

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING-GROUP
XXXX MEETING**

Rome ~ 17-18 February 2000

**IASC REFERENCE GROUP ON POST-CONFLICT REINTEGRATION
SUMMARY SYNTHESIS OF REPORT AND FIELD RESPONSES
18 NOVEMBER 1999**

In its meeting of 19-20 November 1998, the IASC Working Group, acting on a decision by the ECPS/ECHA/UNDG Joint Executive Committees meeting of 3 November 1998, considered the “gap in international response to post-conflict rehabilitation” and agreed that: “UNDP will convene a reference group – including interested IASC members and the additional entities recommended by the Joint Executive Committees meeting – aiming at developing strategies and mechanisms to respond appropriately to the gap. This process should avoid preparing further conceptual documents but should rather promote innovative and creative approaches to a practical solution of the problem”.

The Reference Group is chaired by UNDP and its membership extends beyond the traditional IASC membership to include DPA, DPKO, the World Bank (now fully an IASC member), UNDGO, the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict and other actors concerned with ensuring comprehensive approaches to crisis and post-crisis countries and, in particular, bridging the gap between relief and development.

The Reference Group’s first action was to prepare a report on the issues at hand. The report was endorsed by the IASC Working Group and shared with the Brookings Roundtable group of UN actors and donors, the OECD/DAC, the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group, the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment and the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Network. The report identified 5 major gaps, namely institutional, political, authority, synchrony and sustainability, and made some concrete recommendations for addressing the issue. The report was circulated, along with a set of questions on the relevance of the issues it raised, to Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Haiti, Liberia, Burundi, Angola, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Colombia. Cases chosen for immediate follow-up, most likely in the form of field visits, were: Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Somalia.

Find below a summary of the report and its recommendations (3 pages), followed by a synthesis summary of the field responses to the report (4 pages).

IASC Reference Group Report on Bridging the Gap: Summary

In the context of post-conflict re-integration, the so-called “gap” is manifested by an inability to transfer the momentum of crisis response to recovery, rehabilitation and development activities. The gap has both temporal and capacity dimensions. In so saying, it is important to emphasise that the gap is not an inevitable feature of post-conflict situations. Broadly

speaking, there are five sorts of gaps: institutional; political; authority vacuums; the synchrony gap; the sustainability gap.

- The institutional gap describes the inability of concerned organisations – both indigenous and international – to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to significant changes in the operating environment. Major problems that defy easy resolution include lack of common country/region-specific vision, conflicting principles and mandates, poor leadership, lack of objective-oriented coordination, institutional cultures, inappropriate standard operating procedures, unpredictable and often inadequate funding and inadequate personnel policies.
- Political gaps refers to the actions of bilaterals, in particular their rigid compartmentalisation of funding but more importantly their bilateral political interests and risk-aversion. Individual bilaterals' political calculations and judgements based on administrative reasons, reasons of accountability or political acceptability add a substantial degree of unpredictability both to planning and operations.
- Lack of indigenous expertise and capacity, breakdown in communications systems between the capital and provincial areas, factionalisation of new post-conflict authorities and other such dynamics affecting nascent governments give rise to a vacuum of authority, a gap extended by all the problems and difficulties of engaging emerging authorities in a post-conflict recovery process.
- One of the considerable difficulties in post-conflict situations is to establish agreements or synchrony between the international community and host authorities. Planning frequently reflects donor driven cultural and political assumptions about appropriate governance systems. Reconciliation programmes are often structured to fit funding timeframes rather than to meet the needs of extensive social trauma. Host authorities tend to formally agree to but then persistently revise and reject various aspects of the proposals, and in ways subtle and less subtle to suggest that these “are your priorities, not ours”.
- A sustainability gap arises from governments' inability to meet its obligations under such international assistance while avoiding over expanding its public sector commitments and thus its inability to maintain the momentum of recovery. Furthermore, there is little post-conflict recovery assistance, that ensures the types and levels of investment that will generate economic growth.

Further compounding and complicating these gaps – and inherently limiting engagement in post-conflict recovery – are many events, perceptions, negotiations and institutional dynamics that go well beyond the immediate causes of the gaps, themselves.

- Fluid, protracted emergency-type operating environments;
- Assistance delivered according to ability as opposed to unbiased needs assessments;
- Tensions between people-centred and state-centred assistance;
- Differences in humanitarian and development dynamics. reflected in assumptions about timing, engagement with national authorities and priority activities;
- Gulf between political and development/humanitarian activities;
- the trust factor, especially for returnees
- the muddy boots factor, in which the inherent pressures and uncertainties mire the process of post-conflict planning.

From an operational perspective, IASC organisations pointed to various ways in which these elements are unintentionally fostered and perpetuated by the UN:

- Lack of strategic vision and leadership;
- Inability to reconcile contending principles and mandates;
- Planning mechanism failures;
- Coordination difficulties;
- Lack of quick and flexible access to resources and means for disbursement;
- Personnel and in-country office issues;
- Inadequate advocacy and marketing.

The UN system as a whole and individual agencies have made concerted efforts to address many of these issues. There are now at least seven major tools that have been designed in one way or another to analyse and address relief, rehabilitation, recovery and development needs, including Strategic Frameworks, the Extended Consolidated Appeals Process , the Common Country Assessment, United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Country Strategy Note and the Global Support System. The World Bank at the same time has its own Country Assistance Strategy and is discussing a proposed Comprehensive Development Framework. While these initiatives have added a degree of coherence to the work of the UN system in a few countries [eg, Burundi, Afghanistan], they overall have had mixed reviews. Furthermore, the separation between policy processes, standard operating procedures by which programmes and projects are developed. and resource mobilisation on the part of most agencies leads to inconsistencies at headquarters and field level.

Individually various agencies have come to grips with at least some of the basic institutional problems that have dogged the continuity of transition assistance. Examples include the new WFP programme category for protracted relief and recovery operations, conceptual adjustment to their aid frameworks by UNICEF and the ICRC, UNHCR's QIPs and IOM's expat return programmes. Through UNDP's TRAC 1.1.3, resources are available to assist governments and, through the RC system, the wider UN system to plan for post-conflict recovery, rehabilitation and development. FAO has reviewed and further strengthened the role of its Emergency Coordination Group and WHO has increased its ability to deal with a variety of basic health requirements even when government facilities do not as yet have the capacity to do so. OCHA continues actively to promote linkages between relief and development activities, as described in GA 46/182, while DPKO has undertaken additional responsibility to ensure that strategic planning in post-conflict situations relate to the security requirements of those situations that fall within its purview. OHCHR is advocating a human rights approach in bridging the gap by promoting and providing technical assistance for the participation and empowerment of civil society with a view to national institution building in linking relief and development activities. However, these initiatives are mostly self-contained, with little active cognisance of the need for programme synergy or even clear hand-over arrangements.

Nevertheless, there are at some interesting examples of inter-agency hand-over agreements and cooperative arrangements for post-conflict activities. It is not insignificant that most of these agreements and arrangements have been created and implemented at the field level. That said, perhaps one of the most important of inter-agency in the context of post-conflict reintegration is the headquarters inspired *Framework for Operational Cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP*, signed in April 1997. The JRP in Rwanda, launched in 1998, provides a good example of coordinated planning and programming for refugee and IDP

reintegration.. In Angola, the agencies have become increasingly committed to co-funded projects identified through an inter-agency Joint Working Group on Co-funding. In Angola and Burundi programme coherence has been generated through the UNDAF process.

The institutional constraints that mar more effective and collaborative post-conflict assistance can be addressed in very substantive ways; less so the political, economic and cultural dimensions relating to the synchrony, sustainability and authority gaps discussed earlier.

Based upon a range of interviews, evaluations and “lessons-learned” exercises, there are at least seven conclusions to draw about the gap in post-conflict recovery situations:

- The real post-conflict recovery gaps are probably the least amenable to immediate solutions.
- The gap that could most readily be closed is the institutional gap. This, however, will require a real commitment to using already established instruments more effectively and to considering new types of strategic partnerships;
- Post-conflict situations normally are marked by a high degree of political manoeuvring and sensitivity;
- Tension between the differing assumptions and actions of those who programme and implement humanitarian assistance and those who promote development is a matter of institutional culture that which affect attitudes towards implementation.
- There is a wide range of relatively simple initiatives that could enhance post-conflict recovery, e.g. regional and sub-regional planning, effective monitoring of both the totality and use of assistance and more “thematic programming”.

Recommendations

Planning as a process. Existing planning instruments, if used properly, should go some way towards providing the coherence and sensitivity required for effective post-conflict response. However, the present tool box of planning instruments and process could be further improved:

- An inclusive, consultative post-conflict planning process has to begin far earlier than is normally the case.
- Streamline and clarify existing instruments;
- Involve donors, private sector and others;
- Strengthen RC/HC and ensure more coherence between individual agency and system-wide tools;
- Incorporate regional perspective and engage with regional organisations and other actors;
- Clear accountability and evaluation criteria should be part of every planning exercise;
- greater attention needs to be given to “thematic approaches”, intangibles and human rights in the planning process;
- there needs to be a more studied and transparent way of reconciling state-centred and people-centred assistance.

Strategic partnerships. Partnerships based upon a combination of country and regionally-specific interests and expertise:

- Country-specific donor groups (“Friends”)
- Coordinating structures, e.g. a “troika” of a major NGO, a multilateral organisation and a donor representative;
- Lead agency approaches.

Intra and inter-institutional reviews:

- Genuine HQ commitment to coordination, cooperation and common programming;
- More coherence between policy, programming and fund-raising on the part of agencies;
- Joint fund raising and disbursement procedures;
- Personnel policies including in-house and inter-agency training and sensitisation programmes;

“Mini-Marshall Plans” and new funding mechanisms. There is a place for new types of funding mechanisms to provide consistent and “seamless” support for all stages of countries in crisis:

- Post-conflict trust funds;
- Better monitoring of pledges and disbursements;

Strategic objectives agreed by all UN partners and reflected in:

- Clear instructions for senior representatives in the field.
- Collaboration and better use of existing instruments.

Summary Synthesis of Field Responses

All the comments from the field praised the analysis of the report and noted its relevance to their particular situation, even those cases where conflict was ongoing and even escalating. The conceptual clarity and frankness of the report was appreciated and its recommendations supported. The five gaps identified were regarded as almost universally applicable. Other gaps mentioned were a socio-cultural gap, whence misunderstandings between the international community and local authorities arise, and a welfare gap, caused by too high an expectation on the part of post-conflict authorities of the international community’s role in the provision of social services.

In response to the specific questions posed, the analysis was regarded as universally pertinent. Recommendations on planning as a process and strategic and operational frameworks were most useful. Coordination in all countries was regarded as good, even in those cases where the Bank and major donors were not necessarily present on the ground. The capacity of the authorities was in all cases weak but clearly central to the transition and thus a major focus of activity. Interaction between humanitarian and development personnel was regarded as mostly adequate. On the other hand, funding mechanisms were widely described as lacking and not effective in addressing post-conflict transitions. Finally, all those who responded regarded joint training as an urgent need.

Among major concerns mentioned in the general comments on the report were the need for the international community to respond to the needs of communities as well as individuals, avoiding islands or imbalances of assistance; the responsibilities of donors in particular to ensure adequate funding and not place conditionalities on aid that exacerbate gaps; the need for a pro-active approach to conflict prevention; and the need for more flexibility, adaptability and coordination on the part of the UN. One RC/HC recommended full operationalisation of the strategic framework concept, while another urged specific agencies to establish regional rapid response teams as well as the necessary skeleton budgets to field such teams for the initial assessment and response.

1. How is the analysis presented in the IASC Reference Group paper on Post-Conflict Re-integration relevant to your country situation?

Every response deemed the report highly relevant, even those with ongoing conflict or pockets of conflict. Afghanistan noted serious problems in the areas mentioned namely, institutional, political, authority, synchrony and sustainability. The Angolan experience provides an instructive example of how failure to bridge the reintegration gaps identified by the Report could, and did, plunge a country into the worst-case scenario of return to war. Of particular relevance in Burundi is the political gap arising from the deliberate decision on the part of most donors not to fund anything but the most urgent humanitarian needs. Field coordination is good but serious problems have arisen because of slow, inappropriate procedures at headquarters level and/or mandate battles at global (rather than country) level.

In DRC, according to the response received, there is very good coordination between the RC and HC, supported by a coordination unit – set up by UNDP in 1995 and merged with OCHA since February 1998. The CAP includes bridging activities and “doesn’t feel the gap”. In Sri Lanka, the observation about dealing simultaneously at the operational level with humanitarian and development needs was regarded as especially accurate. The field office noted that the role of the state should emerge more clearly when considering political and institutional gaps; many overlaps and contending priorities, as well as centre-periphery gaps and issues of political commitment on the part of the authorities were cited. The report is highly pertinent in both Liberia and Tajikistan. Only in Azerbaijan was the relevance less than total: not all reported features can be attributed to the specific situation in Azerbaijan, where UNDP responded to the appeal of the Government to assist the reintegration of IDPs as far back as early 1996.

2. Which recommendations appear appropriate or useful for your country situation?

Most of the recommendations are with greater or lesser success already applied in the case of Afghanistan. The recommendations most useful for Angola are those concerning planning as a process; strategic partnerships; and strategic objectives. Most recommendations under planning as a process, strategic partnerships and intra and inter-institutional reviews have some relevance to the situation in Sri Lanka. The Azerbaijan response noted that recommendations to agree between the agencies on a common set of procedures that will facilitate joint funding, disbursement and accountability could be useful to enhance the cooperation. For achieving this goal, more flexibility and authority should be delegated to the field level to hasten the receipt and disbursement of much needed resources. Among the

most relevant for Burundi is the one concerning donor support groups: the UN initiated a local donors group this year.

In DRC recommendations most pertinent and, in some cases, already being implemented include those on ways to relate political, peace support functions to those of recovery, rehabilitation and development in a coherent and consistent way, those on the need to address the authorities with a crystal clear view on parameters of post-conflict initiatives; and those on planning as a process. The conceptual framework presented in the Report, the nature of the gaps and the role of external partners in the process are all instructive for Liberia and the country's experience underscores their relevance for post-conflict countries. While all are relevant for Tajikistan, of particular significance are the recommendations related to coordination of planning and the timing of such planning. Clearly defined entry and exit strategies are necessary to minimise gaps and ensure continuity of approach and priority. Similarly, the issues related to donor relations are quite applicable to Tajikistan, where donor whim is the determining factor of project success and strategic viability of any planning framework, regardless of the title.

3. Describe the relationship of the RC/HC with the World Bank, EU, USAID and other major bilateral donors in terms of post-conflict planning and implementation?

The World Bank does not work in Afghanistan we nevertheless have them, along with the EU and USAID, actively participating in the Support Group (ASG) and the Afghanistan Programming Body (APB). During the post-conflict phase in Angola, there was active dialogue between the RC and the World Bank and the Bank collaborated closely with UNDP on macroeconomic policies and institutional and human capacity building projects. Collaboration between the RC and multilateral donors like the EU was very good. While consultations with the major bilateral and multilateral donors still continue, the collaborative relationship which has been established needs to be institutionalised. In close collaboration with the government of Azerbaijan, the UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, WB and the EU, working through a number of NGOs have demonstrated effective interagency cooperation in moving towards a common goal. The cooperation between the UN Agencies, WB, EU and other major donors has been promoted through the establishment of the International Advisory Group chaired by the UNDP, WB, UNHCR and EU.

The UN country team in Sri Lanka has a number of mechanisms for coordination, including a Rehabilitation Theme Group of heads of agency, which includes the World Bank and through which a Joint UN Framework for Relief and Rehabilitation has been developed. There is also a UN-chaired donor working group on relief and rehabilitation. Neither the Bank nor UASID are present in Burundi, which has made relations more distant. The EU does have a delegate on the ground who cooperates closely with the UN. In spite of a complicated environment in DRC, contacts and daily working relations are being maintained with donor countries and multilateral donors. The HC also regularly visits and briefs donors with a view to promote the humanitarian and post-conflict resolutions envisaged in the UN Common Humanitarian Assistance Strategy (July 1999). There has been a close and mutually reinforcing working relationship among these partners in Liberia. They have worked closely together in assisting the new Government formulate an integrated post-conflict reconstruction programme, with the strategic framework as the guiding principle. There is a particular close collaboration between the UN Country Team, USAID, EU and ADB in programme implementation. Liberia's current serious arrears problem

with the Bretton Woods institutions has constrained a more active participation of these institutions in programme financing and implementation.

In Tajikistan, the number of resident donors is limited to World Bank and EU through ECHO, although this is slowly changing. Through concerted efforts on the part of the RC/HC and the UNDP management, ADB and EBRD are soon to join the resident donor community, while USAID is active from its regional position in Almaty. Because of his role as SRSR a.i., the RC/HC has an enhanced profile with the donors, and is able to leverage funding more successfully. It should be noted that Tajikistan has an excellent collaborative relationship with the World Bank, with complete complementarity between programming initiatives. There is a conscious effort to ensure that the policy reforms being advocated by the Bretton Woods Institutes are supported through project initiatives by the UN agencies.

4. To what extent is the capacity, or lack of it, of government institutions an obstacle to post-conflict rehabilitation? What can be done to improve it?

In Afghanistan, whatever capacity there is on both sides is focused entirely on the war effort. Institutional capacity in Angola is weak at all levels of government, as a result of which relevant government institutions found themselves ill-prepared to formulate and implement post-conflict rehabilitation programmes, or even coordinate humanitarian and/or development activities. Indeed, human and institutional capacity building has been, and remains, a major activity of the UN agencies in Angola. In Azerbaijan, both the humanitarian operations and development efforts could not be successful without the capacity building of the Government to coordinate the assistance. UNDP's establishment of a national agency for reconstruction has facilitated this. In Sri Lanka the issue is less one of governmental capacity than one of governmental political commitment in the context of a separatist conflict.

In Burundi, government institutions have received very low levels of support for the past four years. Their capacity is greatly weakened; many are more or less non-functional. No funds are available to improve them. This will have a significant, negative impact on Government's ability to manage future recovery and development initiatives. So far, only a clear implementation of the Lusaka agreement by all the protagonists would render a post-conflict rehabilitation process something else than mere slogans in DRC. Donor interest has diminished and capacity is weak. In Liberia the devastating impact of the war on governance institutions, at both central and local levels, resulted in significant erosion of Government's capacity for post-conflict reconstruction programme formulation and implementation. Currently, the Government's limited capacity is being augmented through partnership with NGOs and private sector in programme implementation. In Tajikistan, the government has struggled with the transitional from the Soviet-style of administration and criminality and authority vacuums are a major problem.

5. How would you describe the interaction between humanitarian and development agencies in your country and in what manner is humanitarian and development planning integrated to deal with the gap?

For Afghanistan no real distinction is being made between humanitarian and development agencies, there is very good collaboration. In Angola, at the level of the UN, the interaction is assured by active participation of the Humanitarian agencies in the RC system, through

regular meetings of the Heads of Agencies, the UN Programme Working Group and other established bodies. However, effective collaboration in the area of integrated humanitarian and development planning is constrained by the unfolding political-military and socio-economic crisis of the country; limited human and financial resources of the UN agencies; overlapping mandates and responsibilities; and, among other things, traditional institutional rivalries. In Azerbaijan, a wide inter-agency coordination has been maintained, including UN Agencies, other concerned international organisations and NGOs through regular food assistance and non-food assistance coordination meetings chaired by DHA and, since 1998, OCHA. The MOU on operational co-operation between UNDP and UNHCR, combined with the directions from the respective HQ has contributed greatly to a strong coordinated UN effort in addressing problems of return and reintegration.

UN agencies are virtually the sole development actors in Burundi, in addition to being among the main sources of humanitarian assistance. As a result, the UN country team coordinates both humanitarian and development initiatives. Thus there is no problem in harmonising the two areas, except that very little funding is available for development work. The establishment of a system-wide coordination unit, which was born through merging OCHA and UNDP coordination cells into a UN Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit, in DRC precluded the compartmentalisation of relief and development aid. Interaction between the humanitarian and development agencies is relatively smooth in Liberia under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. Humanitarian and development planning is a highly integrated planning process, which recognises the close interrelationship between humanitarian assistance, peace building process, reconstruction and development and is in line with the strategic framework, adopted after the crisis.

There are differing opinions whether Tajikistan is still facing a humanitarian crisis or has already started the transition to longer term development. Sectoral coordination meetings facilitate the coordination between agencies, and addressing the gap is the underlying theme of most meetings. The CAP has provided an excellent forum for this discussion, fostering a sort of annual "state of the union" assessment. In Sri Lanka, few organisations are exclusively humanitarian. Most have programme in the southern part of the country, where there is more of a "normal" situation. The key issue is for agencies to resist running two entirely separate programmes, with one for the conflict areas and the rest of the country. There is therefore quite a good interaction between the two.

6. What funding mechanisms are currently in use and how effective are they in addressing post-conflict transition?

Apart from agencies' core funds, the consolidated annual appeal and ad hoc appeals for recurring disasters and emergencies are the main funding mechanisms in Afghanistan. In Angola the Round Table mechanism, especially the successful donors' conference in Brussels in September 1995 enabled the implementation of some significant transitional programmes. UNDP managed the resulting Open Trust Fund. The other funding mechanisms currently in use include UNDP TRAC 1 and 2 and UNDP TRAC 3. Also in operation are a CCF, which has been extended until the end of 2000, to allow the preparation of a UNDAF and the finalization of a new CCF for the period 2001-2003. The annual Cap has also been quite effective, despite the often significant shortfalls between appealed funding and funds actually raised. The major constraint in Azerbaijan is still the lack of adequate financial resources to expand the programme to other parts of the liberated territories so that more IDPs could be

resettled. Funding is received from UNDP, the World Bank, EU's TACIS programme, ECHO, UNHCR and the Islamic Bank.

In Sri Lanka, there is no lack of funding or funding mechanisms; rather there is a lack of political commitment to ending the conflict on the part of the parties. The UNDP Trust Fund has been critical in attracting funds of donors who are not ready to allocate funding directly to the Government of Burundi. It is also critical in being relatively unearmarked and allowing for direct execution. DRC has been requesting UNDP TRAC 3 but not yet received any allocation. The concept of mini Marshall Plans offers an innovative approach to funding constraints. Liberia is a CG Country but negative donor perceptions and continuing arrears problems with the BWI remain problematic and special donor meetings are the agreed solution for the moment. Tajikistan has been using the CAP and informal donor conferences as its primary inter-agency fundraising mechanisms. However, as the focus of the CAP is humanitarian assistance, individual agencies also have been directly addressing donors for particular projects or programmes. It is essential that aid coordination be systematised in order to avoid confusion. Pledges are sometimes re-stated in different appeals, and the total amount is often unclear.

7. What is the feasibility/desirability of joint training programs that would involve both humanitarian and development personnel?

All RC/HCs responded that joint training would be highly desirable and strongly urged that such opportunities be explored at both the country and headquarters levels, and that the necessary funding be allocated for these purposes, although this was not perceived as possible in DRC at present. In Tajikistan, this has been done informally between OCHA and UNDP but should be institutionalised.