early on to ensure that development programs and policies focus on successful prevention.

The case for prevention is clear. As we noted in our joint study, prevention benefits everyone. If we could prevent conflict in countries that bear the direct costs – casualties and losses to economic growth – we would avoid over 34 billion dollars in damages per year. For the global community, prevention would save at least 1.2 billion dollars per year that fund humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping interventions. And as costs fall, the benefits of prevention increase over time.

For today's discussion, I want to highlight three key points for effective prevention from the development perspective, as part of a coordinated effort by the global community and by countries.

First, policies for prevention need to address grievances around social and economic exclusion, which can create fertile ground for mobilization to violence. Institutions also need to improve efforts to reinforce inclusion.

The joint study shows that exclusion and unmet aspirations are at the root of many of today's conflicts. Participation of women and youth in decision-making – as well as long-term policies to address the economic, social and political aspirations of young women and men – are fundamental to sustaining peace at all levels.

Second, governments hold the primary responsibility for prevention, but civil society, the private sector, international and regional organizations – among others – need to be included. The study emphasizes that successful prevention is built on coalitions of various actors. The private sector is already playing a key role in post-conflict reconstruction, and it has the potential to play an equally important role in prevention, which development partners can support.

Third, global issues play a significant role in today's conflicts, creating stress and triggering violence in tense environments. Climate change, demographic transition and migration, illicit trafficking, and advances in communications technology need to be considered in prevention efforts at the country and global levels.

The World Bank Group is taking action. Across the institution, we're emphasizing prevention and preparedness to better manage heightened global challenges and escalating risks. For example, for the 18<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the International Development Association – our fund for the poorest – which began on July 1, we are doubling resources for countries affected by fragility and conflict.

We're also providing additional support for countries where conflict risks are rising. And we're working much more closely with partners on innovative financing. The Global Concessional Financing Facility, which we launched with the UN and Islamic Development Bank, supports middle-income countries hosting large numbers of refugees.

Prevention means that we need to take the long view, engaging early to address risks when development policies and programs can achieve the best results. And when crises do happen, we will stay engaged to help prevent societies from falling into violence. During conflict, we're committed to helping prevent escalation and protect essential institutions that will be needed to

build the peace. Long after the violence ends, we will continue with development efforts to avoid a relapse.

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of collaboration across humanitarian, development, peace, and security partners. We have made significant progress in strengthening our collaboration over the past year. Through this joint study, we had the opportunity to *think together* about how best to address the complex challenge of preventing violent conflict. Now, we need to *do more together*, making the best use of our complementary roles. I hope that this study will provide important directions for our work ahead, and help shape meaningful partnerships to prevent conflict and build lasting pathways to peace.

Thank you.