

Historical Overview: The World Bank Group's Classification of Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations

The World Bank Group's Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) Group annually releases a list of fragile and conflict-affected situations. The first such list was compiled in fiscal year 2006 and has gone through a series of changes in terms of classification from the Low Income Countries Under Stress List (LICUS) (2006-2009), to the Fragile States List (2010), to the Harmonized list of Fragile Situations (2011-2015), and now the List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations. The concept and the list have evolved as the WBG's understanding of the development challenges in countries affected by violence and instability has matured. This information note provides a brief historical overview of the progression of the list to date.

Historical Classification Systems (by Fiscal Year)

Low Income Countries Under Stress List (2004-08)

- i. LICUS countries were identified by weak CPIA ratings.
- ii. They covered a spectrum of fragility and included: countries with deteriorating governance, states in prolonged political crisis, post-conflict transition countries and those undergoing gradual but still fragile reform processes.
- iii. The Bank defined LICUS as (i) low income countries with overall CPIA and governance average of the CPIA ratings of 3.2 or less, and (ii) non-member territories and IDA-eligible countries without CPIA data.
- iv. "Severe" LICUS countries had the lowest CPIA score within this grouping.
- v. The "marginal" LICUS group scores are on the edge of what was considered LICUS and were included on the list for monitoring purposes only.
- vi. The LICUS lists were initially for internal purposes only, and were not publicly disclosed. However, for research usage, the LICUS lists from 2006-08 have now been disclosed.

Fragile States list (2009-10)

- i. The Fragile States list followed the same format as the LICUS list, with categorization as: (i) Core Fragile States score lowest within the grouping, with CPIA score of 3.0 or lower, and (ii) Marginal Fragile States with scores between 3.0 and 3.25.
- ii. The categorization as core or marginal was an internal operational categorization (mainly relating to staffing benefits).
- iii. These lists were publicly disclosed from inception.

Harmonized List of Fragile Situations (2011-2020)

- i. In FY11, reflecting consultations with clients and partners, the name of the Fragile States list was changed to create the Harmonized List of Fragile Situations. The harmonization stemmed from an agreement to synchronize the list between the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank using an average of the institutions' CPIA (CPA in the case of ADB) scores.
- ii. 'Fragile Situations' included countries or territories with (i) a harmonized CPIA country rating of 3.2 or less, and/or (ii) the presence of a UN and/or regional peace-keeping or political/peace-building mission during the last three years.
- iii. Political and Peace-Building Missions were specifically defined as the presence of a UN and/or regional (for example: AU, EU, NATO) peace-building and political mission in this country in the last three years.

List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FY20-)

- i. In FY20, in connection with the development of the WBG's first FCV strategy, the methodology to classify fragile and conflict-affected was updated to strengthen the differentiation of the various types of situations.
- ii. Fragile situations are defined as those: (i) With one or more of the following situations: (a) the weakest institutional and policy environment, based on a revised, harmonized CPIA¹ for IDA countries (for which CPIA scores are disclosed)² that is below 3.0; or (b) the presence of a UN Department of Peace Operation (DPO), as this reflects a decision by the international community that a significant investment is needed to maintain peace and stability; or (c) flight across borders of 2,000 or more per 100,000 population, who are internationally regarded as refugees in need of international protection,³ as this signals a major political or security crisis; (ii) And that are not in medium- or high-intensity conflict (see definition below), as such countries have moved beyond "fragility."
- iii. Countries in high intensity conflict are defined as those with: (i) an absolute number of conflict deaths above 250 according to ACLED *and* 150 according to UCDP; and (ii) a number of conflict deaths relative to the population above 10 per 100,000 according to both ACLED *and* UCDP, reflecting widespread and intense violence across many parts of the country.
- iv. Countries in medium intensity conflict are defined as (i) countries with lower intensity conflict, as measured by: (a) an absolute number of conflict deaths above 250 according to ACLED *and* 150 according to UCDP; and (b) between 2 and 10 per 100,000 population according to ACLED *and* between 1 and 10 according to UCDP; or (ii) countries with a rapid deterioration of the security situation, as measured by: (a) a lower number of conflict deaths relative to the population between 1 and 2 (ACLED) *and* 0.5 and 1 (UCDP) and (b) the number of casualties more than doubling in the last year.

¹ The list will use the lowest score (rather than the average) of CPIAs from the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank.

² See footnote 1.

³ These include Refugees, People in Refugee-like Situations, and Venezuelans Displaced Abroad.