

## Governance for Results in Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Countries

You all have before you the paper I produced for our official document; I hope you have had a moment to read it because I see no reason to read it here; I want to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Mikhail Dmitriev, Mushtaq Khan, and Paul Oquist for their help to me in preparing this under duress. I am also thrilled that Odette Ramsingh and Paul Oquist each agreed to prepare complementary papers for our discussion on these two different types of governance challenges – post-conflict and post-disaster.

Today I prefer to single out a few of its points and to make some recommendations for our discussion and possible future action:

- the challenges, requirements, and conditions facing public administration and development management in countries emerging from internal war and countries confronting natural disasters are qualitatively different than those on which our knowledge on public administration and public governance for results is based and on which prescriptions are designed. This is a challenge to us as a committee as much as it is to international actors seeking to assist.
- these two categories of countries also present very different challenges. They are only lumped together within programs and documents of international organizations and donors because they share one characteristic: that neither fit the conditions necessary for normal aid programs and external assistance. Separate modalities for assistance needed to be devised.

- Notice, please, that we are not starting with the needs of the countries themselves but the needs of external actors.
- The two sets of countries are conceptualized by outside actors as crises that require immediate, flexible response. Over the past 15 years, the era of international activism, this conceptualization has taken international response further away from what these countries need rather than closer, but in opposite ways:

(1) for post-disaster countries, the international willingness and institutional capacity for disaster assistance has grown ever greater, but remains within a perspective of a one-off emergency, one where international actors rush in and take over from locals – just reflect back to Haiti in 2009 and 2010 – and then depart, whereas the facts are, and especially due to the effects of climate change, that disasters are repeated, successive crises that need public governance capacities within the country, especially as regards development planning, to manage pre-disaster, disaster, and post-disaster challenges simultaneously and cumulatively. Yes, these challenges do require highly agile and flexible decision-making and the mobilization of a significant part of the administrative capacities and resources of multiple state institutions, as well as support from the private sector and civil society, but far more than one-off emergency assistance.

(2) for post-conflict countries, the external consensus is that the problem is the absence of a functioning, effective state, that state-building should be the priority of all external assistance, but this agenda

has by now created such an enormous list of tasks, programs, external actors, an agenda entirely driven by donors, more often than not bypassing the local state and creating parallel budgets, civil services, administrations, and implementing agencies because the short-term focus of outsiders is highly unrealistic about what can be accomplished in a few years and thus creates impatience with the locals, but with no mechanism for setting priorities. Unfortunately, the primary focus of state-building and public sector reform is public financial management, as if the primary problem of post-conflict countries is debt repayment to the IFIs and fiduciary accountability to the donors; state-building designed for aid delivery rather than for a sustainable peace.

- As experts on public administration and development management, I believe we are in a position to offer advice to the United Nations system, which encompasses all of the relevant actors, whether international organizations or member states and their organizations.

- (1) The agreed concern with climate change can be leveraged to propose ways to improve assistance to countries facing repeated disasters: this would have to include some regional or international financing modality, but it would also require analysis of the challenges to governments' development planning that might assist the world of emergency assistance to adapt to their needs and these new conditions.
- (2) As regards post-conflict countries, the question is what our value-added can be to a very engaged United Nations system already in the field of peace and security, including the Rule of Law office at the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations, the rule of law and civil service reform programs at UNDP, and the wholistic efforts to support country-based strategies for those few countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. While the World Bank has programs on what it calls public sector reform, it readily admits that it does these very poorly if at all. What is clearly missing is analysis of and support for governance capacities for development, by which I mean capacity in productive sector development. How can the public sector assist the private, what few civil service positions are vital to understand economic policy-making, such as how to negotiate with the WTO, how to do trade agreements, how to work in partnership with the private sector to provide incentives for and reward to successful producers. What small but absolutely vital functions and corresponding institutions can we assist countries themselves in building?

3 empirical findings from the vast literature on post-conflict countries bring this home: (1) what countries are able to accomplish appears to depend on what resources flow in from outside, and yet these flows often stop abruptly and too soon; capabilities to generate resources from within would interrupt that trap; (2) post-conflict countries are characterized by ever growing, and long-term, aid dependence, including the constraints that implies for their development choices; (3) in public opinion surveys, everywhere, regardless of country and context, citizens identify the unsustainably high unemployment and lack of opportunities for legitimate means of survival as their number one concern; and (4) the greatest weakness even in the donor's focus on public financial management is governments' autonomous capacity for agenda-setting. To this one can add that a peacebuilding process is primarily political, in the sense that standard

growth models and cost-efficiency criteria do not address the attention essential for peace to equity, a wide public sense of fairness, and above all, employment- and welfare-enhancing economic growth.

- In addition, current programs for training civil servants in post-conflict cases take two forms: (1) establishing a police academy and (2) technical assistance of external consultants working alongside administrative staff in the finance ministry, accounting, and procurement services. Why not establish a training program for senior management to promote skills in development planning and to assist private sector entrepreneurs in the skills needed for organizing production?

Finally, we might also bring attention to and gather information about the unusual needs of and local innovations in post-conflict cases through setting aside one of the public service awards explicitly for post-conflict countries, and possibly a second for post-disaster countries.