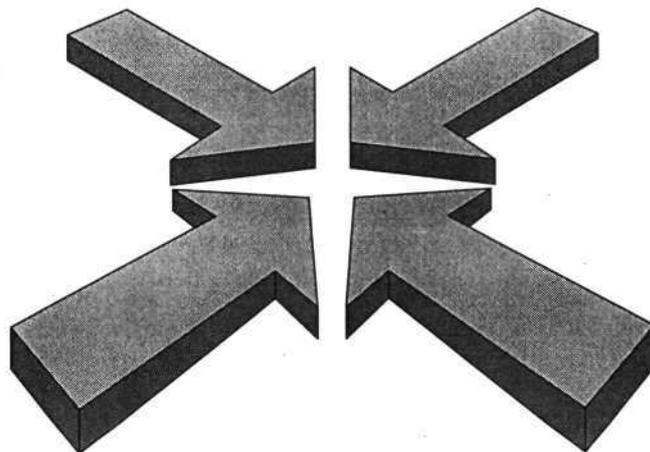




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Departamento Federal de Asuntos Exteriores

## **BEYOND THE "CONTINUUM": PEACE, CONFLICT, RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**



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## INTRODUCTION

The following report is the result of a working group initiated within the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 1996. It was composed of staff members from the humanitarian, development and policy units of SDC as well as representatives from the relevant units of the Political Directorate<sup>1</sup>. It has been approved by the Director-General of SDC on April 4, 1997.

The working group was set up in the process of putting into practice the key policy document of the Swiss government with regard to North-South relations, the **Report of the Federal Council on the North-South Relations of Switzerland in the 1990s**, the so-called "Guidelines North-South" of 1994. This document calls for, inter alia, a coherent and internationally co-ordinated humanitarian aid. The working group had the mandate to:

- review the issue of peace, conflict, relief and development assistance and draw lessons from the current international debate;
- evaluate the experience of Switzerland's external assistance in situations of acute crisis and violent conflict over the last years;
- present conclusions and recommendations to strengthen the coordination and coherence of Switzerland's involvement in situations of conflict and post-conflict recovery both between Swiss actors, between Swiss actors and the international community as well as between external and internal actors in the country affected.

The report, therefore, consists of three main chapters:

### 1. **Beyond the Continuum - Peace, Conflict and Development Cooperation. Lessons from the Current Debate**

The chapter summarises the international debate since 1993 and draws the key conclusions as seen from the angle of SDC in the form of twelve theses. It may be noted that the discussion in the working group has both profited from and given inputs to the OECD-DAC Task Force on the same issue.

### 2. **Learning from Switzerland's Field Experience**

The chapter consists of a brief synopsis of the lessons learned from a detailed evaluation of six case studies of Swiss involvement in conflict and post-conflict situations (Mozambique, Rwanda, Cambodia, Central America, Bosnia, Georgia).

### 3. **Recommendations**

- General principles to improve the coherence of Swiss assistance in situations of conflict are presented first, followed by specific operational and procedural recommendations on pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict phases. The chapter concludes with proposals for appropriate measures in the domain of staff development.

It must be emphasised that the present document is an intermediate summary of a process which will continue in the future. In many ways, the process itself, by bringing

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together all relevant partners within the Swiss administration in a focused dialogue, is as important as the printed result. The Department of Foreign Affairs will further deepen its analysis of the interlink between peace, conflict and all forms of external assistance, and continue to adjust its organisation and procedures in the light of an ongoing discussion, both at the national and international levels.

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1 The Working Group had the following composition:

**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC**

Chairman: *Charles Raedersdorf*

Deputy Chairman: *Gerhard Pfister*

Secretary: *David Bongard*

Members: *Martin Fässler, Peter Fuhrmann, Urs Herren, Beatrice Meyer, Stefan Nellen, Franklin-Noel Thévenaz.*

**Political Directorate**

Members: *Didier Chassot, Marianne Engler, Claude Wild.*

## Chapter 1. Beyond the Continuum: Peace, Conflict and Development Assistance

### Lesson from the Current Debate

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to set the scene. It reflects both the international debate of the last three to four years and the deliberations of the working group. In particular, it provides

- a review of the debate on the "continuum",
- a compilation of key "lessons learnt".

#### 1.1. Summary

The current debate on the linkages between peace, armed conflict and development assistance is a reflection of the reorientation of international relations in general - and of development assistance in particular - brought about by the end of the Cold War. It shows development assistance actors trying to come to terms with a situation where political instability and armed conflict have become a persistent aspect of the international scene. In fact, in many parts of Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the CIS states, "structural stability" as a basis for sustainable development of societies does no longer exist. To recreate this basis, a comprehensive peace-building approach is necessary, which goes beyond development and humanitarian assistance and the issue of the transition between these two modes of assistance.

In a wider sense, the **"continuum"-debate is about the need to integrate different forms of external response** - emergency relief, refugee assistance, rehabilitation measures, reconstruction and development assistance, macro-economic, military, diplomatic and political action - **in conjunction with internal response in the context of actual or imminent armed conflict.**

Although such conflicts may be compounded by natural disasters (drought, locusts, cyclones, land-slides, earthquakes, volcano eruptions etc.), the focus of the debate and also of the working group has been on situations of armed violence.

#### 1.2. The "Continuum" Debate - A Short Review

##### The Origins of the Debate, 1992/93

The origins of the "continuum" debate can be traced back to about 1992/93. From its inception it constituted an amalgamation of different concerns which had surfaced at this moment:

- By 1992 it had become evident that the end of the Cold War had not yielded a large "peace dividend", as optimistically expected, but had led to an upsurge of "new"

conflicts, most of which were internal rather than between states. Outside of the Cold War context, these conflicts have proved much more intractable. The situation sharpened the perception of donor countries that many of their development co-operation programs operated in conditions of political instability, wide-spread insecurity and latent or open violent conflict.

- The upsurge of such conflicts had led to a dramatic increase of peace-keeping budgets after 1990 and to the shift of ODA funds away from development assistance to humanitarian relief activities, while ODA funds began to stagnate or decline due to internal budgetary constraints in donor countries. This raised concerns which were further fuelled by the fact that in the heyday of "humanitarian intervention", in a number of countries, ODA budgets were drawn upon to finance the deployment of military personnel.
- Several crises, mostly the Central American experience as well as the highly mediatized Somalia case, had highlighted the lack of co-ordination and clarity of mandates between large UN agencies. The issue was raised as one of intra-UN co-ordination by the ECOSOC and led to the creation of DHA and the Interagency Standing Committee on the Relief to Development Continuum<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence, several agencies began to deal with the issue more in-depth (notably UNDP with its "Continuum-Project", which was co-financed by SDC)<sup>2</sup>.
- With the same cases as a background, humanitarian actors were frustrated that development actors did not follow up on humanitarian activities and started to get involved in development activities (e.g. by starting "Quick Impact Projects"/QUIPS), while development agencies reluctantly began to deal with areas such as the rehabilitation of security forces and the judiciary system, the demobilisation of combatants or demining programs.
- The discussions had clearly demonstrated two gaps:
  - ⇒ the funding gap between relief and classical development activities
  - ⇒ the large gap in corporate identity and culture and operational and budgetary procedures between the development and the relief actors.

By 1993, the awareness on these problems had become quite acute within both relief and development circles. However, in subsuming various issues under the label "**continuum (between relief and development)**", the misleading impression of a focused debate was created.

It was at this point in time that the Swiss "Guidelines North-South" took up some of the "continuum-debate", but saw the issue mainly in terms of a better co-ordination of humanitarian assistance. The guidelines do not link this issue to the more integral view on the promotion of peace and security.

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<sup>1</sup> See also "Document du groupe de travail du DAH sur les aspects opérationnels du 'Relief to Development Continuum', Villars-sur-Ollon, 1993."

<sup>2</sup> UNDP, "UNDP in Conflicts and Disasters", Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, August, 1994.

## Establishing the "Continuum Debate", 1993/94

During this period the continued discussion began to show some more pragmatic results, while at the same time certain conceptual flaws became more readily apparent.

- In summer 1993, the threat of resumption of armed conflict in El Salvador showed that the international response did not sufficiently take into account the underlying factors of the conflict (land, security forces), and that the political, macro-economic and relief-rehabilitation activities needed more integration. This for the first time led to a discussion between top staff of the UN and the BWI on this issue. So far, the "continuum debate" had been seen as mainly one between relief and development actors, leaving out the politico-military (= security) concerns. Analysts started calling for a **strategic framework of response**, which would integrate all forms of external assistance by all actors present.
- At the same time, the analysis of the UNDP "Continuum Project" began to question the usefulness of the concept:

*"The continuum concept, to the extent that it places emergencies within a linear representation of sequential events, {...} thereby disregarding the simultaneity of emergency and development situations, is conceptually wrong and can be operationally misleading".*

M. Stiefel, UNDP in Conflicts and Disasters, PSIS/Geneva 8/1994, p. 16/17

The shift in conception can be seen as characterised by the coining of the concept of the "**contiguuum**", emphasising the "contiguousness" of relief, development, economic and politico-military operations in many conflict scenarios. The UNDP report also called for an integration of efforts at the political level, and for better co-ordination at the field level<sup>3</sup>.

- During 1994, several agencies (like UNDP, DHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC) began to think about and act on co-ordination issues at the field level.
- Also in 1994, the DAC of the OECD first took up the issue and, on the basis of concerns about the volume and composition of ODA, correctly identified the problem as one of "**security and development**". This was partly a response to the "Agenda for Development" (1994) which called for more **preventive and curative development**.

## Conflict, Peace and Development Assistance, 1995/96

By 1995 reference to the "continuum" had become widespread. Unfortunately, the reservations against the concept within the most advanced fora and organisations, were not reflected in many circles. A workshop held in June 1995 in Austria, bringing together a

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2.

vast array of UN organisations and agencies can be seen as typical<sup>4</sup>. Almost all tried to call for a role or a mandate "within the continuum" although the workshop also showed that attempts to construct a typical sequence of conflicts or define a matrix of actors/actions against any ideal sequence of the continuum proved fruitless. Of course, the discussion often turned around the question of who should be the lead agent in the co-ordination everybody was calling for.

However, there have been, over the last two years, a number of promising initiatives trying to tackle what must be more generally seen as an issue of international assistance in situations of protracted conflict and violence, and of both conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction initiatives (or "preventive and curative development").

- The UNDP, in spring 1995, created a US\$ 50 million "window" for financing activities in countries "facing special circumstances", in order to speed up response in emergency situations calling for quick preventive or curative development activities. The guidelines for the use of these funds were approved in June 1996.
- The UNRISD "War-torn Societies Project", as an action-research initiative, tries to bring together multilateral, bilateral and local actors at the national level (in Eritrea, Mozambique, Somalia, Guatemala) to discuss the issue of integration in conflict situations and to propose solutions, while at the same time advance theoretical work on the questions involved<sup>5</sup>.
- Mainly triggered by the events in Rwanda and Bosnia the DAC/OECD<sup>6</sup> has initiated a "Task Force on Peace, Conflict and Development Co-operation" in order to review existing experience, assess the "state-of-the-art", and come up with a compendium of Best Practices and Orientations by May 1997<sup>7</sup>.
- Several countries have undertaken steps to better deal with the coherence of their instruments and activities as regards countries with open or potential conflicts. Sweden is a notable example, where the post of under-secretary of state for peace, security and development issues has been established. The Netherlands, too, have taken organizational measures by creating the "Department for conflict management and humanitarian action".
- The International Finance Institutions, which until 1995 were not part of the discussion, have now joined in. The IMF actively participates in discussions both at the UN and OECD levels and has come up with ideas on how to guarantee the coherence between macroeconomic measures and other initiatives in post-conflict situations. The WB is currently drafting a policy on reconstruction activities<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> UN Dept. for Development Support and management Services/UNDDSMS, "International Colloquium on Post-Conflict Reconstruction Strategies" held at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution", Stadtschlaining, 23-24 June 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The War-Torn Societies Project publishes a newsletter (The Challenge of Peace) appearing every 6 months.

<sup>6</sup> UNDDSMS, "International Colloquium on Post-Conflict Reconstruction Strategies" held at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution", Stadtschlaining, 23-24 June 1995.

<sup>7</sup> cf. OECD. Task Force on Peace, Conflict and Development Co-operation. Draft overview of DAC policy orientations for development co-operation in conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery. DCD/DAC(96)30 and the more comprehensive background document DCD/DAC(96)31.

<sup>8</sup> A draft has been discussed in the Board of Directors in October 1996

- Finally, the European Community has extensively dealt with the issue and published a comprehensive report this year<sup>9</sup>.

### 1.3. Key Lessons Learnt

The following section tries, in the form of commented theses, to draw together a number of key results and "lessons learned". It is based on the international discussions of the last two years<sup>10</sup>, published material and the discussions in the working group<sup>11</sup>.

#### The Character of Current Conflicts

The post-Cold War era has been characterised by the rapid increase in the number of violent conflicts. During the period from August 1994 to July 1995 alone, SIPRI has counted 22 high-intensity conflicts (> 1000 deaths/year), 39 lower-intensity conflicts (> 100 deaths/year) and 39 serious disputes with considerable escalation potential. The vast majority of armed conflicts are intra-state conflicts within developing countries. While conflicts differ widely in type, they share recurrent features such as colonial legacies, problems of state and nation-building, ethnic, cultural or religious tension, systematic human rights abuses, competition over resources. It must also be pointed out that armed factions often derive considerable "war dividends" from a continuation of armed conflict and the maintenance of a particular "war economy". In most cases, the root causes of a conflict are multiple and complex; appropriate understanding of the dynamics of conflict is therefore often lacking.

#### Thesis 1

Analytical efforts to understand the root causes of conflicts, of the factions involved and of the conflict dynamics need to be enhanced. Appropriate understanding of the conflict is a prerequisite for successful preventive and peace-building initiatives.

#### The Conflict Sequence

For analytical purposes, it has been attempted to define a conflict sequence and corresponding modes of external assistance. The transition from acute violent conflict and immediate emergency relief operations through a post-conflict rehabilitation phase towards long-term post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts has been described as a "continuum". This does usually not, however, conform to actual situations which follow no set pattern, chronology or order. Even armistices, peace agreements and formal settlements may not necessarily imply a secure sequence on the way to normality.

<sup>9</sup> Commission de l'Union Européenne. Communication de la Commission au Conseil et au Parlement Européen sur "Les liens entre l'aide d'urgence, la réhabilitation et le développement", Bruxelles, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> The OECD-DAC Task Force on Peace, Conflict and Development has been a very helpful mechanism for exchanging views between OECD members and multilateral institutions.

<sup>11</sup> See bibliography and footnote 13.

Cases where relief, rehabilitation and development activities take place along each other for long periods of time, in regionally different settings and under various agreements, and where fragile periods of suspended violence easily revert to armed fighting are the order of the day.

#### Thesis 2

In many current conflicts, most of them of internal nature, the post-conflict situation is simultaneously a pre-conflict situation, the main task being to prevent the resurgence of violence. Preventive and curative actions thereby become synonymous or simultaneous.

In so far as the term "continuum" implies a linear sequencing of the involvement of different actors and instruments, it is conceptually and operationally misleading. Instead, the "continuum" is a matter of transversal integration rather than of temporal sequencing.

### The Need for Integration

Based on the characterization of current conflicts and of conflict sequences, the main finding of the discussion on peace, conflict and development is the following:

#### Thesis 3

The fundamental challenge to conflict prevention and peace-building in conflict-prone societies lies in the difficulty of integrating different policy instruments - political, military, relief, rehabilitation and development - within a coherent overall strategic framework.

The need for strategic integration of external responses clearly floors the question of the role of development assistance and humanitarian aid within wider foreign policy approaches of bilateral donors. It is also evident that the issues to be addressed go beyond operational or administrative co-ordination or streamlining between development and humanitarian actors.

#### Thesis 4

Seen from an organisational angle, there is a need for a coherent approach at four levels:

- Between humanitarian and development actors (including co-operation with Eastern Europe)
- Between relief/development agencies and the political branches of Foreign Ministries (and possibly other foreign policy actors), both regarding individual countries of operation and the multilateral system.
- Between official actors and the NGOs operating on the scene, often with official funding.
- Between different donor countries, both bi- and multilaterally.

In this sense, the mandate given to the current working group dealing with Task 37.3 of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Guidelines North-South is too limited. A broad view of the problem should include the action lines for the promotion of good

governance (lines 1,3) and the rule of law (line 5), the reduction of military spending (lines 8,9), and the strengthening of conflict prevention and mediation (lines 10, 12).

### **Leadership**

The issue of leadership for integration or even co-ordination of external assistance in a given conflict/crisis cannot be solved once-and-for-all, nor will the political will for integration be given in many cases.

#### **Thesis 5**

Leadership in co-ordinating external assistance in a conflict case is important, though often controversial. It should best be based on the competence, authority and comparative advantages of actors already involved in a given situation.

### **The Impact of Assistance on Conflict**

External assistance, be it humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction or development assistance inevitably affects and is affected by local and international political forces. In all cases, the first consideration must, therefore, be the prevention of negative impact of aid. However, little consideration has been given so far to the impact of aid on the conflict dynamics and on the "war economies/societies" involved. In order for aid to strengthen the "forces of peace", a good understanding of the conflict itself is essential (cf. Thesis 1).

#### **Thesis 6**

In all phases of conflict situation, close monitoring of aid impact on the conflict itself must be maintained. All actors involved should develop "conflict impact assessment" routines.

### **Conflict Conditionality**

From Thesis 3 it follows that the relation between foreign policy on the one hand, and development assistance and humanitarian aid has to be conceptualized more clearly (cf. the need for an integrated strategic framework). Conditionality considerations can, therefore, not be avoided.

#### **Thesis 7**

Development assistance in conflict situations, especially with regard to rehabilitation/reconstruction measures, calls for a judicious formulation of political conditionality, including both negative sanctions and positive incentives.

Conditionality on the basis of progress of certain domains (e.g. respect for human rights) within the war-to-peace transition has been referred to as "conflict conditionality" or "peace conditionality".

## Challenges to Different Actors

It is quite obvious that the experiences and developments since 1989 have seriously challenged the identity of most actors involved. An open discussion is therefore difficult and may sometimes be painful. It must be seen as an ongoing process of redefinition.

### *Development Actors*

#### Thesis 8.1

Development actors need to concert better with foreign policy actors in the domains of early warning, early action, and conflict contingency planning, as well as with regard to conditionality issues.

In order to promote this concertation, appropriate and flexible mechanisms need to be developed between foreign policy and development/relief actors. The experience of a number of countries show that leadership based on comparative advantages in a given case, and horizontal rather than vertical mechanisms have a better scope for success.

#### Thesis 8.2

Development actors need to assess whether in situations of subdued or suspended conflict, co-operation programs sufficiently take into account and possibly act on root causes of conflicts.

#### Thesis 8.3

Development co-operation actors must learn to deal and liaise with "non-traditional" forms and actors of assistance in conflict situations.

Such actions are often of a political nature, they may include:

- Support to regional mechanisms of conflict prevention/mediation
- Support to security functions and systems of justice
- Support to positive measures for mediation, arbitration and reconciliation, also in the media domain.
- Support to human rights monitoring
- Support to the rehabilitation of institutions and of governance (incl. the security and judicial domain)
- Support to the rehabilitation of key infrastructure (roads, power lines etc.)
- Support to the re-integration of combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

### *Humanitarian Actors*

Humanitarian efforts, as any other form of external assistance, cannot be entirely shielded from political factors in conflict situations. Humanitarian actors must be aware of this fact to avoid pitfalls and to successfully harness political forces in support of peace. Although neutrality and unconditionality is a principle in humanitarian efforts, it is difficult to operationalize in complex emergencies. There is currently a debate whether a concept of **even-handedness** may be more useful and pragmatic. Nevertheless, there may be

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certain minimum conditions for the implementation of humanitarian aid (access to victims, absence of outright violence against relief workers, no appropriation of aid resources by armed factions, etc.).

**Thesis 9**

Humanitarian actors must acknowledge that relief operations may have both a positive and a negative impact on the conflict dynamics and on the rehabilitation potential. Appropriate precautions need to be taken to prevent negative effects.

In practice, joint frameworks of engagement, codes of conduct and appropriate staff development have yielded positive results. (guidelines, training).

***Political Actors*****Thesis 10**

Political actors need to be active at two levels. At the diplomatic level, they have to support efforts aiming at resolving a conflict (preventive diplomacy, peace-making, good offices). At the operational level, they have to support efforts aiming at stabilising a crisis situation in the field (contributions to international peace-keeping and peace-building missions as well as active promotion of democracy, human rights and minority rights).

**Thesis 11**

Political actors need to concert better with both development and humanitarian actors. In fact, they will often have to rely on the local level expertise of these actors. It may be useful to seek advice from NGOs.

***Multilateral Action***

Improving integration and co-ordination will, in many conflict cases, happen to a considerable extent within the multilateral system, especially the UN. It is therefore important that bilateral donors develop, on the basis of their discussions on the issue, a multilateral policy which is consistent and taken up in negotiations with the UN and individual UN agencies.

**Thesis 12**

Bilateral donors need a policy on integration of actors in the multilateral domain.

## Chapter 2. Learning from Switzerland's Field Experience

This chapter is dealing with the lessons learnt from our field experience in six countries/regions where Swiss official actors have been involved in one way or the other. The following table outlines the salient features and actors involved in each of the case studies (for explanations see Footnote <sup>12</sup>).

| <u>Country/region</u> | <u>Involvement of Swiss Actors</u>            |     |     | <u>Remarks</u>  |
|-----------------------|---|-----|-----|---|
|                       | <i>Development - Humanitarian - Political</i> |     |     |   |
| Mozambique:           | XXX   | XXX | X   | First priority country (D). Innovative role in the peace process (Demobilization). Field Office plays a key role. |
| Rwanda:               | XXX   | XXX | (↗) | First priority country. From D to H to a possible new D (?).  |
| Cambodia:             | (X)   | X   | --  | H only; multilateral focus. Withdrawal after peace.   |
| Central America:      | XX  | XX  | XX  | H+P for repatriation only. Weak links with D.   |
| Bosnia:               | (↗)   | XXX | XXX | Strong involvement in post-war peace + reconstruction efforts.  |
| Georgia:              | (--)  | XX  | XX  | UN Peace mission entrusted to Senior Swiss Diplomat.<br>H - Multilateral<br>H - Field office                      |

The case studies have been selected in order to represent the full range of intensity of Swiss involvement<sup>13</sup>, from a limited humanitarian assistance through multilateral channels only (Cambodia) to the combined and longer-term application of political, developmental and humanitarian means (Mozambique, Bosnia). This sample shows how the Swiss official actors apprehended the "continuum" reality in the field and at headoffices in Berne.

<sup>12</sup> The signs used in the table have the following meanings: Weak involvement = X; strong involvement = XXX. Involvement could grow in future = ↗. Brackets indicate potential future action.

<sup>13</sup> A full set of the case study papers can be made available on request.

The major conclusions of the group are first presented in terms of **potentials** and **constraints as perceived on the basis of the case studies**. The final section then outlines the key lessons that form the basis for the group's recommendations in chapter 3.

## 2.1. Potentials

### The "continuum" is emerging in practice

The group has found numerous examples where effective linkages between agencies and instruments have been established in a pragmatic manner, despite the fact that there was little or no joint planning and not enough co-ordination during the implementation stages. Although the "continuum" debate was not directly reflected among the field actors at the time, there was a growing awareness of the need for improved complementarity, be it for the better use of scarce resources or for the growing concern about sustainability (development of water supplies in Mozambique; linking energy/environment in Rwanda).

### New initiatives have been deployed flexibly

The examples show that the present institutional set-up allows initiatives to originate from various actors and to eventually gain momentum throughout the system. In the case of Mozambique the development staff of the DDC co-ordination office played a key role in defining the peace process, and particularly the demobilisation program, as a priority issue of our country program. In Georgia, our involvement was triggered by a UN mandate to a senior Swiss diplomat, with the opening of a regional field office for humanitarian affairs being decided at a later stage. Such variety of approaches is seen as a positive feature, showing openness and flexibility. The same can be said with regard to innovations at project and program level.

### Leadership has been pragmatic

The issue of leadership among the Swiss actors was mostly dealt with in a pragmatic manner, letting the actor with the best comparative advantage play the key role, sometimes drawing in the others at a later stage (Mozambique: development activity calls for political and humanitarian involvement; Rwanda: humanitarian aid steps in as a temporary caretaker). Leadership based on continuous field presence can provide for intensive process monitoring and can help to identify key issues, bottlenecks and critical transitions at an early stage. The examples show the particularity of each case and the need to specify the critical path on the spot.

## **Rapid response is possible**

A key element of our comparative advantage is our capacity to respond quickly when the need arises particularly in the field of humanitarian aid. In Mozambique, a strong and attentive field presence made us focus on the peace process and enabled us to play an important role in the shaping and fostering of the demobilisation program, thereby reducing the risks of new violence and helping to build up confidence. By contributing simultaneously to both the local think tank and to the UN-trust fund, our role was further strengthened. In retrospect, it can be said that the bridging of certain gaps was crucial for advancing the peace process. It is important that this capacity to respond quickly will be extended to the development and political actors.

## **2.2. Constraints**

### **The potential of the institutional set-up is not sufficiently utilised**

As the linkages between different instruments of Swiss assistance have been established largely in an unplanned, uncoordinated manner, the synergy potential is tapped to a relatively small extent. The group feels that more impact could be achieved through a determined effort to link the instruments already at the planning stage and to train the staff accordingly (water in Mozambique).

### **The awareness of conflict situations is still limited**

The review of the cases shows that in many instances, the awareness of conflict situations among the actors involved has been rather limited. As a consequence, little creative potential was brought to bear to tackle complex crisis situations. However, a tendency for program reorientation can be observed as a consequence of traumatic experience (Rwanda; Bosnia).

### **Comparative advantage needs to be more clearly defined**

Although the concept is often mentioned as a criteria for the repartition of tasks, comparative advantage is seldom defined in a clear-cut manner and announced as such to the partners concerned. The potential for complementarity is thus weakened, and even more so if one considers the fact that certain advantages are tied to a certain policy environment. They are not just given, but must be developed and shaped to become fully effective.

The examples show that Switzerland can offer a comparative advantage in countries/regions where it has established a certain field presence network and local

expertise and where it has pursued a policy of concentration. In addition, our advantage can be due to our institutional set-up (all the three instruments under the same ministry) and to our procedures, which allow us to respond quickly, with flexibility, combining the necessary resources under a decentralised management. However, more could be done to fully exploit this potential.

### **Prevention is a stepchild**

Much lip service is paid to the need for prevention also in Switzerland. However, with the OSCE region as a notable exception, our involvement in crisis mitigation has started mainly in the period of acute crisis and sometimes stopped early on, e.g. with the return of refugees (as in Cambodia) or even before. While such limited contributions can make sense in the perspective of inter-national burden sharing, leaving the longer-term tasks to others, we must not lose sight of the possibility for preventive action at every stage of the process, and first of all at the political level, where Swiss proactive involvement has been rather weak (cf. Rwanda), except in OSCE missions.

It must be noted that many ongoing activities - developmental, humanitarian or political - have an inherent potential for prevention; they have been launched by the respective agencies in their own way, but could probably have much more impact if applied jointly.

## **2.3 Towards joint strategic thinking**

The absence of a joint policy framework is mentioned as a major weakness in all our case studies. Consultations, where they were held, were focusing on the project level, rather than on the broader concept of crisis management. The need for a common reference is felt at all levels, in the field and at head offices. Thus the time might be ripe for improvements, the actors being convinced of the benefits of better concertation throughout the different stages of a complex emergency.

Some argue that it might be difficult to harmonise the need for joint planning with the need for quick response. A possible answer to this "dilemma" could be that the planners and the emergency managers meet in the field, instead of through lengthy bureaucratic procedures. Recent organisational reforms in various agencies (UNHCR, WFP, ICRC, etc.) point in this direction. The same trend should be encouraged among political actors.

The call for better concertation is often combined with the proposal for the establishment of Special Task Forces to deal with complex emergencies. It is also pointed out that the information systems remain underdeveloped and deserve to be shaped in such a way as to allow for an early translation of reports into political action.

## Chapter 3. Recommendations

The following recommendations aim to achieve optimal links between the different forms of response in the context of armed conflicts and complex emergencies. While distinguishing phases of "pre-conflict", "conflict" and "post-conflict", we bear in mind that characteristic elements of different phases often occur simultaneously, and that post-conflict situations are often marked by high vulnerability and a still highly explosive conflict potential. Therefore, the urgency of preventive measures is becoming a permanent theme throughout all stages of the conflict cycle. Furthermore it has become evident that complex emergencies are highly specific, and that each calls for an equally specific response.

It is understood that a small donor country like Switzerland has to be very selective in choosing regions and countries where it wants to become active be it in pre-conflict, conflict or post-conflict situations. Field presence and local expertise will be key factors in identifying these priorities. Political day-to-day considerations may not lead to a dispersion of scarce resources. Long term commitment and reliability shall be common futures Switzerland's assistance.

### 3.1. General Principles

1. Switzerland shall continue to give high priority to the **common search by the international community for the best response to complex emergencies**, with the ultimate aim of reducing the vulnerability in crisis prone areas/ societies in a sustainable manner. Any type of assistance must be provided in ways that **enhance the coping mechanisms of affected people**. Opinions and proposals of local organisations and affected communities shall be integrated in the setting and programming of activities.
2. In order to provide **effective leadership for concerted international action** in the case of complex emergencies, the **UN-system must be reformed and strengthened**. Switzerland shall participate in such reform efforts, according to its particular status and its comparative advantages. The general tendency of the reform should be to strengthen **horizontal co-ordination**, based on clearly defined and mutually accepted roles.
3. In order to achieve the best possible impact, i.e. timely, efficient, effective, significant and sustainable, the multitude of actors involved must refer to a **joint strategic policy framework** which outlines the complementarity of actions, both simultaneously as in a foreseeable sequence, moving from emergency relief to peace building, and from rehabilitation to reconstruction and development, with prevention as the overall guiding principle. It is only within such a strategic policy framework that combined objectives such as "relief for development" and "development for disaster prevention" can become meaningful.

4. **Comparative advantage** must be the guiding principle for reaching an agreement on who does what in which field and for how long. Partners should assist each other in shaping, enhancing and mutually respecting comparative advantages.
5. **Regional concentration on special areas of high vulnerability** must be considered as one important way of enhancing the comparative advantage of smaller bilateral actors. Concentration would allow for a more effective pooling of resources, more in-depth analysis of local needs and capacities, and consequently, better preparedness for early action.
6. **Switzerland must, in each case, define its own policy framework**, specifying its role in international networks and the complementarity of Swiss actors/instruments. NGOs shall be invited to participate in the elaboration of the policy framework and to select their fields of activities accordingly, in a co-ordinated manner.

### 3.2. Recommendations on Pre-conflict Situations<sup>14</sup>

1. **Switzerland is to define regions of first priority**, characterised by high vulnerability and conflict potential and the importance of bilateral relations. In regions of first priority, a sufficient level of **field presence** through co-ordination offices, embassies, or at project level is to be maintained. Early field presence is often the key to early identification and appropriate response. On this basis, a **Conflict Management Team can be convened** at an early stage (see point 3.3.1. below).
2. **Political analysis must be translated into timely political action**. Capacities for **preventive diplomacy** shall be strengthened both at head office and in the field, through bilateral and multilateral channels, by combining human resources and institutional capacities within the Department of Foreign Affairs. Preventive political action shall, where feasible, be supported by humanitarian and/or development activities.
3. In regions of first priority, SDC shall establish **memoranda of understanding with local partner organisations**, when appropriate, in order to be ready to intervene rapidly and in a co-ordinated manner, making best use of local capacities. **Early identification of needs** shall be combined with **early assessment of local capacities and partner networks**.
4. Development programmes in priority countries must **address root causes of open or potential conflicts**, assess disaster vulnerability and incorporate disaster preparedness into development objectives.
5. **Monitoring** of conflict potential and vulnerability shall become a permanent activity in all priority regions. Monitoring reports shall be reviewed regularly by the country team (see point 3.6.4.) or by a Conflict Management Team (see point 3.3.1.). A

<sup>14</sup> The problem of conflict prevention in general will be addressed by a consecutive working group within the SDC Action Plan for the implementation of the Guidelines North-South. This group is to start work early in 1997.

synthesis of monitoring reports shall be included in annual review and planning documents.

### 3.3. Recommendations on Conflict Situations

1. At the outbreak of an armed conflict, especially in a region defined as a Swiss region of first priority (see Point 3.1.1.), a **Conflict Management Team shall be established on a temporary basis** (or reactivated, with a more specific mandate) comprising all the actors concerned, political, humanitarian and developmental.
2. The Conflict Management Team shall work out **a common policy framework and clarify the roles of its members**. Leadership shall be assigned to the actor offering the best comparative advantage and the respective presence in the field.
3. **NGOs** shall be invited to participate in joint programming and to adopt a code of conduct regarding situations of armed conflict.
4. **Emergency assistance must be need-oriented and even-handed**. It must, however, not be guided by political considerations. Recurrent conflict impact assessment of emergency assistance shall be done at each stage of the conflict.
5. When "non-traditional"<sup>15</sup>, innovative forms of assistance are applied, all the relevant partners shall be consulted during the planning phase.
6. Conditionalities attached to development activities shall be discussed with political and humanitarian actors before decided.

### 3.4. Recommendations on Post-Conflict Situations

1. **Humanitarian aid and political support for rehabilitation and reconstruction have an important role to play during the consolidation period**. Its length of duration shall be determined on the basis of agreed objectives and comparative advantages, taking into account the specificity of the local situation.
2. Both humanitarian and development activities **shall promote the empowerment of people and governance systems** through greater efforts in local and national capacity building. Projects should concentrate on people at risk and vulnerable groups, enabling them to reduce vulnerability and regain coping capacities.
3. **Relief activities shall be phased out as early as possible** in order to mark the transition from emergency management to a longer-term perspective and to avoid any disincentive with regard to local responsibility.

<sup>15</sup> Strengthening governance, justice and security, human rights monitoring, support of mediation process, etc.

4. The withdrawal of relief aid **shall not cause any interruption or weakening in the process of peace consolidation**. It must be communicated well in advance to all the partners concerned.
5. Humanitarian and development activities shall be linked to **human rights monitoring**.
6. **Political and development activities in the field of peace building** should be undertaken in close consultation between the political and development actors involved.
7. The **Conflict Management Team** established in pre-conflict or conflict periods shall remain active throughout the post-conflict period and review the monitoring reports of all the actors involved.

### 3.5. Recommendations on Staff Development

1. **Staff development must respond to the new challenges of complex emergencies**, from early identification and assessment up to the consolidation period. Cadres at head office and in the field shall be capable to conceptualise and manage the interplay of various instruments/actors through different stages.
2. The **policy of staff rotation**, between divisions at head office, as well as between head office and field level, shall be emphasised to give particular attention to the needs of complex emergencies.
3. The **policy of staff secondment to multilateral partners** shall be further developed and strengthened, including humanitarian, peace and development organisations.
4. **Special training efforts** will be required to enhance the sensitivity of our staff on "continuum"-issues; improvements shall be sought in both directions, "relief for development" and "development for disaster prevention". **Meetings and seminars** shall be organised jointly with partner organisations in complex emergencies. The programmes should be interdisciplinary and focus on the complementarity of specific tasks and on network performance.

### 3.6. Recommendations on Institutional Development

1. It is the general feeling of our working group that **the present institutional set-up is offering a positive framework** for improving our combined response to complex emergencies along the lines stipulated in the above recommendations. It is therefore recommended in cases of crisis that further improvements be sought in a pragmatic way by fully exploiting the existing channels of consultation and co-ordination.

2. When co-ordination at inter-departmental level is required, **the Commission for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid (CICDA)** is providing an appropriate forum. It is recommended that this commission be activated at an early stage of a complex emergency, in order to set the general framework for the combined efforts of all the Swiss actors involved.
3. At the level of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the creation of a **Conflict Management Team** for each priority area is recommended as the best measure for assuring coherence and synergy while respecting the specificities of each actor.
4. In SDC priority countries a **permanent country team** with clearly defined leadership shall be established comprising all the actors involved. The country team shall monitor the complementarity of the Swiss instruments and suggest further improvements.
5. Demands for the reallocations of budget resources shall also be dealt with in a pragmatic manner, as the need arises, considering case by case in the light of special circumstances and comparative advantages.

### **3.7. Recommendations on Information Flow**

1. The flow of information among all official actors must be intensified and accelerated. Again, the best way of achieving this objective is seen through the functioning of a **Conflict Management Team** that would at the same time activate the demand for better information and monitor the response.

In areas of high vulnerability, **data banks and information and research networks** shall be established at the international level in a preventive manner, thereby improving capacities for early warning and analysis.

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