Annex 6

UN Coordination Mechanisms for Peace Strategies

Coordination mechanisms and instruments have proliferated in conflict-affected countries—particularly where there has been a concerted international response. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to see how these various coordination mechanisms can coordinate among themselves. There is an urgent need to streamline and simplify such mechanisms and infuse them with clearer approaches and strategies for dealing with UNDP’s operations in conflict-affected countries. Additional guidance and support is required from UN Headquarters on how the various arms of the UN system should work together in the context of an integrated office.¹

GLOBAL AND OTHER COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Coordination mechanisms exist at several levels. At the global level for countries with a Security Council mandate, there are two principal mechanisms:

- **Security Council:** The Security Council constitutes a forum for decision-making that sets the overall direction for the international community in countries with peacekeeping or peace-building missions. It focuses principally on stabilization and the humanitarian response. However, because of its enforcement function, the Security Council presents the only reliable means for UNDP to apply pressure to effect structural changes at the country level. The head of the UN mission (usually a Special Representative of the Secretary-General) and also, periodically, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, provide reports to the Security Council, which determine the structure and resources of peacekeeping missions. Progress is monitored strictly within the framework of the (short-term) parameters of the Security Council mandate. The developmental and institutional aspects of the transition are not independently reported on (for example, by the Administrator of UNDP) and are rarely explicitly covered in the formal report presented. As a result, key structural and institutional concerns remain peripheral, raising the potential for regression upon the completion of the Security Council mandate. Furthermore, as discussed elsewhere in the evaluation, despite the move towards integration, the development arm of peacekeeping operations is never funded from the assessed budget defined by a Security Council resolution.

- **International pledging conferences:** Needs assessments covering humanitarian and development needs are presented by the UN system and, now, increasingly, by the World Bank at international pledging conferences in support of a peace process. Since the development component of a post-conflict response is not covered by the assessed budget authorized by the Security Council, these pledging conferences are the principal source of funding for development activities in support of a peace process. UNDP and the UN Country Team

¹ An initiative on the part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to jointly prepare a ‘United Nations Manual for Multidimensional Peacekeeping’ that would have helped establish a frame of reference and standard procedures for the UN system and the World Bank was completed in 2002, but the manual was never promulgated due to objections from some entities within the system.
generally play a critical support role in the preparation of joint needs assessments for such pledging conferences (see below), but take a back seat in the conferences themselves. Pledging conferences are heavily dominated by current donor interests and needs. And they are increasingly led by the Bretton Woods institutions, which represent the development side of the equation because of their role in the management of debt as well as grants, and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, representing the political side. Both objectively identified needs as well as ongoing plans of donors are presented without real distinction. Such conferences are as much intended as a show of resolve and political support on the part of the international community as commitment to the structural aspects of post-conflict transition. As a result, experience has been that the actual appropriation of funds and most certainly their commitment and disbursement under specific programmes is subject to extensive delays.

Within the UN itself and beyond, the following coordination mechanisms are used at different levels in the case of conflict-affected countries:

- **Executive Committee for Peace and Security (ECPS):** Chaired by the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs in New York, this Committee brings together the lead departments, funds and programmes of the UN system on peace and security, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. The UNDP Administrator represents the UN Development Group and UNDP at such meetings. The ECPS meets according to need to discuss broad policy issues pertaining to countries in conflict or countries of particular political concern. It constitutes a forum for UNDP to draw attention to some of the key structural concerns pertaining to peace-building and recovery.²

- **Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC):** The IASC is a forum established in response to General Assembly resolution 46/182 on strengthening humanitarian assistance. It is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and is composed of key humanitarian agencies of the UN system, international organizations (such as the International Committee for the Red Cross) and select NGOs.³ Though UNDP is a member of the IASC, the heaviest emphasis is placed on the coordination of humanitarian assistance and the monitoring of humanitarian needs assessments and appeals for funding. To the extent that it does the latter in the context of pledging conferences for countries in conflict, it is relevant to post-conflict peace-building. Meetings are held in New York and Geneva based on need. The IASC develops humanitarian policies, agrees on a clear division of responsibility for the various aspects of humanitarian assistance, identifies and addresses gaps in response, and advocates for effective application of humanitarian principles. Together

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² The Executive Committee for Development Operations, or UN Development Group, chaired by the Administrator of the UNDP, is the principal Headquarters-based mechanism for the coordination of development operations of the UN system, and is attended at the level of heads of departments, funds, programmes and specialized agencies. Conflict-affected countries are, however, rarely a principal focus of the committee’s sessions.

³ The IASC membership includes the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), (chair), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP, World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Standing invitees include: the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), The World Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Representative of the Secretary-General for IDPs, and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.
with the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), the IASC forms the key strategic coordination mechanism among major humanitarian actors.

- **Inter-departmental Framework for Coordination on Early Warning and Preventive Action (the Framework Team):**
  The Framework Team, created in 1995 as an informal, inter-departmental mechanism to identify countries requiring special attention before intensive armed conflict sets in, has grown to include 24 entities of the UN system. The World Bank participates on a selective basis. Membership spans the peace and security, development and humanitarian assistance sectors. A recent evaluation suggested that the Framework Team could benefit from a clearer conceptual framework in which it could organize programme strategies. It also recommended that the Team work towards identifying needs earlier in the process; transcend the current phased approach; and become more formalized in order to ensure effective follow-up either directly or through the ECPS, to which it currently reports. The UNDP has played an important role in the Framework Team throughout and has chaired it repeatedly.

At the country level, a variety of coordination mechanisms also exist:

- **UN heads of agency meetings:** UN heads of agency meetings are convened and chaired by the Resident Coordinator of the UN System/Resident Representative of UNDP. Representatives of all UN funds and programmes and specialized agencies participate. In most instances, World Bank and IMF Representatives also attend. There is no formal guidance from UN Headquarters regarding coordination in the case of non-integrated peace-building or peacekeeping missions. In most such cases (as in Tajikistan and Guatemala), the UN Resident Coordinator has usually opted to co-chair the meetings with the Representative of the Secretary-General. Leadership has sometimes been contentious, but generally the lead function has gradually shifted from the Representative of the Secretary-General to the UN Resident Coordinator as the peacekeeping or peace-building operation phases out.

- **Inter-agency coordination meetings:** In many countries (such as Afghanistan and Sierra Leone), the Resident Coordinator or Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for humanitarian and development operations chairs broader meetings of most of the key development and humanitarian agencies in the country concerned. Such meetings include international organizations, bilateral agencies, international NGOs and the international financial institutions. Thematic working groups are often established based on need, and these are chaired by lead agencies that have a particularly strong presence in the thematic area or sector concerned. National representatives tend to be invited to these meetings only sporadically.

- **Ambassadors’ meetings:** In many countries, the UN Resident Coordinator convenes meetings of heads of missions to discuss political developments and policy issues. These meetings are informal and are not binding in any way.

- **National coordination mechanisms:** In most countries, UNDP provides support to national coordination mechanisms through advisers, funding and systems support. The lead ministry for this purpose is usually the Ministry

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of Economy and Planning or the Ministry of Finance. In the case of the immediate post-conflict environment, however, this poses special problems since development assistance is viewed as a means of influencing political outcomes. Such mechanisms are therefore given less importance or are chaired by the UN with participation of all of the parties to the peace agreement, rather than the government alone. In the case of Tajikistan, several years into the post-conflict period, the UN Resident Coordinator has encouraged the creation of a series of (controversial) thematic national coordination mechanisms centred around the Millennium Development Goals as an alternative. These are nationally run forums for the coordination of both domestic resources and ODA.

**IN-COUNTRY INSTRUMENTS FOR COORDINATION**

In the immediate post-conflict period, most of the instruments that apply in the case of countries in normal development circumstances and require extensive government involvement are suspended. This is because, in most instances, there are multiple parties involved in a peace process and, pending free and fair elections, there is no internationally recognized government in place. Over the past decade, however, several instruments specifically adapted to conflict-affected countries have been developed to serve as a frame of reference for substantive programming, monitoring, evaluation and resource allocation.

- **Joint needs assessments:** Joint needs assessments are intended to lay down the substantive framework for programmes in support of a peace agreement. They are linked to international pledging conferences and the global trust funds. Such needs assessments, which are increasingly led by the World Bank and feed into World Bank-led pledging conferences for the mobilization of resources, have been conducted for Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Muslim Mindanao (the Philippines), Somalia, Sudan (joint assessment mission) and Timor-Leste. In most such instances, UNDP engages with the World Bank through its regional bureau, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the UN Development Group Office, which represents the operational agencies of the UN as a whole. Joint needs assessments are divided into sectoral missions and, at the insistence of the World Bank, the UNDP has usually been restricted to leading the mission on local governance. Governance at the centre is either managed outside the framework of the joint needs assessment, as in the case of Iraq (by the United States Government) or by the World Bank itself. Joint needs assessments enable the entire UN system to be involved in their areas of expertise and have, increasingly (as in the case of Sudan), attempted to estimate the availability and allocation of both domestic resources as well as ODA. They have also attempted to factor debt into the equation. The quality and methodology followed in the joint needs assessments have varied considerably. Most have been heavily dominated by international consultants and agency staff, while some (such as Sudan) have included the full involvement of senior advisers from the various sides of the peace agreement throughout. The latter approach is clearly the most appropriate if national ownership is to be fostered in the long run.

Joint needs assessments have generally been linked to pledging and the establishment of country-specific global trust funds administered by the World Bank in Washington, DC. Funds

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5 Drawing on the experience gained in conflict-affected countries, a joint needs assessment was also undertaken for tsunami-affected countries.
earmarked for thematic or sectoral activities are contributed to the fund and projects submitted by agencies (UN and others) are approved by the World Bank following a prioritization of proposals at the country level. This includes projects now implemented through grant funding by the World Bank itself. This has resulted (fairly or unfairly) in accusations of manipulation of the fund to favour World Bank initiatives (as in Sudan) and in extensive delays (as in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste), resulting in donors establishing trust funds in parallel through UNDP. In general, UNDP has been found to be quicker and more nimble in the management of funds, while providing acceptable levels of accountability. The establishment of this mechanism has also clearly facilitated access to grant funding on the part of the World Bank and extended the scope for its involvement in post-conflict situations, even where conditions do not permit lending.

- **The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF):** This joint programming tool for UN agencies has, in some instances, been adapted to fit the specific needs of post-conflict countries and to lay a framework for the UN Country Team’s involvement in peace-building.

- **Direct budget support:** Direct budget support has become an increasingly important instrument for the coordination of assistance to certain sectors in post-conflict situations. For example, the civil police force in Afghanistan was established and managed by UNDP with bilateral donor funding through sector-wide approaches (SWAps). UNDP’s capacity in-country and the relative rapidity with which it is able to mobilize to manage such funds in the absence of reliable national capacity has meant that it is becoming a preferred administrator of SWAps. SWAps can help to enforce a policy framework for the management of a sector. Yet in Afghanistan it was noted that there was no explicit policy framework or strategy established for the management of budgetary support. As has been discussed in the case study reports, the UNDP should use its role in the management of direct budget support to help establish policies for the implementation of capacity development programmes and the strengthening of the institutions concerned.