

# **Post-war reconciliation and democratization: Concepts, goals and lessons learnt**

Göran Hydén

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Göran Hydén

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## **Post-war Reconciliation and Democratization: Concepts, Goals and Lessons Learnt**

Any strictly rational approach to history distorts it much as a road map distorts reality. The most sophisticated theories of why what happens suffer from a flat-earth syndrome; missing are the dimensions of fear, centuries of hate gathering in poisoned pools, the darkness of bigotry, ignorance and despair. The irrational, by definition, eludes the reasoned unraveling of causal connections, slips through the mesh of logic, and locks men into its own version of truth.

Ernst Pawel, *The Nightmare of Reason, A Life of Franz Kafka* (1984)

### ***Introduction***

The past ten years of global efforts to promote and enhance democratic forms of rule have been characterized by a distinct sense of confidence that humankind is interested in and capable of realizing the goals associated with these efforts. Democracy is a universal good, a prerequisite for any attempt to make development more sustainable. It enhances the opportunities for a reasoned approach to solving problems because it is expected to encourage all interested parties -- 'stakeholders' in today's development language -- to participate. Already developed democracies have seen it as their mission to support this process in other countries in order to accelerate it. The favored approach has been to prescribe those measures that have been part of their own path to democracy. Drawing on rational theories indicating the causal connections of development in their own past, representatives of these developed democracies have embarked upon an exercise in social and political engineering that has given rationality pride of place.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now say that neither theory nor effort has been in vain. Theory may not have provided democratizers with a road map or flight plan specifying the fastest and safest route from autocracy but it has at least given them an instrument panel for use in navigating different possible courses and gauging their progress en route to their chosen destination. Efforts have also paid off in many different ways. Even though democratizing countries differ in terms of how far they have reached in their political transition, more countries than ever before are meeting some, if not all, standards of modern democracy. Foreign aid, as seen by many, if not all, actors in democratizing countries has made a positive difference, as, for example,

a recent evaluation of Danish support of democracy and human rights projects confirms (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000).

Democratization, however, has also created new uncertainties, especially in societies without previous experience of political pluralism. This is where irrational elements, such as fear and suspicion, have surfaced and anticipated causal connections have failed to materialize. The political transition process has been associated with civil violence and, sometimes, civil war. It is significant that out of a hundred armed conflicts in the past ten years, all but six have occurred within states (International IDEA Newsletter 2000:1). The international community has recorded mixed results in dealing with these conflicts. It has been reasonably successful, for example, in Guatemala, Mozambique and Namibia, but much less so in Bosnia or Somalia. The result is that we are now dealing with an increasing number of countries characterized as being in a 'post-conflict' state, i.e. undergoing a simultaneous reconstruction and reconciliation.

It is this category of 'divided societies' that is the subject of our conference. More specifically, our interest lies in drawing the lessons from efforts made at building democratic forms of governance in such places. My contribution here is to raise some initial questions about goals, concepts and lessons learnt that may be relevant for subsequent deliberations. I have chosen the following four as being especially salient:

1. Why has the number of intra-state conflicts risen so dramatically in recent years?
2. What is the nature and extent of divisiveness underlying intra-state conflicts?
3. How relevant or realistic have policy interventions been?
4. What are the challenges to obtaining greater local involvement?

I shall discuss each in turn before concluding with some reflections on where we are at present and what is needed in order to improve the management of post-conflict situations.

### ***1. Increase in intra-state conflicts***

This first issue deals with the policy context. Before any evaluative comments can be made, it is necessary to say something about the circumstances in which political

reforms are being carried out today. The increase in intra-state conflicts is first and foremost the result of a change in the nature of politics in the past ten or so years. This change manifests itself in the emergence of a politics that focuses on the rules of the political game rather than the more materialist issue of 'who gets what, when, and how?' This marks a shift in emphasis from distributive to what I call 'constitutive' politics (Hyden 1999). For students of politics, this means a growing interest in 'regime' over 'state'. It is necessary to elaborate a bit on the nature and significance of this shift because the road to democracy is full of unexpected turns that defy the more rational and strategic approaches associated with distributive politics.

The rise of constitutive politics reflects in part the end of the Cold War that for a long time had preempted debates about norms and principles of governance. For forty years, constitutional issues were essentially 'frozen', because what mattered most was the ideological identification with one of the contending camps. Even the democratic countries in the West were ready to sacrifice the political principles that they themselves adhered to in order to count developing countries among their supporters. The break-up of the Soviet Union and the bipolar system of international politics gave the Western democracies an opportunity to move their own position forward. In the 1990s attention shifted from what a state was doing to how it was doing it.

This shift, however, is also in part an outcome of the ways the international community has defined 'development'. For a long time -- from the 1960s to the 1980s -- development was viewed as a non-political activity. It was variably seen as enhancing technical or institutional capacity, meeting social needs and, eventually, getting prices right. The earlier interpretations of what development is all about draw their inspiration from the notion of an omnipotent state that could catalyze national progress, regardless of the costs to individual citizens. The emphasis was on meeting the demands of the state in nation-building. One-party systems, even military juntas, were seen as legitimate as long as they proved capable of fulfilling national development goals. Their eventual shortcomings in doing so, however, led in the 1980s to a concern with achieving higher levels of efficiency in reaching development goals. The market replaced the state as the favored distributive mechanism. Even in this situation there was a deliberate effort to keep development out of politics. Structural adjustment policies were consistently defended as purely economic

interventions. Their inability to achieve a marked improvement in levels of efficiency or productivity in the public sector finally led the international community to acknowledge that the main hurdles to development are political. The two can no longer be kept separate. Getting politics right in the name of good governance is now being interpreted as a prerequisite for development.

Constitutive politics differs from its distributive counterpart in two important ways. The first is that constitutive politics deals with the very foundation on which distributive politics rests. It is more radical in the sense of going to the roots of what is perceived as being wrong with the way politics is conducted. As such, it generates higher levels of uncertainty in the polity. The second is that constitutive politics calls for changes in the relations between state and citizens. This way it tends to affect not only political leaders but also the public at large in more far-reaching manners than distributive politics typically does. The latter, even in its redistributive incarnation, achieves merely incremental changes. It is precisely this combination of radicalism and social latitude that makes constitutive politics more controversial and thus heated. By leaving the nature of the rules open for grabs it generates levels of uncertainty in the minds of the public that in turn can be exploited by populist politicians. In culturally diverse societies, such behavior tends to make people more aware of who they are. Constitutive politics, therefore, may easily exacerbate social or cultural divisions.

Current democratizing countries are likely to be less fortunate than India which may be the most culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse state in the world but which also has a functioning constitution replete with various arrangements for special status for states and regions in the country. This does not mean that India is free from communal tensions. In fact, nowhere else are violent clashes more common. During a two-month period in 1987, for example, the Indian and foreign press reported six separate communal types of conflict: (1) over the creation of a new state (Mizoram); (2) over language in Goa; (3) over the demands for a separate Ghurkaland state; (4) over an insurgency in Manipur on the Burmese border; (5) over the declaration of certain border areas in Tripura as 'disturbed areas'; and (6) over objections by China to the incorporation of allegedly Chinese territory in the new state of Arunachal Pradesh (Hannum 1990:171-72).



The point here is that where constitutional rules are viewed as legitimate and there are credible institutions to adjudicate disputes, even communal conflicts may be contained and managed. Where such rules are being contested as part of a regime transition, however, the prospects of success are much dimmer. What is more, because current political reform efforts affect not only state but also society, the repercussions tend to be far-reaching once conflicts get out of hand. During the Cold War times, unanticipated political changes were generally confined to the state and took the form of military coups. Now such changes are typically armed conflicts involving the civilian population at large. The result is inevitably a higher cost in both physical and human terms and, usually, a major post-conflict operation to restore peace, foster reconciliation, and start or restart a move toward democracy. The sources of conflict are not only the rapid pace of the economic and political transition, as suggested in the DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation (OECD 1997:12), but also the nature of transitional politics, which encourages a focus on rules and rights and thus, by implication, on identity rather than economy. In sum, politics is more volatile and the potential burden facing the international community correspondingly heavier than before.

## ***2. Nature and Extent of Divisiveness***

Any effort to intervene in a conflict or a post-conflict situation requires a careful analysis of the situation. As the DAC Guidelines recognize, the sources of conflict vary and so does the depth. There are underlying causes, which are often very different from more proximate sources or the factors that may trigger a conflict. Any attempt at generalization, therefore, is bound to be controversial. Nonetheless, I shall try to point to a few lessons that at least should be further examined and discussed. The first concerns the nature of social division, the second the depth of social cleavages.

Societies may be divided horizontally or vertically. A horizontal division is typically the result of differential access to resources. Disparities in the distribution of benefits of development may lead to social conflict. Such conflicts are usually referred to as being based on 'social class.' Vertical divisions of society are racial, ethnic, religious

or cultural in any other sense. Such divisions tend to become manifest especially in a situation of political transition to a more competitive form of politics, where the consequences of the new rules are not yet clear. The 'face' of conflict in this period of regime transition, therefore, is almost always cultural, although other factors may form underlying causes. The problem with this mobilization of vertical differences is that they lead to conflicts which result in zero-sum game rather than positive-sum game situations. In other words, conflicts tend to produce a 'winner-takes-all' attitude among the political players. If the conflict had remained primarily one over resources, the chances for negotiations to produce a positive-sum game outcome would most probably have been higher. In such a scenario, all players may have received some gain. Because constitutive considerations tend to overshadow distributive ones in current political transitions, it is very difficult to contain conflicts to purely distributive issues, even if they happen to be the real substance of the matter.

If cultural factors in conflict tend to be consequences of political mobilization rather than some form of immutable social fabric, it is important to know how deep such cultural divisions may go. The most difficult conflicts can be found in the 'old world' precisely because history looms more largely over those societies. As the conflicts in Palestine, the Balkans, Cyprus, Kashmir and Sri Lanka demonstrate, the cultural loyalties or identities on which political leaders can draw are so deep that once mobilized, it becomes very difficult indeed to bring these conflicts to successful resolution. Here the foundations of social cleavages are hundreds, if not thousands of years old and differences are richly inscribed in the memories of people. The post-conflict scenarios also tend to be more challenging because there is a greater reluctance on the part of the international community today than before to accept forced mass migration of people as part of a partition settlement. One critic of present approaches to post-conflict management strongly advocates that the international community should endorse separation as a remedy for at least some communal conflicts; otherwise, the processes of war will separate the populations anyway, at much higher human cost (Kaufmann 1998:123). His approach may well apply to many 'old world' conflicts, but it should also be recognized that wherever there is no clear winner in sight, the antagonists may be brought to the negotiating-table and work out a post-conflict strategy. This is what seems to be happening haltingly in

Palestine and which did take place in South Africa, a country that may straddle the line between the 'old' and the 'new' world.

Cleavages in the 'new' world are generally different. In Latin America, they are first and foremost between marginalized indigenous populations and modern-day representatives of those who once colonized their countries. With democratization in the last two decades this issue has come to the fore. The rights of indigenous peoples have become both a national and an international issue, thus raising their own social and political consciousness. From Chiapas in Mexico, via El Salvador and Guatemala to, most recently, Ecuador, social movements have taken upon themselves to fight for greater social justice for the Indian populations. Even though these movements have a cultural character to them, it is important to acknowledge that the conflicts that they create are largely over distributive issues, notably land ownership. It is no coincidence, therefore, that post-conflict situations have generally been easier to manage successfully in that part of the world.

Africa has experienced the largest number of intra-state conflicts in recent years, but this does not mean that conflicts are more difficult to handle there. The idea that Africa remains more backward because of its ethnic fragmentation is being hosted in serious policy circles and must be challenged. Easterly and Levine (1997), for example, claim that 'ethno-linguistic fragmentation' is significantly correlated in a negative way with school attainment, financial depth, and the number of telephones per worker and positively associated with such phenomena as black market transactions. The latter type of factor in turn has negative consequences for overall economic progress, accounting for 25-40 percent of the growth differential between a regressing Sub-Saharan Africa and the fast-growing economies of Southeast Asia. The way this works is that over time African ethnic diversity, on its own momentum, has generated a perverse one-dimensional cutthroat intergroup competition that makes it exceedingly difficult to agree on the distribution of public goods and on sustainable, development-friendly macroeconomic policies. While the two authors may be right in their observation about the difficulty in finding agreement on sustainable macroeconomic policies, their attempt to link it to ethno-linguistic fragmentation is, as Michael Chege (1999:379-380) points out in a critique of their article, merely another attempt to blame Africa's woes on its ethnic divisions.

Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa is neither as pervasive nor as primordial as many policy analysts and the mass media tend to assume. Because cultural identities are socially constructed, they are malleable. Africa's history, both before, during and after the colonial interlude, is full of examples of how ethnic identities have been reconstructed to serve members as social or economic circumstances have changed. Why cultural identities tend to become so prominent in Africa stems from two factors that are peculiar to that continent. The first is that personalized rather than formalized relations matter most. Patriarchal and clientelist relations are cases in point, but so are relations of solidarity that often cut across family or community boundaries. In short, the social 'embeddedness' of relations is a more general phenomenon, one that I have elsewhere called 'the economy of affection.' (Hyden 1980) The second factor is the lack of identification with the public institutions that are responsible for macroeconomic management and other state- or nation-building tasks. There is little appreciation of the 'civic' public realm, or the institutions of the state, as Peter Ekeh (1975) noted already a quarter-century ago. The state has never been allowed to evolve in an organic fashion from society in Africa. Instead, it has been imposed on a multitude of cultural groups who have been forced to find a *modus vivendi* within the territorial boundaries agreed upon by the colonial powers and subsequently adopted by Africa's own new nationalist leaders.

Because African countries by and large lack a middle class made up of people with independent means of wealth, rising up the social ladder has been based on strategies aimed at controlling public resources. Political leaders have used their communitarian relations to justify a distribution of public goods that benefits both themselves and their followers. In a competitive multi-party setting, this battle over scarce public resources has intensified. While public finance reforms have reduced the opportunities for leaders to stray from agreed upon budgetary commitments, they have often shifted attention to non-state resources. The civil wars in countries such as Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been fought over control of mineral wealth. This rendering of the state as less attractive as a source of 'mining' public resources also means that conflicts in Africa tend to spread to society and affect the civilian populations in ways that were not the case before.

African conflicts are typically over resources rather than identity. What triggers them is politics, more specifically the competitive variety that has evolved in the post-Cold War period. It is no coincidence that a major preoccupation during the first years after independence was to find a political formula that responded to Africa's preference for a consensual approach to policy-making. The one-party system was not an inappropriate means of doing so. One-party systems and democracy are not necessarily incompatible as the initial efforts in that direction indicated (see e.g. Cliffe 1967). Uganda's experiment with a 'movement' system is such that even if it has its shortcomings, it does constitute a governance formula for Africa that should not be ignored. The point here is that the international community can make a difference in conflict or post-conflict situations in Africa provided its representatives recognize that the dimensions of these conflicts are different from those in Asia, Europe or Latin America and that, therefore, they call for measures that best respond to these differences.

But what about the experiences in Rwanda and Burundi? Do they not imply that conflicts in Africa are more deep-rooted in cultural traditions than suggested above? The answer is both yes and no. Conflicts in these two countries have deeper cultural roots than elsewhere in Africa but precisely because that is the case, they are not representative of conflicts on that continent. What makes the conflict in these two countries so special is that communal relations are nested in caste relations, thus reinforcing the cleavages in ways that are typically not found in multi-ethnic societies elsewhere in Africa. The relations between Tutsis and Hutus also have deep historical roots, which means that both groups have been able to appeal to a rich roster of prejudices and pre-conceived ideas to create hostile images of each other. In many respects, therefore, the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi carry some of the same features as those in the 'old world.' In this context, it may be worth remembering that it took decades for Germany to face up to its past; in Rwanda, the wounds are still raw, as Lemarchand (2000) notes in a recent commentary on race and retribution in that country.

The long and short of this discussion about the nature and extent of divisiveness is that the conflicts that stem from these cleavages are generally politically generated. Preventing them from becoming primarily 'cultural' over issues of identity is

important because once they have been politicized they become difficult to manage and bring to a peaceful resolution. This is likely to be the case especially in Europe and Asia. Both Latin America and Africa offer better prospects for conflict resolution and also reconciliation and democratization in the post-conflict context.

### ***3. Relevance and Realism of Policy Interventions***

Having examined the global policy environment and the nature and extent of conflicts, it is now time to look more closely at the policy interventions of the international community in post-conflict situations. What can be said about the experience of various measures taken so far? In answering this question I shall analyze both the relevance and the realism of what has been done.

A major reason why politics is different now is that the international community itself has embraced the notion of constitutive politics. Their concern about 'good governance' echoes the significance of process; that is, how political decisions are arrived at. For this reason not only national politics but also international relations in year 2000 are significantly different from those of the past. It took about forty years for the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, first launched at Versailles in 1919, to become universally accepted and applied more widely to remaining colonial territories. Such was also the length of time needed to get the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) more universally accepted as an instrument of international politics. Sovereignty is no longer a concept limited to states, but increasingly also to peoples. Their rights rather than those of states are what matter. The constraints on involvement in the affairs of a sovereign nation-state, therefore, are no longer as strong as they used to be.

As experiences in the 1990s suggest, however, the problems with international interventions in conflict or post-conflict situations are many. This is not the place for an exhaustive review of all these problems. Instead, I will focus on a few that seem to be especially salient in post-conflict situations: (a) conflicting time horizons, (b) controversy over impartiality, (c) scope of involvement, and (d) indicators of success.

## **a. Conflicting time horizons**

There are essentially two sets of differences that are important here. One is the conflicting time horizons applying to economic and political reforms. The other applies to the varying time perspectives of actors in the post-conflict situation. Economic reformers tend to be in a hurry and often insist on drastic measures as the only way forward. This means pressing for austerity measures that limit the ability of local actors to solve outstanding political issues. El Salvador offers an illustration of this conflict. When the international community was trying to facilitate the consolidation of liberal democracy in El Salvador in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which required significant governmental spending on land reform and other measures to integrate former rebel parties into mainstream Salvadorian society, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were imposing austerity measures on the government. This was detrimental to the main thrust of the human rights and security efforts undertaken by other agencies of the international community. Wishing to act at a fast pace in order to take advantage of a particular 'window of opportunity'--as post-conflict situations often constitute--is sometimes a strategy adopted by political reformers as well. This may work in some situations, but it would be a mistake to assume that political reforms can be put into practice at the same pace as economic ones may. Representatives of the donor community, who are under pressure at home to show results from their efforts to assist other countries in post-conflict situations, are especially likely to insist on 'quick fixes.' Experiences in many countries around the world, however, have taught us that while it takes little time to destroy social capital, a lot of patience is required to rebuild it. Reactivating trust often requires the mediation of a third party, e.g. representatives of the international community, but it also calls for the latter to make a commitment to stay with the process of reconciliation as long as it takes to institutionalize the necessary trust or social capital.

## **b. Controversy over impartiality**

Conventional peace-keeping missions by the international community have been carried out on the premise that their members act in a strictly impartial manner. They are there to keep the contending parties apart so that they do not begin fighting again. There are examples, such as Cyprus, of the relative success of this type of mission. As the number of conflict situations has escalated and they have arisen in culturally

differing environments, the conventional approach has often proved inadequate. Is the international mission there to protect the integrity of the state? How does it deal with a group of rebels that mercilessly violate the rights of their fellow-country citizens? Is peace more important than respect for human rights? These are some of the questions that have arisen in the 1990s in places such as the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan. The international community has de facto accepted this 'escalation' of involvement and many actors now realize that impartiality is not only impractical but also undesirable. It is appropriate, therefore, to speak of a 'second-generation' type of mission that emphasizes peace enforcement. But what is 'good' or 'evil' in any conflict situation is often hard to determine. So is what measure should come first. These challenges have arisen, for example, in Sierra Leone, where the recent peace agreement between the government and the rebel forces essentially lent legitimacy to a rebel leader who had unsparingly committed human rights violations as a means of gaining power. This type of controversy has also adversely affected international human rights observers in places like Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo because they have been viewed by the authorities as undermining their own political cause. The overall effect has been that there tend to be more tensions between national governments and agencies of the international community and within the latter more disagreement about how to best proceed.

### **c. Scope of involvement**

The present concern with post-conflict situations is in fact an acknowledgement that even this second-generation type of international mission is not enough. In order to avoid the risks of disagreement and to enhance the prospects of success, more and more analysts are now calling for a more integrative or comprehensive approach, one that some call 'peace-maintenance' operations (e.g. Chopra 1998). Peace enforcement missions have often gotten extended to include not only humanitarian assistance but also concerns about restructuring the judicial system and other related measures aimed at fostering reconciliation. Such extensions, however, have typically happened more by default than design. They have been added on to more specific peace-enforcement tasks as the post-conflict situation has evolved. The idea of peace maintenance is that international interventions are planned in a comprehensive manner from the beginning. Analysts differ in terms of what such comprehensiveness should encompass. In a recent issue of *Global Governance*, devoted to this kind of



issue, Morphet (1998), for instance, argues for the creation of an international political force that would operate independently of the actual peace-keeping missions on the assumption that such a force could restore confidence among warring parties and thus reduce the security threats that might reignite conflict. Plunkett (1998) calls for the establishment of a standing contingent of judicial experts responsible for reestablishing the rule of law, human rights bodies, truth commissions and other aspects of the judicial system. Brown and Oudraat (1997) emphasize the need for long-term economic aid that supports rather than undermines the objectives of reconciliation and democratization. Knight (1998), for his part, believes that wherever necessary in post-conflict situations there is a need to set up a special 'political authority' to take the place of a national, legitimate central government.

These proposals look fine on paper, but when applied in practice they are likely to be quite controversial. First, there is the threat of excessive intervention and domination, leaving the local actors with limited involvement. As one African observer notes, the comprehensiveness of the peace maintenance approach smacks of neocolonialism (Adibe 1998). Second, there is the issue of how such a comprehensive approach should be 'packaged' to become successful. Is there a particular sequencing of measures that can be identified as 'best practice'? Experience to date provides no clear-cut evidence to answer that question. It may well be that no such answer is really possible. Third, there is the question of costs and the political will to support extensive missions. The more comprehensive the approach, the more expensive each mission is likely to be. Are members of the international donor community ready to make such commitments or will comprehensiveness be applied only on a selective basis where their own respective national interests may be at stake?

Comprehensiveness, therefore, is no panacea. It creates its own problems. The international community really needs to think twice about the prudence of adopting this 'third-generation' peace-maintenance approach.

#### **d. Criteria of success**

Although one author has demonstrated that comprehensiveness does enhance goal achievement (Regan 1996), his data are too limited to suggest that this is a criterion of success. In fact, one gets a sense that those who push for greater comprehensiveness and less of ad hoc measures are planners and evaluators who believe that the greater

'control' they have of all the factors going into a given operation, the greater the chances of prediction and, by extension, success. This conventional approach to designing and evaluating projects, however, rarely makes sense in the context of activities that are lodged in a political process where those who are interested in knowing the results are also part of those forces that influence the outcomes. The essential feature of post-conflict operations is that there are multiple stakeholders, all of whom approach the situation from different angles. The ultimate criterion of success, therefore, must be the extent to which reconciliation is effective and the national actors can engage in democratization on their own. As indicated above, however, attaining such an objective is not only difficult but also hard to establish. When does the international community know that it can withdraw from a post-conflict situation confident that there will no recurrence of violence? It cannot be established with the help of regular evaluation methods. Because the members of the international community are typically involved in post-conflict situations with motives of their own, their 'national' objectives cannot be ignored. Given a widespread reluctance in Europe as well as the United States to have their troops engaged extensively in conflicts way beyond their own borders, it is not always easy to get agreement on how to manage operations most effectively. The reluctance of the United States Supreme Command to let American troops in Kosovo serve in areas other than those where they were originally placed is a case in point. There is also the question of how far conventional cost-benefit criteria apply in situations like this. Policy-makers in the donor countries would wish to see tangible benefits before agreeing to more financial commitments but because sorting out conflicts takes time and does not easily lend itself to quantitative measurements as conventional development projects may, there is a limit to how far such criteria are really helpful or appropriate. It is important, therefore, to disaggregate the overall objectives of each mission and develop criteria that apply to specific parts of it. For example, with regard to human security one can trace the number of deaths due to civil violence. Human rights may also be measured in terms of the number of reported violations (although such a measure is likely to be less conclusive). Other 'good governance' measures, such as elections, the rule of law, and government stability may also be measured in this fashion. The result is that one may end up with success on some scores but not on others. Such differentiation is important not only to establish a better sense of what works but also to provide policy-makers with an understanding that post-conflict

operations are at least achieving some of their objectives. Too often, the latter expect instant and full success and it is important to be able to counteract such impressions.

#### ***4. Challenges to Local Involvement***

There is a general agreement in the international community that any post-conflict operation must strive at achieving full involvement by local stakeholders in the conflict. This objective, however, raises its own issues. One concerns the extent to which reconciliation through integration can be pushed with the willing approval of local actors. A second centers on the way the international community itself behaves vis-a-vis the local actors.

The current approach to post-conflict management by the international community, as reflected, for instance, in the DAC Guidelines, assumes that the reintegration of belligerents into existing state entities is possible without the forced movement of populations or final military victory by one group. The international community assumes a degree of confidence in itself when it comes not only to bringing warring parties to the negotiating table but also to resolving the intricacies of post-conflict management. The notions that 'war is over' and that civilianization and democratization are steady processes, however, are often challenged by the presence of 'spoilers.' The latter become a real threat in post-conflict situations because they know that the prospects for peace, reconciliation and democratization are dependent on their behavior. They may agree to a peace settlement, but they have no intention of fully living up to the objectives of the peace accord. Most recent conflicts have had their share of spoilers: Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, Palestine, Rwanda, Somalia, just to mention the more obvious cases in point. Thousands of innocent people have been killed, many more harmed, and the costs of peace implementation have escalated. A major reason for the presence of spoilers is that peace settlements typically do not satisfy the interests of all warring parties. The perception of security threats endures in the minds of people. This may be the case especially where populations are not separated from each other but continue to live intermixed. (Kaufmann 1998)

Reconciliation and democratization in post-conflict situations are likely to be difficult as long as spoilers exist. Judicial mechanisms such as truth commissions or war

tribunals and political instruments such as consociationalism, proportional representation or safeguarding minority rights will be ineffective as long as the international community cannot control the spoilers. (Stedman 1997) This means having to take side in the conflict, a position that may have wide implications for the mediating party. Some of those who have an interest in undermining the peace accord may be part of the post-conflict management process. Their aim may be limited to redressing a specific grievance. Overcoming their reluctance to participate fully in the process is often possible as, for example, the cases of Guatemala and El Salvador illustrate. The challenge to the international community becomes greater, however, whenever a spoiler drops out of the post-conflict process. This typically means a return to violence. In such a situation, the only option is likely to be militarily defeating or marginalizing the spoiler. One lesson learnt in recent years is that in order to succeed with peace maintenance, diagnosing and keeping an eye on potential spoilers is an integral part of post-conflict management. As Stedman (1997:17) notes, this includes understanding the goal and intention of the spoiler, his commitment to such action, the support base he can call upon, and the likely effects on his behavior of actions by the international community.

Local involvement in the post-conflict process may prove especially opportunistic in situations where former belligerents do not have very coherent programs which negotiations about how to foster reconciliation and democratization can address. In such situations, keeping these efforts on track may prove especially hard, because any new conflict is likely to revolve around naked power only. This means both sides to the conflict will adopt absolute stances. Separatism or forced unity on the terms of the majority will turn out to be the only acceptable options. (Hannum 1990:10-11) Post-conflict situations on the African continent have often taken such turns as the cases of Angola, Burundi, Chad, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan illustrate. Why this scenario is common there may well be because, as Francis Deng (1987:69) has argued, there is less consensus in these countries about the very fundamentals of politics--nationhood, structure of government, the shaping and sharing of power and wealth--than elsewhere. As he stresses, even the concepts of 'majority' and 'minority' cannot meaningfully be applied in such places. There is reason, therefore, to be cautious when it comes to applying Western elections and laws to these societies. Such instruments of governance will not necessarily be appreciated as much as more

'home-grown' approaches may be. The role of global governance is not always to apply the 'big stick' of international law but to facilitate the emergence of what lawyer Philip Alston (1994) calls '*localized conventions*.' The fact that the rules of morality change from place to place does not equal moral relativism; a core of universal principles is still possible, but not necessarily a universal interpretation of what they mean in practice (Edwards 1999:176).

This takes me to the second issue: how the international community behaves toward the local actors. Its assistance is typically based on the use of sticks and carrots to persuade recipients to conform with conditions set by outsiders. Over time, these conditionalities may have become more progressive, but they are still applied in a situation of unequal power and responsibility that erodes local ownership. The results are predictably disappointing: the dysfunctional children of an unhappy marriage, as Edwards (1999:226) describes them. The time has come to think about 'compacts' rather than 'conditionalities', as a growing number of critics are arguing. (see e.g., Vraalsen 1997)

The DAC Guidelines emphasize the need for coordination and coherence in implementing approaches to good governance. Although the rhetoric includes references to the importance of local ownership of the process, the operational guidelines are confined to what the donor community should do as a corporate entity. In order to transcend the limitations of current donor approaches, it is necessary to recognize that the critical 'c' words are 'consistency' and 'continuity', both of which imply a long-term commitment and cross-society decision-making. As several analysts of foreign aid, e.g. Hellinger et al (1988), Hewitt (1994), Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (1996), Valderrama (1997) and Koehn and Ojo (1999), argue, only with such modifications will the idea of compact become reality. Local and international action must be more closely integrated so that local action becomes demand- rather than supply-driven. The best way to achieve this is to turn aid into investments. The objects of such investments would be consolidated funds, e.g. used for sectoral or thematic purposes, that are managed through a cross-society decision-making arrangement involving both resource providers/investors and representatives of the state, as well as civil society in the country where the fund is established. Organizations interested in receiving financial support would apply on a competitive

basis. Such competition would be open to both public and private-voluntary agencies. Thus, donors, instead of running every activity on a bilateral basis would make joint investments in funds that are managed in a joint fashion by trustees or directors elected from among their own ranks as well as a cross-section of local institutions, state- as well as civil society-based. Such arrangements would create partnerships that exist not only at the official but also at the operational level. This way consistency with local demands and capabilities would be enhanced and funding secured on a continuous basis. Targets that reflect long-term outcomes rather than short-term outputs may also be given more credence. This is not to imply that the latter are irrelevant. The point is that financial accountability has become so prevalent that it is now driving many program decisions made by the donors. Thus, accountancy rather than accountability has become the paramount practical concern. As Edwards (1999:142) implies, the notion of 'good governance' must apply not only to countries in the South but also to those in the North. Agreements must be tied to how their resources are effectively integrated into the governance process in individual countries in the South. A true compact, therefore, includes conditionalities on both sides.

This argument applies to international cooperation at large, but it has a special relevance in post-conflict situations where state power may be contested. One of the principal objectives in this type of situation is to overcome partisanship and build trust in public institutions that can serve everyone regardless of social, cultural or economic status. The development funds described above are an important and integral part of post-conflict management because they constitute institutional mechanisms that have the capacity of mitigating distrust and suspicion by being managed in a professional manner with both locals and outsiders involved. They help in linking governance to development in a way that makes sense to local actors and take away the stigma currently associated with 'good governance' as a 'Western ploy.' Even where such conceptions do not prevail, the funds are important in terms of broadening the turf for reconciliation and democratization. The principle of accountability is localized in ways that make sense to people on the ground. Finally, the creation of consolidated funds as intermediaries legally incorporated in the country in the South is likely to help donors overcome their tendency to focus on

indicators of progress that amount to bean counting and narrow measurements of cost-effectiveness.

### ***Conclusions***

Applying the principles of good governance to post-conflict situations is taking them to a new frontier, where the unknowns prevail. A post-conflict situation is rarely a clean slate, but more often one where the divisions in society have been patched over in a makeshift fashion. Peace accords are often like truces; they break. A major reason why this happens so often is that what is at stake in politics today is much higher than in the Cold War era. Constitutive politics stirs up more sentiments for or against a given policy because it affects the very foundations on which distributive policy-making rests. Keeping post-conflict processes on track, therefore, is difficult and the costs of failure tend to be correspondingly higher than in the past.

Caution and prudence are salient attributes of any approach by the international community to promoting reconciliation and democratization in post-conflict situations. Opportunities to make a difference and to succeed do exist, as experiences in places like Central America and Southern Africa confirm. To make headway, however, it is important to recognize that conflicts that divide societies in a vertical fashion, i.e. racial, ethnic or religious, are not really primordial as much as they are political. As Francis Deng (1997) points out, ethnicity, for instance, is first and foremost a resource for political manipulation and entrepreneurship. The source of conflict, therefore, is more often political than cultural. This is also confirmed in a review of 21 African civil wars from 1960 to 1992 (Henderson 2000), which concludes that militarization increases the likelihood of civil war and that greater economic development reduces its probability. His findings lend support to the thesis that political and economic factors are more important causes of civil wars in Africa. This means that demilitarization and development cannot be ignored in post-conflict situations. They may turn out to be more important than such measures as finding the appropriate electoral system or the right balance between central and local government.

This further reinforces the significance of a new approach to development assistance by the donor community. Post-conflict situations call for strengthening public

authority and making it legitimate in the eyes of all citizens. The consolidated fund model discussed above provides an opportunity for linking good governance issues to development on terms that are likely to be more auspicious than those associated with unilateral conditionalities. The international community must help in building institutions that can nurture good governance in a collaborative and credible fashion. This is the only way to escape a scenario of 'trusteeship' or 'neo-colonialism' that lurks in the background of the current 'conditionality' approach by the international community.

This also means taking a broader view of the relevance and strength of local institutions. The burdens of simultaneously building both state and nation that characterize so many countries caught in a post-conflict situation mean that such concepts as 'citizen' and 'state' must be examined in terms that go beyond conventional legal or economic thinking. For example, while reforming the state is often vital, the tasks go beyond merely making it more effective as an instrument of policy-making and policy implementation. They include establishing public institutions that are not controlled by the political executive but are still part of the state. These include the judiciary, electoral commissions, and human rights commissions which serve the objective of justice, but also the above consolidated development funds in order to ensure that the right to development cannot be denied merely because a particular group disagrees with those in power.

Such measures should all be part of any post-conflict operation where the ultimate challenge, after all, is to turn a zero-sum game into a positive one and by implication, therefore, to transform conflict over the fundamental principles of political organization into dissent over specific policies. Or, to use the notions introduced at the beginning of this presentation, in the name of sustainable development let constitutive politics pave the way for more effective distributive politics.



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