

Development Assistance Committee

DAC GUIDELINES ON CONFLICT, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION



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PREFACE

At the High Level Meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on 3-4 May 1995, Development Co-operation Ministers and Heads of Aid Agencies focused on the growing demands, and opportunities, for development co-operation to contribute more pro-actively to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Committee decided to launch a programme of work aimed at drawing out lessons of experience in the linkages between conflict, peace and development co-operation; seeking ways to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of Members' efforts in these areas and providing practical policy guidance to those called upon to design and implement programmes in these complex and often path-breaking areas.

The DAC established a special Task Force for this purpose which began its intensive work in October 1995.¹ The Task Force work has drawn primarily on the operational experience of development co-operation agencies and the knowledge and expertise of outside experts and practitioners, further illuminated by the growing body of academic research in these fields.

The topic areas covered in the different chapters have all been selected as issues of particular concern in the design and implementation of development co-operation for conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery. They range from broad policy questions, notably in the field of assistance for conflict prevention, to much more technical and operational ones, particularly in the areas of assistance for post-conflict recovery.

While the guidelines are primarily concerned with the role of development co-operation in these areas, some activities and approaches described involve broader areas of international assistance and co-operation. This more integrated perspective should help promote greater coherence and co-ordination, while the rules and procedures governing the use of development assistance funds will determine the extent to which they can be used to fulfil these guidelines.

Each section concludes with specific recommendations for donors. Taken together, these may serve as a kind of "checklist" for quick reference. However, the more detailed analysis is also useful for those working in-depth in any of the fields covered.

Given the evolving challenges and learning in the field, these Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation are very much a "work in progress". A number of important areas have been identified where further guidance should be developed, the DAC is continuing with this work. Moreover, the areas already covered are ones where experience is constantly being reassessed, so that feedback and further suggestions are invited and will be reflected in updated materials in the future.

¹ Participating were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank. Invited organisations included the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA).

DAC GUIDELINES ON CONFLICT, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

I. UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT CONFLICT AND ITS LINKS WITH DEVELOPMENT

A. *Conflict prevention – a central development goal*

1. Increasingly, violent conflict is taking place within, rather than between states. This intra-state conflict occurs primarily in developing countries, many of which suffer from cycles of civil violence, and its principal victims are civilians. Beyond their direct toll of death and destruction, these conflicts leave behind a legacy of deep and enduring social, political and psychological wounds. They can reverse decades of economic progress and impede future development.

2. Social and political tensions are inevitable in the process of socio-economic development. Although prolonged economic decline can be a potential source of conflict, economic growth alone does not prevent or resolve violent conflict, and may sometimes intensify tensions within society. The possible escalation of these tensions into open confrontation and violence can be a major obstacle to sustainable, people-centred development. Sustainable development must therefore be underpinned by institutions capable of managing socio-political tensions and avoiding their escalation into violence.

3. Work in conflict-prone and war-torn countries has always been a part of development co-operation activities. Helping strengthen the capacity of a society to manage tensions and disputes without violence is a vital part of development work. While it may sometimes be difficult to articulate and analyse, this “peacebuilding” objective must form the cornerstone of all development co-operation strategies and programmes. Development agencies can also be a catalyst for the broader inclusion of societal groups in discussion and negotiation processes. Women, and women’s groups specifically, should be encouraged to participate in efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. They can often exert considerable influence in bringing warring parties to the negotiating table, and lend another voice to the search for peaceful solutions.

4. Development co-operation efforts should strive for an environment of structural stability as a basis for sustainable development. An environment of structural stability is one in which there are dynamic and representative social and political structures capable of managing change and resolving disputes without resort to violence. This is one of the primary foundations on which to build social peace, respect for human rights and human rights obligations, equitable access to development resources, and sustainable development. Strengthening economic development will provide a valuable, and often indispensable base for these efforts.

5. While concentrating on fields of action in which it has a comparative advantage, development co-operation can also work with other instruments; including diplomatic, military and economic ones, to strengthen the possibilities for peace and development. Over the long-term, it can contribute to alleviating the root causes of conflict and help to develop institutions capable of managing and resolving disputes in a peaceful manner. Development assistance and humanitarian aid can also help consolidate fragile peace processes by supporting societal reconciliation, political development and physical reconstruction.

6. With their intimate understanding of local conditions, development agencies can often contribute special information and insights on conflict causes. However, we have seen that humanitarian assistance cannot substitute for a long-term and sustained political will and commitment in the international community to support peace. Development co-operation, as well, needs to be much more alert and sensitive to the political context.

B. A framework for analysing conflicts

7. The causes of conflict are varied and intertwined. It is difficult to delineate clearly or weigh the influence of different elements. These range from destabilising social conditions, such as extreme social disparities and exclusion, to government lacking the appropriate mechanisms for the peaceful conciliation of differing interests within society. A comprehensive and integrated knowledge of the needs for state and civil society to work properly together is key to understanding the origins and dynamics of violent conflict. Indigenous capacities may already exist. Supporting them to the extent possible, and ensuring that they are not displaced, can strengthen the possibilities for peace and development.

Box 1. Terms and timeframes

Conflict prevention, for the purposes of these Guidelines, refers to actions undertaken over the short-term to reduce manifest tensions and to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict.

Peacebuilding and reconciliation focuses on long-term support to, and establishment of, viable political and socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of addressing the root causes of conflicts, as well as other initiatives aimed at creating the necessary conditions for sustained peace and stability. These activities also seek to promote the integration of competing or marginalised groups within mainstream society, through providing equitable access to political decision-making, social networks, economic resources and information, and can be implemented in all phases of conflict.

Structural stability embraces the interdependent and mutually-reinforcing objectives of social peace, respect for the rule of law and human rights, social and economic development, supported by dynamic and representative political institutions capable of managing change and resolving disputes without resorting to violent conflict.

Emergency relief involves immediate, survival assistance to the victims of crisis and violent conflict. Most relief operations are initiated at short notice and have a short implementation period with project objectives generally completed within a year. The main purpose is to save lives. External financial and personnel inputs are often predominant. The most complex relief operations are those resulting from drawn-out civil conflict.

Rehabilitation operations overlap with relief operations and objectives are normally targeted for achievement within two years. The principal aims are to initiate reconstruction of infrastructure at the national and local levels and to save livelihoods. As beneficiary self-sufficiency is a major objective, programme management is progressively put under local control. Cost recovery schemes, large-scale employment generating projects and revolving funds operations can be introduced. In situations of continuing instability, disaster prevention (avoiding a return to the emergency) and mitigation (reducing the impact of any deterioration in the situation) are essential aspects of the rehabilitation effort.

Development operations have long-term objectives, extending beyond two years, and presume conditions of security and a functioning administration pursuing national objectives and strategies in partnership with external actors. Feasibility studies and full project appraisal, economic rates of return, environmental impact assessments and social analysis (including gender) are normal. Beneficiary and local government ownership should be sought.

It is important to note that **emergency relief, rehabilitation, and development operations** are not necessarily sequential but are often carried out simultaneously. These distinct forms of assistance can be classified based on their immediate objectives and duration, rather than according to any presumed logical or chronological sequence leading from relief to development, which is rarely seen in reality. Failure to ensure that these operations are structured to be mutually reinforcing, however, can result in their becoming mutually undermining.

8. Theories on how and why violent conflicts occur distinguish between structural factors on the one hand, and accelerating or triggering factors on the other.

a) Structural conditions

9. Structural factors, which must be viewed on a long-term horizon, are those which create a potential climate for violent conflict without, however, making its eruption inevitable. They include such interrelated political, social and economic factors as population density, the level and distribution of wealth and opportunity, the state of the resource base, the structure and ethnic make-up of society, and the history of inter-group relations. Certain patterns of socio-economic organisation can result in a high degree of vulnerability to conflict. For instance, ranked societies with sharp patterns of stratification in which a politically-dominant group controls the state and access to wealth, education and status, often suffer from a high-degree of vulnerability to conflict.

b) Accelerating or triggering factors

10. Accelerating or triggering factors are the events, actions and decisions which result in the escalation of disputes into violent conflict. Since triggering factors depend heavily upon the specific context, it is not possible to list them systematically. Some examples include: economic decline, changes in the degree of internal state cohesion; shifts in internal control of the central authority, including the military; change in the internal distribution of power, including access to government power and privilege; shipments of (small) arms; interventions of neighbouring states, regional powers and organisations; and large movements of people and capital.

c) The phases and dynamics of conflict

11. Conflict is not a static, unchanging state of affairs but rather a dynamic process. While distinct phases can be distinguished, they do not necessarily follow a sequential pattern. A combination of factors will generally determine whether a conflict escalates or recedes. Hence, the passage from one phase to another is not necessarily the result of a single event or factor at the exact moment of transition. Notwithstanding the diversity of the causes and escalators of conflict, almost all crises can usefully be subdivided into four main, difficult to separate phases, as follows:

- situations of submerged tensions;
- situations of rising tensions;
- eruption phases of open confrontation and violent conflict;
- fragile transitional and post-conflict situations.

12. In theory, it is possible to define a conflict cycle in terms of peace - conflict - reconciliation. The actual situation is far more complex. It is often quite difficult to define the moment at which peace or normality has been transformed into conflict, or vice versa. A clear progression from conditions of peace to heightened socio-political tensions culminating in violent conflict before receding back again to peace is the exception rather than the norm. Similarly, at a given point in time, certain parts of a country may be at peace while conflict lingers in others, flaring up periodically. Many countries are characterised by both peace and conflict simultaneously. This situation may span years or even decades.

C. Sources of conflict and their development links

13. As a general rule, a society endowed with a good balance and distribution of solid social and economic resources, as evidenced by high human development indicators, is able to manage tensions with less risk of institutional and social breakdown than a society marked by destabilising conditions such as pervasive poverty, extreme socio-economic disparities, systematic lack of opportunity and the absence of recourse to credible institutions to resolve grievances. In the absence of such capacity, the following are some of the causes and contributors to conflict:

a) Problems in managing transition and rapid change

14. Processes of basic change often create social and political dislocations; without adequate opportunities to participate in national civil society, the political process and labour markets, this can erode social cohesion, and weaken traditional authority structures. Change can sometimes result in a loss of cultural identity and the uprooting or marginalising of communities. Economic and political transitions also generate tension, especially where the power balance shifts in favour of some groups and away from others. Power struggles can erupt between groups competing in the development process, even where they enjoy some of the benefits of economic prosperity. Transition processes at play during the decolonisation period, the current transformation from authoritarian to more participatory states, and the evolution of former centrally-planned economies, illustrate this.

b) Widening socio-economic disparities

15. Imbalanced economic growth and disparities in the distribution of its benefits can also increase tensions. This may disturb established patterns of production and distribution of income and wealth. The allocation of resources and benefits sometimes reaches only those groups which control the state apparatus. This can result in the marginalisation of vulnerable groups and the neglect of less dynamic regions. These inequalities are particularly important when coupled with increased perceptions of disparity, and a lack of institutions to respond to these inequalities, such as often occurs in fast-growing urban populations.

c) The exploitation of ethnic and other differences

16. Ethnic, religious and cultural differences, in themselves, seldom cause conflict. In an atmosphere of heightened tensions resulting from socio-political conflicts, however, they can offer fertile ground for political exploitation. Factors which may contribute to the polarisation of ethnic and cultural differences include: economic, social and political dislocation resulting from imbalanced development itself; the legacy of colonial boundaries; illegitimate or weak state institutions; the forced assimilation of minorities; and aspirations of increased autonomy by territorially-concentrated ethnic groups.

d) Resource-based conflicts

17. Competition over shared resources can also contribute to increased tensions, without resilient political means to manage such competition. Localised and regional scarcity of water and productive land (sometimes caused by rapid changes in population density), changes in land tenure systems, environmental disruption or degradation, and regional crises, lead to conflicts over the management, distribution and

allocation of resources. Conflict over internationally shared resources can threaten the stability of neighbouring countries and sometimes even entire regions.

Box 2. Environmental insecurity and conflict

Evidence is mounting that environmental security can be a significant factor in generating tensions and disputes. Environmental degradation, resulting in poverty and large scale displacement of populations, can work with other factors to precipitate or aggravate violent conflict, both locally and internationally.

In developing countries, major environmental threats may include the deterioration of agricultural lands, growth in populations, and depletion of resources such as fuelwood, grazing land and drinking water. Often these man-made factors interact and reinforce natural forces -- for example, when natural flooding is exacerbated by deforestation and the draining of wetlands. Environmental insecurity is created when ecosystems are no longer able to support and sustain the populations inhabiting them.

Large-scale population movements can result. Often groups migrate into areas which are even more environmentally fragile, or disaster-prone, entering into a vicious circle of displacement, environmental disruption and further displacement. It is estimated that at least 25 million people have been affected in this way, and this number is predicted to grow. Competition for, and unequal distribution of, increasingly scarce natural resources can thus contribute to local and regional conflict.

While most man-made forms of environmental insecurity can be prevented, or their effects mitigated, a better understanding of the nature of this multifaceted phenomenon will be necessary in order to formulate appropriate preventive strategies.

e) The legacy of violence

18. Violence and the damage it inflicts sharpen and entrench polarities in society. This intensifies insecurity, hatred, reprisals and revenge, all of which strengthen the “conflict history” of inter-group relations. In addition to hindering economic progress, it can contribute to aggravating the vulnerability of certain groups to adverse conditions, resulting in extreme cases in large-scale humanitarian crises. As a result of the exploitation of ethnic, religious and cultural factors, this often ensures the recurrence of conflict even when general economic conditions improve. Another frequent legacy of prolonged conflict, the ready availability of arms (especially small arms), can also contribute to fuelling conflicts, by enhancing the propensity to resort to violence.

D. External actions to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding

a) Planning a coherent approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding

19. Conflict is a dynamic process. However, its course can be influenced by international action. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding approaches must be coherent, comprehensive, integrated and aimed at helping address the root causes of conflicts. The close co-operation of all policy instruments (diplomacy, military, trade and development co-operation), based on their respective comparative advantages, is required to ensure coherence and co-ordination. Approaches to conflict prevention must also take account of its potential international dimensions. Neighbouring and regional countries, the United Nations system, regional

organisations and other states may all have essential roles to play, with the understanding that those participating directly must inspire the requisite levels of trust in the countries concerned.

20. Coherence of policies and instruments is an important goal for both national governments and the international or multilateral systems. At the national level, this requires coherence among political, economic, diplomatic, military, humanitarian and development co-operation policies. While policy coherence is difficult at the national level where, for example, arms sales may undermine regional security or human rights policies, it is even more difficult to achieve at the international level. A lack of policy coherence among states on questions of conflict and development policies can be the result of real differences in national priorities, approaches to conflict resolution, or ideas about the root causes of conflict, but it can also result from a lack of co-ordination among relevant actors.

21. The long-term role of development co-operation in helping to create appropriate institutions for conflict prevention and resolution is only one of the relevant factors at work. In most cases, the long-term perspective of development co-operation limits its use as a short-term expedient. Nor can development programmes proceed without consciousness of the conflict factors. In all cases, assistance on the part of outside agencies will require a high degree of political judgement to be constructive. Given their own potentially destabilising impacts, development programmes have to be carefully screened to avoid exacerbating existing tensions in conflict-prone countries or regions.

b) Orientations for external support in conflict situations

i) In situations of submerged tensions

22. Even in times of relative peace, structural conditions could over time make a country vulnerable to potential eruptions of violent conflict. Visible actions to address root causes of unrest, based on suitable early warning, analysis of information, and the rapid flow of signals, are vitally important. Activities could be aimed at improving the allocation and management of natural resources, reducing poverty, targeting socio-political activities in support of participatory development, promoting good governance, limiting the flow and diffusion of arms, especially light weapons, civic education, ensuring respect for human rights as well as measures supporting the self-help potential among crisis-threatened population groups, and promoting the creation of dialogue and mediation structures. There is a specific need to assess the divisions within these societies, and then determine the appropriate ways to minimise such schisms.

ii) In situations of rising tensions

23. Where crisis conditions in society become manifest (as evidenced by, for example, social unrest, armed opposition, mass demonstrations etc.), timely prevention measures must be considered and rapidly implemented. Appropriate measures can counter potential triggers that might otherwise push the conflict towards open confrontation and mass violence. Under the rubric of preventive action there are a wide range of instruments available for mediating and settling conflicts. At this stage, it becomes particularly important to monitor and prevent the stockpiling of arms by the conflicting parties. Though short-term measures to de-escalate the crisis will be necessary, long-term efforts aimed at peacebuilding should continue and may even be intensified. Conflict prevention, peacebuilding and resolution initiatives need to be closely co-ordinated if they are to play an effective role in support of other activities. As in the case of the preliminary phase, activities will have the most effect if targeted at the root causes of conflict.

iii) In violent conflict situations

24. In organised violent conflict and confrontation, preventive diplomacy and military measures are generally utilised for moderating conflict, ending hostilities and starting peace negotiations. Humanitarian aid and, where possible, continued development activities should support these efforts. In some circumstances this may require collaboration to implement cease-fires so that humanitarian assistance for war victims and displaced persons can be provided. The delivery of humanitarian assistance in such conditions presupposes assent and co-operation of the parties involved in the conflict. Negotiations with warring parties regarding the deployment of peacekeepers and the organisation of humanitarian aid itself can simultaneously open the way for other diplomatic initiatives aimed at ending the conflict. These initiatives require close co-ordination among security policy, diplomacy, humanitarian aid and development co-operation organisations.

iv) In fragile periods of transition and during the post-conflict phase

25. Peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives, in addition to reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, are important for ensuring successful peace negotiations. Of critical importance before reconciliation is possible is the re-establishment of security and the rule of law. Where ethnic or even genocidal violence has occurred, concerted effort will be needed to help overcome the enduring trauma, promote reconciliation, and help prevent renewed outbreaks of violent conflict. This is best achieved by linking measures in the following areas: the demilitarisation of conflicts including disarmament and demobilisation; mine clearance and reform of armed forces; the reintegration of uprooted populations; reconciliation between the parties in conflict, including the creation of mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution; and long-term economic, social, political and ecological reconstruction that help to alleviate the structural conditions that made the country vulnerable to violent conflict. In this regard, the post-conflict period presents an opportunity for addressing the structural causes of conflict as identified above under the heading "In situations of submerged tensions".

E. Early warning

a) Needs and resources for early warning

26. Early warning can be concerned with the monitoring and analysis of early signals of potential conflict, the escalation of violence and impending humanitarian disasters. Based on this analysis, it can help to stimulate early action. There are different timeframes for different kinds of early warning. Central to an effective conflict prevention capability is the capacity to identify, monitor and analyse the long-term underlying causes of conflict.

27. Building on efforts already being made internationally, the systematic monitoring of early signals of potential conflict can be helpful in anticipating trouble spots in time to respond effectively. This requires selecting, monitoring and analysing key political, social and economic indicators which might include: military expenditures, power-sharing formulae, human rights conditions, ethnic violence, population movements, social and economic disparities, the functioning and access to basic services, freedom and diversity of the press, and external support for extremist groups.

28. Networks with early warning, monitoring and analytical capabilities are worth encouraging. These should be comprised of individuals and organisations that can alert political decision-makers of impending conflicts and that have sufficient credibility to encourage them to act on their warnings. Within such networks, regional and sub-regional institutions involved in conflict prevention often merit special support to

strengthen and encourage their early warning capacities -- they may also constructively participate in (informal) consultations and negotiations, as well as fact-finding missions.

29. Due reliance should also be placed on field workers and local partners familiar with conditions on the ground to collect and monitor information on conflict potential. This requires a co-ordinated approach, with the pooling of information within the donor community (in particular on long-term solutions for specific problems), between governments, international organisations and NGOs. This will allow refined quantitative data to be augmented by the analysis and judgement of “qualitative” warnings.

30. Effective early warning mechanisms must be able to provide interdisciplinary, integrated analyses that anticipate the questions and needs of policy-makers. They must address what might happen if the situation continues to deteriorate, and how various causal factors are linked. A recognition of this complexity is essential to prevent misguided responses -- for example, treating a single factor as the exclusive cause of the conflict -- disregarding the complex interrelationships from which it arises. In issuing early warning signals, the tools available to help prevent violent conflict and the appropriate timeframes for action, must be kept in mind. It may also be useful to present policy options or at least point to a set of possible actions, linked to the analysis presented. Alternatively, the formulation of scenarios may make the mass of information more readily usable while enhancing the ability to react swiftly to signs of escalation in violence-prone areas.

b) Bridging the gap between early warning and early action

31. It is difficult to secure attention for warnings very far in advance of a potential conflict. When conflict is more imminent, it is often difficult to agree on needed actions. Thus far, international efforts to create and use early warning (especially on long-range issues) have had limited effectiveness. In part, this is a consequence of the inadequate quality, accessibility, and timeliness of the information provided by forecasting and analysis. Clearly the lack of sufficient analytical capacity, and an analytic framework through which the information can be weighed which would include an integrated analysis of political, social and economic factors, creates critical bottlenecks in this regard. There is also a tendency to monitor the situation as it evolves instead of the long-term structural factors which are more difficult to analyse. An excessive focus on the trigger factors precipitating an escalation towards violence may detract attention from a more effective long-term preventive focus.

32. Even where accurate information and analyses have been made available to policy makers, there has often been a failure to respond. Sufficient political will is a vital connection between information and action. Thus, if an early warning mechanism is to be useful, it must help contribute to creating the political will and capacity to act at the national and international levels, including in the donor community. This may also help to mobilise the necessary resources for a timely response. Possible instruments for multilateral and bilateral preventive assistance can include the following: policy dialogue, including in the context of consultative groups, sanctions, demarches supporting peace processes, and actions to deal with impending conflict. Areas that enhance the capacity and effectiveness of timely political action include: strengthening co-ordination and co-operation; the elaboration of “emergency procedures” (including guidelines for co-ordination); and streamlining existing budgetary procedures for funding preventive activities.

33. The media and public opinion can be instrumental in fostering support for humanitarian action at the political level as well as informing the public of the underlying causes of violent conflict and consequent humanitarian emergencies. International awareness of the potential importance of the long-term problems creating conditions ripe for conflict must be stimulated. The sometimes inconstant and inconsistent interests and influence of the media and public opinion may contribute to an *ad hoc* approach to conflict prevention, thereby undermining more coherent and sustained efforts and initiatives.

F. *The special role of development co-operation*

34. A central focus of assistance should be to improve the general economic, political and social climate in partner countries, by supporting measures to improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state as well as the emergence of a strong civil society. Such efforts should facilitate the building of consensus on central economic, social and political issues. Assistance for the promotion of democracy, participatory mechanisms in the political system, and the rule of law can all be elements of a peacebuilding strategy helping to integrate individuals and groups into society, building their stake in the system and preventing their marginalisation and potential recourse to violence.

35. At the community level, donors can specifically help facilitate negotiations and reconciliation processes, particularly in the case of weak states or where large areas or regions are outside the control of the central government. Such assistance, having a primary peacebuilding and reconciliation objective, should focus on nurturing the appropriate social or institutional networks and organisations that can act as stabilising points in society in tandem with efforts aimed at the national-level. This can include support for the development of intermediary social organisations such as local NGOs, business associations, multi-ethnic committees, women's organisations and helping marginalised groups obtain better access to justice systems, the civil administration and the media. Realism requires donors to recognise that some governments may perceive active social or institutional networks as a threat and respond accordingly.

36. When a country is in crisis, external efforts to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding may meet considerable opposition from domestic actors in the name of national sovereignty. Outside interventions may be viewed by parties to the conflict as partial to one side. In such politically volatile situations, or when a situation is on the verge of erupting into violence, the role and potential impact of development co-operation initiatives carried out through established authorities must be carefully examined. The continuation of development programmes designed in the pre-conflict phase can therefore be very problematic during civil war. The protection of civilians and aid workers is of paramount importance if aid is to be used constructively in the immediate pre-conflict, during and post-conflict phases.

37. Peacebuilding activities should normally be intensified with the outbreak of violent conflict, to reinforce other efforts and activities. The post-conflict consolidation phase can be particularly fragile and unstable. To address the potential for renewed conflict requires an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of its background and root causes. Measures formulated to deal with the consequences of war, such as reconstruction programmes, should simultaneously focus on preventing the relapse back into violent confrontation.

38. The dynamic nature of intra-state conflicts makes it difficult to distinguish clearly when and where violence ends and the conditions for genuine peace are established. In this light, an attempt should be made to identify, to the extent possible, the common characteristics of different phases of conflict as a contribution to helping the development community agree on what stage a particular country is currently in. Development co-operation agencies must adjust to operating in unstable conditions, and consider the scope for supporting development processes even in the midst of crisis conditions. They also need to be prepared to seize opportunities for conflict resolution, and they need to plan for post-conflict reconstruction. In such uncertain operational environments, however, the risk of failure must be recognised.

39. In formulating approaches towards development co-operation in situations of conflict the following principles must be kept in mind:

- Development co-operation should strive for an environment of democratic structural stability as a base for sustainable development.

- Donors should seek to develop their capacity to analyse the socio-political context in which development co-operation is provided.
- Detailed analytical work should form the basis of judgement to be made on the relative importance of explicitly addressing the root causes of conflict within development co-operation strategies.
- Where appropriate, this should lead to the exploration of opportunities for preventive action. These should build the capacity of partner countries and actors to address the root causes of conflict, and develop the institutions and mechanisms needed to facilitate the accommodation of competing interests within society, and the peaceful management of socio-political disputes.
- Development co-operation is only one instrument of foreign policy: mechanisms for co-ordination between policy instruments available to donor states (military, political, development, and trade) must be strengthened.
- Similarly, greater policy coherence within the multilateral system between political, military and development elements must be encouraged.

II. CO-ORDINATION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND IN-COUNTRY

A. *Key principles*

40. Developing countries are responsible for their own development. External assistance must build on, and not substitute for national capacities, resources and initiatives. A basic principle of development co-operation is that the integration of external assistance into national efforts is the responsibility of the partner country. In essence, the present set of Guidelines is, in itself, an instrument designed to improve co-ordination toward common objectives, for which the country itself should have ownership. This is a dominant concern of the strategies expressed in *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*, OECD, 1996.

41. There is broad agreement on the purposes of aid co-ordination: resources should be delivered as efficiently and effectively as local conditions allow; the contributions of the many donors involved should be complementary and allocated in line with indigenous priorities and policies. Furthermore, external assistance must be managed so as to ease the burdens on partner countries and not add to their own co-ordination problems.

42. Given that co-ordination is voluntary, its success depends upon the extent to which it adds value to the operations of individual donors and agencies. Such value-added results might include independent needs assessment, and access to information or the conduct of diplomatic negotiations on behalf of all donors, in order to secure safe passage and access to victims in areas in conflict.

43. The voluntary character of aid co-ordination also makes it fundamentally different from the concept of “management”, which implies substantial control of the various elements present. Good co-ordination should not be construed as forcing all activities into a single mould. Diversity of approaches, including experimentation with new methods, can contribute to co-ordination.

B. *Adapting aid co-ordination for countries in crisis*

44. In conflict-prone countries, particularly in situations of rising tensions, the need for donors to adopt common approaches is especially important. Yet, it is all the more difficult to achieve in view of the large number of humanitarian and development assistance actors operating during emergencies. Donors often increase their contributions in times of disaster, which usually results in a larger field presence. Numerous international NGOs establish field operations, and national NGOs may also expand their activities. In such conditions, the United Nations organisations have a key role to play on behalf of the international community.

45. In situations of violent conflict a country may not have a government able to define and articulate national priorities and co-ordinate donor assistance. In some extreme cases, the collapse of a central authority can give rise to situations where different factions exercise *de facto* control in different parts of the national territory. The delivery of relief aid in areas outside government control often requires negotiating with non-governmental or anti-governmental actors in the conflict. As noted in Chapter I, external assistance may be viewed by parties to the conflict as partial to one side.

46. At the post-conflict stage, a negotiated settlement will need to deal with competing interests as regards the future political structure. Pending successful completion of peace negotiations, there may be little certainty as to what power structure will eventually emerge.

47. While the main parties in a conflict generally take part in the formulation of post-conflict reconstruction plans, notably in the context of peace negotiations, the international community may temporarily have to take more initiative than is normal, in identifying priorities and ensuring a proper match between foreseeable needs and anticipated resource availability.

48. In such situations, donors and implementing agencies should strive to work with representative actors at the national, regional and local level rather than defining priorities themselves. Even in situations where the main parties are part of the negotiated settlement, donors and implementing agencies should strive to work with representative actors at all levels. This places a special responsibility on the many agencies involved (UN agencies, bilateral donors, multilateral financial institutions, regional organisations, and local and international non-governmental organisations), to co-ordinate their programmes and ensure that relief assistance reinforces and complements longer term development co-operation.

C. Building-blocks for effective donor co-ordination

49. In practical terms, aid co-ordination is based on five elements: a) a common strategic framework for assistance; b) timely access to resources allowing for flexible implementation; c) leadership among international actors; d) mechanisms for field-level consultation and sharing of information; and e) the availability of resources specifically earmarked for co-ordination purposes.

50. Even when these conditions are met, co-ordination can be constrained by differing views on co-ordinating or lead agency mandates and the need for participating agencies and organisations to surrender a measure of independence and accept the consensus implicit in meaningful co-ordination. Successful co-ordination requires discipline by the participants.

a) A common strategic framework for assistance

51. Co-ordination should be based on a broad consensus among the main actors as to how their respective actions and initiatives will contribute to the attainment of shared objectives. Local ownership should be given the maximum effect possible. Since external assistance can never be divorced from the local, national and international political context, this consensus must be based on an intimate understanding of the causes and dynamics of conflict (including the “political economy of war”) in order to avoid counter-productive impacts of external assistance. This should include in particular the regional dimensions of conflict both with respect to its causes and potential consequences.

52. Based on this consensus, donors should attempt to formulate and agree on a common integrated strategic framework addressing the contents and priorities of the programme as well as the policy and operational roles of different actors according to their comparative advantages. This situation-specific and time-specific strategy will implicitly define the respective mandates of different actors. Therefore it should be agreed upon at headquarters-level as the strategic approach forming the basis of the dialogue with local counterparts at the field-level.

Box 3. A strategic framework for assistance: an illustrative checklist ¹

A strategic framework articulates the rationale for the programme of relief assistance and recovery. It defines the underlying political, economic and social determinants and provides the context and the logic for a rational allocation of resources devoted to relief, reconstruction and development. Strategic frameworks are both a consensus-building process and a product, and are elaborated in consultation with the government, and other local actors, major bilateral donors and IFI's. It should seek to answer the following questions:

Situation analysis

- What is the prevailing political, economic, social and security environment?
- What are the implications of recent developments, for example the return of a large number of displaced people?
- What is the government's response to these events, in terms of policy, governance, institutions and economic management?
- What are the macroeconomic parameters?
- What domestic and external financial resources are available?

Risk assessment

- Can political arrangements that withstand the tensions and stresses of accommodation be reached?
- Can security conditions create an adequate environment to begin reconstruction?
- Can external assistance help overcome the legacy of violent conflict and set in motion a process leading to a more just, humane and productive society?

Programme response

- What are the programme goals, immediate and long-term objectives?
- What are the principal programme components aiming at conflict resolution, reconciliation and recovery that need external support (e.g. reintegration and reconstruction, capacity-building, governance and judicial systems)?
- Is there a road-map for reaching those goals (including a transitional "safety net" covering basic needs for food, water, shelter and medicine provision of basic health, education and other social services and infrastructure; support for a return to productive work and sustainable livelihoods; strengthening of indigenous community-based management and administrative systems)?
- Is there a gender strategy available or being prepared on major thematic programmes such as security sector reform, national reconciliation, institution-building?
- How is the available budget apportioned between the above objectives?

Requirements for success

- Where are the critical requirements for successful programme implementation?
- What is the capacity of local groups and communities to identify and deal with their needs?
- Has specific attention been given to the role women can play in reconciliation and reconstruction?
- Is effective co-ordination amongst national and international actors in place?
- How can short vs. long-term needs be reconciled and dependency avoided?
- Have exit arrangements been formulated for all forms of direct support?
- Are resources available to cover recurrent costs?

1. Strategic frameworks for assistance have tended to focus on countries recovering from crisis and conflict. Similar approaches in cases of conflict prevention are not well developed.

53. Based on a shared analysis of the most pressing needs for political, economic, administrative or social rehabilitation, this strategic framework can provide a guide for prioritising resource allocations across sectors and geographical areas, determining the division of labour amongst actors, and defining common approaches towards key policy issues. By definition, it is not a list of projects but rather a dynamic instrument mapping out the transition from relief to longer-term recovery assistance.

54. This strategic framework should also play a key role in facilitating the phasing out of humanitarian assistance, avoiding the creation of dependencies perpetuating aid supported activities and in helping to ensure that longer-term assistance is provided within the context of a sound macroeconomic stabilisation plan. This is covered in more detail in chapter V.

b) Flexible resources and procedures

55. The availability of flexible resources, combining elements and features of emergency relief and development, contributes to effective aid responses in unstable environments. Countries emerging from crisis and conflict typically find themselves on the edge of bankruptcy and need some immediate injections of funds in order to maintain basic services and avert further economic destabilisation.

56. Planning, programming and disbursement procedures must allow for timely responses to changing circumstances and take account of the exceptional human resource constraints facing many countries emerging from crisis. Flexibility with regard to the areas and activities eligible for support, in line with the special needs and priorities of countries in crisis or recovery, is also essential in order to strike a balance between immediate humanitarian needs and the requirements of rehabilitation, long-term reconstruction and peacebuilding. Timely fulfilment of pledges for resources is also critical.

57. Flexibility on the part of donor agencies must be reflected in the way fund-raising instruments (expanded consolidated inter-agency appeals, special donor consultations, round-tables, consultative groups etc.) are prepared. By mapping out clearly the rationale and funding requirements of peacebuilding and reconstruction programmes, the strategic framework can help guide donors in their decisions, relative to aid resource allocations.

Box 4. International framework for resource mobilisation: Experience from Cambodia

The civil war in Cambodia lasted for 13 years before a cease-fire was finally achieved with the signature by the concerned factions and countries of a peace agreement in October 1991 (Paris Agreements), forming the basis for a comprehensive peace process.

The Paris Agreements also prompted the international community to increase its aid to Cambodia. At the Ministerial Conference on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia held in Tokyo in June 1992, a total of US \$880 million was pledged by the participating countries and international organisations. There was also agreement to establish the International Committee on Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) as the co-ordinating mechanism for medium- and long-term reconstruction assistance to Cambodia. Three ICORC meetings were convened in September 1993, March 1994 and March 1995, which led to a total pledge of US \$1 079 million. The total ODA volume from DAC Members and international organisations doubled each year from 1990 to 1993. Multilateral financial institutions, such as the IMF and the International Development Agency (IDA), also began to offer full-scale financial assistance from 1994.

ICORC has thus not only proved to be effective as the core group for co-ordinating international aid but has also played a catalytic role in mobilising aid resources towards Cambodia. One of the key factors which accounted for the relative success of the Cambodia peace process was the steady fulfilment and execution of aid pledged by the countries concerned. This contributed to the gradual stabilisation in the daily lives of the Cambodian people.

By 1996-97 international assistance for Cambodia was entering a new phase. The ICORC functions were being taken over by the Consultative Group (CG) meeting. The first CG for Cambodia was held in Tokyo under the co-chairmanship of the World Bank and Japan in July 1996. The total amount pledged at the meeting -- US \$501 million -- was almost equal to the amount of external resources required by the Cambodian government in the same year.

c) Leadership among international actors

58. While always seeking to encourage local capacity, ownership and responsibility, reaching consensus on, and commitment to, a common strategy may require a facilitating mechanism for external partners. This may include the designation of an independent co-ordinating authority to monitor donors' adherence to agreed principles.

59. Experience suggests that the co-ordination of technical and financial assistance benefits from the leadership of a bilateral or multilateral agency or donor that is recognised as credible by donors and aid recipients. Different agencies and donors have performed this role and it seems appropriate that flexibility in assuming leadership be retained. The lead agency is responsible for the proper dissemination of information in the otherwise disorderly environment which is likely to exist during or in the aftermath of the crisis. This is vital in order to ensure that the various activities supported by donors are consistent with agreed-upon policy principles, and are mutually supportive.

60. In addition to even-handedness towards the main parties in conflict, criteria guiding the selection of a leading agency or donor include:

- commitment to the leadership role and willingness to take the corresponding risks, including the possible need to take decisions that may not be favourably interpreted by public opinion in the donor country;
- knowledge of cultural, historic, ethnic and linguistic factors of the country or region;
- previous track record of effective support in crisis situations;
- capacity to mobilise qualified and experienced personnel promptly;
- capacity to mobilise significant financial resources.

d) Mechanisms for operational consultation

61. Within the context of an agreed strategy, co-ordination at the operational level requires clearly defined headquarters-field relations and the delegation of sufficient administrative and financial authority for field personnel to be able to respond to changing circumstances. In some agencies, this may require greater decentralisation of responsibility as well as the availability of specially selected and trained field personnel.

62. The peacebuilding process must be complemented by initiatives targeted at the grass-roots level. The mechanisms of co-ordination for relevant assistance therefore should be as decentralised as conditions permit, involving established national, regional and local capacities. At the local-level, the number of actors is normally more manageable than in the capital, so that a representative cross-section of the organisational interests at hand can meet regularly. This contributes to the effectiveness of co-ordination.

63. The importance of having a common information base and a shared assessment of the situation and its evolution cannot be overestimated. Many co-ordination problems arise from varying perceptions among actors, resulting in differing opinions as to the potential impact of assistance.

64. All parties should be encouraged to pool information regarding the evolving socio-political and security situation, and on progress made in the execution of the programmes and relevant actions taken by the government. Each actor should have at its disposal information on all relevant factors, including, the assistance provided by others, in order to make informed decisions. Information gathered in the field regarding programme impact, failures or inconsistencies must be transmitted to senior decision-makers at the field and headquarters' levels.

65. Not all organisations and agencies involved can necessarily attend meetings of a co-ordinating entity. Where NGOs are present in significant numbers they should be encouraged to create co-ordinating structures of their own, which can represent them in larger co-ordination and information exchange mechanisms.

66. The large volume of resources mobilised for relief and rehabilitation makes it essential to establish an up-to-date, systematic means of tracking aid flows. In this context, there is an urgent need to develop common definitions of the related nomenclature, i.e. statements of intent, pledge, commitment, obligation and disbursement. Different understandings of the same terminology can lead to confusion in the field and in headquarters and hinder attempts to develop shared databases.

e) Earmarking resources for co-ordination

67. Co-ordination requires resources. United Nations agencies, which have general co-ordination mandates cannot usually accommodate co-ordination requirements within their normal administrative budgets. Accordingly, they fall back on financing co-ordination work from project funds or from the proceeds of special appeals to the donor community. In a few cases, co-ordination costs have been covered under peacekeeping budgets voted by the General Assembly. The lack of predictability of these various methods for raising resources for co-ordination have often led to seriously underfunded situations, false economies and inefficiencies.

D. Partnerships and division of labour

68. UN agencies and other multilateral organisations are often called upon to assume a wide range of responsibilities, including co-ordination and leadership, in relation to international co-operation for relief and development assistance. This is based on an appreciation of the fact that co-ordination of external assistance is best exercised by a body perceived to be even-handed and at the same time able to embody the collective purpose of the international community. Where these organisations are not judged appropriate, other co-ordination mechanisms can be established, as noted above.

69. NGOs are significant actors in crisis and post-crisis situations. Their sheer number, diverse mandates and varying operational capacities make co-ordination essential to ensure the coherence of their combined efforts. In the absence of an effective NGO co-ordination mechanism, the mandates and fund-raising approaches of certain NGOs may skew their assistance away from effectively meeting priority needs as seen from a government, UN, or bilateral perspective. Donors relying on NGOs as channels for their assistance have a responsibility to ensure that the organisations they finance have the capability to undertake the tasks allocated to them, and conform to agreed policies, programmes and standards of behaviour.

70. The delivery of humanitarian assistance in the midst of violent conflict entails facing particularly difficult and dangerous conditions. NGOs are principal delivery vehicles, and UN specialised agencies are often heavily reliant upon them as implementing partners. As NGOs are often the first to initiate relief operations, they face particular challenges. The exceptionally difficult circumstances in which humanitarian operations are conducted to meet immediate life-saving objectives can detract from needs assessment and co-ordination efforts. This context must be kept in mind in evaluating the performance of NGOs.

Box 5. Co-ordination of humanitarian assistance in Angola

Angola returned to civil war in October 1992, after only eighteen months of peace. The resumption of fighting, and resulting humanitarian crisis took most humanitarian agencies by surprise. Within a few years, about four million Angolans were in need of emergency relief. This number almost doubled over the course of 1993 and 1994. Heavy fighting took place throughout the country. The economy collapsed, agricultural activities ceased, commercial ties broke down, social services stopped and families were separated.

In March 1993, the Government, which no longer had access to most of the territory, asked the United Nations for help in confronting the mounting humanitarian crisis. Leading donors and NGOs called for a mechanism to co-ordinate humanitarian relief. This led to the establishment of the *Unidade de Coordenacao para Assistencia Humanitaria* (UCAH) by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA).

Co-ordination not operation

Established for the purpose of co-ordination, UCAH was not charged with the implementation of programmes. This allowed it to play a leading role in objectively assessing the humanitarian needs of the populations affected by war. In this function, UCAH could draw upon the experience of staff seconded to the unit by the principal UN agencies in Angola.

By defining the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved, UCAH created acceptable conditions for co-operation. UN agencies would concentrate on “macro-level” issues such as logistics or security while field-based NGOs would focus on “micro-level” issues such as the food distribution in villages and towns.

Politically neutral and operationally independent from the UN Verification Mission, UCAH could furthermore negotiate with both the Government and the rebel movement *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) in order to identify the populations most in need of assistance and obtain safe access for relief supplies.

Co-ordination in practice included the following elements

Information exchange among bilateral donors, UN agencies and NGOs involved in emergency relief activities. This included weekly bulletins summarising main events related to the various ongoing humanitarian programmes; briefing notes on key cities and provinces; situation and needs assessment reports; and special reports on sectoral issues such as agriculture and nutrition.

Regular consultations with bilateral donors and NGOs explored specific issues and programmes, needs assessment at field level and the co-ordination and mobilisation of resources. UCAH also assisted NGOs with communication and transport, and backed their fund-raising efforts by including them in the appeal process.

Joint needs assessments were conducted with the Government or UNITA, as well as bilateral donors, UN agencies and national and international NGOs. It is noteworthy that UCAH was able to secure the co-operation of UNITA despite the sanctions imposed against the latter by the UN Security Council, following the resumption of hostilities.

Linking relief and long-term development

UCAH understood the need to frame relief actions in the context of longer term requirements of reconstruction and development. In February 1994, when the prospects for successful peace negotiations improved, UCAH highlighted the need for bilateral donors, UN agencies and NGOs to plan for post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. Priority programme areas included the reintegration of displaced people and former combatants and demining.

E. Best practices identified

71. Donors and implementing agencies have an interest in co-operating to ensure that:

- the prerequisites for sound co-ordination are established and that adequate financial resources are provided for this purpose;
- to the extent possible, and wherever appropriate, the government is encouraged to lead the co-ordination process;
- government agencies are provided with the necessary technical assistance to perform emergency management functions.

72. Efforts at co-ordination should concentrate on promoting coherent approaches to critical objectives. Whatever the mechanisms established, care must be taken that co-ordination does not inhibit rapid responses and innovation by individual donors. Within an agreed strategic framework individual actors should conduct their operations according to their own comparative advantages. Indifference or lack of support for the work of the co-ordinating entity may, however, undermine its effectiveness. Active support can be expressed in several ways, such as by:

- freely subordinating “proprietary” or other interests in order to buttress consensus programmes and policies recommended by the co-ordinating entity;
- streamlining regulations and simplifying procedures;
- staying within the confines of the common strategy agreed amongst donors and recipients;
- contributing to trust funds set up by the co-ordinating entity to advance agreed policies and programmes;
- assisting in the collection of information so that comprehensive data may be assembled on current aid programmes;
- offering to second staff to the co-ordinating entity and actively participating in co-ordination work.

73. In order to improve co-ordination of activities undertaken by NGOs, donors and NGO-funding partners (including UN agencies) should:

- Agree on common principles for funding specific kinds of operations, activities and costs, including items such as the funding of overhead and recurrent costs.
- Ensure transparency in funding NGO activities in order to avoid gaps and duplications between funding sources.
- Establish criteria for oversight and accountability of NGO-activities funded from public sources in accordance with agreed performance standards and basic humanitarian principles. The monitoring of performance should not be confined to questions of efficiency and cost-effectiveness but should also include adherence to the common strategy agreed to by donors.
- Encourage and support the activities of local NGOs, strengthening their capacity for networking with international sister-agencies.

- NGOs and others delivering services in conflict and post-conflict situations need to have gender integrated staff, to ensure appropriate communication with, and delivery of services to, the target populations.

F. Key orientations for donors

74. All parties should support the co-ordinating entity, co-operate in its effort to collect and process information, and -- whenever possible -- rally to its calls for joint action.

75. Programme managers and operational staff in the field are the best-placed to observe and judge what actually works and to identify synergies or overlaps between different programmes. Field level co-ordination requires special mechanisms to agree upon the main rules of co-ordination and the means to translate them into practice.

76. NGOs are often bound by the principles of impartiality and independence in the delivery of assistance. Seemingly impartial interventions can contribute, however, to aggravating tensions and can undermine the general objectives and principles agreed upon by donors as a group. It is the special responsibility of donors to monitor the organisations whose programmes they finance to ensure that recommended policies are being observed. Unless funding governments are ready to insist upon, when necessary, adherence to a given policy, co-ordination may suffer.

77. Local NGOs and other entities of civil society -- given their local knowledge and human resources -- may have a comparative advantage in providing support in a number of fields. These may include community development, local-level dispute management, post-crisis social and economic rehabilitation and post-conflict reconciliation and, more generally, capacity-building for disaster management. Compared with their expatriate counterparts, they may also place more emphasis on the sustainability of assistance. Local NGOs, whether independent or affiliated with an expatriate NGO, should be invited into operational and co-ordination mechanisms as full partners.

78. In the immediate post-crisis phase, there may be a period of uncertainty as to which agency should assume the co-ordination role or act as lead agency. Several organisations may be suitable and willing candidates. This signals the need for an authoritative mechanism under which the responsibility for co-ordination is assigned as early as possible, in order to minimise any potential institutional controversies. This may have to be complemented by mechanisms and procedures helping to move more rapidly to resolve differences of opinion.

79. Embassies are normally familiar with the various policy and funding issues, through their exposure to other in-country co-ordination networks, to World Bank-sponsored Consultative Group Meetings or Round Tables co-chaired by government and UNDP. They should thus be well-positioned to bring their experience and insights to bear on the co-ordination process and to integrate bilateral activities in the overall programme. These in-country co-ordinating networks should also take account of the regional dimensions of the issues they address.

80. A degree of competition may develop in the field when implementing agencies vie with each other for resources and donor support. Donors need to be aware of such competition, as it can have a crippling effect on co-ordination and effectiveness. Transparency among the various funding sources of NGO activities can greatly enhance co-ordination efforts.

81. Sectoral committees or working groups responsible for the articulation of sector-specific policies and programmes can greatly facilitate the effectiveness of co-ordination efforts. If these committees cannot be established under the leadership of the host government, they should at least include its active participation. Donors and implementing agencies can then take part in these committees where they have a particular interest. It is also possible to assign leadership responsibilities for each committee to a specific donor agency.

82. The costs of co-ordination, in terms of financial resources and staff time, must be explicitly taken into account in the formulation of aid programmes and budgets. Failure to earmark sufficient resources can severely impair co-ordination efforts, ultimately resulting in duplication and other inefficiencies.

Box 6. Co-ordination among multilateral agencies

In 1991, the United Nations General Assembly established, under the authority of an Emergency Relief Co-ordinator, a Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), with a clear mandate to take a lead role in the co-ordination of emergency aid in crisis countries. The DHA relies on the support and comparative advantage of other UN agencies that are able to bring technical or specialised contributions to the process. The following organisations have recognised mandates and responsibilities in the area of humanitarian protection and assistance:

- the UNDHA Emergency Relief Co-ordinator, for the overall co-ordination of humanitarian relief;
- the country-level UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator, who with rare exceptions is also the UN Resident Co-ordinator for Development Operations;
- the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), for the needs of refugees and persons in refugee-like situations;
- the World Food Programme (WFP), for the provision of food relief;
- UNICEF, focusing on the needs of women and children;
- the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), for migration activities;
- International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS), for general relief activities.

In most humanitarian crises, the provision of emergency assistance is combined with reconstruction and development efforts. Humanitarian actors must ensure that relief operations do not undercut the long-term objectives of development initiatives. In the multilateral sphere this falls within the fields of competence of:

- the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which deals with the full range of development issues;
- the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which advise on macroeconomics frameworks;
- specialised UN agencies and other UN programmes, each within its sector of interest, which co-operate as part of the UN Resident Co-ordinator System.

Given the frequent mix of emergency and development interventions, DHA and UNDP have worked to establish a structured and close relationship. The complementarity of mandates should enable these organisations to help bring together the various programme components in consolidated appeals for resources and to shape consensus among aid agencies on policy matters that affect the programme.

At the country level, the UN resident co-ordinator will normally assemble a "Disaster Management Team" and co-ordinate the humanitarian assistance of the UN system on behalf of DHA, seizing opportunities to facilitate the transition from relief to development.

In some countries peacekeeping operations of limited duration are established by the Security Council, giving the UN added responsibilities in the political and military area. All such activities are then co-ordinated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to whom all UN entities and specialised agencies involved are required to lend their support.

III. FROM HUMANITARIAN RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT: SOME OF THE CHALLENGES

A. *External assistance in conflict situations*

83. External assistance in complex emergencies injects substantial resources in an environment of acute scarcity, where control of resources is an important objective for contending parties. Aid is often assumed to be a powerful lever for peacebuilding and reconciliation, but it can also be counter-productive, aggravating the competition between the parties in dispute, and raising the stakes in the struggle for political control. In situations of open conflict, the right to humanitarian assistance must be maintained. At the same time, donors should be aware that even if aid is intended to be impartial in scope and purpose it can often be perceived as being the reverse, mainly favouring one of the warring parties. Aid therefore does bring a risk of fuelling tension, either as an inadvertent by-product or due to manipulations by controlling distribution.

84. Although the need for impartiality is not in dispute where humanitarian matters are concerned, it can be very difficult to operationalise in conflict situations. In cases of outright violation of human rights, ethnic cleansing, genocide or other war crimes, even-handedness, within clearly articulated and respected humanitarian criteria, may be a better guide, though also difficult to put in practice. Even-handedness is achieved when the sum of external assistance is provided in such a manner that none of the parties to conflict is able to accrue politico-military advantage. This implies that external assistance is perceived by the warring parties as being provided in a balanced way.

85. Given the inevitable political context in which humanitarian aid is provided, experience has shown that aid agencies must guard, in particular, against the following situations:

- Warring parties may try to monopolise access to humanitarian resources, in particular food, to gain political strength through the control of such key resources. Alternatively, they may benefit indirectly from selling stolen aid supplies.
- Humanitarian aid may indirectly contribute to the continuation of conflict by allowing the belligerents, whether established governments or opposition movements, to evade or defer their responsibility to address the urgent needs of civilian populations and to seek political solutions to conflict.
- Programmes which result in more attention being given to returning refugees than to internally displaced persons and other groups affected by conflict can create tensions between these groups.

86. In an environment of long-standing enmity, it will often be necessary to negotiate with the parties to secure safe passage for humanitarian relief supplies. This may serve to convince the antagonists of the even-handedness of external aid interventions and ultimately enhance the ability of aid agencies to contribute to the resolution of the conflict. Conversely, offering payment to the parties in conflict to secure access to people in need of relief can directly contribute to reinforcing the power and legitimacy of the forces of violence. The process of negotiating access for relief deliveries can also result in high-levels of diversion and biasing of assistance away from those areas in greatest need.

87. It is also essential to avoid creating dependencies among the recipients of aid. Short-term and long-term goals in relief operations can be contradictory; what makes good sense in terms of saving lives may in some circumstances make longer-term solutions harder to attain. Three examples will suffice:

- Free distribution of seeds and agricultural implements to farmers after a period of violent conflict may alleviate food shortages during the first few cropping seasons following the crisis. However, it can also produce a situation of dependency if it is continued and farmers take free distributions for granted reducing their savings and investment accordingly. Also, the free distribution of agricultural inputs to farmers cultivating on squatted land can contribute to legitimising their occupancy, sowing the seeds of future conflict when the rightful owners return. Thus, short-term considerations, such as the urgent need to “jump-start” agricultural production and the administrative burden involved in recovering the costs from beneficiaries can contradict the longer-term objectives of promoting self-reliance and reconciliation.
- The geographic concentration of people may, from a logistic point of view, facilitate the delivery of relief aid. But it may also foster dependency by distancing people from their normal means of livelihood and weaken social cohesion.
- Relief has a significant impact on local administrative institutions, which are often by-passed and weakened because of the alternative capacity of well-equipped NGOs. Reducing vulnerability and building capacity to cope depend on the evolution of competent local institutions. While heavy use of expatriate teams may be unavoidable at the start, the hand over to local institutions must be a priority.

88. Avoiding these pitfalls requires an intimate understanding of the local, national, regional and international dynamics of the conflict. External assistance must also be carefully monitored so as to identify counter-productive impacts and to harness political forces, groups and entities in support of peace and long-term reconciliation. In particular, the benefits derived by certain groups from conflict and its perpetuation (e.g. status, material gain, economic livelihood, political support, sense of individual and collective identity) need to be examined, and the political obstacles to conflict resolution identified.

89. The social impact of relief aid on different groups must also be examined. Men and women have different material and social needs, which can be considerably affected by violent conflict. Insecurity and forced displacement can result in a redistribution of access to, and control over, critical resources such as land, labour, tools, seeds. Social relations are often redefined, with new roles emerging for both men and women, and traditional values are often undermined. Relief and rehabilitation strategies that understand and respond to men and women’s differential vulnerability, and support their coping and survival strategies, can result in high-impact, more cost-effective assistance.

90. Gender should be a prime consideration when distributing resources in the context of relief and development assistance. For example, distribution of food to men can undermine women’s roles in managing household food consumption, with lasting socio-economic consequences. As important providers of resources aid agencies themselves can often help develop new roles for men and women, where appropriate, and help establish new networks of social relations.

91. The search for solutions to questions of whether to distribute through community structures, to household heads or to individuals, should begin with an understanding of the effect on gender relations. Gender analysis should identify men and women’s differing vulnerability to crises as well as their different capacities and coping strategies. It can also help identify unequal power relations underlying social organisation so that the findings can be applied to ensure that women are not further marginalised by relief interventions.

92. Giving women influence in decision-making and support for effective mechanisms for participation are key elements of a gender-aware approach. This will require staff with the appropriate training to establish

the methodology of programme appraisal to identify gender-based vulnerabilities and responses. Early in the consultation process means should be sought to ensure that women are represented in the local institutions. Thorough consultation may not always be possible in periods of acute crisis. Therefore, mechanisms to give all actors a voice in decision-making processes should be set up as soon as possible.

B. *Lessons learned*

93. In crises, the media and public opinion in donor countries can generate strong pressures for a quick aid reaction, which result in a large-scale aid response. The humanitarian imperative of responding rapidly to the needs of the largest possible number of victims is often the only viable option, and public sympathy and the media can help mobilise the resources necessary to provide relief. Such situations, however, are not necessarily conducive to considered decisions on how best to intervene. Inexperienced NGOs may hinder the work of established actors, and media attention can distort assessments of priorities, affecting the formulation of assistance programmes.

94. Agencies and NGOs specialised in disaster relief have made significant contributions in many emergencies. They have concentrated on saving lives and relieving suffering, paying less attention to the longer-term needs of recipients. There is a real need to introduce longer-term planning at the early stages of a crisis in order to promote self-reliance and avoid dependency on continued external assistance. As NGOs are often the first on the scene, they may also be thrust into policy decision-making roles by default and their actions may set the course for later programmes. The policy gap which often exists at the beginning of a crisis cannot be ignored.

95. Relief aid unaccompanied by planning beyond immediate needs can also contribute to weakening the local administration. In crisis situations, local organisations, often already weak, can be totally overwhelmed where international relief agencies set up parallel systems to procure and distribute humanitarian aid. When relief agencies leave, there is an administrative vacuum that hinders the rehabilitation effort.

C. *Bridging relief and development*

96. For the purpose of analysis, the transition from emergency crisis to long-term development has often been described as a “continuum”. This does not, however, conform to actual situations which follow no set pattern, chronology or order. Emergency relief, rehabilitation work and development assistance all co-exist in times of conflict and crisis, and they interact in innumerable ways. The challenge is to overcome the functional distinctions of the various agencies involved and to integrate, rather than merely co-ordinate, relief, rehabilitation and development objectives within the framework of a long-term strategy.

97. Periods of extended crisis offer opportunities for investments aimed at improving the capacity to cope with crisis, particularly among vulnerable groups. For example, building up emergency food and seed stocks at the community-level can contribute directly to limiting the risk of massive dislocation of people when disaster strikes, reducing the impact of humanitarian emergencies and the need for relief assistance. In practice, the recognised importance of disaster preparedness in sustainable development strategies is not matched by resource allocations, which are usually a small fraction of funds devoted to humanitarian assistance.

98. It is often possible to reconcile within the same activity short and long-term objectives and to address simultaneously the needs for relief, improved disaster preparedness and development. For example, a typical food-for-work project to rebuild community infrastructure can:

- provide relief through the distribution of food rations (emergency);
- provide legitimate employment opportunities and work skills, including to recently demobilised soldiers (emergency and rehabilitation);
- rehabilitate a school building that has been destroyed (reconstruction);
- help create the national capacity to administer similar projects in future emergencies (preparedness);
- help ensure that primary education is not unduly interrupted (development).

99. Emergency aid can also make use of existing local markets and entrepreneurs for the delivery of relief supplies. Business networks are often active despite civil disorder, and can be used for the distribution of essential goods in rural areas and for bringing surplus crops from farm-gate to the market. Where rural commercial networks have vanished entirely, their re-establishment poses a major challenge, particularly in relief environments dominated by the free distribution of food and other goods.

100. A constructive way of linking humanitarian assistance and development-oriented interventions is the systematic mapping of existing social and productive assets of districts and regions affected by the crisis. Detailed baseline data, recording the results of rehabilitation activities carried out at the district level by official aid agencies, NGOs and private commercial operations is very useful. It can provide knowledge of the current situation, early warning signals indicating a need for preventive action, and help in assessing the impact of assistance. Sharing the results of such mapping among donors can be a useful tool for fund-raising and for operational co-ordination.

D. Best practices identified

a) During the planning phase

- All complex emergencies are different and situation-specific strategies need to be developed for each crisis. A thorough understanding of local conditions is vital.
- Limit the scope and duration of emergency relief operations to the strict minimum and plan the implementation of post-emergency operations at an early stage.
- Cease parallel relief and rehabilitation delivery systems as early as feasible.
- Examine the risk that development and relief aid can prolong a crisis by creating large groups of dependent beneficiaries and by providing supplies used by protagonists in the conflict.

b) Towards beneficiaries and local institutions

- Support local capacities to take over the running of aid operations as soon as possible. Avoid over-funding local structures, creating expectations that may not be maintained. Introduce effective control procedures, through, for example, double signatures on cost recovery revenue accounts. Emphasise bottom-up support in strengthening local capacity.

- Consult beneficiaries and inform them in advance of important changes, such as the replacement of free food with food-for-work projects and cost recovery policies.
- Incorporate gender analysis into relief and rehabilitation programming as standard practice, paying attention to the specific needs of women, particularly in single-headed households, and wherever possible building on and supporting the distinct coping/survival strategies of men and women.

c) Towards partner agencies

- Agree on a code of conduct, in particular as regards contact and co-operation with factions in a civil conflict; strict impartiality is essential. Payments for “protection services” cannot be justified as they provide an incentive to factions to maintain insecurity and ransom humanitarian aid.
- Set up information exchange mechanisms between agencies in the field and at headquarters. Implement pooling arrangements in logistics to reduce costs and to limit the scope for misappropriation of aid by the parties in conflict.

E. Key orientations for donors

101. Conflict involves control of resources and it must be recognised that the injection of resources into these situations inevitably means involvement in the conflict. This is an important factor for humanitarian assistance but also for development co-operation. Thus, the risk is not just that outside parties may be perceived as partial, but that their resources can be diverted and used by warring factions. In short, there is an undeniable political impact of relief assistance and longer-term development assistance in conflict situations.

102. The political impact of relief must be recognised explicitly. Development and relief assistance can confer power to local organisations involved in its distribution and challenge other economic and social structures. Food and other forms of aid can be misappropriated by combatants for commercial gain or for power-brokering purposes. Aid agencies may thus find themselves accused of taking sides (feeding the enemy), and indirectly contribute to prolonging the crisis. This must be addressed explicitly in crisis management programmes.

103. A careful analysis of the social context is critical where relief goods, notably food, are channelled through local community organisations. This can help minimise the risk of inequitable distributions and avoid reinforcing any existing patterns of exploitation. Special consideration should be given to the gender dimensions. This should take into account women’s needs and potentials in various sectors, develop projects in view of women’s roles in the household, society, and the economy, make projects and aid accessible to women, use gender-trained staff, and improve target-group orientation through participatory planning and flexible project design.

104. Independent agencies and NGOs should be encouraged to analyse the potential socio-political impacts of aid distribution, and to develop standards for their activities in post-conflict operations. These could be based on commonly agreed principles such as the Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements.

105. The transition from crisis to long-term development follows no set pattern or order. The distinction between emergency relief and long-term development aid is not always useful for planning support to countries in crisis. Institutional, budgetary and functional walls between relief assistance and rehabilitation can in fact produce contradictions, gaps and barriers to co-ordination. Integrating the planning of relief and development assistance within the context of long-term approaches aimed at fostering self-reliance is a major challenge.

106. The role of development assistance in preventing violent conflict, or mitigating its effect, should be examined systematically. In areas where the potential for violent civil conflict is high, assistance must focus on addressing the root causes of violence before it erupts. In this context, the concept of vulnerability is important in identifying the groups most at risk.

*Box 7. Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief for the International Red Cross
and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs*

The Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief, completed in 1994 by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and major NGOs, aims to define standards of behaviour and ensure independence, effectiveness and impact for humanitarian aid operations. The principles elaborated for NGOs involved in disaster relief programmes include:

- the humanitarian imperative comes first; aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind;
- aid priorities are evaluated on the basis of need alone; aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint;
- NGOs shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy; NGOs shall respect culture and custom;
- NGOs shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities;
- ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid;
- relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerability to disaster as well as meeting basic needs;
- NGOs shall be accountable to both beneficiaries and donors.

107. The identification of “dependency syndromes” is an essential exercise for national and international aid agencies. Careful assessment of needs, based on detailed knowledge of locally available resources is required for making proper judgements of the aid required, in terms of quantity as well as quality.

108. Avoiding market distortions, especially in the food production sector, is essential to counteract dependency on aid. Free distribution of food aid can do long-term damage to local food producers. It is important, therefore, to monitor the impact of food aid on the local supply and pricing mechanisms. At the onset of each crisis and in parallel with any relief operation, efforts must be made by donors to ensure protection and/or supply of development assets such as livestock, seeds and tools.

109. If local government is non-existent, other local structures or NGOs could be engaged. If they lack capacity, they can be trained by counterpart international NGOs. Care must be taken that salaries offered by aid agencies do not rob the local administration of qualified staff. Addressing this question requires that explicit standards for local staff recruitment and remuneration for humanitarian relief programmes be accepted and applied by all donors.

110. Excessive reliance on international NGOs may serve to weaken or inhibit the development of effective national governance. It may also impede the development of problem-solving and self-governing capabilities within communities. International NGOs should be encouraged to form structured relationships with national and local NGOs -- both those involving men and women -- with the goal of helping to build the capacity of all segments of the population.

IV. FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACEBUILDING: GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

A. *Basic principles*

111. Peacebuilding involves both long-term preventive measures and more immediate responses before, during and after conflict. It depends upon and, at the same time, seeks to foster a spirit of tolerance and reconciliation. Broad acceptance throughout society of the legitimacy of the state and the credibility of the institutions of governance is a key aspect of forging such a civic spirit. When all people's human rights are respected, when society is governed by the rule of law, and when ordinary men and women are involved in the political process, resort to violence to effect political change is obviously less likely. Efforts to support participation, democratisation and peacebuilding, through strengthened institutions of governance, are clearly interlinked.

112. In countries divided by inter-group conflict, certain elements of civil society may be able to play an important role in building bridges between polarised groups, promoting dialogue and reconciliation. Conditions of insecurity, sometimes aggravated by the exploitation of ethnic, religious and cultural differences, contribute to a climate of social distrust. However, socio-political conflict itself can also provide a stimulus for the emergence of new actors and institutions specifically dedicated to the cause of peace. These can include human rights networks, peace activist groups, and independent media organisations. Other stabilisation points or "voices of peace" can be found among community and religious leaders, traditional forms of authority, in trade unions and professional associations.

113. In the case of "failed states", or in countries where certain areas are controlled by non-government or anti-government authorities, local level, non-state mechanisms may be the most effective means through which peacebuilding and conflict management can be animated. Even though not all elements of civil society necessarily work toward peace, the opportunities often exist, even in crises, for a society to develop and strengthen commonly-held values and goals. By identifying and supporting key actors and mechanisms dedicated to peace and reconciliation at the community level, and avoiding inadvertent support to "forces of war", donors can make an effective contribution to peacebuilding.

B. *Building-blocks for peacebuilding and reconciliation*

114. Given their sensitive and complex nature, governance oriented assistance programmes need a strong base of political commitment in both donor and recipient countries over the long term. Assistance efforts should consistently emphasise the strengthening of partner-countries' own capacities for good governance. Mechanisms to help strengthen political will for reform in partner countries often involve elements of policy dialogue and incentives. The *DAC Orientations on Participatory Development and Good Governance*, Development Co-operation Guidelines Series, OECD 1995, provide a sound framework for these efforts. In discussing the design of development co-operation programmes with partner countries, donors can, without proselytising or understating the complexities, consistently emphasise the need for good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and the development of a strong civil society, as a basis for long-term stability.

115. The various elements in a vigorous civil society do not necessarily set out to achieve a broad consensus. Yet the chances for a society to develop and strengthen commonly-held values and goals, and the ability and willingness of the individual to participate in mainstream society are vital components of peacebuilding and sustainable development. In the longer term, donors can contribute to this through, among other activities:

- support to government institutions and other organisations, including the business community, which are able to establish or maintain social networks and associations enhancing participation in mainstream society, or who support or promote commonly shared values, such as cultural and athletic programmes;
- support for access to information through education, and institutions such as citizens advice bureau's, local media, etc.;
- support to local NGOs and community-based organisations to help them become more capable and responsive to their constituencies.

116. Although DAC Members usually rely to the maximum extent on measures of positive support, they may need to call upon persuasion and dialogue when working with some partner governments to promote constructive steps towards improved governance. Policy criteria focused on promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance should be integrated in a wider range of development assistance programmes in this area.

117. The most basic tenets of democratic practice require broad acceptance by the state and civil society. Democratisation is thus a complex, gradual, and participatory process whereby citizens, civil society, and the state create a set of norms, values, and institutions to mediate their relationships in a predictable, representative and fair manner. Development co-operation efforts in support of improved governance and participation must be framed over the long-term horizon, based on coherent strategies consistently applied by different donors and multilateral agencies. This requires effective co-ordination among all actors involved in the design and implementation of programmes.

118. Approaches to governance must be adapted to national circumstances. For example, when dealing with authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states, the scope for constructive dialogue may be severely limited, and donors may have to restrict their assistance to non-governmental sectors committed to reform. In the case of countries in transition to democratic systems, support may concentrate on strengthening civil society actors and democratic political processes. Donors must also be careful to avoid precipitating political and economic instability through the sudden introduction of democratic institutions.

a) Respect for human rights

119. The fundamental freedoms that should be protected by the rule of law are essential for healthy relations between the state and civil society.

120. DAC Members must support the international principles contained in the UN Charter, and elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Vienna Declaration (1994). They must also comply with the provisions of the international and regional conventions to which they have adhered, such as the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) the Red Cross Conventions (Geneva 1949) in the field of humanitarian law, and the Additional Protocols (1977) which aim to provide protection to persons not taking an active part in conflict and to the victims of conflicts, as well as the Convention on the Status of Refugees (Geneva 1951). More generally, internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms should be explicitly promoted and supported through development co-operation and humanitarian aid initiatives and policy dialogue.

121. Active non-governmental interest groups can be important vehicles for donor initiatives in support of human rights, by providing information in a given country and building a constituency for promoting human rights vis-à-vis governments and public opinion. Similarly, targeting groups who are close to or represent the victims of injustice and misuse of power can also be effective (e.g. women's groups, farmer co-operatives). Channelling aid through international NGOs benefits from their influence, professionalism and neutrality, and local human rights groups may gain protection and enhanced capacity through association with international networks.

122. Donor assistance in this area should be used as part of a wider promotion of just and sustainable development, providing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups with knowledge about their human and legal rights, as well as the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship. Efforts to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights must place emphasis on the institutions and processes which formulate and interpret law and social policy (legislatures and courts), as well as on those which implement and enforce them (government departments, police forces, military actors). Experience has shown these approaches work best when integrated into an overall strategy, rather than in isolation.

b) Participatory processes

i) Participation

123. Fostering popular participation in the governance agenda is essential to peacebuilding. Participation strengthens civil society and the economy by empowering individuals, communities, and organisations to negotiate with institutions and bureaucracies, thus allowing civil society to influence public policy and to provide a check on the power of government. Participation also aids in dealing with conflicting interests in a peaceful manner. It follows that the creation of a climate and the capacity for constructive interaction between civil society and government is a critical component for long-term peacebuilding.

Box 8. Decentralisation

Decentralisation can stimulate local and regional participation in decision-making, thereby improving the accountability and legitimacy of government. It can improve the responsiveness of the state, and thereby reduce tensions which may lead to violent conflicts.

However, if decentralisation is perceived as affecting the allocation of resources, income, or employment opportunities at the expense of certain ethnic or religious groups, there is a danger that such identity traits may be politicised and mobilised. Thus, decentralisation could exacerbate separatist and regional pressures and their violent manifestations.

Central authorities, whose commitment to the decentralisation is needed for reform, may see diffusion as a threat to their power. Thus strengthening local government requires an understanding of the structure of incentives facing political leaders at both the central and local government levels.

124. Specific areas of donor support include:

- providing specialised technical assistance and expertise in the field of decentralisation policy (introduction of decentralised planning and administration structures);
- clarifying functional responsibilities between central and local levels of government. This includes support for the establishment of systems to allocate fiscal revenues and corresponding responsibilities;
- strengthening organisational capacities of representative intermediary bodies, including regional parliaments and local councils;
- strengthening the representation of marginalised groups in civil service posts.

125. Within the context of projects aimed at the provision of basic social services as education, health and infrastructure, donors can also play an important role in helping ensure that these services are made available to all segments of society, and especially marginalised groups.

ii) Democratic processes

126. Democratisation enables the population to articulate its needs and interests and to protect the rights and interests of marginalised groups, and the most vulnerable. A democratic system also provides mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including the distribution of political and economic power, and mechanisms for transferring political control. By supporting and consolidating democratic institutions, which include political parties and representative institutions, donors can contribute to building peace and stability.

127. The following list draws on available experience, to suggest broad approaches towards strengthening democratisation with direct conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives:

- support for constitutional reforms, including provision of advice to governments on constitutional and legislative issues;
- assistance to strengthen representative political institutions, including political parties;
- support for legislative systems and electoral processes, including informing the electorate about their rights, election monitoring, analysis and reform of laws governing elections;
- assistance for the organisation and monitoring of elections and referendums. This should contain a capacity building element so that a country may develop the pool of skills necessary to the organisation and monitoring of its electoral processes;
- assistance for the organisation and monitoring of other democratic institutions (e.g. courts, legislative bodies and the executive).

c) *Strengthening public institutions*

128. Public institutions are the means through which government implements policy. Partiality and corruption in the public institutions responsible for managing public resources and social services directly

undermines the credibility of the state. This can encourage marginalised groups to resort to violent means to effect change.

129. A state which may appear to have considerable capacity may really be ill-equipped for its basic functions. State institutions may be non-representative, non-accountable and under the control of certain elite individuals or groups. Helping strengthen the ability of institutions to perform their core functions in a more effective and non-discriminatory manner, can be an important part of peacebuilding.

130. Specific areas of donor activity can include:

- Support for the executive branch to help improve efficiency of the delivery of government services and promote transparency, sound management, and the eradication of corruption. Support should focus on institutions seriously committed to reform.
- Civil service reform focusing on improving impartiality of, and access to, public institutions, thus helping to eliminate discrimination and bias.
- Strengthening the control by civilian institutions over political and economic affairs, and the armed forces (including military budgets and expenditures).

d) Strengthening systems of security and justice

131. To be effective, justice systems, including security forces, must recognise and protect the rights of the individual and be accessible to all. They must be impartial and politically independent. Ineffective justice and security systems may encourage people to take the law into their own hands. As elements of security and justice systems can have an important role to play in conflict prevention, international assistance in these areas, can be very potent elements of conflict prevention and development strategies.

132. Successful support in these areas depends on the willingness of the recipient government to accept the need for, and recognise the value of, effective justice systems to overall good governance, social stability/harmony and good economic management. Dialogue with governments may be required to persuade them of the advantages of effective, internationally sanctioned norms of law and justice. Security and justice systems are basic responsibilities of the state and are at the core of a country's sovereignty. Efforts should not undermine but rather strengthen respect for the state's monopoly over the use of force within the rule of law.

133. In order to maximise the effectiveness of their assistance, donors must have a broad awareness of their agency's and nation's skills, experience and cultural background which may indicate how best to target development assistance. Donors should also draw upon the knowledge and expertise of a range of fields, including foreign affairs, defence and development co-operation.

i) Justice systems

134. A predictable and reliable legal system is an essential factor for democratisation, good governance and human rights. The absence of a fair justice system can trigger frustrations which impede peacebuilding and conflict prevention. A justice system perceived as unpredictable, inaccessible and arbitrary can trigger resistance within society, and confrontation and repression by the state. Hence all efforts to strengthen peacebuilding and conflict prevention capacity through development co-operation are conditioned to some extent by the legal environment in which they are undertaken. The maintenance of law and order must be

matched by a commitment on the part of government to meeting citizens' basic needs and safeguarding their basic rights.

135. Aid should be proactive in helping to develop and maintain mechanisms that honour basic human rights, improve non-discriminatory access to legal and judicial services, and facilitate the peaceful resolution of disputes. Donors can help defuse tensions by providing support to measures that ensure all individuals, and groups within a society have access to legal remedies, informal decision-making processes and avenues of compromise.

136. While many traditional societies often maintain complex and effective codes of social conduct, they are not always able to meet the demands of an open society. However, the benefits and efficacy of existing traditional systems should not be overlooked. Donors should be open to local initiatives for strengthening such traditional structures as village courts and the roles of traditional leaders.

137. Assistance should be focused on:

- formal law and justice institutions i.e. courts, ombudsmen, law reform commissions, civilian police forces, and prison/detention services;
- communal, traditional law enforcement/dispute resolution structures and groups;
- other agencies which operate in areas that have to face conditions of communal conflict i.e. resource management authorities;
- facilitating access to legal systems for individuals and groups, especially those which are marginalised.

138. Given the complexity and sensitivity of many of the development issues in the law and justice sector, there is a need for flexibility when designing interventions. Aid agencies should investigate innovative projects which can approach the task through various types of support. These may include:

- projects designed to create links between the formal and informal institutions operating in the areas of law and justice, to foster greater community acceptance and commitment to law and justice initiatives (complementing approaches to strengthen the formal institutions in isolation);
- support for monitoring human rights abuses; and
- support for professional training for lawyers and policy-makers.

Box 9. Supporting the justice system in Cambodia

As a consequence of a series of repressive government administrations, Cambodia experienced the almost total destruction of its formal legal systems. Moreover, the massive dislocation of communities has resulted in the disintegration of many traditional mechanisms of arbitration. This has left the country without effective means to resolve disputes and protect the human rights of its citizens. The law and order vacuum presents a substantial barrier to democratic reform and to general economic development. For example, the inability of existing systems to effectively manage investigatory, judicial and imprisonment processes has resulted in the detention and incarceration of people charged with petty offences alongside hardened criminals (sometimes for months) before their cases are properly dealt with. They are literally “lost” in the system.

The loss of institutional memory on basic legal procedure and systems of justice led to a series of donor fact-finding missions during 1994 and 1995. The principal objectives of these missions were to document the state of the sector and to identify appropriate areas for assistance. Specialist teams conducted detailed interviews with Cambodian ministry officials, senior management of the judiciary, prison and law enforcement agencies, and other donors and NGOs operating in the sector.

The project design proposes the introduction of reforms in the prison, judicial and police institutions of the capital, Phnom Penh, and in four provincial centres. This will allow for testing and refinement of procedures and practices and provide models for institutional reform throughout Cambodia. In designing the project, it emerged that it would be important to undertake a number of supporting initiatives including:

- further investigation of alternative community justice mechanisms which could complement the services provided by the formal system; and
- the development of appropriate non-penal sanctions to avoid possible excessive growth in prison populations which could result from the stronger administration of criminal justice.

An unanticipated outcome of this examination of the existing system has been the stimulation of a number of locally-initiated reforms, particularly in the prison sector. These have arisen largely as a consequence of the information exchanges between Cambodian officials and visiting project design teams.

ii) Security sector reform

139. Conditions of socio-political conflict can often contribute to increasing the power and independence of military and police forces vis-à-vis civilian authorities and the population. Reforming security forces to improve accountability and professional conduct and strengthening civilian oversight, can play an important role in peacebuilding. Taking these efforts in parallel with activities designed to strengthen legal systems and civil society as a whole can help promote informed debate and wider participation in these processes.

140. Specific areas of international assistance include: a) the provision of training for civilian leaders in security matters including for monitoring the conduct, performance and cost-effectiveness of security forces; b) the establishment of independent ombudsmen offices, civilian review boards and other forms of civil oversight of security forces; c) the provision of training for police and military forces focusing on their roles in a democratic society and their capacity to enforce standards of professional conduct; d) support for the reform of military education systems.

141. The extent to which these activities can be supported from development co-operation funds will depend upon Member states’ rules and procedures. Nonetheless, positive outcomes can be achieved through close co-ordination between development co-operation and other forms of assistance. Successful efforts

towards security sector reform depend heavily on the existence of a justice system capable of investigating and punishing abuses and misconduct. Thus security and justice systems are intimately linked.

iii) Human rights training

142. The role of the military is changing rapidly in many countries. Defence and security forces are increasingly being used in domestic policing operations and in disaster relief and prevention work. While some military forces may have received training in the basic principles of humanitarian law, few have received appropriate training in the broader principles of human rights. This training is critical for these groups to operate appropriately in domestic situations. As representatives of the international community, peacekeeping forces must be prepared for, and held to, the highest standards in this regard.

143. Culturally sensitive training in human rights can help assure appropriate relations with the civilian population in these situations. Such training needs to be tailored to country-specific situations, but also based on internationally accepted principles as elaborated in international human rights instruments. Given that it is widely acknowledged that women often bear the brunt of the consequences of conflict both domestically and in the wider social context, human rights training should particularly target gender specific concerns and issues.

144. In addition to the provision of training, logistical support for the supply of equipment may be needed, providing infrastructure to assist the target agency to carry out its functions. However, in the area of equipment supply, there can be particular sensitivities. The potential for misuse of assistance must be carefully considered. For instance, equipment for police, while entirely appropriate if properly used, has greater potential for significant misuse than equipment in most other areas.

145. Justice and dispute resolution systems must also integrate respect for and promotion of human rights as fundamental principles. Donors can contribute to strengthening institutions and training personnel who have a role in protecting human rights and managing conflict. Key candidates for human rights training are military, police, judges, legal and paralegal professionals and prison personnel. Other groups that would benefit from human rights training include community leaders and educators.

C. *Reinforcing civil society for peacebuilding and reconciliation*

146. The institutions of civil society play a vital function in representing different interest groups, but when they confront resistance or inadequate accommodation processes, heightened tensions, oppression and increased levels of violence can result. Support to civil society should maintain the objective of helping to reconcile group interests over the longer-term. "Citizen diplomacy" at various levels can provide vital capacities for this reconciliation.

147. In regions of latent or manifest violence, actors within civil society may be inhibited from playing a peacebuilding role by intimidation and attack. Information and communication networks may be especially vulnerable. Group divisions may also be exacerbated and special efforts may be required to help protect the human rights of people in minority situations. However, these same conditions may also generate the impetus for the emergence of new actors and institutions, such as human rights networks and peace activist groups. In certain circumstances this may also include the re-emergence of traditional forms of authority and techniques of conflict management and resolution.

148. While seeking to identify sources of peacebuilding strength in society, development agencies need to be alert to the risk that their support for particular social institutions and authorities can be misrepresented

and misunderstood. Some traditional groups may be elitist and oppressive; some NGOs or other local groups may be instruments of contending factions. These alternative or supplementary peacebuilding agents should be subjected to the same scrutiny that the work of other “partner” institutions typically receive, and their most positive aspects built upon.

149. Specific areas for donor support fall into three broad areas: a) supporting some traditional institutions of authority; b) promoting dialogue and co-operation in divided societies; and c) supporting the freedom of, and access to, information for all members of society.

a) Supporting some traditional institutions

150. Traditional authorities and mechanisms often reflect systems and institutions developed over-time to help manage inter-group tensions and natural resource distribution. In some instances informal dispute resolution mechanisms and traditional authorities exercise considerable influence over national political leaders, even if this influence is not always visible.

151. Where the authority of a government is weak, traditional authority institutions often have a significant influence on communities and can be essential mechanisms for effective peacebuilding. There have, for instance, been many cases where traditional and informal peacebuilding mechanisms have reasserted themselves to the benefit of local communities following the collapse of state authority.

152. Donor activities in support of traditional peacebuilding initiatives should seek to build on those traditional authority institutions which include community elders, religious leaders, and tribal councils, that contribute to the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation in a significant and constructive way.

153. Supporting the development of the political space within which indigenous groups can work out their own solutions to problems is especially difficult. It requires a long-term commitment to traditional conflict management institutions and processes; a thorough understanding of, and sensitivity to, cultural factors relevant to conflict prevention and resolution; and a willingness to build a relationship of trust with local partners, based on significant and long-term involvement in the country.

b) Promoting dialogue and co-operation in divided societies

i) Inter-community relations

154. In divided societies, efforts to foster inter-community relations, including trade, information exchanges, and dialogue can play an important role in defusing inter-community tensions, breaking down long-standing social barriers, and fostering tolerance and understanding. The building of social networks of trust not only contributes to social reconstruction, but also to the building of the social capital that can help prevent recurring outbreaks of violent conflict in the future.

155. Specific areas of donor support include programmes to support intercultural understanding, to promote multilingualism and cultural expression by minorities and indigenous people, and to promote the identification of shared heritage, values and goals across different social groups. Such assistance should primarily focus on nurturing social or institutional networks and organisations that can act as stabilising points in society.

156. In both conflict-prone and war-torn societies, donors can undertake activities with explicit reconciliatory objectives, which seek to build links between competing groups. This can include:

- Within standard relief and rehabilitation work, incorporating measures to facilitate the reconciliation of conflicting groups in a society. For example: programmes which focus on reintegrating potentially destabilising elements (e.g. ex-combatants, youth) within wider social and economic life.
- Programmes which focus on providing support to, or distributing resources through “stabilising points” (e.g. multi-ethnic committees, women's organisations) within communities as a means of strengthening trust.

157. Important target groups for such activities include farmers co-operatives, youth associations, and other goal or issue-oriented associations with multicultural memberships.

158. Women can play special roles as bridging partners in dialogue, peace negotiations, reconstruction and rehabilitation strategies and contribute their special experience and perceptions to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. In many instances, women’s organisations can help in preventing and ending hostilities by acting as informal negotiators, lobby groups, campaigners and demonstrators. Women often have less inhibition and more legitimacy than militarised men in protesting against violent conflict and pushing for peace.

Box 10. The role of women in the transition process in Sierra Leone

In 1994 women in Sierra Leone began defining their agenda for the Beijing Conference. It was during this process that they identified the need to organise in support of the peace process, and take an active role in Sierra Leone’s transition to democracy.

Women’s groups in Freetown began mobilising support and demanding peace. They saw democratic elections as a vehicle for resolving the drawn-out conflict in their country. They worked to bring the rebels to the negotiating table and to establish dialogue. Village women went into rural areas singing songs and calling on rebels to lay down their arms. In one instance a planned meeting was discovered by the military, and the women who had gone to meet the rebels were massacred in the cross-fire.

However, women’s groups all over the country persevered, mobilising substantial support among labour unions, teachers and civic organisations, and traditional society, for democratic elections. Despite attempts by both the military and rebels, including atrocities and severe human rights violations, to derail the process, elections were held and the military government replaced by a civilian one.

Ironically, while working for peace these groups failed to ensure their own inclusion on electoral lists. Most women, despite their activism in the peace process, were not yet prepared to run as individual candidates for political positions. This resulted in the election of only two women parliamentarians, and two women appointed to ministerial level positions, one in charge of Gender and Children’s Affairs, the other in charge of Tourism and Culture.

159. As agreed in the Platform for Action at the Beijing Women's Conference (1995), women should be assured equal opportunities to participate in peace fora and activities. Agencies also need to focus on developing efficient strategies and approaches to empower and encourage them to play more assertive roles in shaping a peaceful and viable future for their country through exercises in confidence-building; leadership; negotiation skills, etc.

160. Donors can also provide assistance to local and national advocacy groups and networks or religious organisations, working towards inter-group peace by supporting the establishment of forums of discussion and concertation, to encourage discussions between members of communities in conflict.

161. The rationale for these approaches rests on the argument that the constructive relations built at the personal or professional level can eventually be reflected at broader societal levels thus resulting in a multiplier effect. The regional potentials of cultural networking and the socio-cultural and psychological impact of cultural work provide further strong arguments for these approaches.

ii) Mediation and negotiation

162. By strengthening skills for effective arbitration, mediation, negotiation and reconciliation, development agencies can help to increase the chances that conflict prevention, management and resolution strategies will be accepted as appropriate and legitimate by the actors themselves.

Box 11. Developing the capacity for peacebuilding and reconciliation in South Africa

During the apartheid era in Southern Africa when state-state co-operation was not possible, development agencies funded a broad range of non-governmental projects which sought explicitly to develop the capacity of exiled and anti-apartheid South Africans to negotiate a peaceful transition, and to participate fully in a post-apartheid South Africa.

This included: leadership training workshops for labour leaders, as well as for women leaders specifically; training in broad management and organisational skills; the organisation of a wide network of respected committees to monitor political activity and help contain potential violence; and efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and institutional capacity of national civil movements.

In the post-apartheid era, internationally-supported training and exchange programmes for public officials and community leaders play a continuing role in developing their capacity to represent and negotiate constituents' interests in the political arena, while fostering a better understanding of the structures and processes of political institutions. Examples are not limited to South Africa. Similar work has been undertaken in South Asia, Central America and elsewhere -- often under programmes for good governance and institutional strengthening.

163. Training for effective arbitration, mediation, negotiation, and reconciliation efforts builds and cultivates the skills necessary for participation in the restructuring of the society, economy, and political institutions. Such training should target groups and individuals, particularly women, in positions to play critical roles in the transition to a more just and equitable future.

164. Development projects aiming at addressing such concrete issues as land or water management, health and transportation can also provide important avenues for inter-community co-operation. By bringing together technical specialists from communities in conflict to open up dialogue on mutual interests they can be

instrumental in fostering a shared sense of identity, and facilitating the identification of common approaches towards joint solutions to socio-economic challenges and constraints. Beyond their concrete development impact these projects have a broader confidence-building impact on society, enable different groups to better identify common goals, and also facilitate effective participatory development processes.

165. Development agencies can also strengthen development initiatives designed explicitly to facilitate discussion and dialogue between members of communities in conflict. These types of projects encourage constructive contact between individuals and community-based organisations within conflict-prone regions in order to break down long-standing social barriers, and to create a favourable peacebuilding environment. Such projects should often involve the most vulnerable groups, such as children and mothers, from opposing sides of a conflict.

iii) Education and cross-cultural training

166. Through support for education, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, development agencies have a crucial, if sensitive, role to play in furthering non-violent solutions to intergroup conflict and breaking the cycle of intergroup hostility and conflict along ethnic, cultural and sectarian lines. This can range from support for the development of non-partisan curricula and textbooks, to help cultivate and disseminate shared values such as tolerance and pluralism, to specific assistance for “peace education” initiatives, designed to help create a better understanding of the origins and history of societal relations and promote inter-group co-operation and reconciliation. The considerable development co-operation resources currently allocated to the field of education in many countries should place donors in a good position to play a central role in these areas.

167. The effect that disrupted schooling can have on children who witness brutality and the breakdown of social and moral structures can increase societal instability. This can inhibit learning processes on how to deal with disputes without resorting to violence, and how to co-exist peacefully with other religions and ethnic groups, thus reinforcing the conflictual history of inter-group relations.

c) *Supporting the freedom of, and access to, information*

168. The importance of a free press for encouraging democratic tendencies and respect for human and civil rights is well recognised. Conversely, the dissemination of distorted or biased information can fuel tensions in politically and socially unstable environments. The media and information providers have a unique capacity to reach and influence populations in conflict-prone conditions and a crucial role to play in the promotion of dialogue in divided societies. Controlled media have been used on many occasions to exacerbate communal hatred, disseminate propaganda, and distort events to bolster the position of one side. During periods of crisis, simple access to free, fair and complete information can contribute significantly to easing tensions.

169. Local tensions and localised communal violence are often as much the result of misinformation and misunderstanding as of real conflicting interests. Local channels of communication and access to information on events in the wider society can help prevent these from escalating towards violence. Media reporting which is fair (including all views), accurate (reporting context, not just events) and complete (reporting processes and objectives that underlie stated positions), can be crucial to defuse conflict potentials.

170. In its social education role, unbiased coverage by the media can address many social issues of concern to the target audience, and in the process it can help to reduce tensions and build trust across society.

Important information is often related to health, literacy and numeracy, farming, and the environment. In areas of conflict, this can also be extended to include issues such as landmine awareness, war trauma, the Geneva Conventions on the treatments of prisoners, the wounded and civilians, and tracing missing persons, as well as peace accords and demobilisation processes. Independent media may provide a “voice” for the disadvantaged, as well as watchdog mechanisms for ensuring the accountability of leaders. In a peacebuilding context, it may also ensure that each side to a dispute is allowed to hear the other’s position, thereby opening lines of communication where few might otherwise exist.

171. In supporting the media’s capacity as a means to inform the actions of social and political actors, donors must consider the identity of the target audience and their cultural traditions, before considering the choice of the media and scheduling of broadcasts. These are particularly important in conflict zones where there are unlikely to be any support activities on the ground to facilitate understanding and reinforce messages. Involving the community in the design, planning and delivery of activities strengthens ownership and commitment.

Box 12. The media as a social educator in Somalia

Radio listening is a way of life in Somalia, which makes radio an important channel through which to try and influence attitudes and behaviour in this notoriously complex and intractable conflict situation. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have attempted to broadcast humanitarian messages through the BBC Somali Language Service, and UNICEF has also funded the Radio Voice of Peace which broadcasts from Addis Ababa.

When the ICRC and the BBC World Service’s Somali Section embarked on an imaginative drama series emphasising the need for humanitarian values in war and exploring ways of resolving the conflict, there was a mixed reaction. Some listeners were very positive and appreciated the emphasis towards peace in the BBC series. But in a ICRC survey, other listeners saw the drama as a plot by one sub-clan to criticise their rivals. The problem was the choice of actors - their accents gave away their clan, and the name of their imaginary village, which turned out to be a real village, added to their suspicions that the drama was a veiled attack by one clan on another. If the peacebuilding messages were to have any chance of being influential, they would have to have been perceived as being non-judgmental and non-partisan.

This case illustrates the potential pitfalls of this form of pro-active broadcasting to a highly factionalised society: Somali listeners are highly discerning. It is quite common for them to compare BBC broadcasts in Somali, English and Swahili and assume that any discrepancy is part of a BBC conspiracy. This is symptomatic of a phenomenon which all mass media face in conflict areas: through personal suffering or commitment their audience have often lost their ability to remain impartial.

172. Specific areas of donor support include:

- helping establish or revise appropriate laws on the independence and freedom of the media (e.g. slander laws);
- training for local editorial staff in reporting on conflicts, to help develop high quality, accurate coverage;

- the establishment/maintenance of autonomous (or independent) national and local media institutions (including community-level or rural radio broadcasts) and their commitment to high professional and ethical standards, through technical and financial support;
- local coverage of events by the international media in circumstances where it would otherwise not be financially viable;
- projects and programmes which assist state actors to understand and support the role of the media in a democratic society, and which provide material, financial, and legal assistance to the media to pursue the same goal.

173. In countries in which access to information is limited or restricted, or where the state or partisan groups controls overall information content, it may be necessary to identify and support informal information and communication channels. In these situations donors, working with the international media, may also help empower otherwise oppressed local media.

174. Support to the media to provide channels of communication between opposing perspectives must be an on-going process: training for local journalists and producers needs follow-up support, particularly in the difficult circumstances of conflict; technical support for independent media should be tied to training, both editorial, technical and managerial, for higher quality programming. The focus of interventions should not be geared solely to front-line journalists, but also to news editors, managers, and where circumstances permit, political authorities, who may have ultimate control over information flows.

175. Training and staffing of media should be gender balanced. Special support toward the inclusion of women in broadcast media could provide women with a more public forum in which they can develop their skills as commentators and experts on current issues, and increase their visibility and influence for wider political roles. Their media presence provides both a “voice” for women in the country and an increased opportunity to address issues of importance to women.

D. Key orientations for donors

176. Donors need to contribute to the development of those institutions and processes within the state and civil society which will stimulate and sustain democratisation. Support for governance involves, *inter alia*, increasing a state’s capacity to develop and maintain representative, responsive, and fair political institutions. Facilitating the transition to more democratic systems of government may require donors to respond to requests for assistance in planning, conducting, and monitoring elections. It may also require capacity development within civil society itself to articulate interests through non-violent channels, and to use or develop the mechanisms necessary to pursue those interests in the public arena.

177. Development agencies have particular skills and networks in developing countries that may be harnessed in these circumstances, but this work also demands effective working relationships with other types of actors -- such as political and military actors within the country as well as diplomats, international financial institutions, and peacekeeping contingents.

178. In order to encourage participation in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, it is first necessary to identify those aspects of both state and society which may effectively contribute to, or obstruct, these efforts. Development co-operation should work to reinforce the constructive elements, while moderating the negative impacts and circumnavigating obstacles. Specifically, it must avoid over-centralising assistance to strengthen

government institutions, if it risks making them less dependent on local groups and structures and thus less interested in establishing dialogue and co-operation.

179. The strengthening of public institutions must be suited to the political, economic, social, cultural, and historical context within which it is undertaken. Institutional-strengthening may draw on the examples and experiences of donor countries, among others, but ultimately, the institutions adopted in a given country may be very different in form, if not in function.

180. More specifically, DAC Members should continue to support efforts to:

- ensure that all government institutions and bodies function in a transparent, accountable and accessible manner to the benefit of all members of society, especially minorities, the marginalised, and the vulnerable;
- encourage vigorous community consultation and participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy;
- ensure provision of affordable, effective, and accessible services and facilities, and their equitable distribution to all affected communities;
- ensure that government interacts with members of the public, organisations and interest groups in an inclusive, non-discriminatory and non-sectarian manner;
- facilitate the empowerment and education the public, including women, and organisations in government processes, policies and projects;
- ensure that the officials and staff of government institutions are representative of communities served;
- involve the staff of government institutions at all levels of planning and decision-making processes; and
- ensure that existing and new government officials and staff are trained or re-trained in the administrative, communication and other skills necessary to fulfil the above objectives.

181. In extreme cases, where governments, or elements within them, are particularly resistant to supporting these key elements of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, donors may have to consider the judicious use of direct incentives and/or disincentives in their funding allocations. Such approaches, despite their limitations, may in some cases provide an effective stimulus for recipients to strengthen the underpinnings of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in their national development programmes.

182. Support for dispute resolution must focus primarily on helping build-up sustainable local capacities. Donors can only provide a nurturing or facilitating role, and must be as open and flexible as possible to the needs and priorities expressed from within the society itself so that solutions will be durable.

183. Development interventions in support of dialogue and negotiation must avoid seeking to impose externally generated solutions. They must constantly discipline themselves to help create the space within which the parties to a conflict may themselves explore solutions, and work together to build peace and good governance.

184. Assistance must be sustained over the medium to long-term, otherwise individuals and groups brought together to deal with an immediate crisis may return to “business-as-usual” before the underlying problems have been fully addressed.

185. All assistance aimed at supporting indigenous mechanisms of dispute resolution -- whether traditional authorities, or moderate groups -- need to be developed in light of the best possible understanding of the political, social and economic dynamics that underlie the conflict.

186. Donors recognise that assistance which seek to strengthen or support the institutions of civil society may not in themselves prevent or reduce conflict in the short-term. Rather, donors should support peacebuilding and reconciliation at the community-level over the long-term, parallel to their efforts to strengthen the peacebuilding elements of good governance.

V. SUPPORTING POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY: OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

A. Overview

187. The objective of post-conflict reconstruction is not to return to pre-crisis conditions but to lay the foundations for peace and sustainable development. When civil authority has broken down, the first priority is to restore legitimate state administration, regarded by its citizens as serving all groups and able to allay the tensions that inevitably persist in the post-conflict period.

188. Past systems and institutions may have contributed to creating economic and social inequities, and to fuelling conflict. Post-conflict situations provide special opportunities for political, economic and administrative reform. Critical areas for action include: land tenure and administration, judicial practice, and internal security systems.

189. Whatever the phase of the conflict, donors should work to foster internal consensus on a set of appropriate policies and programmes that reflect the economic, social and cultural environment of the country concerned. National and local authorities or groups, including representatives of the parties in conflict, should participate in the formulation of programmes, paving the way for national ownership of the development process.

190. From the outset of a political dialogue on such critical issues as governance and participation, all groups, including the marginalised, should be encouraged to express themselves. Freedom of association and the encouragement of political parties need to be included in the political agenda. Public participation in the process of political reconstruction requires that the civil and human rights of the participants will be respected.

191. From an operational standpoint, priority areas of support for post-conflict reconstruction include: restoring internal security and the rule of law, legitimising state institutions, establishing the basis for broadly-based economic growth, and improving food security and social services. This may require reforming security forces and legal systems or helping establish completely new structures where the former are viewed as illegitimate by society.

192. Other priority areas more uniquely related to the special needs of countries recovering from violent conflict, including reintegrating refugees and internally displaced persons, demobilising former combatants and removing the threat of land mines, often a *sine qua non* for the normalisation of economic activities, are then discussed in more detail.

B. Restoring a working capacity for economic management

a) Critical issues and priority needs

193. Countries in crisis or recovering from violent conflict urgently need to mobilise domestic and external financial resources for economic reconstruction in the face of exceptional constraints. Often critically short of expertise in macroeconomic management, newly established authorities also have to wrestle with the competing demands of peacebuilding and economic stabilisation. The need to preserve peace and stability, rehabilitate essential infrastructure, reform public institutions, jump-start the economy, and create employment opportunities places heavy demands on budgetary resources. At the same time, the need for a stable, balanced economy and the restoration of private investors' confidence requires that inflationary pressures be contained.

194. The formulation of a sound -- if rudimentary -- macroeconomic framework for reconstruction is thus a priority. The objective should be to provide a realistic assessment of the cost of reconstruction and peacebuilding activities and ensure consistency with the resources likely to be available as well as the country's absorptive capacity. This would contribute to reducing the risk of inconsistencies between the political agreements reached in the course of peace negotiations and the financial resources available to implement them, thus fostering economic stabilisation. Formulated as a joint effort involving existing or emerging authorities and the principal parties involved in the peace process, this macroeconomic framework would also be instrumental in ensuring proper use of the assistance provided by official and non-governmental organisations.

195. During the immediate post-conflict phase, the focus of a government's economic policies should be to ensure that the priority expenditure required for peacebuilding and reconstruction (including payments to demobilised soldiers, rehabilitation of war-damaged infrastructure, and the provision of basic social services) are programmed in a manner consistent with the need to return to a stable macroeconomic environment (appropriate budgetary and monetary policies, normalisation of financial relations with creditors, including IFIs).

196. It is also essential that these public expenditures are clearly accounted for within a budget consistent with i) an available external budgetary and project support in line with the country's debt servicing capacity (taking into account that donor funding is likely to taper off over time); and ii) domestic financing that is non-inflationary and does not pre-empt the capital needs of the emerging private sector.

b) Recommendations

197. The mobilisation and allocation of resources for post-conflict recovery can be greatly facilitated by the early preparation by the government concerned and the lead agency of a Macroeconomic Reconstruction Framework for organising technical assistance and financial support, in consultation with other relevant institutions and agencies. This document could be similar to the policy framework paper that is produced for low-income countries which receive financial support from the IMF. However, it would have to be less comprehensive and placed within a shorter time horizon. In preparing assistance programmes for crisis countries, all concerned donors and implementing agencies should thus concentrate on:

- engaging the principal parties in discussion on a broad economic policy framework to guide the formulation of reconstruction efforts as early as possible in the course of peace negotiations;
- initiating comprehensive training and technical assistance programmes to develop the necessary capacity for economic policy-making and the management of public finances, especially in budget formulation and public expenditure.

Box 13. Economic management: priority needs for technical assistance

Newly established authorities particularly those arising from an armed conflict may have little or no experience in government and require extensive training in a number of specialised areas of economic management and public finance. Capacity for basic economic management must be restored as early as possible. Where barter and the informal economy have replaced or displaced currency and formal market transactions, the basic exchange, trade and banking services may also have to be rebuilt completely. Country authorities may need assistance in the following areas:

Public finance management

This may include assistance for rebuilding capacities for: budget preparation and execution; the collection of information for allocating and controlling expenditures; the monitoring of revenue collection and the management and tracking of external assistance.

Monetary and exchange rate policy formulation

This may include assistance for: i) the establishment of a monetary authority; ii) the re-opening of the Central Bank; iii) the initiation of a currency reform; iv) re-establishment of adequate accounting mechanisms at the Central Bank and commercial banks; v) strengthening the Central Bank's ability to handle the payments system, currency management practices; and banking supervision; and vi) rebuilding the mechanisms for collecting key economic information (e.g. prices, monetary statistics, government debt and balance of payments). Such mechanisms -- and the proper budgetary process -- are essential for the effective delivery of aid.

Specific policy decisions which also have to be taken at an early stage include:

- a) In the budgetary area;
 - identifying quick-yielding revenue measures and priority current expenditures needed to jump-start the economy and restore basic infrastructure and social services.
- b) In the monetary area;
 - how to obtain currency notes; which instruments to rely on for controlling credit and monetary aggregates;
 - which minimal conditions to impose for the (re)opening of commercial banks; which banks to liquidate; and how to address the issue of compensation of depositors;
 - devising a financial programme built on simple rules for the various monetary aggregates taking into account the financing needs of the government and the private sector and the objective of containing inflationary pressures.
- c) In the exchange and trade areas;
 - which exchange rate and trade system to adopt; which type of exchange controls, if any, to maintain;
 - how to restore export marketing facilities and ensure that local importers have access to international means of payment.

C. *Priority areas of support*

a) Restoring internal security and the rule of law

198. The security of the individual and respect for basic human rights is the cornerstone of political and economic stabilisation. Rebuilding credible institutions is vital at the central level as well as at the local and community levels, as they will have a determining influence on the entire reconstruction effort, ranging from the restoration of productive sectors of the economy, the return of capital, to the collection and disposal of weapons. Within their rules and procedures, and in concert with other forms of assistance, development co-operation should strive towards these broad goals.

199. Many aspects of the rule of law may need to be assisted in order for the overall system to become effective. They include: i) training of police, lawyers and judges and ii) capacity building in the resolution of civil disputes, including those relating to property rights and access to land.

b) Legitimising state institutions

200. Peace agreements may place national elections at the top of the political agenda. More generally, political institutions must again be seen as legitimate and competent. Elections are important mechanisms for establishing political legitimacy, but they do not create or sustain democracy in themselves. Democratisation must be understood in the broader context of changing relations both within the government and civil society.

c) Fostering the re-emergence of civil society

201. One of the most debilitating legacies of violent conflict is the polarisation of social relations. Conditions of insecurity contribute to the creation of lasting social distrust. Rebuilding bridges of communication between social groups and promoting participation in political life are essential requirements for social reconciliation.

d) Improving food security and social services

202. Improving food security is basic to any systematic prevention strategy and to linking relief with disaster preparedness and sustainable development. This includes work to improve agricultural productivity, access to markets and distribution systems and market-based measures to stabilise farm-gate prices. The restoration of basic services in health, education, water supply and increased life opportunities for women and children are also essential priorities.

e) Building administrative capacity

203. Whatever the urgency of addressing other needs, the development of technical and administrative capacity within the principal departments of government cannot be postponed without jeopardising the sustainability of the reconstruction process. Where the shortage of skilled manpower is a critical constraint, it may be necessary for donors to make staff available to the government on a short-term secondment basis. As demonstrated in various UN-sponsored programmes, it is also possible to mobilise members of the exiled diaspora through special incentive programmes.

D. Reintegrating uprooted populations

a) Relevant principles and priority needs

204. The forcible displacement of people is a clear indicator of conflict in society, of social insecurity, and of the inability of a government to protect its citizens. Conversely, the establishment of the rule of law, respect for human rights, civil peace and security help to encourage the successful return, with dignity, and reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons, and demobilised former combatants.

205. The presence of large numbers of refugees creates economic and social burdens for host neighbouring countries that can be politically destabilising. The safe and orderly return of refugees to their country of origin, where conditions allow, can be important to maintaining political stability in the region.

206. Reintegration is often the first major step towards national reconciliation. It must take place within a legal framework that includes guarantees for returning *bone fide* refugees and ex-combatants. Displaced people also need to be convinced that they will not be victimised when they return. The needs of uprooted populations must be addressed explicitly as part of peace negotiations to ensure that reintegration and demobilisation strategies are part of the formal agreement. The responsibility of states for protecting their citizens, whether returning refugees and other war-affected groups, is a crucial consideration.

207. In addition to restoring basic security, reintegration priorities include access to water and sanitation; agricultural inputs including credit to improve food production; transport and communications infrastructure; social services such as health and education as well as assistance in the field of legal and civil documentation. In this connection it is very important that recurrent costs related to public services such as salaries for teachers and health workers positions created under the reintegration phase be clearly accounted for when considering budgets for public expenditure, both at national and local levels. The resolution of disputes related to land-holding must be addressed as early as possible.

208. The process of reintegration cannot be initiated on a large scale until areas of return have been identified as safe or low-risk. Emergency mine surveys, mine clearance and awareness activities are a high priority in this context. Moreover, it is also recognised that the repatriation can be sustained only if timely and effectively consolidated by wider development oriented efforts. Operational linkages have to be established from the outset between returnee aid and development.

b) Area-based rehabilitation and reintegration schemes

209. Area-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes have been developed to facilitate the reintegration of uprooted population. Implemented at the community-level, in specific districts and provinces, these programmes focus on reinforcing the capacity of receiving communities to integrate new residents. Combining emergency relief and development approaches contributes to the alleviation of war-induced economic devastation and helps promote social reconciliation at the local level.

210. Programmes are community-driven and deal with priorities determined locally with the involvement of civil society, including local NGOs, trade unions and private enterprise. They promote local self government and contribute to activating the self-help potential of communities. This allows implementation to integrate activities ranging from the provision of basic social services to legal assistance in the areas of civil documentation, land titling, and the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure. Such programmes have been implemented in a number of war-torn countries in Central America, Asia and Africa.

i) Key elements of programme design

211. *Geographical area focus:* The selection of specific geographical areas for programme implementation allows the programme to avoid making artificial distinctions among population segments and to address the needs of displaced persons, refugees, demobilised former combatants and other victims of war, without discrimination. The programmes also promote the participation of vulnerable populations in local development initiatives ensuring an appropriate balance between the interests of the most active and organised local groups and those of lesser means. This can provide concrete support to broader policies of promoting the consolidation of the peace process and social solidarity. This is essential to avoid creating new inequities and tensions at the community level, to foster reconciliation at the community level. Areas selected for programme implementation are identified as those where the peace process is most fragile, and social exclusion most acute, or where large numbers of displaced persons are to resettle.

212. *Launching the reconciliation process:* The programmes are intended to offer a powerful incentive for the initiation of a genuine reconciliation process. They provide financial resources and technical support to the various segments of the population groups who -- regardless of their political affiliation and social position -- are willing to work together. While nurturing community participation and local decision-making is a time-consuming process entailing long negotiations, the response of the communities involved has generally been positive.

213. *Decentralised management:* Programme planning and management are the responsibility of representatives of the local civil society brought together for this purpose. They are responsible for formulating and developing high priority investment plans, identifying sources of finance and establishing the financial mechanisms for cost recovery. This allows the revitalisation of local social and economic structures in a way compatible with local history, tradition and culture.

214. *Linkages between local initiatives and national policies:* Another central objective of these programmes is to establish close linkages between local-level institutions and their counterparts at provincial and national levels, in order to ensure consistency of approaches. The long-term sustainability of the infrastructure and administrative systems developed at the local level hinges on their integration within national-level systems. In certain cases, institution-building carried out as part of an area-based rehabilitation scheme has created opportunities for more general reforms, with some of the systems of governance developed at the local level being subsequently used on a larger scale.

215. *Integrated approaches to social and economic rehabilitation:* The social fabric in target areas cannot be restored without revitalising economic activity and rebuilding basic infrastructure damaged by war. In part this can be done with the help of labour-intensive public works projects (including food-for-work projects). The benefits of peace and reconciliation become more tangible with the provision of social services and the rebuilding of community assets. Improved welfare, new employment and training opportunities help to create an environment in which individuals feel they have a stake in sustaining the peace process. For men and women living in a post-war zone, the transition from the status of victim to beneficiary to full participant is essential for sustainable development.

ii) Key programme components

216. A variety of distinct activities can be carried out simultaneously under integrated management:

217. *Human rights:* This includes the establishment and/or strengthening of mechanisms, to protect human and civil rights and restore confidence in the legal system and the access of citizens to courts of justice.

This is an important part of efforts to combat social exclusion and foster the participation of marginalised groups in social and economic life.

218. *Health:* This includes the establishment of local health systems in line with a view to decentralising health services and primary health care. Health care is not limited to prevention and treatment, but is expanded to incorporate social and community well-being. The effectiveness of activities in this field requires the collaboration of the state, the community and local NGOs.

219. *Education:* This includes the development of local education systems to bring the management of educational infrastructures and services in line with accepted principles of co-existence amongst different communities and respect for cultural differences.

220. *Production systems:* This includes assistance to farmers with the provision of inputs and in the area of marketing, the establishment of local economic development agencies, financial and/or technical assistance to help entrepreneurs.

221. *Physical infrastructure:* This includes programmes to rehabilitate roads, irrigation systems, drinking water supplies, schools, health centres, basic housing, sewers and latrines. These are generally carried out by local NGOs, local small- and medium-size enterprises, co-operatives and community groups.

222. *Environmental rehabilitation:* This includes the establishment of local land-use planning mechanisms, to identify and evaluate alternative agricultural practices and patterns of land use and the implementation of community-based programmes to rehabilitate watersheds and protect ecologically fragile zones.

c) Some lessons learned

223. To be successful, post-conflict reconstruction depends heavily on the participation of returning refugees and displaced persons, as they often represent factions opposed to the government during the conflict. Assistance in the post-conflict phase should take this into account.

224. The conduct of the warring parties during the conflict, and, in particular combatants' behaviour towards civilians, shape the prospects for reconciliation and for a durable peace. Setting up mechanisms for the public exposition of human rights violations and/or the prosecution of individuals accused of war crimes including rape, may be an integral part of a viable process of national reconciliation. The social, psychological and physical impact of extreme violence must be taken into account in reintegration programmes.

225. In certain cases, parties in conflict deliberately target civilian populations for violent abuse, as part of political strategy. As a result, the situation of internally displaced persons can be far more precarious than that of refugees, who have benefited from international protection and basic subsistence. Also, the needs of returning displaced people cannot be assumed to be greater than those of local populations who have stayed behind throughout the period of turmoil. In these situations, efforts to meet the needs of returnees must also respond to those of the local community.

226. Although it cannot be assumed that returnees will want to settle back in their area of origin or return to their former line of activity, studies of post-repatriation problems point to the critical importance of access to land for cultivation and the value of support systems that kinship provides in the first reintegration phase. Among returning refugees, only few have the opportunity to put to good use new skills acquired while in exile, and most return to agriculture.

227. Experience from many refugee repatriation and reintegration programmes show that the bulk of aid resources available tend to be spent on the repatriation operation. Less attention and resources have been devoted to the reintegration effort. There is, however, increasing awareness that the reintegration of returning refugees is the more complex part of the process, and more demanding in terms of resources. It is also important to synchronise reintegration programmes with the return of the refugees and to avoid a prolonged hiatus between repatriation and support for reintegration.

d) Actors and partnerships

228. Within its mandate which also includes protection, work on the reintegration of refugees is normally initiated by UNHCR in the context of its repatriation operations, and the launching of quick impact projects designed to assist the receiving communities in coping with the arrival of the returnees. As a rule, national and international NGOs are associated with these operations, as implementing partners in the UNHCR programmes.

229. In many situations, initial reintegration assistance leads on to more broadly designed programmes, such as the area-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes sponsored by UNDP and UNOPS, which provide a decentralised management structure for the various technical activities carried out by other specialised UN agencies, local government agencies or by NGOs.

e) Best practices identified

230. In advance of repatriation, an early assessment should be made to ascertain whether access roads, farm land and areas of return sites are free from land mines, and where necessary to allocate resources for mine awareness and mine clearance programmes.

231. The reintegration of displaced people, and especially area-based schemes, need to be based on an intimate knowledge of needs in order to establish the nature and scale of the effort in a realistic manner. This will entail a full analysis of the political, economic, social conditions, the state of the infrastructure, and of the security environment in the immediate post-conflict period, which should be carried out at the earliest stage, before humanitarian assistance is phased out.

232. Assistance should not be targeted at particular groups of beneficiaries. To contribute effectively to social reconciliation, the assistance must be seen to bring benefits to the entire population in areas where uprooted populations are to resettle, irrespective of whether people have been externally or internally displaced, have participated in the conflict as combatants, or remained at home during the conflict. Programmes should be as decentralised as possible and focus on promoting: co-operation within and between communities affected by conflict; and on the local identification of priority needs as well as means to address them.

f) Key orientations for donors

233. The magnitude of resources required for the organised repatriation of refugees can sometimes overshadow the considerable needs and difficulties that follow with the reintegration of both refugees and internally displaced people. Recognised to be a complex and extended process, reintegration demands substantial preparation and support alongside that for the initial repatriation or movement.

234. As the UN agencies primarily involved in the reintegration effort rely on voluntary donor contributions, it is important that funds are pledged for this purpose well ahead of the repatriation operation, so that these agencies can put in place the administrative institutions needed to carry out the longer-term reintegration effort. A hiatus in the delivery of assistance following return may seriously jeopardise the effectiveness of the programme.

235. Strategic operational linkages between initial reintegration aid and more development oriented projects should be established at the earliest stage of the operation. The earliest establishment of these linkages will ensure a smooth phase out of humanitarian assistance.

E. Demobilisation and social reintegration of former combatants

a) Relevant principles and issues

236. The successful demobilisation and reinsertion of former combatants in civilian life is a key to political stability and to rebuilding war-torn societies. In post-conflict situations, it is often a high priority for governments, which call for international assistance with various aspects of demobilisation programmes.

237. Where demobilisation has been poorly conducted, unpaid or undisciplined troops may turn to banditry, preying on villagers and road traffic, or even re-mobilise to form insurgencies challenging the established regime. Apart from its impact on political stability, the resulting insecurity can have devastating effects on economic activity. The challenge is to formulate cost-effective demobilisation programmes which are satisfactory to the former combatants themselves.

238. Political circumstances in neighbouring countries can have a major influence on the success and credibility of national demobilisation efforts, which must then be viewed in the wider context of political and military relations at a regional level.

239. Providing support for the reintegration of former combatants presents donors with two special challenges:

- First, some donors face legal restrictions in terms of support to military organisations, even for the purposes of demobilisation and discharge.
- Second, the ever-present risk that hostilities will resume, may be a strong deterrent to the funding of programmes in support of demobilisation.

240. At the same time, the knowledge that programmes have been put in place to assist demobilised combatants may have helped to bring about the demobilisation agreement itself. Once agreements are reached, implementation must follow rapidly to reduce the risk of relapse into conflict. Lead time is necessary for preparing demobilisation programmes. Decisions to support them cannot await the conclusion of peace accords, but must be based on an assessment of the probable success of political negotiations.

Box 14: Mali and “La flamme de la paix”

Following years of unrest and violent conflict in the Northern part of the country, negotiations between the government of Mali and leaders of the Tuareg rebellion led to the conclusion of a peace agreement (“Pacte National”) in 1992. The process of reconciliation and demobilisation was, however, short-lived. The government of Mali faced severe difficulties in managing the agreed demobilisation and reintegration programmes, and delivering the promised economic assistance to the North.

Elements of the Tuareg movement broke away from the central co-ordinating body of the Pacte National and many Tuareg ex-combatants, who had been integrated in the national army, reverted to armed rebellion. Sporadic fighting broke out between government forces and militias, banditry and smuggling intensified, and the security situation deteriorated to the point that many development programmes could not be implemented in the North of Mali. The widespread availability of arms, which undermined demobilisation efforts, clearly contributed to the deterioration of security conditions.

In October 1993, the President of Mali set a precedent by asking the UN Secretary General for assistance in collecting and controlling illicit small arms. An Advisory Mission sent to Mali to assess the situation concluded that the security situation in Mali, by undermining the implementation of agreed programmes for demobilisation, re-integration, and the return of refugees, blocked economic and social development in Mali. The Mission thus proposed a “security first” approach to address the problem of insecurity. This called for the provision of external assistance for capacity-building programmes for police and other internal security forces; strengthening border controls and other measures. The Government embraced this approach, and prepared an emergency rehabilitation programme within the framework of the Pacte National. This included plans for a new and reinforced security system and for civil and administrative rehabilitation alongside demobilisation and development projects.

The UNDP agreed to support this approach, provided that the security plan be validated and monitored by UN experts, and provided support for an emergency rehabilitation and peacebuilding programme. In March 1996, in an event of great significance, ex-combatants from the militias and Tuareg gathered in Timbuktu to hand in their armaments, which were then burned under UN inspection. Besides allowing the disposal of large quantities of light weapons, this “Flame of Peace” (“Flamme de la Paix”) had great political and symbolic significance in the peacebuilding process.

The Government established a National Commission to co-ordinate efforts to tackle the proliferation of licit and illicit light weapons. A code of conduct for civil-military relations was also developed in a process involving representatives of the military, the police, civilian authorities, parliament and various sections of civil society as well as UN experts. Amongst other things, this has provided guidance to reinforce guarantees on the appropriate use of security assistance. Despite this progress, The post-conflict peacebuilding process remains fragile with a continuing availability of small arms and poor internal security.

b) Needs and areas of co-operation

i) Cantonment and discharge

241. As a rule, mobilisation begins with the assembly of former combatants in special camps (cantonment), where they surrender their weapons and uniforms and await final discharge. The period of cantonment, often supervised by United Nations military observers, serves the essential security objective of

accounting for combatants and their weapons and of building confidence between the warring parties that they will uphold the terms of a negotiated peace agreement.

242. The needs of cantoned troops, which include food, water, shelter, sanitation, elementary health care and other basic necessities may be relatively easy to meet. However, the government, which is often already in arrears in paying soldiers' salaries, may require assistance to meet associated costs.

Box 15. Children as soldiers

The recent United Nations study, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, reports that, over the past 30 years, government and rebel armies around the world have recruited tens of thousands of children, most of them adolescents under 18 but also children age 10 and younger. They generally come from poor backgrounds and are often separated from their families and conscripted forcibly. Principal victims of social upheaval and violence, children have thus also become perpetrators of violent acts.

Armies invariably try to cover up the presence of child combatants in their ranks. As a result, peace agreements have no provisions for this category of former soldiers despite the debt owed by society for depriving them, at a critical age, of opportunities for normal emotional and intellectual growth.

The special measures needed to demobilise children and to reintegrate them in society are almost an after-thought. A first consideration is the desirability to reunite child combatants with their families, if at all traceable, and to locate their home communities. Completion of their primary education must also be a priority, and to the extent that child soldiers cannot be integrated in regular schools, special classes should be organised. Growing up, child soldiers may well have learned that violence pays, and effective retraining to provide them with vocational skills are part of a weaning process involving psychological counselling and readjustment.

As in many other situations, best solutions are in the preventive area, ranging from working with governments to adopt and ratify the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on involving children in armed conflict, to investigating complaints or negotiating agreements with rebel groups that bar the recruitment of children as combatants or for other military support functions.

243. Although every attempt is made to keep the period of cantonment as short as possible to reduce the risk of disorder, the political context within which demobilisation takes place is highly unpredictable. The actual duration of cantonment can therefore be difficult to estimate in advance. If the cantonment period is extended, the requirements of encamped soldiers, who are often joined by their families, can increase significantly, with the provision of further facilities including recreation and sports.

244. The cantonment period however also provides an opportunity to determine the exact number of combatants to be demobilised and to conduct detailed surveys of their skills, social status, intentions, and expectations. This greatly assists the formulation of reintegration programmes. It is also possible to give former combatants and their dependants a first orientation of what to expect in civilian life, including occupational counselling and vocational training.

ii) Re-insertion and reintegration

245. The actual discharge of former combatants usually depends on the successful completion of other parts of the peace accords. On leaving cantonment areas, former combatants are usually dispersed and

transported to their home districts. Upon arrival, they should be acquainted with representatives of the local government and any NGOs involved in the area.

246. Initial reinsertion assistance usually consists of allowances to assist veterans with the basic necessities of life -- shelter, medical care, food, clothing -- over a period ranging from several months to two years. This may take the form of cash payments, vouchers and in-kind transfers; another important function of transitional assistance is to reduce the burden that veterans and their dependants place on the communities that receive them. The make-up of the reinsertion package should take account of the local cultural environment and modes of subsistence.

247. While financial payments may provide the greatest flexibility at least cost, the choice of mechanism for delivering reinsertion and reintegration assistance depends on local conditions, including the existence of local bank offices. When support is provided in the form of cash payments these are usually better spread over several instalments, with an option of advances for investment purposes, rather than disbursed as lump sums.

Box 16. Demobilisation and reintegration in Uganda and Ethiopia

Background

In 1992 the government of **Uganda** announced the demobilisation and reintegration into civil society of some 50,000 soldiers. For this purpose, the Uganda Veterans Assistance Board was founded. In **Ethiopia**, following several decades of armed conflict, as well as natural climatic disasters, the government was confronted with the challenge of providing assistance to 3,5 million uprooted people. This included former soldiers and their dependants; internally displaced persons and returning refugees. Demobilised former combatants were considered a potential risk to security, given their military skills and lawless attitudes acquired over many years of war experience. A long-term programme initiated by the government of Ethiopia supported the reintegration of ex-combatants.

In **Uganda**, the overall objective is to reintegrate veterans by creating employment opportunities in their communities of origin. This is achieved by establishing self-sustaining small Ugandan enterprises in the road maintenance sector. The provision of employment opportunities of this kind is intended to foster the social reintegration of veterans and facilitate their acceptance in the community. The programme also aims to develop new skills among veterans and their dependants.

In **Ethiopia**, a major goal is to create income-generating activities and employment in co-operation with NGOs and local and regional administrative departments. This is supported by establishing an "open fund" to help NGOs, local associations and grassroots self-help groups to engage in reintegration initiatives. Various types of interventions are used including food-for-work, cash-for-work, and the provision of agricultural inputs and training. The project also aimed to reinforce local economic structures destroyed by the war.

Box 16. Demobilisation and reintegration in Uganda and Ethiopia (cont'd)

Lessons learned:

In **Uganda**, the strategy of helping to integrate veterans into local societies by employing them in the sector of road rehabilitation and maintenance turned out to be a promising approach, although the participation rate of veterans remained below 50 per cent. In **Ethiopia** project results indicated that the reintegration of the ex-combatants, through the provision of short-term employment opportunities, offered a chance for understanding and reconciliation.

Some general lessons can be drawn from this experience:

- Issuing a non-transferable discharge certificate: ensures that veterans have access to their benefits; and reduces the risk of targeting errors. The continuous provision of information to beneficiaries about opportunities, constraints, and procedures significantly enhances reintegration.
- Veterans and their spouses should participate in the design of support packages. Donations in kind should correspond to their specific needs; cash support should not be handed out in one lump sum but in instalments, with part of the allowance going directly to women.
- Access to land and credit is vital for the reintegration of the different groups in the society. Small-scale credit schemes are important, but must be complemented by professional counselling in order to ensure effective utilisation of the funds made available.
- Central co-ordination through a temporary agency, balanced by decentralising implementation authority to the communities, makes for a powerful institutional arrangement. Field offices enable i) beneficiaries to have easier access to programme benefits and ii) the government to make the programme more responsive to local needs.

248. It is essential that such assistance not be perceived as an indefinite entitlement. Termination dates should be communicated clearly to the soldiers at the time of demobilisation. Special provisions should be made, however, for long-term assistance to severely-handicapped former combatants.

249. While reintegration support is usually focused on former combatants, it should always be kept in mind that there are other groups facing serious problems of reintegration into traditional villages and families following conflict. These often include unmarried mothers, victims of rape or girls who have resorted to prostitution in order to survive. In traditional societies these victims face particularly difficult problems in being accepted if they return. In some societies families may reject their unmarried daughters. Reintegration in these types of situations must involve counselling for both the victims and their families and communities, as well as training in child care, nutrition, and basic education.

c) Some lessons learned

250. Former combatants often feel that they deserve special attention, as they have made personal sacrifices and borne the brunt of war. Their capacity to disrupt the peace warrants paying special attention to

their needs. Political circumstances, therefore may dictate providing disproportionate assistance to former combatants. Resolving the competing demands dilemma requires pragmatism and considered political judgement.

251. At the same time, ex-soldiers from the lower ranks of the army or rebel forces, constitute a socially vulnerable group sharing many of the characteristics of other populations uprooted by conflict. Enrolled at an early age, many have low levels of education, few marketable civilian skills and little or no experience in the labour market. Many suffer from physical and psychological handicaps. Resentment against former combatants held responsible for war-time destruction is also a handicap to their reinsertion in civilian society.

252. The reintegration of former combatants in civilian life usually occurs under conditions of economic stagnation, with employment opportunities scarce and the scope for entrepreneurial ventures limited. Given poor economic prospects, the risk of demobilised soldiers being drawn to criminal pursuits is high. Severance payments only provide short term relief and must be supplemented with broader programmes in support of economic reconstruction. Over the long term, only the resumption of economic growth provides a basis for economic and social reintegration.

253. Experience has shown that severance payments alone cannot achieve a smooth reintegration of ex-combatants in civilian life. Targeted assistance in the fields of vocational training, skills certification and job search are also required. In order to minimise social polarisation, reintegration programmes should furthermore focus on the communities in which former soldiers are reintegrated, as part of broader programmes designed to assist all war-affected populations.

Box 17. Cash for a gun?

In most situations where the disarming of regular soldiers or guerrilla forces has been agreed to, proposals are frequently made suggesting that weapons not handed in when soldiers are demobilised might be collected by offering cash compensation to individuals against each surrendered weapon.

Arms buy-back schemes of this kind have been tried in various situations. Experience shows that they are seldom workable nation-wide or on a large scale. In the first place it is virtually impossible to set a generally applicable “market price” for weapons, or one that is likely to satisfy all former soldiers and arms holders. The price of a weapon is relative and contingent on too many factors, from its possible use by an individual for criminal purposes to the systematic sale and smuggling of arms across a border, to an insurrectionist movement in a neighbouring country. Buy-back schemes create a demand for weapons which may be overwhelmed by an increased supply which is a legacy of the conflict. Broader efforts, reflecting local culture, are needed to encourage voluntary disarmament as security increases.

Offering cash for weapons has worked well in more confined settings, where there is strong popular support for such actions, or where a non-governmental organisation or a church can administer the scheme in relative isolation from wider influences affecting the will of individuals to dispose of or to hold on to their weapons.

d) Institutional arrangements

254. Designing demobilisation programmes requires close co-operation between the many actors involved, at the earliest possible stage. The military must identify the number and rank of combatants to be demobilised and agree with the government on a package of demobilisation benefits. Donors must agree with

the government on how the demobilisation is to be carried out and the amount of support they are able to provide. NGOs, which often play an important role in the implementation of these programmes, must also be involved in the planning process. The expectations of demobilised soldiers and the views of the communities to which they will be returning must also be reflected in the programmes.

255. The establishment of a mixed civilian, quasi-governmental commission has proved to be a good mechanism for guiding the overall demobilisation/reintegration process and for co-ordination within the donor community. Former combatants also need a special organisation to represent them and protect their rights. The primary objective must, however, be to assist veterans, not to create an elaborate administrative structure.

256. Another critical component of any demobilisation/reintegration scheme is the capacity to monitor and evaluate the programme, to allow adjustments to make them as effective as possible for the beneficiaries.

257. Where demobilisation occurs as part of a peace process supervised by the United Nations, a peace keeping operation may be responsible for co-ordinating assistance among donors. In other cases, it is desirable to appoint a lead bilateral or multilateral agency further purpose.

258. Alongside demobilisation programmes, it is important to develop arrangements to reduce the level of arms in society, and to manage the destruction of “surplus” weapons. Moreover it is also often a priority to strengthen institutional capacity to control borders, not least in order to limit illicit arms flows both inwards and towards other regions of tension or conflict.

e) Best practices identified

259. Reinsertion/reintegration is a family affair: any assistance provided should not be aimed at the soldier alone but should also include dependents. Programmes that do not take into account the fact that many former-combatants must provide for numerous dependants will fall short of former soldiers needs and may delay their reintegration into society.

260. Reinsertion-reintegration is also a community affair: the more support veterans receive from community groups, the greater the chance of their rapid reintegration. Since extended families are an important support to newly demobilised soldiers, veterans should be encouraged to take up residence in communities where family members reside. It is, however, desirable to survey communities, during the planning phase and on a sampling basis, to ascertain their attitudes and capacity to assist veterans. Where possible, efforts should be undertaken to sensitise community leaders to the challenges facing veterans and their families, and inform them of roles that local communities can play in easing the transition to civilian life. Area-based rehabilitation programmes can provide a way to assist communities that absorb a substantial number of ex-soldiers.

261. Programmes must take into account the needs of vulnerable groups. The disabled, the chronically ill, child soldiers, and women require special attention. Female combatants and the wives of veterans often face considerable social and economic hardship and may need targeted assistance.

f) Key orientations for donors

262. Highly political as they are, demobilisation programmes are susceptible to delays and modifications. Soldiers may have to remain in assembly areas much longer than anticipated. Where the conflict has ended without a clear victor, political pressures to alter benefit packages and eligibility criteria are particularly

strong. Despite such constraints, early planning of demobilisation programmes can help them to be responsive to political developments and avoid delays in implementing the peace process.

263. Provisions for the implementation of demobilisation programmes should be explicitly included in peace accords. The planning of demobilisation and reintegration should begin well before troops enter assembly areas and make allowance for unexpected events and delays. The availability of quick disbursing funds that can be applied flexibly is also essential.

264. As far as possible, programme design should be based on surveys of the skill profile and employment aspirations of soldiers; these should be matched with work and training opportunities in the communities to which they are to return. The scope for adapting ongoing programmes to meet the needs of ex-combatants should also be explored.

265. Governments emerging from long periods of civil strife may be eager to consolidate their power, reward loyal followers, and enhance their support by promising benefits they cannot deliver. Unfulfilled promises to ex-combatants risk generating social discontent. Donors should assist governments in shaping programmes that are realisable and financially viable.

F. *The clearing of land mines*

a) Relevant principles and issues

266. Few consequences of conflict in recent decades have been more traumatic than the maiming and death caused by land mines, often planted purposely in a random fashion. The great majority of victims are innocent civilians in pursuit of their livelihoods. Though weapons of war, land mines continue to constitute a threat long after the armed conflict has abated.

267. The prevalent and unpredictable security threat posed by remaining mines is a major obstacle to the resumption of normal life and economic, social and political development. The human suffering caused by land mines has become a matter of rising concern to the international community in the last decade. In facing the aftermath of a series of civil wars, humanitarian agencies are confronted with two critical challenges:

- In the short run, major resources are required to attend to casualties needing medical care and physical rehabilitation.
- Over the long term, the task of identifying and removing the land mines over the whole territory affected will require considerable efforts and resources, probably extending over decades and diverting scarce resources which could otherwise be devoted to reconstruction and development.

268. The critical issue has been defined and debated in international fora: whether the military utility of land mines, in particular anti-personnel mines, outweighs the unintended injury to civilian populations that invariably follows. Negotiations have so far fallen short of a final conclusion on the scope of application, on transfer and verification issues, as well as on various technical and economic points related to production and use.

269. A growing number of countries now hold that the case for banning the production, trade and use of land mines is incontrovertible. The General Assembly of the United Nations has repeatedly called for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines, and the Secretary-General has made a strong plea for introducing a total ban on the use of such mines. On a parallel track, the Ottawa Process aims for completion of a ban agreement by December 1997.

b) Needs and areas of co-operation

270. In conflict and post-conflict situations, the clearing of land mines is frequently an immediate priority. De-mining and awareness of the mine threat are directly related to emergency activities, because of the urgent need to save lives, to provide surface access to relief distribution points and to ensure the safe movement and reintegration of displaced people.

271. Mine clearance is also linked to the transition from emergency relief to development and to the progressive normalisation of all aspects of national life.

Box 18. The costs of mining and de-mining

Mines are extremely cheap to manufacture and plant but difficult and subsequently expensive to identify and remove. The production cost of an average mine, around US \$10-\$20, compares with the direct and indirect removal costs of US \$300-1 000 per mine. It is estimated that the cost of clearing all mines world-wide could range from at least US \$33 billion to US \$85 billion.

In the meantime, the problem is still growing as land mines continue to be laid faster than they are being removed. It is estimated that, on average more than 2 million mines are being laid each year while clearing operations remove about 100 000.

272. There is a primary need to establish the extent of the land mine problem in the country concerned, through emergency surveys to provide basic information on the scope of the problem. Subsequently, detailed surveys are necessary to establishing the location of mine-fields and mined road stretches and priorities for mine clearance operations. The physical characteristics of these areas and mine density are important for assessing the possible use of different techniques in clearing the mines.

273. Another priority need is the training of national de-mining personnel. Whatever technology is eventually applied in the de-mining operations, there must be a corps of trained personnel in manual de-mining and a cadre of supervisors with on-the-job experience. In most cases it is possible to recruit trainees from the ranks of the military, and where demobilisation programmes are under way, de-mining can provide employment to ex-soldiers. Women and children, as agriculturists and fuel gatherers, are particularly vulnerable to mines and should be targeted for mine-awareness training programmes. In addition to increased security, such training can provide both economic opportunities and empowerment for women, often the traditional teachers in society.

274. Preliminary surveys of the extent of the mine problem and the training of national de-mining personnel are frequently started during peace-keeping operations. As far as mine clearance is concerned, a cardinal point of peace-keeping missions has been that de-mining is the responsibility of national agencies and personnel. Beyond reporting the existence of mine-fields, foreign contingents will normally not themselves engage in the marking of mine perimeters or in removing mines. Peace-keeping contingents can, however, readily provide instructors and establish temporary centres to train personnel in the basic theory and practice of land mine removal.

275. The selection and training of supervisors has to be done with care, as managers and de-mining leaders play a key operational role. Supervisory experience on the job is essential, and special arrangements have to be made for peace-keeping units to provide operational settings and opportunities for nationals to acquire job experience. In general NGOs specialised in mine clearance have been able to mount training and

de-mining programmes with speed and efficiency. However, though readily engaging in actual operations, NGOs are usually not in a position to conduct activities on a scale commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.

Box 19. Unexploded munitions and ordnance

In most countries where land mines have been planted there are also large quantities of unused infantry munitions, artillery ordnance and unexploded bombs. As with land mines, unexploded ordnance poses threats to anyone moving them deliberately or accidentally, and to anyone trying to salvage or play with the items found.

Neutralising unexploded ordnance demands different techniques than those used for clearing land mines, although most categories of infantry and artillery munitions can usually be handled by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) staff attached to demining programmes. The hazards caused by unexploded ordnance have however remained a persistent problem with many of the countries that took part in the two world wars, and the removal of unexploded devices is usually carried out by specialised units of the military or police.

276. When de-mining operations are launched, the principal needs that arise are, firstly, how to provide a long-term institutional base for all mine-related activities, and secondly, how to fund de-mining operations in the long run. Freeing an entire country of mines is invariably a costly effort, and usually no firm target date can be set for reaching that goal.

c) Some lessons learned

277. International assistance has focused on creating an indigenous capacity for mine removal, using manual techniques, which is often labour-intensive and slow in producing results. In part, this is because faster military technologies of mine clearance, appropriate for opening breaches in enemy defences, have not yet been adapted for civilian requirements, and further trials are necessary to establish the field conditions under which such technologies can be used to advantage.

278. Understandably, with daily reports of victims of injuries and fatalities from land mines, there is considerable pressure on all concerned to act with urgency. As a result, the institutional aspects of de-mining operations, which are key to making them sustainable, are too often neglected or delayed.

279. Pressures to begin de-mining programmes quickly increase the risks of inadequate preparation. If the scale of the problem is not properly assessed, and the location of mine concentrations not well identified in advance, the choices of mine-clearing technology may be inappropriate. More attention needs to be paid to productivity and cost effectiveness in de-mining work. The time-consuming manual prodding of land, square metre by square metre, can be supplemented by other techniques where mine density is low and where topographic conditions permit.

280. Over time, and once a national capability for mine removal has been created, the social and economic dimensions of demining demand increasing attention. The humanitarian objectives of mine-clearance are intimately linked with development, affecting transportation, agricultural production, as well as the health and social sectors. Political dimensions arise with issues of land use and the selection of beneficiary communities. It is therefore essential for the mechanisms set up for processing and approving demining requests to include a transparent system for assessing priorities.

d) Partnerships and actors

281. Humanitarian NGOs and agencies have been in the forefront in confronting the problems created by land mines. Early on, Red Cross associations and NGOs took up the physical rehabilitation of disabled land mine victims. Establishing orthopaedic centres and workshops for the manufacture of artificial limbs, they have made a significant contribution to national health care in many countries. These activities have led several NGOs to expand the scope of their work and to specialise also in preventive mine-awareness programmes, mine-field marking and mine clearance.

282. Within the United Nations system, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) has been named the focal point for mine-clearance work. It has played a lead role in organising de-mining programmes, and in following up on training activities launched as part of peace-keeping operations. DHA has staffed up a special De-mining Unit and opened a trust fund designed to secure resources for the early start-up of demining operations which might otherwise be delayed. DHA is also building up in-house capacity to provide advice on all land mine-related issues and, in particular, on the choice of de-mining technologies, as determined by the various factors influencing cost-effectiveness and productivity.

283. A peculiar feature of external co-operation in the field of de-mining is the contribution made by the defence establishments of several donor countries. This is usually a legacy of earlier involvement in peace-keeping operations; contributing countries continue to second military personnel to meet the technical assistance needs of national mine-clearing agencies, drawing in part on their defence budgets for this purpose.

284. From their various vantage points, UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF all have a direct interest in mine removal, financially supporting mine-awareness and mine clearing programmes. UNESCO has developed expertise in promoting mine-awareness. As a rule UNDP along with UNOPS are called on to assist at the institution-building stage, providing general management inputs for the conduct of demining operations, and ensuring that the resources devoted to land-mine removal also serve social and economic goals effectively.

285. The UNDP complements DHA by providing continuity to de-mining operations beyond the emergency phase. As it has limited funds from core resources at its disposal for demining, UNDP needs to pool funding from several donors, through trust funds or cost-sharing arrangements. Even where bilateral donors prefer to make their support available in kind, UNDP plays a general co-ordinating role and structures contributions so that these are mutually supportive.

e) Best practices identified

286. In particular, donors have an interest in supporting:

- the conduct of early detailed mine prevalence surveys to determine the scale of future operations and to assess the potential of different de-mining techniques;
- the launching of immediate demining operations, having recourse to specialised NGOs, providing them with the means of equipping and deploying de-miners;
- the creation of an indigenous capacity for mine clearance; as rapidly as possible;

- the governments' efforts in making institutional arrangements for the long term, integrating information and verification systems, mine-awareness activities, mine-field marking and mine clearance operations;
- the implementation of the government's de-mining strategy, including policy regimes designed to ensure that it is consistent with national plans for social and economic development, as well as with the humanitarian intent;
- the efforts of non-governmental organisations in caring for the victims of land mines, including post-trauma rehabilitation and training for productive occupations.

f) Key orientations for donors

287. Where mines have been deployed on a large scale, the cure is costly and time consuming. Long-term commitments on the part of donors are necessary to assist affected countries in freeing their land from mines

288. The ways of channelling financial contributions to the de-mining effort include: i) making cash donations to the DHA-managed Voluntary Trust Fund of the Secretary-General for Assistance in Mine Clearance; ii) helping establish a UN stand-by capacity to provide rapid survey missions, trainers, managers and de-mining equipment; and iii) contributing to trust funds or cost-sharing arrangements designed to finance individual national de-mining operations.

289. Tests indicate that the application of new technologies may have considerable potential. An intensified research effort designed to refine current methods of detection and render mine removal more effective could significantly speed up demining operations, with immeasurable benefits in terms of economic and social costs.

VI. REGIONAL APPROACHES TO CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING

A. *Principles and approaches*

290. The rise in intra-state violence in recent years has not only exacerbated socio-economic, environmental, and developmental problems, it has also raised the risks of regional instability. Refugee flows highlight the need for comprehensive regional perspectives and responses to transborder ethnic nationalism, environmental degradation and resource scarcity. The growing focus on internal conflict should not obscure the fact that inter-state tensions persist in most regions, calling for better responses by the international community.

291. Conflict prevention often requires addressing both sub-state and regional issues. A key challenge for external efforts to assist lies in the fact that the state has been traditionally seen as the exclusive expression of political unity and guardian of national security. Most international organisations and bilateral agencies are organised to programme their assistance efforts at the level of the state. They are often constrained in effectively addressing the regional dimensions of conflict, both with respect to their causes and their consequences.

292. Sensitivity to outside involvement is heightened in situations of violent conflict, with post-colonial governments having special reasons for resisting any form of assistance on the part of the international community which might appear to question their sovereignty and territorial integrity as independent states. This can act as a serious impediment to effective early engagement in conflict prevention by the UN and other non-regional actors. It is perhaps the most compelling justification for working to strengthen regional approaches to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

293. The fact that internal conflicts generally produce instability at the regional level means that effective strategies to proactively engage conflict situations will require a co-ordinated regional approach based on a commitment to agreed principles. Development of such a set of common principles is an essential first step. These principles should affirm the commitment of member states to existing norms and standards defined by the UN and international law, and draw upon existing regional instruments.

294. The end of the Cold War has allowed the UN to reassert its Charter in promoting the use of regional organisations and arrangements as the preferred level of response for the preventive engagement and management of regional conflicts and post-conflict transitions. Parallel to this has been the growth of institutional initiatives and mandate reforms by various regional organisations, reflecting the evolution of regional frameworks for security dialogue and co-operation. The Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) have, in particular, demonstrated a renewed determination to try to deal with internal conflicts and democratic development.

B. *Regional dimensions of conflict*

a) Intra-state conflict and regional instability

295. Many serious inter-group tensions and structural inequalities -- which, combined with the lack of effective political mechanisms, can generate violent internal strife -- might be effectively addressed by initiatives at a regional level. Political participation, decentralisation and power-sharing arrangements, constitutional and legal guarantees, and reform of the role of the military are all crucial issues which have regional dimension. In the economic sphere, long-term reconstruction will be better secured with concrete

steps towards greater regional integration of markets. In addition, the harmonisation of human rights norms and practices (particularly as regards minority rights) among governments at the regional-level can contribute greatly to stability and decrease the possibility of external support for insurgents.

Box 20. Responding to regional initiatives - arms control in West Africa.

Many of the causes and consequences of internal insecurity, ranging from the illegal arms trade, to large scale refugee flows, and outbreaks of banditry which can follow failed demobilisation efforts, have strong transboundary dimensions and must be addressed through regional co-operation. In recognition of this fact a group of West African countries, including, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d' Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal have, since 1994, sought to develop co-operation in the fields of security and peacebuilding. Specific areas of co-operation include: efforts at harmonising national laws and regulations on the import or sale of arms and ammunition; promoting co-operation and information exchange amongst customs authorities; as well as co-ordinating law enforcement approaches to counter banditry and smuggling.

Following promising approaches adopted in Mali, where strategies were specifically designed to address the issues of security, peacebuilding and development, similar efforts are being initiated in other parts of the region. In November 1996, representatives from governments, regional organisations, and outside experts met in Bamako, Mali under the auspices of UNDP and UNIDIR to discuss the scope for strengthening co-operation in the sub-region. Promising approaches that were discussed included: improving the co-ordination of self-restraint measures on imports of light weapons; adopting codes of conduct for civil-military relations; the development of stronger, harmonised legislation on arms transfers and possession; creating a sub-regional register on arms supplies and transfers; and strengthening co-operation with regard to border control.

296. The issues at stake in a protracted internal conflict will often be of greater salience and significance to a country's immediate neighbours than to the broader international community. Regional actors will often, though not always, have both an immediate interest and a more nuanced appreciation of the options available for effective external contributions. The international community has learned from experience that multilateral preventive engagement in an internal conflict may often be best mediated through the relevant regional organisation or group.

297. Regional approaches (whether they are *ad hoc* plurilateral contact groups or regional organisations) have an advantage in that they can often accommodate sovereignty issues effectively by engaging state authorities in a process that is at once supra-state and localised. A government that is a member of a regional organisation may well feel less threatened by a regional process of engagement co-ordinated by that organisation, than by intervention by non-regional actors. Such regional approaches also allow for the participation of regional middle-powers in facilitating dialogue. This follows the so-called "South-South approach" whereby neighbours co-operate and assist in support of peacebuilding, rebuilding and the implementation of reforms. However, it must also be recognised that the impartiality of regional organisations and neighbouring countries is sometimes in question. In cases where there are regional power struggles or hegemonic fears, wider international institutions may be more appropriate channels for international response and support.

298. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes must be self-sustaining once external donor support has ended or reverted to regular development programming. This raises the important issue of ownership of peace programmes, their origins in local/regional approaches to conflict prevention and

management, and the continuing role of local/regional organisations in programme creation and delivery. By rooting conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes in regional approaches, donors are more likely to effectively ensure their long-term viability and compatibility with regional norms. Protagonists would be inclined to put a greater emphasis on continuing participation in a process which is the product of their own interests and concerns.

b) Impact of refugee populations on host countries

299. Aside from their regional political impacts, large scale refugee movements have a major social and economic impact on host countries. From the moment of their arrival, the needs of refugees compete with those of nationals for scarce resources and assets, be they land, water, wood for fuel, housing or food. Their presence inevitably places a heavy burden on local amenities, forcing host country authorities to divert energies and resources from their own development effort.

300. In many respects, major refugee flows are thus an added impediment to development in the host country. The direct and indirect impacts may be felt long after the refugees have returned to their country of origin. For example, the damage caused by a sudden and unexpected influx of impoverished people is often devastating to the environment. The problems caused by the consumption of wood for fuel and shelter, in areas that are already ecologically fragile, are particularly serious.

301. The impact of refugees on hosting areas is not entirely negative, however, as their presence often helps generate economic activities, such as trade, employment and income opportunities, which can benefit host populations. On balance though, such benefits seldom outweigh the negative impacts of a large-scale refugee presence over extended periods.

302. When refugees are from the same cultural and linguistic group as the host population, there is often widespread sympathy for their situation. Where such bonds are weak, friction and resentment more easily arise. A common source of discontent among the local populace, especially the poor, arises when refugees receive attention and services not available to the local host community. Aid agencies should attempt to promote equal treatment for those in hosting areas, especially in such fields as education and medical services.

303. The heavy price that host countries, themselves often among the least developed, have to pay in providing asylum to refugees is increasingly recognised. Whilst donor response has so far been uneven, there is now greater concern that the international community must help mitigate the negative effects of refugee presence, especially when it is protracted.

304. In most cases asylum extended by the host country does not imply that the presence of refugees comes without political strains which affect relations between the countries of the region. The consideration of problems of asylum and repatriation is accordingly an eminently regional concern that can often only be resolved within a regional political framework.

Box 21. Generating income for Afghan refugees in Pakistan

More than three million Afghan refugees, with as many head of livestock, entered Pakistan to escape the war in their homeland. Their daily requirements of fodder, fuelwood and water inflicted considerable damage to range land and forest areas, already under stress, and their presence in such numbers overwhelmed the limited rural infrastructures in the host country.

The Income Generating Project for Refugee Areas (IGPRA), which was set up in 1984 by UNHCR and the World Bank, focused on both the economic needs of the refugees, and on repairing the environmental damage resulting from their presence.

The main objectives of IGPRA were, *inter alia*, to:

- create employment and generate income, both for Afghan refugees and for the local host communities through labour-intensive rural projects;
- repair some of the physical damage caused by refugees and their livestock to infrastructure and the environment; and create lasting assets for the host country;
- prepare, through on-the-job training, Afghan refugees for their reintegration in their home country.

Programme activities concentrated on the following main areas:

- reforestation and soil conservation (seedling production, planting or degraded lands, etc.);
- watershed management, irrigation, drainage and flood protection; and
- road improvement.

Over a period of more than ten years, close to 300 sub-projects were implemented with financing from several DAC Members, principally through a trust fund administered by the World Bank, at a total cost of over US \$86 million. Much of this work has created lasting assets for the host country; by attacking soil erosion and flood hazards, and by reducing the loss of productive land and the pressure on remaining forests. New and improved roads have increased access to isolated areas and to urban markets.

C. Best practices identified

a) Regional mechanisms for conflict prevention and peacebuilding

305. Principles of regional security should be built on the main components of human security, including the rule of law, social justice, equitable and sustainable development, protection of fundamental human rights, democratic development, and inter-group dialogue and reconciliation. Donors should endeavour to help regional organisations to uphold established international principles and commitments. In concert with this human security orientation, donors should encourage regional organisations to develop comprehensive frameworks for the promotion of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and orient their support for capacity-building to help regional organisations act as a bridge between the international community and the states of the region. The availability of financial and technical means often determine

the activities that regional organisations can undertake. Specific areas of donor support should include providing technical expertise to strengthen communications and logistical capacities.

306. Development agencies should also consider support in regions in which there are as yet few effective arrangements for regional conflict prevention and peacebuilding, such as Northeast Asia and South Asia. Emerging regional arrangements, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), focusing on trade and economic co-operation issues, could be encouraged to address specific aspects of regional and sub-regional security (e.g. minority rights, shared resources, and military confidence-building).

307. Donor agencies can also provide much-needed financial and technical support for regional/local NGOs which are engaged in the development of common regional approaches to conflict and security. Particular attention should be given to improving the capacity of national and local women's organisations to form regional links supporting dialogue and reconciliation. Supported by the donor community, regional organisations should also be encouraged to systematise co-operation with regional and local NGOs.

b) Regional management of shared natural resources

308. Increased competition over access to shared natural resources, such as land and water, can encourage powerful groups to seize control of increasingly scarce resources, forcing marginal or vulnerable groups to migrate to less habitable, often ecologically sensitive areas. This process can in turn reinforce environmental strain and raise the potential for social tension. Under certain circumstances, scarcities of renewable resources, such as cropland, forests or water can produce civil disputes at the community or national level and raise transborder suspicions and tensions.

309. To address the problems associated with the management of regionally shared natural resources, joint management in some form of Resource Management Regime (RMR) is often necessary. RMRs vary to fit the geographic region to which they are applied. They can encourage long-term management through co-operative approaches involving all stakeholders and thus reduce the potential for conflict. Generally, the better a RMR is in recognising major stakeholders, the better equipped it is to resolve conflict between parties.

310. While taking realistic account of the respective interests and bargaining strength of the parties, a strong RMR uses ideas and scientific understanding to shape the development of issues and options. It plays an entrepreneurial role by using its negotiating skill to influence the ways in which issues are approached and "contracts" defined for the benefit of all parties. It can act in the name of these parties to devise effective ways of bringing resources and expertise into agreed solutions. RMRs help national policy-makers better understand where to intervene to improve outcomes, gather relevant data and make those data available, and strengthen the methodology and theories that help policy-makers understand development problems.

311. Most importantly, resource management must increasingly be informed by sound evidence on changes in the quality and quantity of resources available. Sharing research between stakeholders can often diminish tension and promote the idea of a common problem with a solution lying in co-operation instead of conflict.

312. Specific areas of donor support can include:

- the transfer of knowledge and expertise, including in the fields of policy-making, planning and institutionalised decision-making;
- the transfer of technology;
- capacity development in the environment; and
- facilitation, mediation and co-ordination.

D. Key orientations for donors

313. Neighbouring countries may often have both strong motivation and special capability to help carry out successful peacebuilding and reconstruction programmes. The ability to provide appropriate technical assistance and training, share experience on transitions and reform, and familiarity with regional issues and communities all argue for greater involvement of other regional countries, wherever they are also able to act even-handedly.

314. The absence of an effective dialogue process between state and sub-state actors is a difficult issue for states and donor agencies to address, yet it is perhaps the central issue for effective preventive engagement. Regional and local non-governmental and community-based organisations, including women's peace groups, can offer promising opportunities in this regard. Donor agencies and regional organisations should identify key regional NGOs which can act as co-ordinating contact points for the delivery of peacebuilding assistance by local NGOs in the field. An integrated regional approach to conflict could thus be two-pronged in nature: working with regional organisations and groups at the supra-state level, tied to regional/local NGOs at the sub-state level.

315. Donors should encourage initiatives aimed at fostering greater regional economic co-operation and integration, which would not only help to expand local economic gains but also foster mutual trust and co-operation. Encouraging “South-South” co-operation on specific functional issues in specific sectors could be pursued as a means of building regional dialogue and the mutual, integrative perception of shared interests.

316. Sub-regional bodies which are formed to address functional issues such as trade or resource management can sometimes provide a basis for beginning to address issues of regional tension or conflict. These more indirect means of supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding can offer promising avenues, especially where these efforts are sustained over the long-term. Donors should also support the creation of interstate decision-making mechanisms which specifically include dispute resolution machinery.

317. Natural resource stocks and flows are rarely confined within natural boundaries, and recent experience has shown the need to “unbundle” exclusive administrative control from territorially distinct state institutions. Donors should encourage and facilitate the establishment of Resource Management Regimes to formalise webs of bilateral relations connecting neighbouring states. For an RMR to work, it must have the ability to implement a management plan, thus it requires technical and operational support to give it credibility among the partner states.

Box 22. The Mekong River -- potentials for regional conflict and co-operation

As the resources of the Mekong are increasingly harnessed to promote the economic goals of the riparian states -- which include Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and China -- the potential for differences and conflicting interests to arise poses challenges for the maintenance of stability in the region.

The considerable imbalance in size and power among the states creates some concern among the smaller countries that they will be dominated by the larger powers. Combined with an uneven enthusiasm for rapid exploitation of the region's resources, there is a potential for tensions, in a region torn by war for much of this century.

The evolving political and economic situation in the Mekong basin requires new and flexible approaches to resource management. These approaches should include strategies for ensuring that resource development is mutually beneficial and that effective mechanisms exist for inter-country dispute resolution.

The Mekong River Commission is well placed to ensure that the Mekong River is utilised in an equitable and sustainable manner. The structure of this organisation and the commitment to co-operation that underpins it gives the Commission the potential to assume considerable practical importance and moral authority in the management of regional affairs in Southeast Asia.

Even as the tensions diminish between states, the potential for conflicts to be generated between interest groups over environmental issues and resource usage and distribution may increase. These new axes of conflict include:

- ethnic tension arising from patterns of resource use i.e. between shifting cultivators and other resource users;
- inter-regional tensions particularly created by income disparities and conflicting resource demands between regions within a country, often exacerbated by access or the lack thereof to river resources;
- social divisions often arising in the absence of well-defined resource tenure;
- challenges to mainstream interests arising from democratisation and socio-political liberalisation i.e. the emergence of new NGOs/interest groups, which often have cross-border linkages.

These new axes of tension and insecurity suggest the need for innovative approaches to promoting co-operation, conflict resolution and peace within the Mekong region and beyond. An exclusive focus on nation states may not be the most effective approach, at least in certain arenas of conflict.

318. Regional approaches to military and security sector reform should, wherever possible, draw upon the expertise of other regional partners in such areas as demobilisation and reintegration. This may take the form of intra-regional exchanges of military and police officers to share lessons on enhancing their professionalism and strengthening civilian control.

319. While supporting their potential, it is necessary to recognise the limits of many regional organisations in the developing world. Many are financially-constrained and under-resourced institutions with little institutional or administrative capacity to deliver comprehensive and integrated mechanisms for

conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Ad hoc regional arrangements can also be an effective avenue for conflict prevention. This assumes that the ultimate goal in advocating regional approaches is the prevention of conflict, not institution-building *per se*. The most effective instrument for addressing the conflict should be supported, whether it be a formal intergovernmental organisation, NGO, *ad hoc* grouping, or some other alternative arrangement.

320. The imperatives of co-ordination, information exchange and lead donor/agency roles all apply equally in regional approaches as well as national situations. Co-ordination can greatly help regional organisations or groups determine the priorities for programme delivery, and could develop (with selected NGOs, IFIs, and bilateral donor agencies) the general orientations for ensuring that assistance is effective in both conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as in developmental terms. This vital donor co-ordination will often require some subordination or pooling of objectives at the national level in favour of co-operative regional ones. In some instances, regional development banks could act as co-ordinating bodies for integrated regional approaches, and also initiate programmes to support the development of regional capacity-building. In addition, donors could encourage the sharing of expertise and lessons learned, not only between states and non-governmental groups within one region, but also between different regional organisations.