



Norad



Thematic Meeting on Diplomacy, Development, and Integrated Planning in Fragile States (Oslo, 11 and 12 February 2008)

Final Outcome Summary

The Thematic Expert Meeting gathered around 75 experts and senior officials from the UN system and the World Bank, from OECD countries and developing fragile countries, including diplomats, development officials and military staff, as well as independent academics and resource persons.

The purpose of the meeting was to review experience and constraints to linking diplomacy and development in fragile states, and to review the ongoing multilateral processes for integrated planning in order to identify opportunities for promoting closer operational alignment between these and bilateral action.

The main points emerging from the meeting can be summarised as follows:

- International engagement in fragile states requires a combination of political diplomacy, humanitarian and development activities and often a security component in order to protect human life, promote and support a peaceful solution, stabilisation and development. Given the fragile context, *political considerations and a conflict analysis* are essential for international interventions for development and security purposes.
- Countries engaging in fragile states as well as the UN system need better mechanisms at capitals/ headquarters level in order to improve coherence and efficiency (the so-called “whole-of-government” approach) but even more important is to promote a coherent approach involving national as well as international actors at *the country level* in each fragile state.
- Recent achievements by the multilateral system to improve on integrated planning, including the revised post-conflict needs assessments, the integrated missions planning process and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, were all considered a step forward in the right direction. Participants stressed, however, that all planning for recovery and peacebuilding has to be *kept simple, rapid, and concise*.

- In most fragile states peacebuilding implies involving *opposing political forces* and actors in power- and wealth-sharing arrangements. International actors therefore need to encourage *conflict-sensitive and inclusive considerations* in all recovery and reconstruction planning.
- All external support has to be based on a *sound and, to the extent possible, shared political and economic analysis* of the specific country situation, as well as recognition of the authority and responsibility of the *national government* and its institutions.

Recommendations:

1. **In countries emerging from violent conflict an integrated peacebuilding strategy should be developed early at the country level, guiding international actors.** The strategy should be sufficiently broad to address support for a political settlement, the security challenges, and the immediate social and economic rehabilitation and development needs.

Such a strategy has to be country-specific, build upon the agreed political solution/ peace agreement, and encourage security and development actors to prioritise resources in support of peacebuilding, which implies being conflict sensitive and taking account of the interests of various political forces.

Initial strategies need to be developed quickly, kept short and simple to address the need to establish critical peace, security and development dividends. Later processes may expand on this initial strategic framework, and develop more detailed plans.

The strategy should be agreed among all major international actors active in the country, including regional actors and non-traditional donors, and the national government, recognising the roles of various international and national actors. It should constitute the common platform guiding the activities of the different actors.

The UN peacebuilding architecture was recognised as a natural driver and potential model for such an initial peacebuilding strategy.

2. **Focus must be on building responsive states.** All actors need a realistic approach to state capacity and quality in an early recovery phase, and avoid overburdening the state with too high expectations. It must be acknowledged that state-building implies long term national social processes which may be conflictual, and that it requires institutional designs based on “tailoring and stitching” from existing local and national resources and mechanisms.

State capacity building is crucial for improved service delivery as well as for improved security, but ways of providing this may vary, and donors have to be flexible in finding good mechanisms for supporting state-building and not undermining it.

3. **The government budget has to be acknowledged - and enabled - to become the central allocation mechanism for all major flows of funds**, even if rudimentary and with weak financial management initially. The budget should not be viewed as a technocratic tool, but as the fundamental political tool for resource allocation, including addressing the security/ development trade-offs.

In countries where funds cannot be managed in a responsible and transparent way through the government budget, donors and governments need to devise transparent mechanisms allowing for similar political considerations of major resource flows and allocations.

4. **It is important to “invest in leadership” at top and senior manager levels, nationally as well as internationally.** Experience has shown that personalities and leadership have a major influence on outcomes in fragile situations and their role as “mediators” and facilitators should be given more focus. Whenever possible and feasible, good leadership therefore should be supported and strengthened:
 - a. At international level; strengthen the selection and profiling of senior managers, and establish a common systemic coaching of potential leaders of international operations, across political, security and development issues in order to enable good combined use of all relevant tools for a peacebuilding process.
 - b. At national level, where feasible, leaders should similarly be supported to strengthen their capability to manage a broad peacebuilding agenda.

On integrated planning in the immediate post-settlement phase:

5. **Planning and programming for early reconstruction must be well adapted, simple and timely, and relevant to the country situation.** The revised version of Post-Conflict Needs Assessments and Transitional Results Frameworks (PCNA/TRF) developed collaboratively by the World Bank and the UN should be supported by all international donors as providing the main framework and reference document in the immediate reconstruction phase, provided that:
 - a. They are politically inclusive and take account of the needs and interests of all stakeholders in order to stabilise a fragile peace.
 - b. They are aligned to the national programming priorities and budget, to the extent possible.
 - c. They are focussed on priority setting based on realistic funding, rather than all-inclusive needs assessments.
6. **Mutual accountability and transparency are important, and may be crucial in order to build trust when relations have been difficult.** Governments and international donors should aim for a “compact” approach including a monitoring

system, provided that it will be a simple and transparent mechanism. Such a compact may include:

- a. Full transparency on all donor support to the country, including funding through non-government channels.
 - b. Donor agencies to avoid new mechanisms and institutions that undermine the state-building objectives of the political agreement.
 - c. Full transparency on the national budget and use of national resources, including for developmental and security purposes.
 - d. Minimum standards for public sector governance, that are realistic given the actual context in the country.
7. **International funding may usefully be pooled through mechanisms such as multi-donor trust funds (MDTF),** provided that:
- a. They contribute to capacity development and state-building in line with general peacebuilding strategy and national recovery plans.
 - b. Such mechanisms have well-defined objectives and are cost-effective.
 - c. The UN and the World Bank finalise their global agreement on management of such funds, so as to avoid future legal and other obstacles to fast and smooth operations.
8. **Funding gaps for early recovery require attention,** because existing funding is too often earmarked for specific purposes or too bureaucratic. Donors and fund managers should review existing funding mechanisms and earmarking with a view to manage these resources more flexibly in order to cover remaining gaps. The proposal to create a special international fund for early recovery may also be considered as an option.

On development-diplomacy linkages

9. **Peace agreements are important for defining the framework and basic principles for future development.** This is a central shared arena for political actors with a development perspective. Peace agreements should not be overloaded with too many issues, but should nevertheless include major elements on power-sharing and management of main resources. They should create sufficient incentives for all partners to implement it, which requires the involvement of political forces as well as ministries of finance and international supporters.
10. **In countries with protracted crisis, international actors need to explore further ways and means to make use of – and linking – diplomatic, developmental and other tools** in order to maintain a dialogue and stay engaged to promote a peace process. There is a need to explore further opportunities for developmental and humanitarian actors to support and empower local communities and interest groups, as well as to establish “track 2” diplomacy.

Development and humanitarian issues can be the entry point for a dialogue with “difficult” regimes and other political forces including non-state armed groups, and

thus enable communication with actors who are important for any political settlement. Development activities may contribute to communication and trust, and may contribute to alleviating some of the grievances causing the conflict.

Humanitarian assistance is guided by humanitarian principles and need to be protected as a neutral activity in a conflict zone. Humanitarian actors may nevertheless open up lines of communication important for diplomatic initiatives.

11. **International actors need to explore mechanisms and procedures for promoting integrated approaches in practice across ministries/ departments** at capitals/ head-quarters level as well as at country level, such as for instance:
 - a. Joint inter-ministerial mechanisms in capitals, relating to specific fragile countries, and joint inter-ministerial missions at political and technical levels when visiting fragile states.
 - b. Mixed teams/ presence at country level in embassies or local missions, supported by joint training.
 - c. Multilateral institutions, in particular the UN system, need to put into practice agreed principles for greater coherence, including ongoing reforms and integrated missions processes, as well as the increased coordination and collaboration between the UN and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

12. **International presence at country level has to be improved in terms of professional quality, knowledge of country context and understanding of the conflict dynamics.** International actors should aim to bring in personnel from a broad range of disciplines, organisational structures and professional backgrounds and cultures to better reflect the interdisciplinary needs on the ground. Current processes of both recruitment and training needs to be improved to ensure that all actors, while drawing from their diversity, are familiarised with the broader peacebuilding agenda, the mandate and the concrete objectives of the intervention. All need a basic understanding of the conflict lines, as well as good professional background within their own field.

13. **Bilateral actors should contribute expertise to multilaterally coordinated processes,** in order to enhance the capacity and knowledge base especially for conflict analysis and more integrated planning based on such analysis. This should also contribute to better coherence between multilateral and bilateral support to implementation of agreed strategies and plans.

14. **Countries should send similar messages regarding coherence to all the relevant multilateral agencies,** including UN and the International Financial Institutions, and the security/ military organisations (such as NATO). At the country level, the UN SRSG missions and the Peacebuilding Commission, where present, are the natural focal points for coherent and integrated operations.

Process going forward:

- These outcomes will be communicated by the OECD and its member states through the defence, development and diplomatic channels to the respective diplomatic missions.
- The outcomes will be brought together with other Thematic Meetings' findings – the PFM Meeting on March 17-18, hosted in Paris by France and Australia, and the Meeting on Security System Reform on April 9-10, hosted by The Netherlands – and jointly presented at the OECD/DAC High-Level Meeting on 22 May 2008
- The findings and recommendations will then be fed into a OECD/DAC Senior Officials' Meeting to be hosted by Switzerland in late 2008.
- The recommendations will also be relevant in preparations for the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008.
- The UN and the World Bank will take account of these recommendations in future processes to improve integrated planning.