Post Conflict Reconstruction

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While conflict is ongoing, the provision of humanitarian assistance—basic food, shelter and medical services—is a priority for both national and international actors. The signing of a peace agreement or other event that marks the official end of war signals the beginning of post conflict reconstruction. Large bilateral or multilateral agencies arrive to work with national governments, and to manage and disburse most funds for social and economic reconstruction. This transition from war to peace is not smooth. More often than not "emergency relief, rehabilitation work and development assistance co-exist…and interact."[1]   When peace agreements hold and military violence subsides, the focus of aid shifts from emergency relief to long-term social and economic development.

Among international donors, there is widespread understanding that social and economic reconstruction in the immediate post conflict phase—often known as the transition phase—is not only a key to preventing a recurrence of conflict, but is also a critical step toward long-term development.   In 2002 a consortium of international actors, including **the Center for Strategic and International Studies,** published the Post Conflict Reconstruction Framework.[2]   The Framework identifies three phases of activity between the "cessation of violent conflict and the return to normalisation."[3] While overlapping and not always consistent, the phases (noted below) are helpful in identifying priorities and understanding the continuum from war to peace.

1. The **initial response** comes immediately after the end of widespread violence and is characterised by the provision of emergency humanitarian services, stability and military interventions to provide basic security. Internationally such responses also include the deployment of peacekeepers (See chapter on peace support operations).

2. The **transformation** or **transition** phase is a period in which legitimate local capacities emerge and should be supported, with particular attention needed for restarting the economy, including physical reconstruction, ensuring functional structures for governance and judicial

processes and laying the foundations for the provision of basic social welfare such as education and health care.

3. The **final phase** or the period for **fostering sustainability** is a time when recovery efforts should be consolidated to help prevent the resurgence of conflict. Military actors—particularly international peacekeepers—withdraw and society begins to "normalise" during this phase.

The critical role of local populations in post conflict reconstruction is often overshadowed by the arrival of major international actors, but there is acknowledgment that ultimately effective and sustainable reconstruction is largely determined by the commitment and capacities of local populations, including national government and civil society, to maintain the process. Increasingly, international actors are reaching out to local organisations in partnership for reconstruction efforts. Yet, often women and grassroots groups at the front lines of recovery are marginalised and excluded. This chapter, although not definitive, offers an overview of the policies and practices of the international community as they engage in post conflict reconstruction. Broadly speaking, this includes addressing security, governance and justice issues as well as economic development and social well-being. However, as other chapters of this Toolkit are dedicated to many of these issues, this chapter

focuses on economic regeneration. It highlights the impact of policies and programmes on women, the challenges and opportunities they encounter in establishing social and economic reforms that meet their needs and the ways in which women's organisations have overcome these problems.

1. WHAT IS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION?

The social and economic dimensions of reconstruction include re-establishing the functional components of society, including:

- restoring **internal security**, including the reintegration of uprooted populations, and disarming, demobilising and reintegrating former combatants (see related chapters);

- building administrative and **governance capacities** (see chapter on governance);

- repairing **physical infrastructure**, including building homes, roads and bridges; restoring water, electricity and fuel supplies; repairing schools, markets and hospitals; recruiting personnel; and providing the training necessary for operations and maintenance;

- establishing functioning **financial infrastructures and economic restructuring**. This includes creating a credible banking and financial system; fiscal planning and budgets; restoring an economic base drawing on traditional agricultural or pastoral production and existing industries; and creating an environment conducive to generating new sources of income and economic growth. It also includes the provision of loans and grants to businesses or new ventures, skills training, development of new industries and commerce and eliminating criminality and the control of armed actors over important sectors of the economy;

- establishing a credible and functioning **judicial system,** including processes for drafting legislation, reforming courts and judicial processes, recruiting personnel, providing training and initiating a national legal literacy program (see chapters on transitional justice and human rights); and

- ensuring **social well-being**, including the health care needs of the population, (e.g. food security, providing basic social services and rebuilding education systems).

Clearly these issues are not unique to post conflict settings, but the phase of conflict can determine the primary actors, the type of assistance most needed and what can be provided.

2. WHO AND WHAT IS INVOLVED IN POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION?

Societies emerging from conflict have become a growing concern for many international donors. There is awareness that while war has ended, peace, especially sustainable peace, is not so easily forthcoming. Dire poverty, ongoing ethnic, political or religious rivalry, the proliferation of arms, non-existent governments and infrastructure all pose tremendous threats that can easily lead a country back into war. Simultaneously and despite the overwhelming challenges, the post conflict period is also a period of hope and opportunity. Coming after years or even decades of fighting, it is a time—albeit brief—when financial and technical resources are available to help address the root causes of war and shape the future of a nation.

At the international level, there is acknowledgement that in many cases, "winning the peace" poses a bigger challenge than winning the war and that nation-building is a complex and long-term process. There is also understanding that no single institution can address every issue.

THE ACTORS

Many of the key actors involved in post conflict reconstruction are listed below. Although in the majority of cases, as noted, they have specific policies on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women, these policies often are not effectively implemented at the field level.

1. **The World Bank Group** comprises five institutions and is owned by governments of 184 member nations. The US is the largest shareholder, holding just over 16 percent of the votes. It includes:[4]

- the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, which focuses on poverty reduction through loans, guarantees and advisory services to middle-income credit-worthy countries;

- the **International Development Association (IDA)**, which provides interest-free loans to the world's 81 poorest nations;

- the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, which promotes economic development by supporting the private sector;

- the **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency**, which encourages foreign investment in poor countries by providing guarantees against non-commercial losses (e.g. as a result of war); and

- the **International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)**, which encourages foreign investment by providing arbitration and mediation services in case of disputes.

The World Bank specifically refers to the IBRD and the IDA. The **country director** leads its offices in each country and has primary responsibility for developing a **Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)**. The CAS is a 3-year plan that defines the priority areas for investments, technical assistance and activity for the Bank.

Since the 1990s, the World Bank has become increasingly involved in post conflict aid activities. Between 1980 and 1998 the Bank's lending to post conflict countries increased by 800 percent, which represented 16 percent of the Bank's total lending activity that year. More recent figures indicate that World Bank assistance to post conflict countries amounts to some 25 percent of its lending; in 2003 that amounted to $18.5 billion.[5]   In part this increase is due to the surge in conflicts immediately after the end of the Cold War and thus to an increase in the number of countries that could be categorised as "post conflict" in subsequent years. But it is also due to increased involvement by the Bank in such situations. The Bank is also increasingly providing aid in grant form rather than as loans to post conflict countries.

The Bank also has a **Post Conflict Fund** (PCF) that gives grants for social and physical reconstruction.

It is administered by the **Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit**. In 2003 alone, $13 million was disbursed through the Fund. The Fund accepts applications from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups in conflict regions, but uses World Bank country offices to assess the viability of requests. The country offices must endorse and recommend applicants to the PCF.

The World Bank's policies on gender equality state:

- Persistent gender disparities hamper economic efficiency and growth; and

- Public policy can make a difference in closing the gender gap.

The Bank's gender policy aims to reduce gender disparities and enhance women's participation in the economic development of member countries. To this end, the Bank—through its analytical work, policy advice, and lending programmes—assists member countries to:

- review and modify, as necessary, the legal and regulatory framework;

- strengthen the database for gender analysis;

- obtain necessary financing to support these policies and programs; and

- design gender-sensitive policies and programmes by:

  - identifying barriers women face;

  - assessing the costs and benefits of strategies to address these barriers;

  - ensuring effective programme implementation; and

  - establishing effective gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation systems.

To analyse gender issues in each country, the Bank uses country poverty and gender assessments, public expenditure reviews, other economic work, and in-country dialogue. The analysis is meant to be incorporated into the country assistance strategy and reflected in the lending programme.[6]

2. Region-Specific **Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)** are institutions that provide financial assistance and professional advice to countries

for economic and social development regionally. The term MDB is used to refer to the World Bank Group and four regional banks:

- the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** focuses on development in Africa;

- the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** focuses on poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific;

- the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** invests in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and a number of states of the former Soviet Union; and

- the **Inter-American Development Bank Group (IADB)** finances development efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. **The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Relief (OCHA)** is the **United Nations (UN)** focal point for responding to complex emergencies and natural disasters. OCHA has a mandate to coordinate humanitarian responses, develop policies and undertake advocacy. OCHA coordinates its work through the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** that includes many of the UN's key agencies with humanitarian NGOs and the **International Committee of the Red Cross** movement. OCHA is not involved in day-to-day operations, but it does coordinate:

- the development of a common strategy for humanitarian aid among its partners on the ground;

- situation and needs assessments—in a crisis, OCHA's job "is to 1) identify overall humanitarian needs; 2) develop a realistic plan of action …that avoids duplication; and 3) monitor progress and adjust programmes accordingly;"[7]

- networking and meetings among key actors so that experiences and information are shared and there is increased transparency and accountability among actors;

- mobilising resources—particularly through the Consolidated Appeals Process, which identifies priorities for funding and is a cost-effective means of reaching major donors;

- addressing problems in the midst of crisis. When other agencies or NGOs do not have a mandate, OCHA takes the lead in resolving problems (e.g. negotiating with warring parties to provide humanitarian aid to civilians); and

- the use of tools and mechanisms to improve coordination among agencies. For example, OCHA is responsible for "early warning analysis" to track potential humanitarian crises. It uses a methodology based on early warning indicators to identify potential crises, resurgence of conflict, or deterioration of situations (see chapter on conflict prevention).[8]

4. **The UN Development Programme (UNDP)** is the prime UN agency addressing development issues, particularly focusing on democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, sustainable energy and environment and HIV/AIDS. Given UNDP's presence in countries often before, during and after crises and conflicts, the agency's **Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery** has become a lead actor in post conflict transition states. Its goal is to coordinate UN efforts on the ground and it plays a leading role in UN missions that help determine the priorities for the social and economic reconstruction of a country. UNDP is also a member of the IASC (see above).

Traditionally, UNDP has focused most of its work on partnership with national or governmental entities, but it is also a prime partner and donor to civil society organisations, including national NGOs and local community-based organisations. In **Nepal**, UNDP established a $2.6 million trust fund, financed by external donors, to strengthen civil society organisations in their efforts to rebuild societies affected by violence.[9]

UNDP offices worldwide are led by **Resident Representatives (Res Reps)**, who are responsible for consulting with UN agencies and international actors, and working collaboratively with national government and civil society actors, in identifying development priorities and initiating, implementing and evaluating in-country programmes. UNDP is the leader in formulating the **UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)** for any country. Typically this lays out policy and programme priorities for a five-year period.

UNDP's policies on gender state that:

"Making gender equality a reality is a core commitment of UNDP. As a crosscutting issue, gender must be addressed in everything the organisation does. Why? Because equality between women and men is just, fair and right—it is a worthy goal in and of itself, one that lies at the heart of human development and human rights. And because gender inequality is an obstacle to progress, a roadblock on the path of human development. When development is not 'en-gendered' it is 'en-dangered'…. There are two complementary approaches to achieving gender equality: mainstreaming gender and promoting women's empowerment. Both are critical."[10]

5. **The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** works in partnership with other UN agencies, governments and civil society, providing technical and financial assistance to promote women's rights, capacities and opportunities globally. Its primary areas of focus are:

   • strengthening women's economic rights and empowerment;

   • engendering governance and peacebuilding; and

   • promoting women's human rights.

   In the context of conflict-affected countries, UNIFEM supports women's participation in peace processes and reconstruction by providing leadership training and capacity building, facilitating contact with the international community, supporting indigenous women's peace activism and advocacy and initiating conflict early warning and prevention projects. UNIFEM has fifteen regional and sub-regional offices.

6. **UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** has expanded its policies and range of expertise to match demands in a variety of areas as peacekeeping operations expand beyond military-style enforcement and into peace support efforts and even state-building. On the question of gender, since the passing of Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, new initiatives have been launched, including appointing full-time gender offices and advisers in missions, making efforts to integrate

gender perspectives in the disarmament and reintegration of fighters, promoting gender balance in local police forces, providing training on issues relating to domestic violence and trafficking, developing "quick impact" projects based on their differential impact on women and men and supporting the inclusion of gender-sensitive election laws and processes.

In its own organisational context, and particularly with regard to the recruitment of peacekeepers, DPKO recognises that "pursuing gender balance has the potential for greatly increasing the pool of talent. Further, gender mainstreaming can increase the understanding of a complex situation. It may lead to new assumptions and definitions. It may suggest different approaches to a desired end and it may reveal overlooked resources and talents."[11] It also states "the need to increase the participation of women in all aspects of peace operations and at all levels, particularly at the highest levels of decision-making, remains a priority concern."[12] However, the department places the onus for the recruitment of women on member states, noting, "the Secretary-General has called on Member States to increase the recruitment of women as military observers, peacekeeping troops and civilian police."[13]

7. **Other Agencies of the UN Family** are also involved in post conflict social and economic recovery efforts. The **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, which specialises in labour rights and the promotion of social justice and human rights, is a key actor in addressing economic and employment issues in post war countries. Working with governments, civil society and labour organisations, it provides technical assistance to improve employment opportunities and to ensure the provision of social protection for workers. The **World Food Programme (WFP)** is the leading UN agency in providing food and fighting hunger in crises and emergency situations, including conflict. It has a strong commitment to working with women, recognising that women are the "first and fastest route to reducing poverty and hunger."[14] The **Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)** is the lead agency in ensuring food security and assisting nations in their efforts to improve nutritional standards and agricultural production.

The mandate of the **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)** is the protection of children. In war-torn countries, UNICEF is actively involved in the reintegration of child soldiers, restoring schools and providing education (see chapter on children's security).

In principle, there is a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment across the UN system, with many institutions deriving their policies based on recommendations made in the **1995 Beijing Platform for Action**. In addition, there is a system-wide commitment to realising the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, which include gender equality and women's empowerment (see text box). In practice, more progress is still needed to achieve equality.

The Millennium Development Goals[15]

In September 2000, following extensive consultations globally, the member states of the UN gathered in New York to embrace and endorse eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

According to the **World Bank**, the MDGs commit the international community to an expanded vision of development, one that vigorously promotes human development as the key to sustaining social and economic progress in all countries, and recognises the importance of creating a global partnership for development. The goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.

The eight goals are to:

• eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;

• achieve universal primary education;

• promote gender equality and empower women;

• reduce child mortality;

• improve maternal health;

• combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;

• ensure environmental sustainability; and

• develop a global partnership for development.

Reaching these goals has become a primary objective of most bilateral and multilateral development and aid agencies. Many of the countries furthest from achieving the MDGs are those affected by conflict.

The introduction of MDGs has made it possible to restructure the relationship among donors and between donors, recipient governments and civil society. The mechanism for this is the **Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)** process. The PRS process is meant to be participatory, involving government, financial institutions and civil society agreeing on the priorities for poverty reduction. Civil society organisations that have monitored the PRS process so far have identified two main problems:

1. Participation has been far less than desired and the participation of women has been particularly poor in many cases. Women's organisations complained that they had often not been informed about the process and that when they were able to participate their concerns were not heard. The result is that gender issues have not been mainstreamed into the PRS process effectively.

2. The funding plan that results from the process (in the form of **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers**) is binding and restrictive. In effect, civil society has been invited into the world of development finance decision-making, but it has also been told that once decisions are made, only projects and organisations that conform to the agreed strategies will be able to access funding.

8. **The Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD)** also plays an influential role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is comprised of 30 member states committed to democratic government and the market economy. The organisation works with over 70 countries, NGOs and civil society. It produces internationally agreed-upon instruments, recommendations and decisions to "promote rules of the game in areas where multilateral agreement is necessary for individual countries to make progress in a globalised economy."[16] The OECD's activities include research and publication and collation and analysis of statistics on issues ranging from development assistance to education and science. The organisation is divided into a series of thematic departments, directorates and other bodies. Issues relating to cooperation with developing countries come under the auspices of the Development Cooperation Directorate that supports the work of the **Development Assistance Committee (DAC).** DAC's 23 members[17] are all major donors that are "expected to have certain common objectives concerning the conduct of their aid programmes. To this end, guidelines are prepared for development practitioners in capitals and in the field."[18]

In 1997 DAC issued its *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century,* which set a new standard in international aid to conflict-affected states. In 2004, *Guidelines on Helping to Prevent Conflict* was published as a supplement to the 1997 work. Among the key principles noted to the development community are that they should:

• actively engage women, men and youth in peacebuilding and policy-making processes. All actors need to take better account of the pervasive linkages between gender differences and violent conflicts and their prevention and resolution;

• reinforce local capacities to influence public policy and tackle social and political exclusion.[19]

The OECD/DAC position on gender in development is that "progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment is vital for improving economic, social and political conditions in developing countries. The knowledge, insight and experience of both women and men are required if development is to be effective, sustainable and truly people-centred. Gender equality requires specific measures at the macro, meso and micro levels in order to propel gender-responsive actions into development work."[20]

DAC's work on gender equality is led by **Gendernet**, an international forum of gender experts from bilateral and multilateral agencies to share experience and develop common policies and approaches. Gendernet publishes studies, guidelines, fact sheets and other material relating to gender and development broadly, including gender and conflict issues. It also conducts thematic workshops with experts from within the UN system, civil society, and governments.[21]

The documents, particularly the guidelines emerging from DAC, reflect a common set of policies and standards that DAC members must adhere to when they are involved in providing development assistance in any venue. NGOs and others advocating for gender equality in post conflict social and economic reconstruction can therefore use the guidelines to monitor and hold DAC members accountable to their commitments.

9. **Bilateral Donors**—including the United States (US), Canada, Sweden, members of the European Union (EU), Japan and many other states—provide funds through the UN and World Bank, and directly to national governments, international and national NGOs and private companies and subcontractors for reconstruction work. The level and nature of their support varies according to their history, interest and involvement with the country. In many instances, these agencies have created specialised offices to address the different phases and dimensions of conflict and post conflict recovery. The **US Agency for International Development (USAID)** primarily supports long-term development efforts in poor countries and is a major actor in the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to war-torn countries and regions

suffering from natural disasters. It has a mandate to set "aside funds for small businesses and women-owned businesses." However, its **Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)** is dedicated to working in conflict prone or "immediate post conflict transition" areas, with a goal of providing flexible, short-term aid that helps bridge humanitarian assistance with long-term USAID development efforts. Similarly the primary goal of the **Department for International Development (DfID)** in the United Kingdom is to reduce poverty globally. Its **Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department** focuses on conflict-related issues.

As evident below, many bilateral agencies have clear policies on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in their operational efforts.

Canadian International Department Agency (CIDA): "Attention to gender equality is essential to sound development practice and at the heart of economic and social progress. Development results cannot be maximised and sustained without explicit attention to the different needs and interests of women and men. If the realities and voices of half of the population are not fully recognised, CIDA's objectives to 'reduce poverty and to contribute to amore secure, equitable, and prosperous world' will not be met."[22]

DfID: "There is a growing and compelling body of evidence that shows that not only do women bear the brunt of poverty, but also that women's empowerment is a central precondition for its elimination. Women's equality is an absolute necessity if the blight of poverty is to be removed and the nations of the world are to create a secure, sustainable, and prosperous future…. The struggle for gender equality is a key instrument for lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Beyond this, it is also a central element of the wider struggle of human rights for all."[23]

EU: "Gender equality is crucial for development in general and the link between gender and poverty has made the relevance of gender mainstreaming in development cooperation more critical than ever before…Investments in improving the situation of women (providing education, improving health and securing their land and labour rights) translate into higher levels of productivity and lower levels of infant and female mortality, food insecurity and poverty."[24]

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA): "Aiming for women's empowerment and gender equality in all aspects of development assistance is now seen as an imperative…. Realising women's empowerment and gender equality does not mean only increasing the number of women-targeted projects, but also integrating the gender perspective in all the assistance which JICA implements."[25]

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency: "The focus on equality between women and men within Swedish development cooperation is based on two important premises: Firstly, the long standing conviction that equality is *a matter of human rights;* and secondly the increasing recognition that equality—equal rights, opportunities and obligations for women and men—is a precondition for effective and sustainable people-centred development."[26]

USAID: "USAID has a special interest in the advancement of women worldwide. Women's health, education, economic opportunity and human rights are at the core of successful, stable societies and economic growth. One of the fundamental principles of the new Department of State/USAID strategic plan is that 'all citizens, men and women, are vital to meeting the critical challenges of today and reaching the goals of equality, peace and security'."[27]

10. **International NGOs** undertake a wide variety of activities in the post conflict reconstruction phase. On the ground, distinctions between "relief," "development," and "reconstruction" are not easy to make. In the same way, the distinction between "conflict" and "post conflict" phases can be artificial in practice. There are countless NGOs working internationally, regionally and nationally on post war social and economic reconstruction. For most, the range of activities they undertake must be determined by the specific context and their institutional expertise. As an example of the range of projects undertaken by international

NGOs in post conflict reconstruction, CARE/USA's programme in **Guatemala** includes projects in civil society development, village banks, education, mother and child health, democratisation, disaster protection, women's development, HIV/AIDS work with young people, as well as water and sanitation.[28] There are also international NGOs that focus on women's empowerment and gender equality. The US-headquartered NGO Women for Women International supports job training and income-generating projects for women in war-torn countries. Kvinna til Kvinna, a Swedish NGO, has been actively supporting women's empowerment in a variety of post conflict countries, particularly in **Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

International interventions may be direct (i.e. international agencies may themselves provide health services, reunite abducted children with their families or operate agricultural schemes) or they may be carried out through local partners. Where security cannot be guaranteed, such as **Iraq** in 2003–04 or **Afghanistan** in 2001–04, international agencies often feel obliged to withdraw their staff, while continuing to support their local partners financially and through training and joint planning. This enables the international agency to follow the situation on the ground, while carrying out international lobbying and solidarity work on behalf of their partners. This form of indirect support is also beneficial for strengthening local capacities and ownership of projects. It is also good practice for international actors to help establish systems and strategies through partnership, rather than being directly operational.

11. **National Actors** play a pivotal role in negotiating funding from the international community and setting its priorities. The main preoccupations of the state in the immediate post conflict period are likely to be military security, reconciliation, establishing political structures and integrating previously conflicting parties into national machineries. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo,** the transitional government, established in 2003, incorporated five warring parties into the government by allocating to each a vice-presidential post, integrating rebel forces into the national army and preparing the country for

elections after two years. In **Uganda,** an education program (including building schools and training teachers) was created through the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme as a means of countering years of neglect that had ultimately led to the drain of young men away from school and into rebel forces.

Civil society organisations are also pivotal and often have greater capacities than state entities in the immediate aftermath of conflict. But the post conflict period does create new challenges for their relations with the state and international donors. In many war-torn countries, civil society is strong. It is the key provider of services and a major recipient of international assistance. However, in the immediate post conflict period, the focus of international donors tends to shift in support of strengthening the state's capacity to assert control and maintain authority. This can mean a direct diversion of funds from civil society to government and a marginalisation of civil society from the political arena at a time when its capacities and expertise are most needed.

12. **For-Profit Contractors,** such as major engineering and construction companies, often have a strong presence in post conflict countries, opening offices, hiring local staff and further subcontracting aspects of work to locally owned businesses. Although bilateral or multilateral development agencies have overall responsibility for reconstruction projects, the actual work is very often subcontracted to private businesses or contractors. Smaller contracting companies with expertise in specific issues such as health care and education are also present. They too offer job opportunities and collaboration with local businesses and NGOs. In many cases contractors have a specific mandate regarding the hiring of women or the support of women-run businesses and organisations.

THE PROCESS: DEFINING PRIORITIES AND ALLOCATING RESOURCES

As soon as an internationally-accepted peace agreement is signed (i.e. there is a political framework for peace) many key agencies conduct in-country **needs assessments**. The level of coordination

varies across and between institutions, but there is cooperation between UN agencies, the World Bank, and often representatives from other multilateral development banks. In **Afghanistan** in 2002, although there was no formal peace agreement between warring factions, post conflict reconstruction planning did take place. Representatives from the Asian Development Bank were members of the teams sent to the country.

The needs assessment process has not been systematic across institutions or countries and new efforts are under way to create frameworks that help international staff conduct assessments. In the UN system, following the preliminary needs assessment, UN agencies mandated with development work conduct a **Common Country Assessment (CCA)**. "The CCA is a country-based process for reviewing and analysing the national development situation and identifying key issues as a basis for advocacy, policy dialogue, and preparation for the **UNDAF**," the UN's five-year development assistance plan.[29] Donors such as USAID or DfID also conduct needs assessments and have criteria that help determine their engagement in a country.

These assessments often help determine the broad agenda and issues for discussion at international donor conferences, at which major bilateral donors pledge funds to support reconstruction based on the priorities identified in needs assessments, as well as other information, including their own mandates and issues of concern. In many cases a "**multi-donor trust fund**" is created, from which funds are then allocated to international and national actors for reconstruction efforts. The World Bank administers the fund either alone or in conjunction with other international institutions.

From the standpoint of local civil society activists, particularly women, a key goal must be to ensure consultation with the international teams so that they integrate gendered perspectives in their needs assessments, priorities and interactions with donors.

THE LESSONS AND CHALLENGES
In the aftermath of conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, and East Timor, the international community—including major donor countries, the UN system, the World Bank system and the NGO sector—has gained significant experience in post conflict reconstruction. There is growing appreciation of the need to adapt and address the requirements of each country specifically. But at the same time, there is increasing understanding that for international aid to be effective, it must be coordinated and timely—with a common acceptance of priorities.

As previously stated, post conflict reconstruction aid is a unique form of development assistance with two key objectives:[30]

• addressing short-term needs, including humanitarian assistance, relief and other forms of post-emergency assistance; and

• repairing (or creating) the infrastructure, physical and institutional, needed to support long-term economic development.

These goals are not incompatible. Inevitably, in many cases, however, finding a balance between the short- and long-term issues and developing an effective transition process is a challenge. In most cases short-term aid is provided that helps address acute humanitarian issues such as lack of food; but international attention is typically too short, so pledges made for longer-term aid are often not realised. Moreover, studies indicate that in the first few years after war, states have little capacity to absorb funds, but this changes radically in the medium term. Clearly there is no "one size fits all" approach to post conflict reconstruction, but major international institutions do have similar approaches to defining priorities and setting strategies.

The international community is constantly trying to improve coordination and collaboration with national governments, but inevitably there is overlap, fragmentation and gaps that are not addressed. Furthermore, despite the publicity around donors' meetings, the pledges that are made are rarely fulfilled in their entirety. Oftentimes donor countries "double-count" their support by including pre-existing contributions to the country with their "new" pledges, or including their normal funding of UN agencies as part of their pledge. In many instances, the funds are not disbursed, or they are spent on short-term needs. In **Afghanistan**, between January 2002 and March 2003, donors pledged $2.1 billion for reconstruction;

however, only 27 percent ($499 million) was spent on major projects. The remainder was spent on immediate humanitarian relief.[31]

Several key lessons can be drawn from past experiences:

• Before international assistance is provided, it is essential to have a political mandate or framework for reconstruction that is rooted in the resolution of the conflict and is accepted nationally and internationally.

• National governments in conflict countries need to be supported with the provision of a comprehensive budget that is public and transparent. Transparency and accountability are essential at the start of this process.

• Reconstruction programs must be developed in partnership with other donors, the national government and the people of the country and they must match the nation's aspirations.

• International actors should coordinate their efforts as much as possible (e.g. pooling resources in a common trust fund administered by a combination of national government, civil society and international representatives can be a means of reducing fragmentation and duplication). NGOs should also have access to the fund.

3. HOW DOES POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AFFECT WOMEN?

The substantial financial support, technical assistance and attention given to countries immediately post conflict are driven by a commitment to bring about major economic, and political changes that strengthen the prospects for peace. This support could and should also address historical causes for discrimination against particular sectors, including women.

The funds that pour in, the programmes and projects that are developed and the major choices that are made, from prioritising for national reconstruction to decisions relating to rebuilding schools, roads and hospitals, or providing energy, all affect women directly. If women are absent from the decision-making process and if gender perspectives are not integrated in the assessments, planning and implementation—then there is a strong likelihood that women's needs are neglected and their capacities are overlooked. Countries emerging from war, where women often make up the majority of the population, cannot afford to ignore and marginalise their needs and skills.

Women need to be involved in discussions about reconstruction priorities in order to ensure that their voices and those of other habitually marginalised groups are heard in the planning of investments and implementation of projects. They should work with national governments and international actors to ensure that women's skills are developed, pay special attention to technical education and training in new technologies and advocate for the employment of women in major reconstruction efforts. Girls' education at primary and secondary levels must be supported and programmes initiated to enable children that missed schooling to return to their education. In places where girls were targeted during war and where many have their own children, childcare facilities and other incentives (e.g. meals, health care) should be given to enable their attendance in school.

Women's organisations can take a direct role in reconstruction efforts by bidding for contracts on physical and social reconstruction projects, as well as supporting micro-finance projects that are often targeted to women. This will benefit their members and provide the organisations themselves with the experience of interacting in a business environment, as well as ensuring that the funds reach a broad range of beneficiaries.

CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN

In areas of intense conflict and war, as state services and traditional support networks collapse, local and international NGOs take on the responsibility of caring for the vulnerable sectors of the population. Women in particular take the lead in caring for orphans, the sick and the elderly and in providing psychosocial support to the bereaved and traumatised. They also seek out economic opportunities—often under unfamiliar and insecure conditions to maintain basic levels of food, water and shelter. While the burdens are heavy, these tasks and responsibilities enhance women's skills and capacities and often mean that women are uniquely placed to engage in the reconstruction effort.

Despite this, women face an uphill struggle in accessing and benefiting from post conflict aid. On the one hand, they face constraints in their own often male-dominated societies. On the other hand, they face resistance or disinterest from international actors who control major resources, but have limited capacity, willingness or understanding to consult with women and ensure effective gender mainstreaming. The constraints on women's participation are many:[32]

- Women are under-represented at decision-making levels in institutions such as ministries, local councils and international NGOs that control the most important resources.

- The localised and informal nature of many women's organisations in addition to their lack of contacts makes it difficult for women to access the funds and programmes that are developed by major international actors.

- Social sector budgets, where women are most likely to find jobs, tend to be the first to experience reduction when the economy is tight and women may be excluded through discrimination in education, training and employment practices.

- Returning male soldiers or male heads of households may compete with women for employment and control of economic resources, with women often being pushed "back to the kitchen" at the end of a war.

- In agricultural communities, women may be unable to maintain their farms because of displacement, inadequate family labour, or destruction of equipment and seeds.

- Ownership and inheritance laws that uphold rights of ownership in male family heads only, may exclude women from access to or control over credit, land and other means of production, even when the male head is absent.

- Many women who are unable to access land, or offer their labour to other farmers for wages that are small and unreliable.

- Women push against accepted norms of behaviour when they engage in illegal or socially unacceptable activities such as bar work, beer brewing or prostitution for economic survival, which may result in stigmatisation and abuse.[33]

- Women may feel unable to accept formal employment because of child care and other domestic commitments.[34]

- The sheer volume of work needed to sustain a family in reduced economic circumstances may strain women's health.

- Violence against women continues after the war in their homes. This seriously impacts their ability to participate in the public and economic spheres.

4. HOW ARE WOMEN OVERCOMING CHALLENGES?

Women's organisations can play a fundamental role in assisting women to overcome the constraints and challenges they face in attempting to access and benefit from reconstruction aid.

SHAPING PRIORITIES AND HAVING A VOICE AT DONORS' MEETINGS

Women's organisations can contact major international actors such as the World Bank and UNDP to offer information about the situation of women in their country, advocate for increased gender perspectives in their work, assist in the needs assessment process to ensure that gender issues are fully integrated and initiate consultations to define priorities and ensure that women's needs are considered.

Women's groups can also lobby for inclusion and representation at major donors' meetings. For **Afghanistan**, prior to the January 2002 international donors' meeting in Tokyo, Japan, advocacy efforts by women's rights activists from Afghanistan and elsewhere, supported by UNIFEM, led to a meeting of Afghan women's groups with donors in Europe. In Tokyo, women's rights advocates acting through the Working Group on the Rights of Afghan Women submitted a number of proposals to donors, including recommendations that aid should be conditional on the participation of women in decision-making in reconstruction; that the gendered impact of interventions be assessed; that women be the beneficiaries of 50 percent of the economic aid provided; that the Ministry of Women's Affairs be adequately resourced; and that NGOs be funded.[36]

Conflict and the Feminisation of Poverty[35]

Violent conflict is often said to be a trigger for the "**feminisation of poverty**," meaning that women are increasingly found among the ranks of the poor. This happens partly because of the increasing proportion of households headed by, and dependent on, women (usually around 30–40 percent in post conflict transition societies). Female-headed households are thought to be particularly vulnerable.

One difficulty female-headed households may face is inadequate labour resources, especially in agricultural communities, because there are few adult men and the adult women are occupied with domestic work. Another is that without men they are not well linked into the networks that control marketing, supplies, community decision-making and have poor links to power structures.

Despite their vulnerability in society at large, there are also instances where members of female-headed households fare better than others, since female caregivers prioritise the family's welfare. Also depending on the cultural conditions and the extent to which war has diminished traditional male roles in the economy, women often find new public outlets for trading and other income-generating activities. In **Somaliland**, the absence of government regulation has provided opportunities for business to flourish. This has been positive for women in some ways, because they now occupy increasingly important roles in trade. But such changes are often temporary. Typically, after war, women are forced out of jobs and put under pressure to give control of resources to men.

The challenge for those wishing to support female household heads is to increase their entitlements (i.e. strengthen their position when it comes to making claims on authorities or on other members of the community). This can be done by changing legislation and policies, raising awareness among women of their rights and supporting their efforts to voice their needs. However, this is difficult to achieve when all households are likely to be unusually vulnerable and when new systems of governance and legislation are not yet in place. In these circumstances women rely more extensively on mutual support.

In post conflict **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Rwanda,** following advocacy efforts by international groups, specific funds (of up to $5 million) were established under the auspices of international agencies, with the mandate to support women and promote their participation in reconstruction. In **Iraq** in 2004, US-based organisations including Women Waging Peace initiated advocacy and awareness-raising efforts that ultimately led to the allocation of $10 million for women's empowerment from the aid package approved by the **US Congress.** In **Somaliland,** women's groups pressed for the restoration of local hospitals and educational services and sought funding for micro-credit facilities for demobilised young men.[37] In **Kosovo,** 22 women's organisations came together in a series of meetings to discuss women's involvement in politics and social and economic reconstruction. This was seen as a preparation for women to take part in reconstruction activities led by the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).** As a result, six women were appointed to the interim transitional council.[38]

INFLUENCING NATIONAL POLICIES AND BUDGETS

In the post conflict period, as new ministries are established and national budgets created, there is an opportunity to ensure that national level policies on a range of issues are gender sensitive. One approach taken in many countries is to establish a Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) with a mandate to promote women's empowerment and to work with other ministries to ensure that gender perspectives are fully integrated into their work. There is concern that such a ministry can risk marginalising women, but there are also benefits to having a ministry with a dedicated budget for women. In contrast, in **South Africa,** while there is no dedicated ministry, there is a Commission on Gender Equality set up under the Constitution that promotes gender equality, makes recommendations on legislation and monitors the country's progress toward gender equality in relation to international norms.[39] In addition, individual ministries, such as the Ministry of Defence, have gender focal points that promote gender equality within the institution.

Advocating for and initiating **gender budgets** is another approach to mainstreaming gendered perspectives into the national economy. Gender budgeting is an exercise in which government financial allocations are reviewed to assess whether they represent an effective use of resources to achieve gender equality. Three sorts of budget item are examined: expenditures allocated for programmes and policies with specific gender targets (such as projects designed specifically for women), expenditures that promote gender equality and those that mainstream it in other areas. For example, if the population of a country is over 60 percent female, with a majority of whom are of childbearing age, gendered health budgets could ensure that adequate funds were allocated for reproductive healthcare. Gender-budgeting exercises can be carried out internally within government, but are more effective if civil society participates.[40]

Programmes such as the **Gender Responsive Budget Initiative**—led by **UNIFEM, the Commonwealth Secretariat**, and the **International Development Research Center**—have developed tools to support governments and civil society in applying gender budgeting techniques, which is practiced in an increasing number of countries.[41]

In **Rwanda** in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, women organised themselves and established effective coalitions across civil society, government, and parliament to push for equality. The government created a ministry dedicated to women's empowerment and a national gender policy was drawn up in 2001. This paved the way for gender to be identified as one of three cross-cutting priorities in the poverty strategy review process. The government sponsored extensive research into different aspects of gender-based disadvantages. The findings were fed into discussions within every ministry and government department about the barriers to gender equality and how they may be overcome. As a result, the Ministry of Agriculture is committed to increasing the number of women reached by its extension programmes. The Ministry of Education aims to increase retention of girls in school. Provincial government structures are promoting the representation of women in local decision-making processes. Gender-budgeting exercises are used to train civil servants to translate policy decisions into concrete actions through resource allocation.[42]

PROVIDING SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Another means of accessing international aid and influencing its use is to partner or subcontract with international actors and provide services and support (e.g. income-generation training, trauma counselling, sexual and reproductive health advice or legal advice and training). This support might be directed to other women. For example, the **Ugandan** organisation People's Voice for Peace (PVP) works with women and children who have been injured and disabled by war. PVP sets up mutual support groups, arranges training in income-generation and advocacy skills and puts its members in touch with medical and other forms of assistance.[43] The Medica Women's Therapy Centre in **Bosnia** offers a combination of medical and psychosocial care for women who have been raped and otherwise abused. In **Sudan,** the Sudanese Women's Association of Nairobi (SWAN) has played a key role in liasing with international donors and facilitating the transfer of funds to small and local organisations.[44]

AVOIDING BACKLASH: TACTICS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Although it is widely argued that education, economic power and the ability to generate resources can enable women to influence political decision-making and affect social attitudes, in many cases this does not happen. Women may generate income, but they are either unaware of, or unable to affect political decision-making. Furthermore, in post conflict societies (and in developing nations) women's control of resources and their successful efforts in generating revenue can create a backlash among men in their community. If not addressed, this can result in the closure of the project. Donors and recipients of aid must ensure that, on the one hand, income-generating programmes have a distinct women's empowerment component to enable women to maintain their space and work. On the other hand, they must try to identify the potential threats and reduce the risks of a backlash against women. In **Colombia,** following years of women's involvement in economic development but limited influence in politics, women's organisations are now combining income-generating projects with training on political rights and empowerment.

In **Sudan**, women's groups and a widow's association have established catering and conference facilities to

generate income. While the ownership rests in the hands of the women, the management and staff are predominantly local men who benefit from receiving salaries. In **Afghanistan**, gender-sensitive UN personnel reached out to male tribal leaders, seeking their approval to initiate programs that would generate income for women in the villages.

5. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Identify key international actors and agencies present in your country and consult with them, advocating for the inclusion of gender perspectives in their needs assessment and planning work. Drawing on their own institutional commitments and mandates on the issue.

2. Encourage your organisation to find out what strategies are being adopted by the OECD, UN family and other international organisations. Build on:

   • their policies on the inclusion of women in post conflict reconstruction;

   • the investments being made; and

   • their interaction and commitment to the inclusion of civil society.

3. Seek to engage with the donors' meeting process, working with UNIFEM and other organisations that support women's inclusion.

4. Develop proposals for programmes and projects based on your institution's strength. Identify key funders, meet with them and propose partnerships.

5. Drawing on global networks and sources on the Internet, identify international actors (NGOs, donors) that could partner with your organisation in advocating for full gender mainstreaming in reconstruction efforts.

6. Join together with other civil society organisations to conduct a needs assessment for communities that identifies priorities, existing skills and capacities and key gaps. Publish and disseminate the results widely among national and international actors.

7. Have clear objectives based on your capacities, what you can contribute and whom you should work with in order to scale up your impact. Have a strategic plan and be clear about areas that need to be strengthened, including project management, information technology, budgeting and accounting.

8. Establish a consortium or identify one organisation to be a receiver of funds and facilitator for the disbursement of small grants to local and informal groups. Ensure that the international community knows of its existence.

9. Identify the potential spoilers and others who can obstruct your efforts. Engage with them and develop tactics to gain their support.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The 2001 OECD/DAC Guidelines on Helping to Prevent Conflict, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/54/1886146.pdf>.

The Beijing Platform for Action, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm>.

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Gender-Related Budget Initiatives, <www.gender-budgets.org>.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Crisis Response and Reconstruction, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/crisis/index.htm>.

The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework, <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/framework.pdf>.

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DfID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICSID	International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives of the United States Agency for International Development
PCF	Post Conflict Fund
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy Process
PVP	People's Voice for Peace
SWAN	Sudanese Women's Association of Nairobi
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

ENDNOTES

1. As stated in the *1997 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation*. 27 September 2004 <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/OECDdev.htm>.

2. See the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Framework at <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/framework.pdf>.

3. Ibid.

4. For more information about World Bank members and institutions see <www.worldbank.org>.

5. Weiss, Martin A. *World Bank Post-Conflict Aid: Oversight Issues for Congress*. Washington, DC: Congressional Review Services, 2004 <www.aicpr.org/WBPC.pdf>.

6. See <http://www.worldbank.org/gender/module/overview/bank.htm>.

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20. As stated in *About Gender* Equality. 27 September 2004 <http://www.oecd.org/about/0,2337,en_2649_34541_1_1_1_1_1,00.html>.

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25. *JICA Thematic Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming/WID*. Tokyo: Japanese International Cooperation Agency, 2002. 13 August 2004 <http://www.jica.go.jp/english/global/wid/pdf/guidelines.pdf>.

26. *Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 1997. 13 August 2004 <http://www.sida.se/Sida/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=656&a=7515>.

27. *Women, Men, and Development*. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development, n.d. 13 August 2004 <http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/usaidbook.pdf>.

28. When CARE was first founded in 1945, its acronym stood for Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe. It now stands for Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Inc.

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36. <http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd%5B157%5D=x-157-3389%20&cmd%5B189%5D=x-189-3389>.

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38. Abdela, Lesley. "Kosovo: Missed Opportunities, Lessons for the Future." Development in Practice 13/2&3, Oxford: Oxfam, 2004.

39. <http://www.safrica.info/ess_info/sa_glance/constitution/cge.htm>.

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