



UN/WB PCNA Review

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Annex III: Conflict Analysis and Peace building

Disclaimer

The following report was developed during a consultative review of Post -Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs) carried out by UN Development Group Office (UNDGO) and the World Bank's OPCFS. This report has been prepared by Domenico Polloni, a consultant hired within Phase Two of the PCNA review to look specifically at the subject of Conflict Analysis and Peace building as it relates to PCNAs (additional technical experts covered the areas of Cross-cutting issues, Security Sector issues and State -building).

Under the guidance of the Core Review Team, the author has drawn upon the stocktaking work from Phase One to contribute to the strategic guidance of Phase Two in his substantive area, including making specific recommendations for PCNA stakeholders. This was done through a comprehensive review of the Phase One case studies and past guidance, in-depth consultations with HQ and field based UN and WB staff, national partners, bilateral donors, civil society and other relevant actors. Findings and recommendations were reviewed, then selectively abridged and incorporated into the UN/WB PCNA Review Report *In Support of Peace building: Strengthening the Post -Conflict Needs Assessment* and into the revisions of the PCNA Guidance and Tools, where relevant. This report, presented as an annex to the UN/WB PCNA Review Report, represents the author's own views as an individual with specific technical expertise. It does not represent the official views of the World Bank or the UNDGO, and should be viewed as an unofficial document.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND PEACE BUILDING IN A POST -CONFLICT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PCNA) – TOWARDS A FRESH APPROACH

Introductory remarks

1. Post-conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs) have been conducted for a few years now with the initial purpose of highlighting in a report the recovery needs of a war -affected country, in the aftermath of a peace agreement or at the outset of a transition. Interested donors, usually in the context of an international conference, would pledge aid resources, and when feasible engage in a debt relief process, against the needs assessed and costed.
2. The present paper endeavours to provide, in the light of the lessons learnt from the analysis of the PCNAs conducted so far (Iraq, Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Haiti, Liberia, Sudan, Somalia and Darfur), some guidance as to:
 - (a) the conditions on which a PCNA can lead the recovery process to more robustly tackle peace building objectives in a post-conflict setting;
 - (b) how an early and better targeted conflict analysis exercise can enable better prioritisation of needs and improve M&E mechanisms.

Definitions and scope

3. It is essential to make explicit the assumptions underpinning the use made in this paper of some key concepts, starting by the one of Post -Conflict Needs Assessment.
 - (a) The language of ‘needs’ has been under strong criticism both in the humanitarian and development literature. The main reasons are:
 - (1) ‘need’ interpreted as “a requirement for a specific form of remedial action... risks assuming a solution without analysing the problem”¹;
 - (2) ‘need’ taken as “defining the ‘what’ of programming” tends to regard entitlements as a commodity like any other, thus obscuring the moral and often legal claim to such entitlements as well as the framework of collective responsibility arising therefrom²;
 - (3) finally, ‘need’ understood as the technical measurement of the gap between the existing situation and a ‘benchmark’, usually the distance from the achievement of the MDGs, while rightly shifting the attention away from the simple return to a previous ‘peacetime’ situation – which may itself have been a source of conflict – tends to obscure the inherently political nature of priority -setting when ‘all is urgent’.The present paper attempts to take particularly the first and third objections into consideration, as the organizing principle will be rather the *risk* of relapse into conflict. What is ‘needed’ to thwart conflict recurrence is arrived at through an analysis of the conflict itself but should also include a stocktaking of the existing, if often untapped, capacities for peace.
 - (b) Conceptually, the question has been posed whether it is legitimate to conflate an ‘assessment’ with a ‘mode of response’, as tends to be the case in ‘real-world’ PCNAs. Operational agencies usually emphasize that “conflict assessment cannot be separated from strategy and programme development”³, as the process of programme design becomes more inter-twined with the analytical study of the conflict and the assessment stands more chances to be acted upon. On the other hand, having a stand -alone conflict assessment may have the advantage “that it explores the context in considerable depth, is easier to update and avoids confusion that may be created by using one tool for two different purposes”⁴. An assessment undertaken by one, or more operational agencies might be biased by the structure of incentives, as funding normally comes as a result of needs assessed. There is no simple way of tackling this circularity, which typically encourages supply- rather than demand-driven responses, but the use of a roster of

¹ Darcy-Hofman 2003, p. 16.

² Darcy-Hofman 2003, p. 5.

³ UNDP/BCPR 2003, p. 19.

⁴ FEWER 2004, ch. 3 mod. 1, box 1.

experts unrelated, or only loosely related, to agency mandates and concerns and a country-specific process envisioning domestic participation in the assessment are likely to reduce the bias.

- (c) '*Conflict sensitivity*' is the ability to understand a context where conflict happens as well as its interaction with an intervention that is being carried out. At a minimum, this approach discounts conflict as an externality to be minimized – '*conflict stabilisation*', meaning *inter alia* that interventions should aim to avoid unintended adverse effects on the context ('do no harm'). In a more proactive mode ('do some good'), it may result in 'conflict prevention' and 'conflict management' – both marking the shift towards '*conflict transformation*'⁵, i.e. to constructive, non-violent forms.
- (d) '*Peace building*' is taken broadly, as tends to be the case in contemporary agency and independent literature⁶, to indicate the ultimate *goal*, and *impact*, of all the political, military, humanitarian and developmental interventions targeted to conflict stabilisation and conflict transformation, namely those aiming "to consolidate peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of mediating conflict, and to strengthen other mechanisms that will either create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace"⁷. The peace building impact is by its nature *cumulative*, as it relates not only to *what* is done in a post-conflict setting, but also to *how much* of it is done, *where* and *how* it is done. Although this report is predicated on the assumption that "one of the objectives of the new peace building architecture is to *add coherence* [our italics] to international efforts across multiple areas – political, military, humanitarian, development, economic and institution building – in the development of overall strategies for 'definitive recovery'⁸, the attention needs to shift from the mechanistic understanding of peace building as a standard inventory of actions, or as a cross-cutting issue, towards an acknowledgement that, in a typical post-conflict setting, virtually every developmental intervention may have a peace building impact, or conversely exacerbate existing tensions.

Review of current guidance and practice

4. **Prioritisation of conflict-sensitive policies and programming.** Most international as well as donor agencies would today share the assumptions,

- (a) on one side, that "transition programming... should aim at 'doing no harm'⁹ and minimising unintended negative impacts";
- (b) on the other side, that "transition programming... should aim at maximising its peace building impact in the aftermath of the crisis as well as over the long term"¹⁰.

The tools available to make sure that these assumptions are met¹¹ differ in many respects and are all flexible enough to cater to the uniqueness of each transition situation. However, it is common for them to feature a three-stage approach, namely:

- (1) *conflict analysis*, ie the process of reaching "a shared understanding of the causes and consequences of violent conflict"¹²,
- (2) *analysis of ongoing responses*, ie the assessment of the responses to the conflict and "their impact in relation to the set of priority conflict factors identified during stage 1"¹³,

⁵ The operational distinction proposed here between (often overlapping) conflict stabilisation and conflict transformation measures is very broadly compatible with the state-of-the-art academic literature on conflict transformation, starting from the seminal work of Lederach 1995. In particular, the notion of 'stabilisation' can be seen as relating to (mainly) outcome-oriented strategies for *conflict settlement*, the notion of 'transformation' as encompassing the (mainly) process-oriented activities geared to *conflict resolution* and *conflict transformation*. For the dilemmas arising from the use of peace building theory in development aid, see Bigdon-Korf 2004 – one of those is touched upon in the present paper under 12 a).

⁶ For the latter, see the seminal work of Bush 1998.

⁷ FEWER 2004, Intr., 4.

⁸ UNEOSG 2006, p. 2.

⁹ The "no harm" approach has been initiated by Anderson 1999.

¹⁰ UNDGO 2004, par. 2.

¹¹ Uniquely for the sake of our argument, the framework followed for the presentation is UNDGO 2004. The three key stages of 'conflict assessment' are likewise presented in DFID 2002, but similarly structured approaches are available in any of the many tools developed by a number of agencies.

¹² UNDGO 2004 par. 3 stage 1.

¹³ UNDGO 2004 par. 3 stage 2.

- (3) identification of *conflict-sensitive strategic and programmatic recommendations* on the basis of the opportunities and gaps revealed by stage 2.
5. **Cluster/sector or cross-cutting.** In some PCNAs, conflict or peace building has been taken, along with gender, human rights or environment etc., as an issue to be 'mainstreamed' in all sectors. In others, it has been a sector of its own. An optimalist view is that conflict and peace issues should be taken in a PCNA both as a general organising principle for the setting of overall policy frameworks and the subject of detailed consideration at the planning level. Conflict analysis in a PCNA is therefore not a cross-cutting issue but a *tool* to prioritize needs and sequence the responses to them according to the key conflict factors previously identified.
 6. **Mandates, roles and expertise of participating organisations.** Regardless of the extent to which this is operationalised, the abundance of conflict analysis tools available (United Nations, World Bank, European Commission, USAID, DFID, GTZ, Clingendael Institute, CIDA, IFRC, CARE, FEWER, World Vision, Swisspeace etc.) does not intrinsically point to a dearth of expertise, nor to deeply rooted obstacles in the organisational culture of the key development actors. However, policy shifts and changing contexts may have been, among others, reasons why conflict-sensitive tools have not been fully used in the development work, and in PCNAs as well.
 7. **Outputs of a PCNA.** PCNAs carried out to date have resulted in the drafting of a synthesis report and a Transitional Results Matrix (TRM). A 'conflict-sensitive' PCNA reporting documentation will look like a 'living' body of evidence. "Conflict-sensitive implementation... involves close scrutiny of the operational context through regularly updating the conflict analysis, linking this understanding of the context to the objective and process of achieving the activities, and adjusting these activities accordingly"¹⁴.

Conflict analysis as contextual analysis and its impact on the PCNA process management

8. **Existing guidance and practice.** The depth, and quality, of conflict analysis in the PCNAs undertaken so far have been variable, with an appreciable level of conflict awareness in the Haiti ICF, the Sudan JAM and the Somali JNA. What is common to almost all the PCNAs under review is that conflict analysis tools have either been used too late or introduced at the outset but not fully tapped throughout the process. A key assumption of this paper is that the conflict-sensitive approach is credible, ie not a convenient add-on for 'public relations' or 'quality assurance' purposes but a strategic backbone of post-conflict transition planning underpinned by sufficient agency 'political will'.
9. **Minimum conditions for PCNA to be undertaken/to proceed.** It is not to be taken for granted that a PCNA *has to* be undertaken whenever a country embarks on a transition, even less that a PCNA has a conflict transformation and peace building effect just because it dangles a carrot before parties formerly in conflict. Furthermore, there may be cases where a PCNA-like exercise has been planned or can conceivably be planned without the existence of a formal peace agreement but still as part of a peace building process (eg Northern Uganda or Lebanon).
While the decision to launch a PCNA has largely been a political one, the review of the existing case studies seem to suggest that:
 - (a) A PCNA has been predominantly understood as a consensus-based planning tool, working on technical issues but in the heavily politicized context of post-conflict transition.
 - (b) Since the PCNA *might* have a peace building impact on a transition country, just as it might worsen the conflict dynamics, it is important to analyse a PCNA as one of the responses to a given set of conflict factors and to gauge to what extent, and on what conditions, its use can indeed address some of those country-specific conflict factors.
 - (c) Determining minimum 'quality' standards for a PCNA – ie the minimum contextual requirements for a PCNA to be undertaken and to keep going, or the minimum features of its reporting documentation to justify the worth of the exercise – has to do according to this paper with a more carefully crafted preparatory phase. In this phase, *strategic*

¹⁴ FEWER 2004, ch. 3 mod. 2, 1.

conflict and risk analysis' should be used to provide the national and international stakeholders, at an adequate decision making level, with such a contextual understanding of the situation as is necessary and sufficient to agree on what the process would broadly look like, and what sort of output and outcome is being sought from the PCNA ¹⁵.

10. Implications for timeline and synchronisation/sequencing.

- (a) The case studies seem to suggest that the PCNA preparatory phase has been one of the most neglected parts of the process. It is likely that the international and national actors had their own reading of the situation, but the rush to capitalise on the momentum created by an allegedly successful peace process seems to have led to the option of launching the exercise and adjusting it as needed. *L'intendance suivra*.
- (b) It is proposed that the preparation of a PCNA should be done more rigorously and transparently, and that one of the tools would be a shared 'strategic conflict and risk analysis', focusing on a relatively narrow set of factors proxied by a few indicators that are relatively easy to appraise. The analytical grid would essentially be based upon:
- (1) the typology of post-conflict setting, both in its position on the conflict spectrum (outstanding risks of escalation, clear potential for de-escalation, etc.) and in its formal institutional features (peace agreement or major peace initiative, varying UNSC mandates with or without a peace agreement etc.);
 - (2) the impact of the conflict on the physical and institutional infrastructure of the country¹⁶, which would point to a realistic time frame to estimate the recovery and reconstruction needs,
 - (3) the impact of the conflict on the existence of widely shared societal goals¹⁷, which would help strike the balance between the setting of long-term strategic guidelines – via a broader-based process of consultation – and a rapid technical assessment of immediate measures,
 - (4) the impact of the conflict on the human and social capital, with particular emphasis on the disadvantaged, eg women, children, elderly citizens, minorities etc., which would underline the persistence of immediate humanitarian and protection needs and is also likely to highlight the existence of untapped capacities for peace,
 - (5) the impact on the conflict on the human and institutional capacity available, which would modulate the focus on capacity-building objectives.
- (c) It is highly relevant to such an exercise that the structure and goals of a PCNA can react to the changing context even as the process is underway, more so whenever a PCNA has been linked to a fragile peace agreement exposed to the risks of collapse or irrelevance (see the Somali JNA or the Darfur JAM). To this end,
- (1) possible best-case and worst-case scenarios could be worked out in very broad terms, the former ones to be incorporated as assumptions, the latter ones to sketch the outline of a PCNA contingency planning¹⁸;
 - (2) or an 'incremental' or 'multi-track' PCNA is initiated that would scale up from one segment to the next only if the key requirements as set forth in the better-case scenarios are met.
- Both options require careful management of domestic (and also international) expectations via an appropriate communication strategy.

11. Impact on resources. Key to the enhanced PCNA preparation is the requirement that the 'strategic conflict and risk analysis' be systematically carried out as the very first step in

¹⁵ UN/WB Roundtable 2005 has come to the conclusion that "a conflict analysis should be done prior to the PCNA and would help to design the PCNA and to set priorities that do no harm. The analysis prior to the PCNA would also help to determine how reconstruction and recovery link to the political and peace building process and would ensure that these processes are intertwined and relate to each other in a mutually reinforcing way" (p. 6).

¹⁶ What has seldom been done in PCNAs, and indeed in integrated programming, has been to estimate the costs of the conflict, at least in terms of GDP reduction, asset depletion, lessening investment, capital flight as well as economic spillovers towards neighbouring countries (the economic costs of the conflict).

¹⁷ See WB 2005, p. 6.

¹⁸ UN/WB Roundtable 2005: "The identification of risk factors at the beginning of a PCNA's strategic design is also critical, to help clarify the political context and define necessary preconditions or minimum requirements in order to move forward and ensure a successful outcome" (p. 6).

planning for a PCNA. At this stage, the exercise should be relatively resource -light. However, it is important for the preparation to involve first the senior management of the international agencies concerned and thereafter the key international supporters of the peace process and the key representatives of the transitional authority. One of the reasons is that donor buy -in is easier to secure if the UN, WB and possibly regional development banks have, from the outset, a broad agreement on what they regard as feasible.

Addressing key peace building issues in a PCNA

12. *The strategic context of peace building.*

(a) **Objectives.** One of the questions explored in this paper is “whether a PCNA can be, or should be, a peace building tool in addition to, or in lieu of, being a reconstruction tool”¹⁹. In other words, whether the proposal that “the PCNAP can serve as a useful primary entry point in post-conflict transition”²⁰ can be upheld.

- (1) Fully integrating peace building objectives in PCNAs, a tool supposed to assist in recovery planning, is not unproblematic, given the long-term nature of such peace building objectives as eg sustainable resource management, a favourable regional multiplier of economic growth, civil society development.
- (2) By the same token, the theory of conflict, and particularly the profile of the linkages between risk of relapse, economic growth and aid in the first half and until the middle of the first post-conflict decade, is an argument to advocate the need to be as forward-looking as feasible in planning on international and domestic action in a post - conflict country, even though a reasonable amount of detail is only possible for the first two-three years.

The review of the PCNAs to date does not suggest that a longer -term transitional strategy targeted to minimizing the *risk* of reversal into conflict, and weaving together economic policy, aid and external military assistance (peace keeping) into a coherent if nascent storyline, has ever been spelled out reasonably early. Such a strategy, or ‘storyline’, in its full scope, eg five to ten years, can be referred to as ‘*integrated peace building strategy*’, with a view to recalling the major rationale of a sustained international engagement with a post-conflict country. However, practical reasons have traditionally pushed PCNAs to focus on the early stages of a ‘conflict-sensitive’ country strategy and therefore to concentrate on a two to three year prioritised vision for the recovery process. In order to convey the sense of a preliminary, yet conceptually robust, priority -setting exercise, the wording preferred here to designate the output of this visioning will be ‘*strategic peace building storyline*’.

- (b) **Peace building actors.** Most often, PCNAs take place in the context of a transitional administration, usually limited to (some of) the formerly warring parties but expected to give way to an elected government at some point during the transition.
- (1) In a peace building perspective, development and donor agencies have to address the issue of “interlocutors”, “partners” or “stakeholders” early enough to build up sufficient buy-in and support for their presence and activity in the country, taking into account that a comprehensive and frank policy dialogue can only be based on mutual trust, and that there are no short -cuts to building trust.
 - (2) Entry points for the early engagement with other stakeholders may not be immediately easy to find, but at the very minimum a ‘stakeholder analysis’ exercise should aim to provide an understanding of :
 - (i) the ‘actors’ involved, and their interests and motivations, with a particular concern for the ‘spoilers’, in particular irregulars or militias , given the pride of place they will have in the parts of a PCNA devoted to DDR;
 - (ii) the ‘capacities for peace’, namely the “structures, mechanisms, processes and institutions that exist in society in order to peacefully and constructively manage conflict”²¹.

¹⁹ From an interview with a senior WB official, October 2006.

²⁰ *Post-Conflict Needs Assessment and Plan (PCNAP). Background Paper for UNDG Principals*, Working draft, 12 June 2006 (not for circulation).

²¹ UNDG 2004, par. 3, 1.3.

- (c) **Peace building components.** At the current level of advancement in policy elaboration, the consideration of 'conflict actors' and institutional 'capacities for peace' in a typical post-conflict setting has led to agency recognition that virtually every developmental intervention²² may have a peace building impact, or on the contrary aggravate existing tensions.
- (1) **The 'peace building activities' approach.** The difficulty with this approach is that it relies on what the international community has on supply, rather than assessing what conflict factors and actors are the primary and most urgent targets of the country-specific peace building strategy. Responses to conflict do not have to originate in the international community, but can and should be rooted in the locally available, if stifled, capacities for peace. Re-focusing therefore on the demand side, one can identify, as some of the most recurrent '*peace building clusters*', the need for a stable institutional framework, the design of clear accountability processes and the requirement to address the legacy of conflict.
 - (2) **Institutional framework.** Peace agreements or transitional constitutions are a key building block of a strategic peace building storyline (in some cases, little else than a UN resolution may be in existence), to the extent that they spell out overarching societal objectives for the whole nation and usually relate them to an institutional framework and a timeline. As such, an analysis of the peace agreement and its implementation modalities is the first step of envisioning a peace building strategy. In an incremental approach, the PCNA, as a process "that uses technical assessment in ways that support the political stabilisation but remains neutral politically"²³, may be led to identify, at a later stage and via broader-based stakeholder consultations, windows of opportunity to address, or make explicit, any gaps in the peace settlement.
 - (3) **Accountability processes.** A transition to post-conflict ushers in a situation where former warring parties take nationwide responsibility. While peace agreements, interim administrations, truth and reconciliation commissions etc. strengthen domestic accountability to the population, the transition country has to take demonstrable steps to put relationships with donors on a new footing as well. On one side, this implies a 'conflict-sensitive' assessment of past or ongoing humanitarian and early recovery assistance in the light of the new situation²⁴. On the other side, there is a need to find "rally points..." to move the international development community towards "aid effectiveness, aid coherence, harmonisation and alignment". A PCNA should become a locus to jumpstart the process²⁵ of incorporating early enough an aid management component.
 - (4) **Legacy of conflict.** A peace building strategy has to address the legacy of violent conflict. Economic effects such as high military expenditure, capital flight and loss of social capital are highly persistent²⁶. The social legacy includes increased mortality but, more importantly, "violence and the damage it inflicts sharpen and entrench polarities in society", making conflict recurrence a statistically significant probability. "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"²⁷.
- (d) **Process.** Once the possible components of a 'peace building strategy' targeted to the country under review have been marshalled, a process must be designed to bring them duly on stream in a plan.
- (1) **Conflict analysis as a planning tool.** The 'peace building strategy' is grounded on an in-depth understanding of the "relevant conflict factors that may contribute to the

²² The UN peace building capacity inventory, for instance, regroups a wide gamut of 'peace building activities' into sectors, namely security system reform, DDR, mine action, justice and the rule of law, human rights, good offices and mediation, constitution-making, public administration, local governance, financial accountability, elections, public information, protection, basic needs, gender, physical infrastructure, employment generation, macro-economic foundations. See UNEOSG 2006.

²³ UN/WB Roundtable 2005, p. 6

²⁴ Civil war theory argues that "aid in general has no significant effect on the risk of conflict... but particular types of aid have increased the risk of conflict" (Collier et al. 2003).

²⁵ OECD/DAC 2005, p. 1.

²⁶ Collier et al. 2003, pp. 20-22.

²⁷ OECD/DAC 1997, p. 13.

resurgence of violent conflict in a transition situation”²⁸. Conflict analysis therefore moves from ‘contextual analysis’ to being a ‘planning tool’ for prioritizing and sequencing the domestic and international responses to the risk of relapse into conflict. Bearing in mind that every tool could be used incrementally to adjust to what is feasible in a specific post-conflict setting, different layers of conflict analysis may have to be introduced during a PCNA:

- (i) the distinction of *structural* and *proximate* conflict factors, of which the former may assist in the crafting of longer-term policies, the latter contribute to the emergence of medium-term sector-based or area-based programming²⁹;
 - (ii) the identification of conflict *triggers* (events), or *hotspots* (geographical areas), which may assist in the short-term design of QIPs (quick-impact programs) as well as in the sequencing of the medium- to long-term interventions³⁰;
 - (iii) the thematic categorisation of conflict factors, eg *security, political, economic and social*³¹, and their distinction according to their *international, regional, national, sub-national* or merely *local* relevance, which may help strengthen an emerging division of labour between the different national and international institutions involved.
- (2) Conflict is a manifold phenomenon. Conflict analysis should endeavour to address factors that fuel grievances but also explore ways to deal with the factors that make conflict feasible in practice, eg the capture of rent from natural resources to sustain conflict – the **‘political economy of conflict’** approach³². A PCNA also needs to take into account the influence of **‘global and regional imbalances’** on conflict propensity, eg heavy dependence on the export of primary commodities³³. It is important to highlight the need for measures reaching beyond the responsibility of national planners.
- (3) **‘Deriving planning priorities from a ‘strategic peace building storyline’ through ‘conflict analysis’** may seem a novel way to organize the work of a PCNA. It does challenge to some extent the more familiar idea that transition planning results from the ‘coming together’ of a number of ‘sectoral’ building blocks, ie social service delivery, governance reform etc., each supposed to take care of unaddressed needs. Although the ‘building block’ approach is attractive because of its practicality, its main difficulties are 1) that the coherence of the plan comes about as the final step, and so does its alignment to the specificities of the country under review³⁴; 2) that it assumes a given scope of public action (size of the state) instead of instituting a process whereby the national stakeholders themselves are led to determine it.
- (4) **‘Capacity building’**. Although incrementally, maximum inclusion in the exercise of ‘conflict analysis as a planning tool’ is obviously desirable. At the same time, the broader-based and the more public inputs are, the less critical the analysis tends to be due to the need to avoid sensitivities. This means that the capacity of the international sectoral experts and national counterparts in conflict analysis and mediation skills may have to be built, particularly with a view to “framing the exercise as non-threatening, building on language and entry points that are acceptable to local actors”³⁵. Some practical options are:

²⁸ UNDGO 2004, par. 3, 1.1. See also UNDP/BCPR p. 6.

²⁹ While most of the development literature seems to have a policy preference for the structural causes of conflict, it is important to recognize that tackling proximate causes is more readily amenable to programming, while the causality nexus in structural factors is harder and on occasions more controversial to pin down, thereby making them less targetable by specific lines of programming.

³⁰ While “adding trigger events to the analysis leads to the identification of scenarios” (UNDP/BCPR 2003, p. 7), the less commonly used category of *hotspots* still has a potential for scenario-building and helps anchor such scenarios to the sub-national level of conflict analysis, a traditionally neglected one. In the Sudan JAM, the national counterparts attempted, without much success, to focus the attention of the international team on the need to address ‘hotspots’.

³¹ UNDP/BCPR 2003, p. 23.

³² See among others Collier et al. 2003, Collier-Hoeffler 1998 and Collier-Hoeffler-Söderbom 2006.

³³ See among others, Duffield 1998 and Kaldor 2006.

³⁴ The Afghan PCNA report was, according to a source, “a set of broad principles that could apply to any number of countries, without a strategic framework to guide implementation of specifically-identified priorities of Afghan communities” (Darcy-Hofman 2003, p. 61).

³⁵ UNDGO 2004, par. 4.

- (i) one or more international and/or national conflict and peace building advisers for the whole duration of the PCNA exercise would be the optimum – their contribution, crucial in the PCNA planning phase, is particularly important at the start of the work of the technical clusters, in order to gear each of them towards the country-specific priorities, and is crucial at the closure of the exercise, particularly when it comes to the drafting of the synthesis report and the final trade-offs between priority areas;
 - (ii) appointing as technical PCNA coordinators persons with the required background in conflict analysis and peace building;
 - (iii) ad hoc use of impartial national resource persons, or skilled diaspora, or experts from regional organisations that may have been involved in peace making, to assist the PCNA leadership.
- (5) **Legitimacy.** It has been argued that transitional authorities should not be allowed to pre-empt such different priorities as may be established by a successive elected government. At the same time it is crucial that conflict-insensitive policies be uprooted as early on as possible. There is no simple way of addressing this circularity but the more inclusive and the more demand-oriented the ‘conflict analysis’ exercise will be, the less it will be dominated by the pressure to provide ‘quick fix’ responses and the more enduring value the final output will have. Since post-conflict governments and the societies they represent have an inbuilt ‘short-term bias’, donors may have a role to play in ‘championing’ attention to critical conflict dimensions deemed difficult to be acted upon by a weak public sector in a post-conflict context, such as poor environmental governance or acute gender imbalances.
- (6) **Management.** The real challenge for ‘conflict analysis’ to become a ‘planning tool’ is to translate agency goodwill into building the skills of the technical international and national practitioners to ‘see the forest instead of the individual trees’. Conflict-sensitive sectoral policy guidelines, as based on agency good practice and the growing body of academic research on peace building and as distinct from generic agency mandates and approaches, are still relatively sparse in the UN system³⁶. Case studies have proved that the submission of check-lists, either general or country-specific, or the final ‘peer-reviewing’ of sectoral cluster reports by the conflict focal points, do not replace the work that conflict focal points should be able to do in an iterative interaction with each cluster team at key junctures of the latter’s assessment – most importantly at its start, at the end of the desk review, at the end of the field missions and during the drafting of the report and the results matrix.
- (7) **Feedback.** The conflict-sensitive results of sectoral analyses have to be fed back and distilled into the PCNA synthesis report, presumably the PCNA document with the widest readership of all. If a ‘strategic peace building storyline’ has been worked out in agreement with the national counterparts during the process, and endorsed at an adequate decision-making level, that will be the crucial instrument to prioritize and sequence different policy and programmatic concerns at the end of a PCNA, whereby high-level participation of the national stakeholders must be sought given the implications on the activities of the development partners. It is important to recall that the application of a conflict lens may lead to an (occasionally radical) re-arrangement of priorities in the immediate aftermath of a transition, as the two following examples demonstrate:
- (i) While it is standard economic theory that sound macro-economic policies have a far more rapid effect on growth than expenditure in basic social services, academic civil war research gives strong indications that in post-conflict settings, “social policy is relatively more important and macroeconomic policy is relatively less important... than in normal situations”, so that “if opportunities exist for modest trade-offs that improve social policies at the expense of a small deterioration in macroeconomic balances, growth is, on average, significantly augmented”³⁷.

³⁶ UNEOSG 2006 provides a contrasting picture. Guidance notes, best practice handbooks, resource packs and other toolkits of variable ambition and scope are available in areas such as transitional justice, criminal justice reform, access to justice, public administration, local government, elections, health and education, employment and skills training. Not all of them are specifically focused, or contain enough substantive guidance, on post-conflict settings, and not all of them are the result of a joint effort of two or more different agencies.

³⁷ Collier et al. 2003, p. 155.

- (ii) Also, the public expenditure that would maximise growth in the early stages of post-conflict is likely to be in the capital city and the most developed, often central region, while conflict may have broken out precisely because of the economic marginalisation of the periphery³⁸.
- (e) **Outcomes.** The international community is increasingly aware that a unified monitoring framework should link priorities in the political and security arena with those in the economic and social arena. Development agencies have gone some way to producing integrated if simple indicator- and result-based frameworks, referred to as *Transitional Results Matrixes (TRMs)*³⁹. However, the challenge has been to turn TRMs into a coherent basis for national debate and dialogue with donors on resource mobilisation and allocation across sectors. The reason is the rapid obsolescence of too detailed planning frameworks and the lack of sustainable mechanisms to update them on an ongoing basis.
- (1) **What is conflict, what is peace.** A 'conflict-sensitive' technical assessment is likely to lead to the design of 'conflict-sensitive' monitorable results. The concept of monitorability needs finessing in a PCNA context.
- (i) TRMs should take into account that the meaning of conflict and peace to the local populations is highly context-dependent and thus make adequate space for both *objective* and *perception-based* indicators. The former are more often process or output indicators, the latter more often outcome or context indicators.
 - (ii) The application of a conflict lens may contribute to refining or complementing the use of input or output indicators, eg the construction of new school facilities or the number of students passing examinations (objective indicators) may have to be monitored jointly with the perception of inter-communal youth dynamics (subjective indicator), because education projects might have succeeded in moving the country closer to the relevant MDGs but exacerbated local tensions if all the beneficiaries were from a particular section of society.
 - (iii) The involvement of a broader audience in determining the perception-based indicators and if possible disaggregating them according to the existing fault lines within society is therefore useful to enhance wide ownership of the priorities identified⁴⁰.
- (2) **Examples of indicators**
- (i) **Process and output indicators.** Well-designed peace agreements have a number of process and output indicators conceptually easy to measure, and sometimes *ad hoc* institutions to monitor them. For example, those relating to ceasefire may have a DDR component built into them, where the key milestones for the disengagement and reintegration of former fighters can serve as proxy indicators for conflict intensity in their host communities.
 - (ii) **Outcome and context indicators.** Outcome- and context-focused conflict indicators are often more perception-based as they relate to the overall terms of reference of inter-personal and inter-communal relationships, eg the degree of allowed criticism of the government. It is, however, important to make them as measurable as possible, and a popular way of doing so has been to link them with surveys and media development.
 - (iii) **Raising the profile of M&E.** More generally, PCNAs might benefit from the setting of one or more worldwide conflict reduction targets among the MDGs, eg halving the incidence of conflict in a given number of years, as political pressure would then build up for the elaboration of conflict-sensitive implementation and M&E systems.

13. **Security and development interface.** Civil war research has proved that a close relationship exists between the three main factors that can foil relapse into conflict, namely economic

³⁸ Collier et al. 2003, p. 166.

³⁹ The most up-to-date tool on TRMs is UNDG/WB 2005.

⁴⁰ For instance, conflict indicators disaggregated by gender have proved to have a stronger early warning and predictive capacity in the Solomon Islands. See UNIFEM 2006.

growth, aid and external military and security assistance. However, if some PCNAs have managed to marshal a convincing storyline covering indigenous economic growth and external aid, no PCNA so far has attempted, other than anecdotally, to take fully into account the security to development interface (the two D's: Defence and Development) – even less the broader profile of the international political and diplomatic engagement with the country under review (the three D's: Diplomacy, Defence and Development). What cannot be addressed developmentally has been treated in a PCNA, explicitly or implicitly, as an assumption. While the '3-D option' may be too ambitious for the current status of policy analysis, linking at least security and development requires us to decisively move to the third and last stage of our conflict sensitivity approach, which can be referred to as 'working on conflict'. The tool proposed is 'conflict analysis as a transition management tool'.

(a) **Conflict analysis as a transition management tool.** A familiar framework to map development work in relation to the dynamics of conflict transformation is the distinction between:

- (1) *Track one*: direct relationship with the formal peace negotiations or other transitional institution-building;
- (2) *Track two*: informal or indirect relationship with the formal peace negotiations;
- (3) *Track three*: development initiatives directly in support of peace⁴¹.

The tool used to formalize the distinction between the three tracks is the analysis of the current responses to conflict, especially but not exclusively in the development field.

- (1) An early challenge is the assessment of the past history of humanitarian and development aid in a conflict-affected country, which may have been in some cases a precipitating factor for the conflict itself (Rwanda) and has in many other cases been unable to prevent the outbreak or escalation of violent conflict (Sudan, among others)⁴².
- (2) In a 'do no harm' perspective, the impact of a PCNA itself has to be assessed on a 'real-time' basis, more so during the PCNA implementation phase, as domestic expectations grow and high-level political attention to the exercise may start playing a role. The risk of singling out national 'darlings' of the international community, sometimes reproducing the patterns of ethnic or cultural dominance or polarisation, looms large, as the *de facto* beneficiaries of a PCNA become the national project staff. The desired continuity of personnel devoted to planning, implementation and M&E may be interrupted by domestic micro-political reasons or through absorption of skilled personnel by foreign agencies, which is a further reason to advocate as 'open' an exercise as possible. Finally, the 'assessment fatigue' that may set in as a large number of parallel assessments are conducted in the immediate aftermath of the peace agreement may undermine the quality of the reporting or induce mistrust of the PCNA exercise or cause the participants "to voice solutions, before going through the step-by-step process that leads to the identification of core issues"⁴³.
- (3) The '*political economy of conflict*' tends to be a more sensitive area to grapple with in a typical post-conflict setting, as the vested interests underpinning the 'feasibility' of conflict⁴⁴ may not have disappeared, or may have been rekindled by the transformation of the warring parties into members of an internationally-supported transitional authority. In less developed, war-affected countries, the political economy of conflict may conflate with the sustainable and participatory management of natural resources. Whenever self-regulation by the private sector or public action by regional partners or the international community are desirable to curb illicit finance sources for guerrilla organisations, even if such measures may be beyond the scope of a PCNA, they should be mentioned along with their expected effect on the conflict patterns in the country under consideration⁴⁵.

⁴¹ UNDP/BCPR 2003, p. 7.

⁴² Academic literature argues that, although aid has a beneficial effect on reducing the risk of violent conflict in fuelling economic growth, particular types of aid increase the risk of relapse into conflict. See Esmen and Herring 2001.

⁴³ FEWER 2004, ch. 2, box 9.

⁴⁴ Collier-Hoeffler 1998, Hirshleifer 2001 and Collier et al. 2003.

⁴⁵ The introduction of the 'do no harm approach' and particularly the 'political economy of conflict' dimension via the 'conflict analysis as a transition management tool' would allow a PCNA to edge towards conflict prevention and management through '*scenario building*' and the 'peace building strategy' to become a 'living' framework to be adjusted to the changing trends. However, scenario building is a complex exercise requiring a wide range of expertise and in most cases a shift to 'regional conflict analysis', both of which tend to be unpractical in a PCNA.

(b) **Peace building for human security.** Conflict analysis modelling is often resented as top-down, as it captures primarily the organized interests. The human security framework has been developed in the UN since the mid-1990s as a way of packaging the manifold international and national endeavours “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment”⁴⁶. The rights-based approach stresses the role of the different actors, including conflict actors, as either ‘right-holders’ or ‘duty-bearers’, thereby highlighting accountability and participation and taking a view of *conflict as denial of rights*, particularly human rights, by warring elites. Although the implications from this approach are all-encompassing, the UN system has found it difficult to bring human rights issues on stream during a PCNA.

(c) **Conflict and economic growth – models and assumptions.**

- (1) When conflict analysis is sufficiently participatory, it can easily integrate the livelihood and poverty assessments, which “take the individual household as a starting point, seeking to establish the economic, political, social and cultural factors affecting the lives and livelihoods of its members”⁴⁷. Conflict-sensitive livelihoods and poverty assessments can valuably explore the implications of conflict at the individual household’s level and join hands with formal conflict analysis to provide a framework for integrated community-based programming⁴⁸. Furthermore, livelihoods assessments are an area of choice for the implementation of the ‘*build back better*’ principle, whereby livelihoods do not have to be reconstructed the way they used to be whenever the old ways were themselves sources of conflict.
- (2) From the standard macro-economic perspective of civil war research, the number of years in which PCNAs have estimated needs has usually been too small (rarely more than 2 years), as the capacity of aid to boost growth, and therefore conflict resilience, is assumed to ratchet up as of the fifth year of the transition⁴⁹. The reason for the limitation is partly practical, since a PCNA focuses on short-term recovery needs of a fledgling transitional administration and keeps an eye on the programming timeframe of most traditional aid donors. Closer integration with other planning processes in a relatively participatory environment, notably the budget and the I-PRSP, has helpfully allowed for instance the Sudan JAM report to provide a framework for reconstruction over the full 6-year interim period.

(d) **Recent practice in linking conflict prevention and management to the development work.**

(1) **International frameworks.**

(i) **Recovery to development frameworks.** Since countries emerging from conflict have typically not had access to aid flows other than humanitarian assistance delivered by the UN directly or through NGOs, the problem of “addressing the funding and strategic planning gap between relief and development activities in the context of natural disasters and complex emergencies” (ECOSOC resolution E/2002/32) has posed itself primarily to the UN system. A ‘strategic peace building storyline’ is key to make the tools commonly in use more responsive to the emerging national priorities.

A tool in use for conflict and immediate post-conflict periods is the *consolidated appeals process* (CAP), organising relief and early recovery activities by agencies into a coherent overview but intrinsically based on the supply side, ie ongoing agency assessments and activities. CAPs are traditionally aimed to preserve a humanitarian space in an immediate post-conflict setting and are rarely based on any conflict assessment, but the tool is evolving.

Other tools for the post-conflict period are *multi-donor trust funds* (MDTFs), which increasingly come to be established as a result of PCNAs (Iraq, Sudan). MDTFs’ governance arrangements may go to great lengths to forge a solid multi-stakeholder

⁴⁶ Commission on Human Security 2003, p. 4.

⁴⁷ FEWER 2004, ch. 2, 4.

⁴⁸ An extremely valuable study, skilfully integrating a detailed livelihoods assessment with multi-layered conflict analysis, is Al-Ahfad-Tufts Universities, “Darfur. Livelihoods under siege”.

⁴⁹ Collier et al. 2003, pp. 157-159 and 167-169.

policy consensus, possibly helping supersede the formal launch of other co-ordination tools⁵⁰. Nonetheless, the operational financial facilities have been criticized as “essentially oriented towards macro-economic stability and... not sufficiently tailored for the rapid design and launch of the QIPs which are critical to the consolidation of peace”⁵¹. Efforts are ongoing to refine the use of the tool – in the framework of such review efforts, the managerial arrangements of the MDTFs should foresee the presence of conflict focal points.

(ii) Integrated UN missions. The rationale of integrated UN missions in a post-conflict country lies in the current evolution of peace keeping “from maintaining the status quo... to a more ambitious programme of managing transitions – assisting in post-conflict reconstruction and in some instances, state building”⁵². Integrated UN missions raise a number of still unresolved policy and operational challenges – in particular, there is a contradiction between the need for “deliberate mechanisms... to be introduced for ensuring that activities introduced in the ‘stabilisation’ or ‘humanitarian’ phase are carried over to the ‘developmental’ phase”, which usually implies the upgrading of the RC/HC position to the DSRSG’s one, and the continued protection of the humanitarian space. It is often the case that to address this contradiction “parallel structures to fulfil transitional and development tasks” have been created within the UN missions, and that uniformed peace keepers have engaged in a “hearts and minds campaign” of service delivery (especially QIPs), which has been blamed for a strong unintended impact on the agencies’ operating environment⁵³. Some practical options, all assuming that the sequencing of the PCNA and the UNSC resolution establishing a peace mission allows the results of the former to feed into an Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), would be

- The country-specific peace building strategy arrived at in a PCNA could be reflected in the mission’s planning.

- The DPA-DPKO planners’ participation in the PCNA, particularly in the phases of ‘conflict analysis as contextual analysis’ and ‘conflict analysis as a planning tool’, with a view to ensuring that the mission’s ‘*centre of gravity*’⁵⁴ is consistent with the ‘strategic peace building storyline’.

- The inclusion of a PCNA working level practitioner such as the conflict adviser in the planning cell of an integrated mission.

(2) Coordination at national or cabinet level.

Conflict-sensitive co-ordination of recovery and reconstruction efforts has implications on the work of the national authorities.

(a) Hardly any PCNA has shown signs of transitional authorities taking a proactive stance for undertaking a strategic conflict assessment. However, good practice is not entirely lacking in this regard, as is shown by the multi-stakeholder conflict assessment piloted by Nigeria in May 2002 under the direct impulse of the Presidency and with the involvement of a multi-donor group and local CSOs, whose findings have been integrated in the PRSP. The recommendations have focused, among others, on the establishment of an *early warning* system and other conflict prevention measures. An early warning cell is an institutional signal of commitment to peace building and more in general to risk reduction, including from natural disasters, but no PCNA has devoted much attention to it.

(b) Although the organisation of a PCNA in sectoral clusters has tended to overlap with the sectors traditionally singled out in sector-wide programming, it is rare for a *sector-wide approach* as such to be used in a weak post-conflict governance context. If the ‘peace building storyline’ has successfully been pitched into a strategic mode, it can later contribute to the planning of a sectoral approach, provided it considers “complementing the macro conflict analysis with a sector-specific conflict analysis of the linkages between the

⁵⁰ The example of Sierra Leone has been advanced, where the Peace Building and Recovery Strategy and the National Recovery Strategy were considered to obviate the need for a CCA. UNDG/ECHA 2004, p. 32.

⁵¹ UNDG/ECHA 2004, p. 25.

⁵² Eide et al. 2005, p. 10.

⁵³ Eide et al. 2005, p. 24 and 30-31.

⁵⁴ The strategic notion of ‘centre of gravity’ in an integrated UN mission is introduced by Eide et al. 2005.

specific sector (eg health, education, agriculture) and the context”⁵⁵. Sector-specific context- and conflict-sensitive indicators, eg evolution of the school attendance rates in regions claiming marginalisation or adjustment of the curricula to local traditions, would help development partners monitor the government goodwill in consolidating peace and become an element in the decision as to when and how the transition from donor -driven financing facilities to sector-wide support.

(3) Peace building at multiple levels of government.

Although increased decentralisation is a key component of a number of peace settlements, PCNAs are still skewed towards the consolidation of capacity at the central government level. Though the interactions between levels of government are a known conflict area in the aftermath of the signing of a peace accord, the building of capacity at the regional or local level tends to be left entirely with the central government. A ‘strategic peace building storyline’ may have to be particularly sensitive to the increasing bulk of experience in community -driven recovery and building service delivery capability at and below the district level, with a view to enhancing the social capital and bonding at the grassroots.

From assessment to action – towards a better linkage

14. Peace building policy development in relevant organisations

- (a) **The UN system.** Policy guidelines cutting across existing political, peace keeping, humanitarian and development lines are still nascent in the UN system. The system seems to be struggling with:
- (1) whether peace building should be a conceptual framework – or a funding channel – aiming to overcome the tight separation between the ‘crisis -humanitarian’, ‘development’ and ‘peacekeeping’ paradigms *or*
 - (2) whether “in determining strategies and operational plans, peace building should be understood to entail a relatively narrow, prioritised and sequenced set of activities critical to support a country’s transition from conflict to a stable political order”⁵⁶.
- The tension between the two perspectives is a healthy one:
- (1) From the perspective of a post-conflict country, “any comprehensive peace and state building strategy requires more than the coherent articulation of a set of distinct technical activities”, as the content of peace building is necessarily demand -driven and is “first and foremost a profoundly political process”⁵⁷.
 - (2) Identifying peace building predominantly in terms of its ‘state building’ implications may, however, shift the attention away from people -centred activities undertaken with non-state actors and bearing a direct focus on conflict transformation, such as the establishment of early warning systems, truth and reconciliation, inter -cultural and inter-religious dialogue, dissemination of peace agreements, local reconciliation etc. Alignment with relevant international norms and standards needs to be a key element of the ‘state building’ approach.
 - (3) It is critical that state building and peace building be linked. In a post -conflict setting, state building may become a *win-lose* process that leaves a number of non-compatible or non-legitimate interests unaddressed. Peace building is an endeavour to find a *common* vision across the society that includes, at least incrementally, all the stakeholders.
- (b) **The World Bank.** The usual criticism is that the Bank focuses too much on macro -economic stability and neglects the issues of equity that often underpin violent civil strife in a country⁵⁸. However, in operational terms, the Bank has found useful entry points to

⁵⁵ FEWER 2004, ch. 4, 3.4.

⁵⁶ From the draft Policy Committee submissions on Peace Building, internal document. Pending further policy clarifications, UNEOSG 2006, p. 2, adopts a definition of peace building that “includes all activities necessary to assist a conflict-torn society to reach a point where violence is no longer a ready recourse, the risks of relapse into conflict are reduced, and the country can move onto a more development-oriented footing”.

⁵⁷ UNEOSG 2006, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Boyce 2002.

'work on conflict' in the community-based recovery programmes and relative funding facilities, where reconciliation activities, especially at the local level, have often been identified and implemented. Efforts to secure macro-economic data disaggregated according to the existing geographical or social fault line are worth pursuing.

- (c) **Regional organisations.** Regional organisations have been involved in 'track 1' peace making, such as ECOWAS in Liberia, IGAD in the Southern Sudan and the AU in Darfur, but there is little evidence of engagement in early recovery and reconstruction planning, within the limits of their mandates. The role of regional development banks in PCNAs is increasing.
- (d) **Donor governments.** Peace building is on its way to being identified by some traditional aid donors, among others USAID, DFID and Norway, as an area worthy of substantive engagement. In the implementation phase, they tend to prefer the resort to local or international NGOs. Donor role in supporting the work of the UN Peace Building Commission and contributing to the UN Peace Building Fund is expected to increase in the future, but it is unclear yet if a PCNA or any of its segments would be eligible for funding. Donors may have tended to regard PCNAs primarily as a resource mobilisation tool but have shown understanding for lengthier assessments when they proved to have a successful capacity-building impact (Sudan JAM) or to build inclusive frameworks for participation and national ownership (Somali JNA).
- (e) **Host country.** Institutional factors play a role in the relative neglect of reconciliation activities in post-conflict countries, particularly the difficulty to link them to specific decision-making bodies in the early phases of transition to post-conflict – itself a by-product of the uncertain and fragile political constellation supporting the peace agreement. Oftentimes, it has been judged politically unfeasible to raise issues of reconciliation or accountability.
- (f) **Non-state and civil society actors.** Finally, widespread national ownership of and participation in a PCNA are highly desirable from a peace building perspective.
 - (1) Challenges have arisen in the effective outreach to the private sector, even when a diversified domestic one had been or was in existence. The involvement of the diasporas has also been relatively unsatisfactory, particularly such refugee and displaced persons groups as represent factions opposed to the formerly warring parties⁵⁹.
 - (2) While the bulk of peace building work in the pre-transition period tends to be ensured by local NGOs and their international counterparts, the participation of both in PCNAs has been disappointing, "either because they elect not to participate in order to preserve their independence, or because the UN [and the other agencies] do not directly involve NGOs"⁶⁰. This, among others, induces an 'urban bias' in the consultations likely to be carried out by a PCNA.

15. Rethinking the PCNA

- (a) **Should we redefine PCNA objectives and terminology?** To address post-conflict transition without falling into the 'everything is urgent' trap, it is essential to boldly set forth country-specific priorities. This cannot happen unless a longer-term 'storyline', referred to here as '*integrated peace building strategy*' and weaving political reforms, growth-friendly economic policy, aid and military assistance into a coherent roadmap, is elaborated on the basis of a sufficiently detailed and inclusive conflict analysis. It is only this strategic storyline, or at least its outline, that can provide secure guidance to a PCNA, once it is validated at an adequate policy/political decision making level. The terminology may have to be modified accordingly, in that the foundations of the exercise are not a comprehensive 'inventory' of 'needs' that sectoral technocrats attempt to compile 'neutrally', but the opening of a space to express such country-specific priorities and envision such strategies as ought to structure national and international responses.

⁵⁹ Diasporas may increase the risk of conflict due to their observed tendency to finance extremist organisations (Collier et al. 2003, pp. 85-86) but at the same time can play a constructive role in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.

⁶⁰ UNDG/ECHA 2004, p. 26.

(b) **Strengthening linkages with parallel processes**

- (1) **Humanitarian and early recovery needs assessments.** Operationally, a PCNA can be for both UN and non-UN development agencies an invaluable tool “to catalyse sustainable development activities” and “to build upon earlier humanitarian programmes to ensure that their inputs become assets for development”⁶¹. At the same time, a PCNA is predicated on the willingness and capacity of a government to be empowered to take full responsibilities towards its citizens. Therefore, “the pace of government leadership of transition processes... might at times be affected by its capacities or willingness to adhere to humanitarian principles and human rights law...” and “in such cases, the UN must uphold its moral authority and maintain leadership of the humanitarian response”⁶². PCNAs are an integrated tool *par excellence*, but this does not mean that absolutely everything has to be integrated. In a ‘incremental’ model, early recovery needs assessments could be packaged as a ‘first’ or ‘fast track’, or be limited to building the capacities of local (as opposed to national) authorities (or vice versa, depending on the circumstances) or to providing ‘light’ coordination to area-based interventions⁶³.
- (2) **National budgetary process and relationships with the IFIs.** A well-conducted PCNA process can provide a solid basis for the design of the first post-conflict budgets and the re-engagement with the IFIs. It is nonetheless important to recall that, in the peace building approach advocated in this paper, national efforts towards the attainment of the MDGs, as expressed by the national share in the total burden of costs assessed by a PCNA, should be appraised qualitatively and not just financially, namely in terms of a better targeted use of in-country resources for explicit peace building objectives⁶⁴.
- (3) **Peacekeeping planning and implementation.** The failure to integrate peacekeeping mission planning in nearly all the PCNAs conducted means that “achieving full complementarity with local efforts for peace”⁶⁵ has been a real challenge. The political leverage that may result from the presence of a SRSG has rarely been used in the context of a PCNA exercise. While the presence of a civil affairs department in some peacekeeping missions, eg UNMIL, is regarded as a valuable asset as a locus for the co-ordination of reconciliation activities, it suffers from limited backstopping at the HQs level, from the time it requires to take roots locally and from the ad hoc character of its programming (mainly QIPs). The case of the Sudan was promising, since an ‘advance mission’ had been authorized by the UNSC (UNAMIS), but the opportunity to tap early enough available local and UNCT knowledge was missed, allegedly due, among others, to an above average level of inter-agency competition.
- (4) **Elections and ‘voice-enhancing’ processes.** Elections are a key milestone of international action in a post-conflict country, as the majority of the peace settlements include them as a mechanism to make the newly created political and institutional dispensation more inclusive. However, it is important for an Integrated Risk Analysis to factor in elections as a factor of post-conflict risk, based on available evidence that elections do not necessarily decrease the odds for reversal into conflict, but rather modify the temporal profile of the risk⁶⁶. The sequencing of capacity building programmes may depend heavily on the transition timetable, eg on whether local elections take place before (Sudan) or after (Haiti) general elections. It is important that agency co-operation with the peace keeping mission in particular be scaled up appropriately – see eg the joint UNDP-DPKO assessment mission on the Haitian local elections in April 2006.
- (5) **Local peace building.** A PCNA is usually not able to undertake in-depth consultations at the district and local level. The strategic approach advocated here

⁶¹ UNDG/ECHA 2004, p. 17.

⁶² UNDG/ECHA 2004, p. 6.

⁶³ See IASC 2006, par. 2.5.

⁶⁴ The problem of *aid fungibility* can emerge here. Although donors tend to find peace building programming attractive to fund regardless of domestic efforts, a PCNA ought to see to it that the transfer of national resources to early recovery and service delivery resulting from the implementation of a peace agreement does not leave activities with an explicit peace building content as a marginal, low-profile add-on to be supported externally.

⁶⁵ FEWER 2004, p. 9.

⁶⁶ Collier-Hoeffler-Söderbom 2006.

suggests this may not be necessary. However, an 'incremental' or 'multi-track' model does create opportunities for at least charting out a process whereby communities will be consulted during the stabilisation phase, their substantive inputs sought and the conflict trends regularly monitored, based on the situational indicators of most relevance to those communities.

- (c) **Reassessing the peace building impact of a PCNA**. In some cases, where the peace agreement has not, or poorly, addressed some overarching political and policy issues, it has been repeatedly argued that a PCNA may open up space for high-level technical dialogue between specialists drawn from the formerly warring parties⁶⁷ or engage traditional or community leaders to think of themselves as the lead actors in the recovery process (eg the Somali JNA). But it could also bring about a fake 'bureaucratisation' of political issues that will loom large even more dangerously in the aftermath of the PCNA. Also, the existence of a formal negotiating framework leading or having led to a peace settlement may freeze the limits of what is politically correct to raise. In the light of the 'strategic approach' advocated here, the Sudan JAM appears an interesting case study, as a joint executive committee worked as a high-level, policy-setting organ for a technical core group that carried out the bulk of the assessment. This may create a locus for confidence-building between formerly warring parties and therefore facilitate the debate on wide-ranging peace building strategies⁶⁸.

16. Preliminary recommendations for key actors.

- (a) **On the management of post-conflict transition in general**
- (1) Post-conflict transition is a long-term matter. Ideally, a five- to seven-year 'storyline', referred to here as '*integrated peace building strategy*' and weaving political reforms, growth-friendly economic policy, aid and military assistance into a coherent roadmap, should be elaborated, and regularly updated, by national stakeholders in close consultation with international development partners at an adequate decision making level.
 - (2) To the extent that a PCNA can be a framework to *prioritise, rather than juxtapose*, needs and responses, it is a promising opportunity to make at least a 'strategic peace building storyline' explicit. In other words, the 'storyline', particularly when it is truly strategic, is not simply the technical 'coming together' of a number of 'sectoral' building blocks, such as social service delivery, governance reform etc. The terminology may have to be modified to deal with the ambiguities hidden in the language of needs and assessments. Also, the agreed sequencing of post-conflict priorities and responses may dictate creative modes of PCNA management such as a '*multi-track*' or an '*incremental*' PCNA.
- (b) **On the preparation of a PCNA exercise**
- (1) With a view to providing the national and international stakeholders with such a contextual understanding of the situation as is necessary and sufficient to conduct a priority-oriented PCNA process, it is proposed that an 'outer ring' of operational analysis, herein referred to as '*strategic conflict and risk analysis*', be undertaken in the preparatory phase of a PCNA exercise and regularly updated at key junctures.
 - (2) Conflict and risk analysis should feature first in the preliminary discussions between the lead agencies and then involve key donors and national counterparts for validation. If politically feasible, this could already comprise some elements of widened national participation.
 - (3) This preliminary analysis should be kept as simple as possible, with only a few easy-to-collect indicators, but possible best-case and worst-case scenarios that may have an impact on both the envisioned process and the expected output of a PCNA exercise ought to be worked out with clarity, in order to sketch out the outline of a *PCNA contingency planning*. It is crucial that the strategic conflict and risk analysis and the contingency planning secure the buy-in of the senior UN and WB (or

⁶⁷ UN/WB Roundtable 2005, p. 5.

⁶⁸ It is too early to draw conclusions from the Sudan JAM, since the policy organs established in that context have failed to fulfil their tasks in the JAM implementation phase, but neither has any alternative strategy been designed to ensure proper follow-up.

development bank) leadership and key donor representatives at an adequate decision making level if it is to be turned into an effective working platform.

- (4) While aligned with the actions taken in the political, diplomatic and military arenas, the strategic conflict and risk analysis needs to be *clearly targeted to the technical work of development agencies*. It should be a dedicated tool, as 'off-the-peg' products such as Crisis Group reports and other open sources of information do not, or not yet, fully suit the needs of development operators. It should be a multi-disciplinary exercise undertaken with the help of conflict focal points, security focal points if any and national and international resource persons, with a view to preserving the country-specificity and neutrality of the assessment. A roster of international focal points unrelated, or only loosely related, to agency concerns and mandates could be established to this end.
 - (5) Donors should be engaged in the exercise, not only because they provide the necessary link with the other '2-Ds' (Diplomacy and Defence) but also because critical conflict dimensions, such as poor environmental governance or acute gender imbalances, may need prominent donors as 'champions' for them to be considered at all worthy of public action in a post-conflict setting. Conversely, donor tendency to underfund 'non-traditional' sectors like social safety nets or environmental management could be corrected through increased exposure to these issues in a PCNA.
 - (6) A key building block of a 'strategic peace building storyline' is the peace agreement and its implementation modalities or the transitional constitution. It is recommended that one of the first steps of planning on a PCNA be the accurate analysis of the peace agreement or the transitional constitution, in order for the exercise to be grounded in a thorough understanding of the parameters laid down in the agreement and to support its implementation. If politically feasible, public debates on the agreement could open up windows of opportunity to address or make explicit the gaps in a non-inclusive, or otherwise partial or incomplete peace settlement.
 - (7) Strategic conflict and risk analysis could also be carried out in a watching mode by the UN and the WB for a selected number of fragile states and beefed up when international momentum builds up for a PCNA exercise.
- (c) **On prioritisation in a PCNA**
- (1) In the earlier stages of a PCNA, a second 'inner ring' of conflict analysis, herein referred to as '*conflict analysis as a planning tool*', could begin to structure the outline of the 'strategic peace building storyline' around the would-be 'peace building actors' and the existing 'capacities for peace'. To the extent that this is politically feasible, broader-based if incremental involvement of stakeholders is desirable to reduce the risk of a non-elected transitional authority pre-empting such priorities as may be determined by the future elected governments. More sustained efforts should be made to tap the potential of the diasporas, with a view *inter alia* to curtailing their frequent tendency to fuel conflict. Outreach to the private sector should also be improved.
 - (2) 'Conflict analysis as a planning tool' in a PCNA is not primarily a thematic cluster or sub-cluster but rather a lens through which to look at the options available to address the different conflict factors and actors. It is a tool to assist in *selecting, in that specific post-conflict setting, what to do as a matter of urgency, how much of it to do, where and how to do it*, out of the gamut of interventions that could possibly be undertaken in a standard low-capacity developing country.
 - (3) It is important to recall that the application of a conflict lens may lead to an (occasionally radical) re-arrangement of priorities in the immediate aftermath of a transition. A striking example is that, while it is standard economic theory that sound macro-economic policies have a far more rapid effect on growth than expenditure in basic social services, there are strong indications that in post-conflict settings, social policy is relatively more important and macroeconomic policy is relatively less important than in normal situations. This means that, at least in general terms, the improvement of social policies sought through a PCNA in the early years of the transition tends to be worth a temporary worsening of macroeconomic balances.
 - (4) From the point of view of sequencing, a conflict and risk analysis tool in a PCNA should in principle lead from exploring conflict triggers and hotspots, and appraising

possible responses to them, as a way of pursuing immediate stabilisation, through the consideration of proximate causes, with a view to identifying and fine-tuning medium-term interventions, up to the search for root causes, requiring a longer-term approach, and possibly a deeper analysis, to be grappled with.

- (5) Operationally, it is essential that conflict focal points be available for the whole duration of the PCNA exercise. More so at the inception of the PCNA, when the strategic conflict and risk analysis is elaborated and the division of labour agreed upon, and at the closure of the exercise, particularly the drafting of the synthesis report and the final trade-offs between priority areas in the framework of the agreed strategic peace building storyline. Given the strategic importance of the conflict analysis tool, funding needs to be ensured from the outset. Should conflict focal points be donor-funded, donor timing needs to be factored in to avoid them joining the process too late.
 - (6) It is highly desirable that conflict focal points are enabled to interact with the PCNA management and the cluster leaders to focus them on the key conflict drivers and actors and build their capacity to use the conflict lens throughout their technical work. In some cases, specialists on the sustainable management of natural resources, eg water, land etc., may have to be more extensively exposed to the particular conflict profile in the country under examination, depending on the political stakes of such issues in the transition. General or even country-specific check-lists and final peer reviewing of the cluster assessments have proved to be less effective. Coaching and mutual cross-pollination are the minimum peace building activities that can help a PCNA frame itself, where necessary, as non-threatening and building on language and entry points broadly acceptable to local actors.
 - (7) Conflict is a manifold phenomenon. A PCNA should endeavour to address root and proximate factors that fuel grievances but also explore ways to deal with the factors that make conflict feasible in practice (eg the capture of rent from natural resources to sustain conflict) – the *'political economy of conflict'* approach. A PCNA also needs to take into account the influence of global and regional imbalances on conflict propensity (eg heavy dependence on the export of primary commodities). It is important to highlight the need for measures reaching beyond the responsibility of national planners.
 - (8) An analysis of the interaction between past humanitarian or development assistance and the conflict context, from a *'do no harm' perspective*, can also move the national authorities closer to a framework of responsible aid management.
 - (9) Likewise, the *'do no harm'* approach implies that the impact of the PCNA process itself on the national context be kept under constant review, particularly as regards the use of national staff, the risk of unduly raising political stakes and the danger of *'assessment fatigue'* due to many parallel planning processes all going on at the same time.
- (d) **On the implementation and follow-up of a PCNA**
- (1) Transitional Results Matrices (TRMs) should include a limited number of key conflict-related indicators. Objective indicators might relate, among others, to the steps taken to ensure compliance with the peace settlement or the transitional constitution; perception-based indicators could be usefully disaggregated by gender and other relevant factors. Based on the sequencing of the conflict analysis exercise, the first measurable – *'stabilisation'* – targets should control mainly for temporal triggers and geographical hotspots, while performance – *'transformation'* – targets established for a later phase of the transition should rather focus on proximate and possibly root causes.
 - (2) In ideal conditions, the capacity to undertake surveys and other opinion polls to monitor perception-based indicators could be integrated in a PCNA, as could the design of early warning systems, or the adjustment of existing models, into post-conflict transition programming. Key donors could *'champion'* the need for simple but reliable early warning systems and provide resources for their design.
 - (3) Whenever the definition of a strategic peace building storyline had a chance to be more inclusive than the immediate interlocutors in the transitional administration, the PCNA product should be validated by a larger audience. In this case a careful

management of the feedback received is critical and may require surge capacity to be made available by the lead agencies.

(e) **On linkages with other approaches and processes**

- (1) The top-down character of conflict analysis, with its emphasis on organized political or social interests, needs complementing through a human rights and rights-based approach. In particular, it is recommended that closer policy and operational linkages be created by the UN and the WB between the conflict analysis approach and the *livelihoods and poverty approach*, with a view to highlighting the impact of conflict at the individual household's, or village's, level and respecting the 'build back better' principle in future interventions.
- (2) The peace building perspective needs to dialogue with the *state building approach* to identify entry points for the management of vertical conflicts between tiers of government or between state and communities in a climate of low trust. It has to be recalled that the public expenditure that would maximise growth in the early stages of post-conflict is likely to be in the capital city and the most developed, often central regions, while conflict may have broken out precisely because of the economic marginalisation of the periphery. Community-driven and area-based recovery programming may therefore be crucial to restore the social capital and bonding at the grassroots, while also enabling key aspects of reconciliation to be introduced at the grassroots level. A broad framework for its design and funding may have to be included in a PCNA.
- (3) The respect for the *humanitarian space* may require the continuation of parallel delivery mechanisms and donor-driven financing arrangements, while a PCNA is predicated on the development of government responsibility towards its own citizens. In this sense, the concept of an 'incremental' or 'multi-track' PCNA does allow separate and successive planning frameworks to be used according to the circumstances. However, it is crucial that humanitarian, early recovery and post-conflict transitional assessments build upon one another, with a view to not overwhelming the limited domestic capacity by conducting too many and too diverse assessments in a reduced time frame. In particular, the same strategic 'storyline' should underpin at least early recovery and transitional planning frameworks. Activities targeted to collect and update baseline data should be integrated from the very early stage, with a view to swiftly building the much-needed local information management capacity.
- (4) The linkages between a peace keeping mission and a PCNA could be critical to capture the forward and backward linkages between security and development, but the practical collaboration of DPA-DPKO planners and PCNA management has been hampered, *inter alia*, by the failure to achieve proper sequencing of a PCNA and a UN integrated mission. If national peace building priorities had already been articulated in the PCNA, the UN mission planning would be in a position to take them into account, thereby offsetting the lack of in-country consultations that tends to be typical of large peace keeping missions. The deployment of advance missions could allow cross-pollination, particularly in swiftly building the capacity of the civil affairs division, traditionally suffering from weak backstopping at the HQs and indistinctness in its terms of reference.
- (5) While a PCNA grounded in a solid strategic storyline can offer valuable opportunities for linkages with subsequent *I-PRSP and PRSP processes*, the right balance needs to be struck between the medium-term objective of macro-economic stability and the rapid design and launch of 'quick impact programmes' (QIPs) for the consolidation of peace at the local level. Given the character of a PCNA, which is strategic in its purpose and relatively top-down in its implementation, the formulation of the first post-conflict national budgets does benefit from the international technical expertise usually available during a PCNA. QIPs, except the large cash-for-work or food-for-work schemes for infrastructure recovery, have a stronger local peace dividend connotation, and their detailed design should be handled locally as much as feasible.
- (6) A moot but crucial question is whether a PCNA may support 'track 2' diplomacy by opening up space for high-level technical dialogue between specialists drawn from the formerly warring parties, as has been the case in some PCNAs. To facilitate the process, a joint executive committee could work as a high-level, policy-setting organ

for a technical core group (the Sudan JAM model). However, the risk of creating 'enclaves' within the transitional authorities with unclear relationships to the line ministries requires an exit strategy for such *ad hoc* entities to be designed quickly. International or national resource persons that have been involved in the formal or informal peace talks could also be utilised in a PCNA. However, the risk of creating an expectation that PCNAs can technically compensate for an uncertain domestic political will needs to be carefully factored in.

(f) ***On long-term initiatives***

- (1) UN agencies and the WB should pursue their ongoing efforts to establish sectoral policy guidelines specifically targeted to post -conflict countries and other transition settings and based on agency good practice as well as the growing body of academic research on peace building.
- (2) With a view to boosting the political momentum for the elaboration of conflict -sensitive implementation of M&E systems, it is recommended that the international community should explore the possibility of setting one or more *worldwide conflict management targets* among the MDGs, eg halving the incidence of conflict in a given number of years.

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