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Annual Report 2015

UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

From the Desk of the Director



I took over as Director of a renewed Oslo Governance Centre in May 2015.

Joining OGC to head this office, at this time has meant confronting several challenges while also planning for and building on exciting possibilities.

Guided by the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, the renewed OGC strives to work with Norwegian, Nordic and other partners from the South in undertaking applied research and developing policy options and tools for governance support in post-crisis and post-conflict environments.

Presented in this report for 2015 is a narrative of the work OGC was able to undertake mainly around re-establishing the Centre, renewing relationships and developing a solid work programme.

OGC is grateful to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from whose strong support it benefits, as well as the numerous other research, policy and academic institutions in Norway, Nordic region and the South.

The activities organised through the year have shown that we have meaningfully connected with our partners and stakeholders in multiple ways. We have used technology and social media to reach out to a wider and bigger audience of interested people. Our emphasis has been not on producing hefty research papers but on bringing people together to share knowledge and experience and hence inform policy and practice.

As the new Director, I am both excited and somewhat daunted by this challenge. The research, policy and dialogue space in Norway and the Nordic region is strong and vibrant. However, I truly believe that UNDP through OGC and with support of colleagues from across the organization has something important to offer, bringing the values and experience of UNDP to that space, and bringing the discussions on governance and peacebuilding from the Nordic region to UNDP.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Lister".

Sarah Lister

Director

Overview of achievements in 2015:

After a period of hibernation and consideration of its mandate, the renewed OGC was launched on 12 June 2015 by UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark and the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in the presence of HRH Crown Prince Haakon.

Since its re-opening, OGC has been supporting policy development and applied research with an overarching focus on democratic governance and peacebuilding in crisis, conflict and transitional contexts. For this, it has been working closely with its New York based Headquarters and other UN and UNDP entities as well as Norwegian, Nordic and Southern-based institutions and partners.

As a global policy centre on Governance in crisis and transitions, OGC's main focus is advancing global dialogue and knowledge sharing on governance pathways for peaceful transitions out of crisis and conflict.

In line with UNDP's Strategic Plan Outcome 7 on Development debates and actions at all levels prioritizing poverty, inequality and exclusion, OGC's expected project level outputs are:

- Governance pathways for peaceful transitions out of crisis and conflict.
- Governance of natural resources in crisis and transition contexts.
- Governance of inclusion in crisis and transition contexts with a focus on gender equality and the political and economic empowerment of women.
- Measuring governance for development results.

In 2015, **OGC's main focus** has been on:

- Renewing partnerships with like-minded institutions.
- Developing a solid multi – year work plan which is anchored in the SDG Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies.
- Showcasing OGC's relevance and value
- Strengthening internal capacity to be able to deliver expected results.

During the year, OGC has renewed its relationship with several key academic, policy and other partners and has consulted widely in developing a solid work programme supporting applied research and policy debate in its focus areas, including significant research-based activities. It is noteworthy to mention that OGC has been asked to serve on the research advisory group for the MFA-Carnegie funded research project on Innovations in Peacebuilding. A number of institutional MOUs are also in the process of being formalised with various Nordic partners including Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) and International IDEA.

The Centre has also demonstrated its accessibility through communicating through a variety of different channels, bringing a wide range of people together to share knowledge and experience to inform policy and practice.

Since Sustainable Development Goal 16 provides the overall framing of its work, OGC ended the year with the organisation of a meeting of Norwegian and Nordic partners to discuss the formation of an informal SDG 16 Nordic network, for which OGC would serve as the secretariat. From this meeting

emerged agreement and acceptance of the idea of setting up a SDG 16 Nordic network mainly to support information flow through strengthened partnerships and collaboration.

Story 1: Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogue on Measuring Goal 16, 12 June 2015



The 1st Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogue on “Measuring Goal 16: promoting peaceful and inclusive societies” took place on 12th June 2015. The morning proceedings saw the launch of the Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogue Series by UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark and Norwegian State Secretary Hans Brattskar, in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway. The presentations focused on sharing experiences from existing governance

measurement initiatives, and their contribution to creating stable, safe, inclusive and peaceful societies. It explored the advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches to measurement, while assessing the contributions to countries in transition. The outcome brief from the 1st Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogue is available [here](#) and the full recording of the day is available on [OGC’s YouTube channel](#).

Review of activities:

During 2015, OGC was able to make steady progress in all the four output areas by focussing on mapping of potential partnerships, resources and, experiences; renewing linkages with like-minded institutions; connecting with ongoing research and analysis; and knowledge brokering through the organisation of several thematic events.

During the year, OGC was able to also host or co-hosted 3 public events, 1 mini-seminar and 1 webinar, with more than 600 people logging on to or attending the events in person. Given below are the key activities per output.

Output 1: Governance Pathways for peaceful transitions out of crisis and conflict:

Countries in transition post crisis/conflict face complex challenges. OGC is working in the applied research and policy space to create sustainable and inclusive governance pathways for peaceful and long lasting transitions of out crisis and conflict. During the half-year it was operation in 2015, OGC was able to:

- Establish partnerships with research institutions and think tanks working on governance, peace and development issues.
- Develop a research partnership on the formation of the social contract in fragile environments, with New School, New York, and Denver University. This will lead to multi-country research in 2016 and beyond.
- Discuss experiences and lessons learnt from our Nordic partners as well as UNDP Country Offices in the field and partner institutions in the South. This included the organisation of a workshop on Politics and Governance: Making Development Cooperation more effective in fragile contexts, 28 October 2015, Oslo (more details in story below).

Story 2: Workshop: Politics and Governance: Making Development Cooperation More Effective in Fragile Contexts, 28 October 2015, Oslo



OGC with Norad and the OECD-DAC Development Cooperation Directorate organized this half – day seminar focussing on how to work more effectively in countries affected by fragility. This event explored multiple but inter-connected questions relating to the challenges of thinking and working politically in development cooperation and operationalizing country context knowledge into programmatic work. It also addressed governance issues in sector work and explored the impact of governance structures and the political economy of development organisations. With sessions chaired by OGC and Norad, and presentations from OECD, BBC Media Action and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was a focus on how the changing nature of accessing information, role of media and people’s capacity to communicate influences development cooperation. The event also saw the launch of the [OECD-DAC GOVNET Governance practitioner’s notebook on ‘Alternative Ideas and Approaches’](#).

Output 2: Governance of natural resources in crisis and transition contexts:

Sustainable management and protection of natural capital and extractive industries, especially by transitioning countries requires effective and inclusive governance. This also requires promoting transparency and the rights of women, indigenous people and others who live in areas affected by extraction. In this area, during 2015, OGC was able to:

- Conduct an internal mapping to identify key partners and organizations (both North and South);
- In partnership with New York-based colleagues, organise a workshop on extractive industries and conflict prevention bringing external experiences and lessons learnt as well as those from UNDP’s work in this area. Based on the discussions during this meeting, a strategy and planning for OGC’s future involvement in this area has been completed (more details in story below).

Story 3: Workshop: Extractive Industries and Conflict Prevention, 17 November 2015



OGC with UNDP’s Conflict Prevention and Extractive Industries Team in the Sustainable Development Cluster hosted this full day workshop with the aim of deepening a shared understanding, exploring synergies and identifying areas for action on how to enhance the role of the extractive industries in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. The event attended by representatives from key UN agencies engaged in this work, IFIs and other multilateral organisations, governments, industry bodies, company representatives, think tanks and research organisations, and NGOs explored how extractives could be either a blessing or a curse, boosting development or causing conflict, depending on how such industries are managed. The day saw several country examples and initiatives that deepened the knowledge and understanding of participants on this issue including from Norway (Oil for Development Programme) and the Latin American context and country case of Peru. The full event recording for 17 November is available on OGC’s YouTube channel [here](#).

Output 3: Governance of inclusion in crisis and transition contexts with a focus on gender equality and the political and economic empowerment of women:

In post crisis and post conflict settings, women's participation is an important ingredient in the process of transitioning towards more inclusive political and economic institutions. Increasingly there is realisation of the important role women play as change agents and peacebuilders.

Under this output, OGC has started to strengthen its network to create a space for dialogue, applied research and the generation of policy options for countries in transition out of crisis and conflict, where women are active participants in democratic consolidation. During 2015, OGC was able to:

- Begin discussions on research collaboration on gender aspects of social cohesion with the partners.
- Organise a seminar on the SDGs and Human Rights on 23rd October, 2015 (more details in story below).
- Begin planning for a global meeting to be held in March 2016 on the prevention of violent extremism through promoting inclusive development, tolerance and respect for diversity.

Story 4: Seminar: The Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights, 23 October 2015, Oslo



The OGC with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) organized this seminar with presentations from Norad, NCHR, the Danish Institute for Human Rights as well UNDP.

The event and lively exchange that followed explored the design and implementation of the SDGs and the potential relationship with human rights and SDG 16 on governance, peace and inclusion.

Output 4: Measuring governance for development results:

The measurement of SDG 16 within the 2030 Agenda will be critical for ensuring that progress is made on governance and peacebuilding. Drawing on its years of work on governance assessments, OGC has a role in supporting discussions on how to generate nationally-owned reliable data through relevant indicators, which can influence policy and practice. During 2015, OGC:

- Established and re-established relationships with key organizations (both North and South);
- Organised the first Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogue on the 12th June 2015 on *“Measuring Goal 16: promoting peaceful and inclusive societies”* illustrating different approaches to measuring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: through official statistics gathered by National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and through expert assessment by international bodies (more detail above).
- Partnered with the UNDP Regional Hub in Africa to organise a governance measurement learning event in November, 2015. (more details in stories below)
- Prepared for an expert measurement on SDG16 indicators, to be co-hosted with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in January 2016.

Story 5: Governance measurement learning event, 12 – 13 November 2015, Addis Ababa

Oslo Governance Centre collaborated with the UNDP Regional Hub in Africa who co-organized with the African Union Commission a learning event on measuring governance in African countries through the use of Governance, Peace and Security surveys, under the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) initiative. The workshop looked at learning from across the 9 pilots to date and discussed next steps.

Cross cutting governance related knowledge sharing events and activities:

During 2015, OGC launched knowledge sharing events around governance which received positive responses and viewership. These events were broadcasted through OGC's multiple communication channels – [YouTube Channel](#), OGC's newly revamped [Facebook page](#) and an active [Twitter account](#).

In this regard, some noteworthy statistics for 2015 are as follows:

- YouTube: 183 people from more than 70 countries globally followed OGC's events online.
 - Twitter: about 600 global posts of OGC events and more than doubled its followership to reach a figure of 339.
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Story 6: OGC – IDS, University of Sussex Webinar: 'Knowledge: the new inequality and governance challenge for the Global Goals?' 22 October 2015



OGC and the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK organized this webinar addressing the central question of how whether and how knowledge is the new inequality and governance challenge for the SDGs. It provided the opportunity to hear about knowledge sharing and its impact on people's lives and how it was likely to contribute to or damage development agendas over the next 15 years.

Both the positive and negative implications that an increasingly digital world hold for achieving global development goals were discussed. The case was made for greater attention to be paid to these issues by the international community especially in relation to democratic governance, institutional accountability, responsiveness and transparency. The full recording of this event is available on the OGC YouTube channel [here](#).

Story 7: Seminar 'Innovation: Game changer for better governance?' 14 September 2015 Oslo.



OGC and the Development Impact Group organised a livestreamed seminar on the potential for innovation in developmental work and particularly for governance related initiatives where the primary motivation has been on exploring and applying innovative models for improving impact and generating greater results with limited resources. Presented during the event were interesting paradigms, partners and methods. The full recording of this event is available on the OGC YouTube

channel [here](#).

OGC Staff – 2015

Sarah Lister	Director	Joined in May 2015
Deborah Mekonnen	Policy Specialist	Joined in January 2015
Aseem Andrews	Policy Specialist	Joined in February 2015
Torni Iren Johannsen	Administrative Associate	All year
June Fylkesnes	Administrative Associate	All year