



Global Legislators Organisation for a
Balanced Environment (GLOBE-EU)
and
Institute for Environmental Security (IES)



Greening Foreign and Security Policy: The Role of Europe

Working Group D: Recovery and Transition

Post conflict restoration, reconstruction and structural adaptation

DISCUSSION PAPER ¹

1. Key Issues and Challenges

- 1.1. When a conflict ends there are many steps that need to be taken to ensure that peace is maintained, environmental damage is assessed and treated, the people and government can transition, and that lessons are learned from the tactics employed during the conflict. Environmental conflict recovery involves a range of methods of alternative dispute resolution such as facilitation, mediation, and conflict assessment.² Recovery and transition are the intermediate stages between emergency relief and development.
- 1.2. The 1992 UN report “An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping” introduced the term “post-conflict peacebuilding for the first time as an important addition to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping.
- 1.3. Post-conflict environmental recovery has been an important focus of UNEP in recent years, as it has for a number of donor governments such as the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK in their own bilateral efforts. The focus is typically on assessing the environmental impacts of war and conflict, identification of hotspots accompanied with mitigation strategies, and in some cases, remediation. The tools that are most often used include geographic information systems (GIS), interviews with key stakeholders, repeat photography, and site sampling.
- 1.4. As described below, there are many obstacles that face post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. The success of the effort is very dependant on the stability and security of the area, as well as the political will of all relevant stakeholders to engage in post-conflict reconstruction.
- 1.5. In many cases, post-conflict rehabilitation tends to be focused on humanitarian consequences and reconstruction with only a secondary emphasis placed on environmental impacts. However, environmental priorities are elevated in

¹ First draft by Johannah Bernstein, 7 October 2006

² U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, “What is Environmental Conflict Resolution?” <http://www.ecr.gov>, Sept. 25, 2006.

importance when the environmental impacts can be explained in terms of their human health linkages.

- 1.6. In post-conflict situations, it is often the poor who are more vulnerable to environmental degradation. Since it is often the poor who lose out in environmental conflict, post-conflict reconstruction must also focus on actions to eradicate poverty, injustice, and inequality. Therefore eradicating poverty depends on a clean and healthy environment, from which sustainable livelihoods can be pursued.
- 1.7. The environment has to be integrated both in the humanitarian and reconstruction phases of post-conflict international efforts. In the humanitarian phase, it is important to ensure that local populations are protected from the health effects resulting from post-conflict environment pollution. Similarly, environmental concerns must be integrated into the reconstruction phase and this is best achieved through environmental impact assessments of all reconstruction projects and programmes, especially in the development of energy and transport infrastructure.
- 1.8. It is important to build strong environmental administrations after the conflict has been resolved so that post-conflict countries will be able to manage their own environmental challenges when the UN and donor community departs.

2. How key actors have responded to the post-conflict recovery challenge

2.1. UNEP's Post Conflict Branch

UNEP's Post Conflict Branch (PCoB), established in 2001, seeks to address the environmental consequences and their related economic and social implications in post-conflict regions, in order to reduce environmental degradation, improve public health and impart as well sustainable development practices in the post-conflict restoration period. Once requested by a post-conflict nation, PCoB's approach involves: initial investigations to assess the specific human and environmental risks; providing recommendations for effective reconstruction; building local capacity through training programmes; mobilizing international support through cooperation with humanitarian as well as environmental institutions to ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into rebuilding processes.

2.2. Norway

The Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs has focused its efforts on the following dimensions of post-conflict recovery: security, political development, and social development. As regards the security dimension, Norway has focused on such priorities as: disarmament, reintegration, humanitarian mine action, control of small and light weapons, and security system reform. As regards the political development dimension, Norway has focused on supporting the development of legitimate political institutions, reconciliation among key groups, good governance, democracy and the promotion of human rights, support for civil society, and the establishment of judicial processes and truth commissions. As regards the social and economic dimensions,

Norway has focused on repatriation and reintegration of refugees, reconstruction of infrastructure, promotion of health and education, development of the private sector, employment, and trade and investment.³

2.3. OECD DAC Fragile States Group

The DAC Fragile States Group works to shape a consensus on how to design and implement policy approaches that are tailored to the specific needs of fragile states. It fosters coordination between bilateral donors and multilateral donor organisations in addressing the need to improve their engagement in fragile states.

3. Recommendations for improving post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation

3.1. Strengthen key institutions

In many cases, countries that emerge from conflict (be it environmentally-rooted or otherwise) have governance structures that are fragile or non-existent. In these cases, several institutional challenges must be addressed to contribute to the reconstruction process. These include: establishing mechanisms that link relief, rehabilitation and development; building an accountable security sector and strengthening the rule of law; developing new institutions and mechanisms for conflict resolution; and developing pro-poor, pro-environment governance systems.⁴

3.2. Integrate environmental considerations into post-conflict reconstruction

The environment should be understood as a humanitarian issue that must be integrated into post-conflict reconstruction. Several measures are essential including: tackling the underlying sources of conflict by establishing property rights and responsibilities and encouraging transparency in natural resources management; building or re-establishing institutional and regulatory capacity to set the foundation for sustainable development; increasing transparency and accountability in financial management; using natural resources as positive assets for economic growth.

3.3. Strengthen UN system's capacity to contribute to post-conflict environmental recovery

The UN system's capacity should be strengthened particularly as regards: carrying out field assessments to identify concurrent tasks, time frames for action, and possible implementing partners; using its existing emergency voluntary funding channels to begin to provide support on the ground to demonstrate immediate progress, including support of infrastructure; providing immediate on-the-ground presence to prevent human rights abuses through the use of monitors, or through emergency legal services; engaging local NGOs that can be linked to UN activities to begin the reconstruction tasks.

3.4. Share lessons learned

³ "Peacebuilding: A Development Perspective". Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 16 Aug 2004. Pg: 5-11.

⁴ Ruohokai, Olli. "Development in an Insecure World: New Threats to Human Security and their Implications for Development Policy". Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, March 21, 2005, page 35.

Future reconstruction should be guided by shared information between key stakeholders and the use of environmental impact assessments.⁵ For example, UNEP has assessed environmental damage from recent conflict areas such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Serbia and Montenegro and this information should be used to guide future reconstruction efforts and should be integrated into a wider framework.

⁵ Michael Renner and Hilary French, “Linkages Between Environment, Population, and Development,” http://www.un-globalsecurity.org/pdf/French_Renner_paper_environ_pop_dev.pdf, Sept. 24.