

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Support to NEPAD Humanitarian Response, post-conflict recovery and reconstruction

Unaddressed consequences of conflict – major impediments to socio-economic progress

Violent conflict and its unresolved consequences rank among the top few factors seriously obstructing a large number of African countries from achieving their aspirations to peace and security and socio-economic progress. Countries emerging from conflict and in post-conflict situations are over-burdened with complex problems including political instability, insecurity, human rights, justice and rule of law, reconciliation, reintegration and rehabilitation of displaced populations and, socio-economic challenges including rebuilding critical physical and institutional infrastructure, corruption, war economies and large unemployment problems.

While it is well recognized that the stabilization of societies emerging from conflict requires more than peace agreements, peace-keeping troops and short-term humanitarian assistance, responses to such situations continue to be security and military oriented in spite of the increasingly articulate rhetoric for comprehensive solutions. As a result, very little attention is given to recovery and reconstruction needs and civilian population in these countries may, at best, expect to benefit only from limited and poorly-coordinated humanitarian assistance.

Weak strategic planning, severely limited capacities of internal actors, lack of significant and sustained international support and funding and, poor coordination between humanitarian, reconstruction and development initiatives leave most of the recovery and reconstruction needs unattended. As a result most post-conflict countries will not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In fact their socio-economic situation could even worsen further unless immediate and comprehensive action is taken to stem the down-ward trend. The impact of conflict on neighbouring countries and sub-regions including the burden of hosting large numbers of refugees could also have serious consequences on their socio-economic progress.

Need for a comprehensive and integrated approach

Addressing the needs of African countries in transition from conflict to sustainable peace would require a comprehensive and integrated approach, commitment of the concerned countries themselves and strong international support encompassing humanitarian assistance, recovery/reconstruction and development. It is in an effort to provide a broad and strategic policy blueprint for such a comprehensive approach that the African Union is currently developing a strategic framework on post-conflict reconstruction. The AU framework could also serve as a strategic tool that will guide the systematic identification of needs and gaps in post-conflict countries and the development of further integrated programmes and projects to meet critical needs and gaps.

The Sub-Cluster on Humanitarian Response and Post-Conflict Recovery

The Sub-Cluster on Humanitarian Response and Post-Conflict Recovery, under the Cluster on Governance, Peace and Security, advocates for increased attention to the needs of countries emerging from conflict, and provides support to the AU in its effort to bring about increased policy-level coordination and the mobilization of international support required to address the needs of post-conflict societies. The Sub-Cluster's priority activities in the short/medium-term include

providing support to the African Union in the development and dissemination of a strategic Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, compiling preliminary assessment reports on critical needs and gaps in selected post-conflict countries, conducting (or participating in) assessment missions, advocacy and capacity building.

The Sub-Cluster's activities were invigorated at the beginning of 2005 with the appointment by UNHCR of a Senior Programme Coordinator and an earlier secondment by JICA, to UNHCR, of an expert on post-conflict issues. The Sub-Cluster held its first formal coordination meeting on 30 March 2005 to review current challenges, endorse its work plan and establish a smaller and more agile Inter-Agency Technical Support Cell comprised of six agencies (IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, and WFP) that would carry forward the Sub-Cluster's work. The IATSC has met twice in 2005 to exchange information about each agency's activities relating to post-conflict recovery and review progress in implementation of its work plan.

The draft AU framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development has already been reviewed by members of the AU Peace and Security Council and other AU Member States during the PSC's 4th Brainstorming meeting held on 4 and 5 September in Durban, South Africa. The framework will shortly be reviewed by two separate meetings of international experts and experts of AU Member States during the first half of 2006. The Framework is expected to be endorsed by AU's decision-making organs during the June/July 2006 AU Summit. Official endorsement of the draft Framework and the creation of monitoring and implementation mechanisms by the AU would pave the way for an increased and more systematic engagement of the NEPAD Sub-Cluster in the Framework's dissemination and implementation.

As part of the build-up to the current state of affairs, UNHCR has also made contributions to the Post-Conflict Recovery Workshop convened by the NEPAD Secretariat in Johannesburg from 13-15 October 2004. The main discussions in this meeting focused on the core areas of intervention in post-conflict recovery.

Preliminary assessment of situation in post-conflict countries

Recognizing the massive recovery, reconstruction and development needs in the Continent, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) seconded a Senior Technical Expert on Post-Conflict Recovery to UNHCR Regional Liaison Office in Addis Ababa in May 2004. The JICA expert provides support to the work of the Sub-Cluster and UNHCR including in undertaking preparatory work such as developing criteria for selection and classification of post-conflict countries¹, organization of a socio-economic databases in these countries and coordination of the preparation of preliminary assessment and analytical reports on the status of recovery and reconstruction in selected post-conflict countries.

The preliminary assessment reports mentioned above would provide a background for the development of integrated and comprehensive programmes and projects that could address critical needs and gaps in past/present recovery and reconstruction initiatives. Compilation of basic socio-economic database on selected post-conflict countries was completed during the first half of 2005. A report on Angola was prepared and shared for comment during the 3rd quarter of 2005. Reports on Sudan, DRC, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Burundi are expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2006.

¹ Angola, Burundi, Central African Rep., Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Liberia, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, and Uganda.

Country-Specific initiatives

The Sub-Cluster and UNHCR also work closely with the AU in support of its initiatives in specific Countries such as the Sudan and Central African Republic. At the Meeting of Experts on Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Sudan held by the AU 5-6 December 2005, a draft “Framework for the Involvement of AU Member States and Relevant African Institutions in Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Sudan” was discussed. This Framework, being developed under the auspices of the AU Committee on post-conflict reconstruction in Sudan, contains guidelines that aim to facilitate efforts of AU member states in providing support to the Sudan in its post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts following conclusion of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement at the beginning of 2005. 44th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council held on 29 December 2005 was also devoted to discussing the situation in the Central African Republic and called for increased international support to meet humanitarian and recovery needs in that country.

UNHCR’s framework for durable solutions

In order to enhance closer cooperation and coordination with other UN System agencies, government departments, NGOs and other partners involved in humanitarian, recovery and development activities, UNHCR developed a strategic policy in the past few years dubbed as Framework for Durable Solutions. This Framework aims to enhance burden and responsibility sharing, building capacities to receive and protect refugees and find sustainable durable solutions to their problems. The Framework includes methodologies such as Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) and Development through Local Integration (DLI) in asylum countries and, Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (4Rs) in countries of origin. In particular, the 4Rs methodology is intended to serve as an overarching framework for institutional collaboration in the planning and implementation of reintegration activities in post-conflict situations.

Following decisions reached in the IASC, UNHCR is also gearing up its activities to strengthen the key roles it will play in the protection of and assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in conflict situations within the UN Collaborative Approach. UNHCR will have a leading coordination role in protection, camp management and administration and emergency shelter.

Major Challenges relating to the work of the Sub-Cluster

1. As clearly mentioned at the opening session of the Brainstorming Retreat on the FPCRD held in Durban in September 2005, **post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa is primarily a political process. It requires, therefore, full commitment and further support by all parties if the efforts were to make a difference on the situation of post-conflict countries in any significant way.**

The Advisory Panel could play a key role in raising the profile of the post-conflict reconstruction issue on the political agenda of the United Nations and other international partners.

2. The African Union has made post-conflict reconstruction one of its key objectives in ensuring stable peace and security in the Continent by including it in the mandate of the Peace and Security Council as well as its strategic plan for the 2004-2007 period. As indicated above,

progress is being made in putting in place a strategic policy framework on PCRD and mechanisms for implementation and monitoring. **This progress, however, should be complemented by strong international support and the mobilization of resources to implement the framework, meet actual needs and bridge gaps on the ground.** In this regard, consideration may also be given to strengthening the synergy of effort between the AU Commission and NEPAD secretariat.

The Advisory Panel can play a key role in highlighting the problems of countries in post-conflict situations and calling for a particular attention of the international community in the mobilization of support and resources to help Africa's development.

3. In light of the immensity of the post-conflict reconstruction challenge in Africa and the primary focus of AU's effort on policy, monitoring, and strategic coordination, the Sub-Cluster can play a pivotal role in connecting this effort with initiatives that can make a tangible difference on the ground. **While all members of the Sub-Cluster have strong support for its objectives, they are often constrained by absence of clear policy guidelines support from their respective headquarters as well as resource limitations at the field level** (especially in Addis Ababa) to engage in concrete activities such as field missions and project/programme development.
4. The challenges facing the Sub-Cluster are closely related to weaknesses observed in the Cluster approach to NEPAD support in general. **If the sub-cluster is to be effective in its initiatives, all member agencies of the cluster system should provide it full support including by providing offices in the field with clear policy guidelines, establishing support and follow-up mechanisms at Headquarters level and the necessary resources** to enable them participate in sub-cluster activities more substantively.
5. The Regional Consultation of UN Agencies Working in Africa, in our view, does not provide an adequate platform to effectively support the NEPAD initiative. Very little information is disseminated regarding the existence and activities of the Clusters and their sub-clusters including between and within the Clusters themselves. **It would be crucial to expand and strengthen this forum if the mechanism is to serve the need for effective dialogue and collaboration. As a minimum, sufficient time should be allocated for the annual consultations** which could, in our view, also be more productive if they were held into two phases – the first at a technical level (examine progress, prepare agenda, make proposals and recommendations) and the second at the level of Principals.
6. As an entity entrusted with the immense responsibility of coordinating the Cluster System, ECA should be given a clear and strong mandate by the CEB, or perhaps even by the General Assembly. ECA should also be provided with adequate resources if it is to effectively and efficiently discharge its coordination responsibilities. Coordination of the Cluster approach may also benefit from the broad experiences of field-based agencies such as UNDP. Participation and commitment of the Breton Woods institutions, within the Cluster system or through another mechanism, would be critical for the success the effort to support NEPAD.

The Advisory Panel may recommend that all UN system agencies, including the Breton Woods Institutions, increase their commitment to the supporting the NEPAD vision.

Annex

Interesting facts on the economic impact of conflict, poverty, forced population displacement and underdevelopment in Africa

- Roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years.²
- More than 281 million of Africa's estimated population of nearly 874 million (more than 32 percent) live in countries which are either currently undergoing conflict, in transition from conflict to peace or post-conflict situations.³
- Between 1989 and 2002 more than half of African countries experienced political violence and armed conflict of varying degrees.⁴
- Armed conflicts are costly. According to one quantitative model the overall economic cost of a conflict, for the affected country as well as its neighbours and the region could reach 250 percent of initial GDP. Considering the average income of most low-income countries (US\$19.7 billion) averting a civil war could save an average of US\$49 billion excluding health costs. When health costs and increased risk for another conflict are added the total cost could reach US\$64.2 billion.⁵
- Out of a total of 22 active armed conflicts in 2003, 9 were in Africa - 41 percent of the global total.⁶
- In 2002, out of a total of 63 low-income countries in the world 38 were located in sub-Saharan Africa. A large number of these countries were also either in active conflict or in a post-conflict situation.⁷
- Out of some 533 armed conflicts that occurred between 1946 and 2001, 168 of them took place in Africa representing almost a third of the global total.⁸
- Africa is host to over 4 million refugees and more than 13 million internally displaced people.
- As of the end of 2003 there were 38 major situations of protracted refugee cases (refugee populations of 25,000 or more **who have been in exile for five or more years** per case) in the world. 22 of these cases, representing 58 percent of the world total and comprising 2.3 million refugees, were in Africa.⁹ The consequences of having so many human beings in a static state include threats to security, wasted lives, lost productivity and squandered resources.

² In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all, Report of the UN Secretary General to the 59th session of the General Assembly

³ GEOHIVE regional population data, www.geohive.com

⁴ Uppsala University, Dept. of Peace and Conflict Research – Conflict Database

⁵ Why Civil Wars are Costly-and what could be done to reduce these costs
PricewaterhouseCoopers, www.pwcglobal.com

⁶ Journal of Peace Research, Vol.41 No.5, Sept.2004

⁷ Rasheed Draman, Poverty and Conflict in Africa: Explaining a Complex Relationship, report prepared for Experts Group Meeting on Africa-Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Program

⁸ Journal of Peace Research, Vol.41 No.5, Sept.2004

⁹ Report to the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, June 2004