

# **National Planning Frameworks and International Assistance in Post Conflict Countries**

**Presentation to the Peacebuilding Commission  
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**(Check against delivery)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Let me start by saying that we value this opportunity to address the PBC on the topic of national planning frameworks and international support in post-conflict countries. It is a complex area with quite a number of existing tools and frameworks – and not least acronyms. But together with my colleague from the World Bank, I hope to be able to provide you with a basic overview. This presentation is not specifically on Burundi and Sierra Leone – its aim is to present in general terms the planning tools and their links – but most of the issues raised are directly relevant to these two countries.

I will begin with a brief overview of some key principles guiding the work in post-conflict situations and then try to describe different steps throughout the process: (i) The assessment phase, (ii) the development of national plans, (iii) the role of donor conferences, (iv) different financing mechanisms and (v) how the internal programming tools of the UN are linked to these national frameworks.

## ***I. Introduction – characteristics of post conflict countries***

While each situation presents its own defining features, post conflict settings are usually characterized by a number of challenges. These are likely to include an overwhelming set of needs at all levels, limited national planning and implementation capacity, insufficient resources as well as lingering humanitarian and security threats

However, despite these difficulties, a post-conflict setting can also present a window of opportunity for national and international actors to address the causes of conflict and re-establish peace for the country's population. The overall objective is therefore to respond to immediate needs while establishing the foundations for long-term, sustainable development.

This implies a shift in the way the international community is involved during the humanitarian phase – where the emphasis is on providing direct life saving services to distressed populations – to a phase where the main focus is on supporting national leadership and building the national capacity to address a country's needs. The international community takes a back seat, supporting role.

To support such a focus, a number of analytical, programming and financing tools are used, both at the national and international level. It is important to keep in mind that this presentation is neither exhaustive, nor does it suggest a standard or uniform way of structuring international assistance. The complexity of post-conflict settings does not allow for such standardization or a linear application of tools with perfectly logical links.

The type and use of planning tools – and their sequencing – vary from country to country, and depend on a number of external factors. These include: the security conditions, electoral cycles, the nature of the political transition, local capacity, and the level of international involvement. Such factors need to be kept in mind when we consider the following instruments.

## ***II. Needs Assessments***

National plans should be based on in-depth assessments of needs, designed to present the key interventions required to consolidate peace and jump start a country's political, economic and social recovery.

The nature of these needs assessments vary from one country to the other. In some cases, they consist of a compilation of existing frameworks and surveys. Especially where a rapid assessment is needed for immediate response, the needs assessments used for the humanitarian interventions, including the Consolidated Appeals Processes (CAP), will provide a strong basis. In other words, timeframes have a big influence on the depth and content of the assessments.

However, in recent years the Post Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA) methodology has been developed to help national actors to undertake a systematic, conflict sensitive and inclusive assessment of priority needs. It has been used in Iraq (2003), Liberia (2003-4), Haiti (2004), Sudan (2004-5), Somalia (2005-6) and Darfur (2006). The methodology includes both an assessment, and a costing of needs as well as a prioritization of results in an accompanying Transitional Results Matrix (TRM).

The overall aim of the PCNA/F is to develop nationally defined priorities and identify the interventions and financial requirements needed to help stabilize the peace and lay the groundwork for essential recovery and reconstruction activities. The process is led by national authorities in close collaboration with the UN and WB and includes wide ranging consultations with national and international stakeholders and civil society.

It is important to emphasize that the PCNA/F process aims to establish a national vision for peacebuilding and recovery based on consensus between the national authorities, civil society, community leaders and technical experts, including technical experts from donors and multi-lateral institutions. The value of the PCNA/F therefore not only lies in the outcome, the process itself can also help facilitate the peacebuilding objectives.

## ***III. National plans***

The needs assessments provide the analytical basis for the development of prioritized national action plans. Depending on the context, these national plans vary in duration and purpose. In many cases, not least due to limited national capacity, the international community has provided significant support to national actors in the design of these plans.

While no standard typology exists, we can differentiate between interim plans and longer term national plans. Interim national plans are often developed during a political transition – for example the Interim Cooperation Framework in Haiti – or for a short duration while analysis for longer term development plans is undertaken, such as the Early Recovery Framework in Lebanon or the Emergency Action Plan in Burundi. Whether interim plans are established or not, longer term national plans then provide a comprehensive framework highlighting national priorities, implementation strategies and modalities, and financial requirements. In many countries, these

often take the form of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), which – in post-conflict countries – are increasingly developed around peacebuilding objectives and goals. My colleague from the WB will provide more in-depth information on the rationale, content, and process of the PRSP.

Wherever a PCNA/F has been used, the Transitional Results Matrix that results from the PCNA/F has formed the core of the national plan, whether interim or longer term.

In addition, as you know, for countries seeking financial assistance from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, a Priority Plan is developed, highlighting the critical peacebuilding priorities for which immediate support is needed. Depending on the context, this Priority Plan can be developed before, in parallel to, or after the development of national plans. When developed in parallel to or after national plans, as is the case with Burundi and Sierra Leone, it is important the Priority Plans be closely coordinated with these planning processes and to the extent possible take advantage of existing coordination mechanisms in country.

#### ***IV. Donor Conferences***

Donor conferences are often organized following the completion of the needs assessments and the development of national plans, to provide political endorsement and support for the plans – and ensure financial assistance.

As an example, the donor conferences following the PCNAs in Iraq, Liberia, Haiti and Sudan resulted in pledges of over \$40 billion. But donor conferences have also been organized around interim plans, such as the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery Strategy, as well as PRSPs.

It should be noted that this is often not a singular event. In many countries, successive donor conferences are organized to renew or maintain international support, take stock of progress achieved, and increase financial support. This is often organized within a Roundtable Format.

#### ***V. Financing mechanisms***

Turning to the financial aspects, a number of channels currently exist to fund the national plans. These include:

- Bilateral programs and projects,
- Pooled funding mechanisms, such as Multi Donor Trust Funds, where contributing donors agree to pool their resources under a common management framework, and where a decision making body – usually including national authorities, donors and multilateral institutions – decides on allocations to sectors and projects
- Global, thematic trust funds, which are normally used for very specific purposes
- Domestic resources originating either in-country (tax collection, customs, etc) or abroad (remittances, diaspora funds)

The Peacebuilding Fund constitutes a recent innovation in the area of pooled funding mechanism for peacebuilding. It combines the characteristics of a global thematic fund with those of country specific MDTF. It is important to note that the PBF – which is designed as a catalytic mechanism to support critical peacebuilding interventions – can be used before tools such as PCNA/F and PRSPs have been completed. In other words, to support critical needs in the immediate post

conflict phase until longer term financing mechanisms are established, or if critical peacebuilding gaps remain unfunded.

In most post-conflict situations, the priorities are funded through a combination of those options. However, the reality is that funding for post conflict recovery, or transition, remains limited compared to what is made available for humanitarian responses or longer term development initiatives. This transition gap is evident both in terms of absolute numbers, and in terms of geographical disparities among countries – and sometimes also within a country. Donor conferences are not always organized and even when they are, the amounts pledged may be insufficient or there may be significant delays in turning those pledges into actual disbursements.

#### ***VI. Links between national frameworks (assessments, plans) and programming tools used by the international community***

As stated in the introduction, the post-conflict period marks a shift in the international community's approach and mode of support to a given country.

For the UN, this has implications already during the assessment phase, where a key objective is to support the national capacity to identify, prioritize, and cost needs. This is an essential element of the PCNA/F process. While humanitarian planning tools such as Flash Appeals and Consolidated Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAP) also often include a capacity building component with national actors, their emphasis is on direct provision of assistance to populations. On the recovery side, the UN's assistance in the post conflict situations retains a strong focus on addressing social and economic needs of at risk populations, but the approach shifts to a supportive role to assist national actors in providing those services wherever and whenever possible

The focus on national frameworks also guides the UN's internal programming. The UN has made significant efforts in recent years to ensure that its interventions in post conflict countries are both fully aligned with national priorities and focused on critical areas where the UN can bring tangible value added. Consequently, the UN's programming tool, known as the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) derives from, and mirrors, the priorities as articulated in the national plans. For example in Burundi the UNDAF for 2007-8 spells out the UN's contribution to a selected number of priorities that were defined by the national authorities in their PRSP.

This also applies to the broader donor community. There has been a greater emphasis in recent years in ensuring that the various programming frameworks are consistent and free of significant overlap or redundancies. In some cases, such as the DRC, the international community has even come together to merge their programming tools.

#### ***VII. Concluding remarks - challenges***

Mr. Chairman, I would like to finish with a number of concluding remarks regarding the challenges ahead.

First of all, it is important to keep in mind that the complexity of the post conflict situation requires flexibility in the type of tools used, their timeframes and duration and their sequencing.

It is imperative to avoid burdening the country with planning frameworks, at the expense of implementation. As mentioned during the IPA seminar on Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies on 1 March, post conflict settings are characterized by a multitude of actors, both at the national and international level. Usually, each actor has its own programme, strategy, and mandate. For the

international actors, the goal should be to harmonize those, ensure alignment with key national priorities and reduce transaction costs for national partners.

This is closely linked to the issue of national capabilities. We all need to help enhance the national ability to coordinate international assistance, track the financial flows and implement and monitor projects and programs.

Secondly, the structure, content, and format of the post conflict programming tool box must be seen as work in progress

All of these tools are indeed imperfect but continue to be improved upon based on a growing body of evidence, lessons learned and experience. The PCNA/F for example, has recently undergone an extensive review that was completed in December 2006. Among the key recommendations from the review was the need to strengthen the assessment of national capacities, making the TRM more “implementable”, and increase the conflict sensitivity/security related components.

Multi-Donor Trust Funds have also been assessed with reviews highlighting the need to strengthen the national ownership components and reduce delays in disbursements. The UN and the World Bank are increasingly working together to support these mechanisms based on the principles of comparative advantages.

Finally, it is a continuous challenge to increase the effectiveness of the international assistance. Despite significant progress, national plans and internal programming tools, such as the UNDAF, at times lack specificity, which limits the ability to establish accountability. The development of an Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy or compact between a given country and the PBC is potentially an opportunity to clarify and strengthen the mutual commitments. A key element will be to identify the constraints and obstacles which impede the effective implementation of those national priorities. Because at the end of the day, all these joint planning initiatives will be judged on the ability to deliver results on the ground.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman