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A close-up photograph of a person's hands, likely of African descent, working with wood. One hand is holding a piece of wood, while the other is using a hammer to drive a nail. The wood is light brown and has some white fibers visible. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

# *Supporting* CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT *in* CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)  
and the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP)

**COVER:**

*In the slum of Bel Aire in downtown Port-au-Prince, people displaced by the earthquake that devastated Haiti on Tuesday, January 12, build makeshift homes in what used to be the stadium.*

**UN Photo/Sophia Paris**

*Supporting*  
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT *in*  
CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCPR	Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
CA	Capacity Assessment
CDG	Capacity Development Group
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFS	Department of Field Support (DPKO)
DGG	Democratic Governance Group
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INCAF (OECD)	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
LECBS	Liberia Emergency Capacity Building Support
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCDS (Liberia)	National Capacity Development Strategy
NCDU (Liberia)	National Capacity Development Unit
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PAR	Public Administration Review
RB/RBx	Regional Bureau/Regional Bureaux
SES	Senior Executive Service programme
SMSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
TA	Technical Assistance
TOKEN	Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WDR	World Development Report

# FOREWORD

We are pleased to share this Report from the UNDP workshop on “Capacity Development in Conflict and Fragile Contexts” (New York, April 2011). Participants from UNDP Country Offices and headquarters, along with representatives from a number of partner UN entities, gathered to discuss country-level experiences and share innovative practices in supporting capacity development in these contexts.

Capacity development is seen, by both national and international actors, as critical to the achievement of development goals in conflict and fragile contexts. Capacity development in countries emerging from conflict, however, presents complex challenges: the environments tend to be hyper-politicized and chaotic; stakeholders have ambitious and sometimes varying agendas; and physical security is often lacking. The workshop was convened to generate specific recommendations to strengthen UNDP’s own capabilities both to support capacity development in these difficult circumstances at the national level, as well as to advocate for effective principles and guidance at the international level through fora such as the International Dialogue and INCAF.

As the operational reflection of UNDP’s commitment to partnership and national ownership, capacity development aims to mobilize and empower national partners to lead the recovery process and rebuild the state-society linkages required for sustainable peace. In providing support to capacity development, UNDP strives to leverage its evidence-based approach to supporting capacity development while customizing its response, methodologies, and tools to accommodate the realities encountered in each unique country context. The workshop generated concrete recommendations for strengthening UNDP’s policy advice and streamlining its operational support. UNDP will work across its practices to implement the recommendations included in the Report in the coming months.

We hope you find that this report provides insights into the capacity development process and enables UNDP and its partners to be better prepared to deliver on their efforts to support capacity development in conflict and fragile contexts.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The international development community is converging on a clear consensus that countries in persistently fragile contexts, particularly affected by conflict, present deeply complex challenges with capacity development efforts. These challenges warrant priority focus on the international development agenda and continued efforts to advance collaborative partnerships.

UNDP has worked extensively on capacity development in fragile contexts in all regions ranging from countries emerging from civil war and ethnic strife, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; newly emerging states, such as Timor Leste, South Sudan, and Kosovo; countries with protracted conflict and complex recovery, such as Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan; and countries grappling with rule of law in the context of narcotics trafficking, such as Colombia. All of these unique development contexts demand significant support to developing capacity as an inherent aspect of the overall recovery and development approach. Drawing from this extensive knowledge base, UNDP has started to examine more carefully what has been accomplished in these contexts.

UNDP is continuing to engage the community of international development actors, such as the G7+ countries, the members of the OECD-DAC, and our partners across the UN System and Bretton Woods Institutions, around issues of shared concern. Of particular concern is the development trajectories of fragile countries, as many of these countries will surely fall short of the Millennium Development Goals and continue to struggle to gain traction in basic human development. UNDP is therefore participating in a rich dialogue around comparative experiences, innovative approaches, lessons learned, and ideas for addressing challenges on the horizon. In concert with these international partners, UNDP is eager to put nationally-driven capacity development efforts at the top of the development agenda. The current climate is very promising for UNDP and its development partners to deepen engagement with national actors in fragile countries and focus increased attention on the reorientation of capacity development support behind their unique priorities.

Against this backdrop, UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) hosted a workshop from April 28-29, 2011 to address the challenges of capacity development in conflict and fragile contexts. Key practitioners from UNDP Country Offices and HQ teams, as well as from partner entities, sought to strengthen UNDP's approach in this arena based on case evidence, constructive review, and innovations tested in diverse country contexts.

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The rationale for holding a workshop on approaches to capacity development in fragile contexts is that UNDP and the greater UN System are contributing their voices to the call for renewed efforts to review good practices for building sustainable capacity and meaningfully promote country-ownership of peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts. These principles are echoed across the international dialogue on capacity development in conflict-affected and fragile states, and within the April 2010 G7+ statement. The latter document expresses the need for a long-term vision to guide development partner assistance to fragile states, and articulates a series of common priorities and challenges experienced by G7+ member countries.

International development leaders and practitioners recognize the need for a robust review of the evidence base for achievements and lessons that can strengthen current policies and practices. Furthermore, in light of UNDP's overall mandate to promote human development with capacity development as its core contribution, it is clear that ongoing investment in evidence-based research, constructive review, and innovation is essential for UNDP's contribution to both the international dialogue and the effectiveness of its own support to national development goals within programme countries.

## WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The main outcomes of the workshop include:

1. An affirmation that UNDP's capacity development approach in fragile contexts will better incorporate extensive political economy analysis<sup>1</sup> to ensure that policy and programming support for capacity development complements the dynamic conditions of fragile countries. In addition, it was acknowledged that issues of legitimacy, social division/cohesion, incentives, and power dynamics will be better reflected throughout the capacity development processes specifically in:
  - *Identifying champions*: capitalizing on leaders who build trust and are effective in driving change;
  - *Setting priorities*: listening to ideas emerging from the ground-up instead of emphasizing an overly technical approach. This includes challenging decision-makers to select a manageable scope of priorities; and
  - *Determining a sensible and strategic sequencing approach*: focusing on entry points and medium-term plans that could yield pivotal change rapidly and/or shore up existing processes or institutions that are essential for stability. Specific priorities will vary depending on the specific context. For example, in some instances it may



<sup>1</sup> In thinking about how to integrate contextual analysis on fragility into possible capacity development approaches, it is helpful to reflect on determinant parameters for state capacity. According to the OECD, these parameters build from three main perspectives, 1) The political settlement, which reflects the implicit or explicit agreement on the "rules of the game", power distribution, and the political processes through which state and society are connected. 2) The capability and responsiveness of the state to effectively fulfill its principal functions and provide key services. 3) Broad social expectations and perceptions about what the state should do, what the terms of the state-society relationship should be, and the ability of society to articulate demands that are "heard."

be best to focus on accountability structures such as Audit Boards, Anti-Corruption Commissions, etc. to build confidence at the beginning of a statebuilding process. Other circumstances may call for support to Public Financial Management or Civil Service Reform, etc. later on. Whatever the case, careful thinking is required to reflect upon the way in which sequencing and sustaining support has proven critical in previous cases of capacity development initiatives.

2. Recognition that the strength of the UN's Community of Practice working on capacity development in fragile contexts is a key determinant of the value UNDP can bring to national counterparts. Therefore, investments in strengthening this Community of Practice are essential. Concretely, several specific recommendations relate to:
  - Investing additional effort in utilizing rosters for deploying the right expertise rapidly; and
  - Better utilizing UNDP's knowledge management platform to direct practitioners to relevant resources and contacts given the voluminous knowledge products already available and additional resources being developed.
3. Commitments for further strengthening partnerships within UNDP and between UNDP and key UN entities. Internally, collaboration between the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the Regional Bureaux (RBx) will continue to be essential for drawing valuable knowledge and experience into coherent approaches. Externally, better collaboration with the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the World Bank can strengthen our offerings to national partners.
4. A recognition that further investment is needed to tailor UNDP's capacity development approach, methodologies, and tools to fragile contexts and to develop guidance on applying them in such circumstances. To that end, concrete recommendations were articulated for refining UNDP's policy, programming, and operational approaches for supporting capacity development in fragile contexts, which are summarized in the recommendations section below.





## CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Building on promising practices brought forth through the country cases, group work, and plenary sessions, consensus arose on recommendations for clarifying UNDP's policy positions and improving UNDP's programmatic and operational approaches for supporting capacity development processes in fragile contexts:

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT:

- Build on existing knowledge products to develop tailored policy and guidance for capacity development in fragile contexts (primarily through simplification and greater alignment with feasibility and do no harm analyses) and:
  - A renewed UNDP policy statement on capacity development in fragile contexts reflecting the organization's position on the issues and opportunities highlighted;
  - Additional guidance for using political economy/conflict analyses and stakeholder mapping tools within UNDP's capacity development efforts;



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- An adapted capacity assessment methodology customized for fragile contexts with emphasis on rapid and focused approaches. Guidance on using the methodology, particularly how to support national counterparts to define realistic goals for developing needed capacities, and how to link capacity assessments with political economy and conflict analyses;
  - Technical guidance on measuring changes in capacity and capacity development results customized for fragile contexts, recognizing the need for longer timeframes, unconventional approaches, and greater degree of risk; and
  - Prioritization approaches and facilitation guidelines to help focus national counterparts on priorities to complement capacity assessment.
- Further incorporate political economy and conflict analyses into the corporate approach for supporting capacity development to strengthen UNDP's intellectual leadership in this arena and to better articulate how UNDP integrates its capacity development process into peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts;
  - Ensure strong UNDP contribution as a leading member in OECD INCAF and International Dialogue processes on developing policy and practice for capacity development in fragile and conflict environments;
  - Ensure strong UNDP contribution within the UN Civilian Capacities Review, the undg Working Group on Public Administration Reform and Local Governance Review and follow up on recommendations of the Secretary General's report on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict; and
  - Strengthen the partnership among BCPR, BDP, and the Regional Bureaux to enhance UNDP's contributions to development processes in fragile contexts.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES:

- Develop guidance for applying different programmatic and process management approaches depending on various socio-political scenarios;
- As one of the main challenges in statebuilding capacity development is understanding and managing social expectations; focus additional resources and assistance in the ongoing outreach and communication efforts of national counterparts/state entities in capacity development programme design. These perceptions are sometimes neglected when designing capacity development programmes, as they are not technical considerations, but they greatly influence the prospect for results and sustainability;
- Focus assistance on consultation and prioritization processes with national counterparts based on rapid and focused needs assessments and ensure implementation of key functions related to the transitional context;
- Focus more assistance on coordination in support of national counterpart institutions which may be overwhelmed by multiple donor agendas and operational approaches to programme/project implementation;

- Research and produce a collection of good examples and proven approaches for sequencing capacity development interventions over multiple-year timeframes; and
- Apply South–South approaches using regional resources for technical assistance and training, and build on existing capacities and knowledge.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL APPROACHES:

- Improve the way in which expertise is mobilized through rosters and the deployment of experienced and knowledgeable resource persons;
- Raise awareness of UNDP's ongoing activities in strengthening capacity development support in fragile contexts; both internally through the knowledge management platform and the provision of advisory services, and externally through partner outreach;
- Develop an inventory of resources currently available and clarify the kind of support that can be deployed. Then, link this to UNDP's knowledge platform (i.e. Teamworks, practice networks, etc.);
- Develop a handbook of good practices and scenario-based approaches. This includes a clear assessment of lessons learned in advancing capacity development processes in fragile contexts; and
- Deepen the dialogue with UN partners, especially DPKO, in leveraging the analytical resources and coordination assets of a mission's political affairs and SRSGs offices. This should occur where appropriate, given the context and nature of UN mission/host government relationship.

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#### NEXT STEPS

1. Communicate policy considerations for UNDP and partners and articulate the policy positions reached;
2. Form an internal working group to advance concrete recommendations: Consolidate resources available and develop guidance for capacity development in fragile contexts; and
3. Share recommendations from the workshop with the UN Civilian Capacities Review Process and other UN interagency process related to CD, detailing UNDP's role and position.



**PART I**  
CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

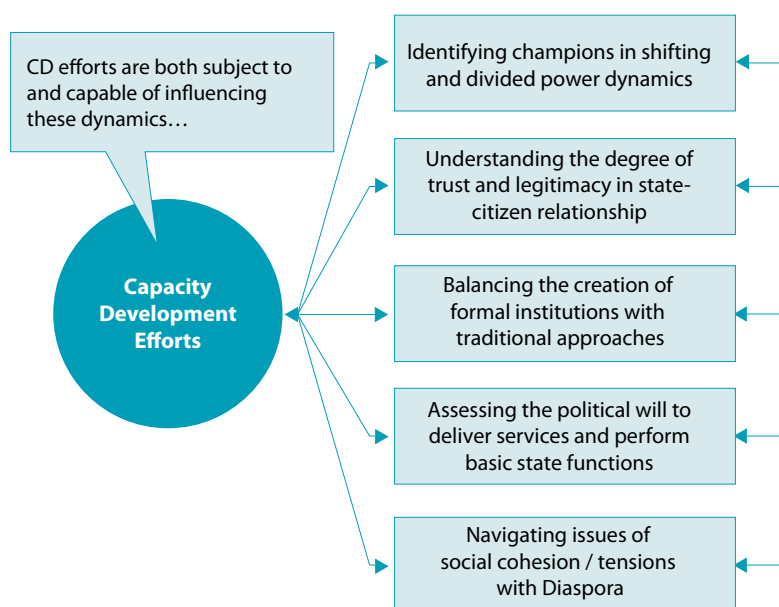


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UNDP plays an important role in contributing to the international dialogue on capacity development in conflict and fragile contexts and pursues ever more effective approaches for our work at country-level. Capacity development is UNDP's core mandate and the defining aspect of how the organization supports programme countries in fragile contexts in achieving overall recovery and development goals. Further, several international development processes and recent high-level policy positions<sup>2</sup> affirm UNDP's important role in the capacity development arena while validating the enormous challenges faced when supporting capacity development efforts in fragile contexts.

UNDP is deeply engaged in the debate on capacity development in conflict affected and fragile environments, participating actively in various international fora, such as the OECD International Dialogue and INCAF, and is cooperating closely in developing policy and practice in the area with other international development partners like the World Bank. UNDP is also contributing strongly to UN process of Civilian Capacities review, the UNDP Working Group on Public Administration Reform and Local Governance Review and the follow up on recommendations of the SG report on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict.

Against this backdrop, UNDP and international development partners are considering the issues that sit at the nexus of capacity development and peacebuilding/statebuilding efforts due to the enormous complexity and variety of challenges encountered in these contexts as well as the numerous lessons available for review. Fragile and conflict affected terrain is the most challenging in the development landscape. Situations are endlessly complex, chaotic and dynamic, and international development players must constantly evaluate the degree to which development assistance approaches are tailored to these realities.



Specifically, capacity development efforts in fragile contexts are particularly challenging as each fragile context presents a unique set of challenges related to power, legitimacy, trust between the state and citizens, social cohesion, inequality and exclusion; these socio-political factors can play out in many different permutations in highly fluid, or conversely, entrenched patterns.

<sup>2</sup> The work of OECD/DAC and OECD/INCAF on conflict and fragility; the International Dialogue/G7+ group's focus on CD in fragile and conflict contexts; the Secretary General's Report on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict; the World Bank's World Development Report (2011); the UN Interagency Review on Public Administration; the upcoming international conference on aid effectiveness in Busan; UNDP/World Bank Initiative on statebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone; and BCPR/CDG work on capacity development and capacity assessments in fragile contexts.





### **Preserve and Reward Intellectual Honesty:**

Learn from past experience  
and try new approaches.  
Articulating the need for adap-  
tive practices can be channeled  
into constructive efforts to  
refine tools or approaches and  
develop new resources

Several lessons explored in the workshop highlight a fundamental point of consensus, which is that UNDP clearly operates in political arenas, but there can be a tendency among development actors to position capacity development support within a false dichotomy between developmental/technical approaches and political contexts. This delineation has proven to be unconstructive, as UNDP is most successful when it navigates political realities and articulates a position appropriately and sensitively to ensure impact. Carrying out assessments of the political context enables UNDP to better ground interventions in reality and contributes to more sustainable results as well as care in doing no harm. These forces may not always be discernible on the surface, but can be better understood through deeper analysis and a working approach, which is explicitly geared towards tailoring technical interventions depending on specific conditions, while at the same time, investing more effort in dialogue with partners and coordination support. One of the core messages emerging from the workshop was that context really matters, and UNDP is in a position to invest more seriously in understanding contextual dynamics.

**PART II**  
DISCUSSION OF ISSUES, LESSONS,  
AND PROMISING PRACTICES



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During the workshop, cases from 14 countries<sup>3</sup> were discussed to deepen our understanding of the challenges of supporting capacity development in fragile contexts, critically evaluate the evidence, and identify innovative approaches.

An overall call for greater investment in contextual analysis and tailored approaches/specialized expertise was a common thread woven through each country case. In addition, lessons learned and promising practices were articulated which relate to particular aspects of fragility and how they influence the “when” and “what” of tailoring a capacity development process, included in the section: **Navigating the Dynamics of Fragility on the Capacity Development Approach** – Special consideration has been given to designing a workable capacity development process that is flexible enough to navigate challenging conditions, common in conflict-affected and fragile countries, including:

1. Insecurity;
2. Social divisions;
3. Weak (formal) institutions; and
4. Power divisions, especially related to centralized power.

Further, lessons learned and innovative practices were discussed in relation to the capacity development process and how its applied in providing advisory and programmatic support, included in the section: **Adapting and Applying the Capacity Development Approach in Fragile Contexts** – Efforts have been directed towards capturing practical lessons learned from UNDP’s extensive experience in capacity development policy-making, programming, and project implementation approaches, which provide insights on how technical aspects of capacity development support may be adapted, or the “how” of designing and implementing capacity development support, including:

1. Assessing capacity assets and gaps;
2. Scoping, positioning, prioritizing, and sequencing capacity development support within a broader recovery/development agenda;
3. Utilizing Technical Assistance and Project Implementation Units;
4. Developing incentive programmes/salary augmentation; and
5. Supporting country ownership.

The following sections detail the issues encountered along both sets of these dimensions and articulates proposed approaches that are emerging from the field.

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#### Operate with Clear Eyes and Political Savvy:

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Working in complex and chaotic contexts, there is a need for UNDP to deepen investments in political economy and conflict analyses and invest in making UNDP’s analytical contributions far more robust

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<sup>3</sup> Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Iraq, Somalia, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Southern Sudan, Lebanon, Kosovo, Colombia, East Timor

## **PART III**

### NAVIGATING THE DYNAMICS OF FRAGILITY IN THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH – THE “WHEN AND WHAT”



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1. **Continued insecurity and the lack of rule of law:** Continued or persistent insecurity is a strong negative force for capacity development efforts, preventing a return to normalcy and distorting incentives, as people consistently place their own preservation above all else. In cases of extreme violence and insecurity in many fragile contexts, the question was repeatedly asked if it even makes sense to pursue a capacity development agenda until there is an improvement in security and rule of law. This question generates different responses depending on the context, including the point that capacity development efforts may gradually help advance a security and rule of law transformation, while the approach to sequencing assistance should be very clear-eyed about the gravity of conflict and insecurity. In either case, development players should recognize when to halt an agenda or alternatively, when to extend the expected timeframe for seeing results.

### IRAQ -TAILORING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO A CHANGING POLITICAL ECONOMY

The continued insecurity and breakdown of rule of law in the aftermath of the Iraq war have greatly complicated all recovery and development efforts. These tumultuous forces have required UNDP to constantly adapt and innovate all while working to deliver some of the largest-scale development aid in any post-conflict context.

Against this backdrop, UNDP, with other members of the UN system, often found themselves greatly outweighed by key donors, who have been mounting major investments in capacity development in line with their own interests and agreements with national counterparts. UNDP also faced the immense challenge of managing most operations remotely, given the security environment. As such, issues of coordination, operations, and politics permeated all activities, including capacity development initiatives within the Governance and Rule of Law Programmes.

Given this context, understanding the changing political economy, including political dynamics within key national counterparts, was imperative for all levels and areas for support. A robust political economy analysis led to the identification of three strategic areas for capacity development: i) support to the National Development Planning Process, ii) Leadership Development, and iii) support to the Elections Commission.

In practice, the continuous feedback loop inherent in the political economy analysis process helped UNDP Iraq to adopt conceptual formulations that resonated with particular populations, such as emphasizing “social cohesion” instead of continuing a polarizing discussion of “conflict,” as well as the recognition that concepts, such as “democratic representation,” and “governance,” were not consistently understood by Iraqis. The process also helped shape capacity development offerings in the areas of service delivery, participation, and institutional strengthening.

### PROPOSED APPROACHES:

- When positioning capacity development support within complementary recovery frameworks, ensure stakeholders and partners clearly articulate how to tailor capacity development programming support in a conflict-sensitive manner.
- In light of dynamics of insecurity, it was proposed that capacity development strategies should follow a peacebuilding/statebuilding approach and target security institutions and processes that build peace to work on creating a better enabling environment for development. While the integrity of UNDP’s capacity development process and levels of support (i.e. individual, organizational and enabling environment) remains relevant in the context of a peacebuilding/statebuilding agenda, decisions on sequencing and priority may reflect more peacebuilding/statebuilding objectives.
- Issues of insecurity and lack of rule of law pose tremendous operational risk for donors and national counterparts. As a result, in some cases, UNDP may need to sanction more flexible operational approaches to



ensure support can be delivered in a timely manner, especially in the area of more flexible implementation modalities and funding mechanisms, and building on approaches like the SURGE<sup>4</sup> to deploy expertise quickly.

2. ***Social divisions and grievances along cleavage lines:*** In the legacy of conflict, in which the perception of “winners” and “losers” or who can be trusted and not trusted colors developments, the design of capacity development initiatives must carefully navigate these sensitivities. Especially in the context of reintegrating ex-combatants, skills development efforts can increase expectations but fail to help individuals secure work as there are continued negative perceptions and an unwillingness to hire ex-combatants. The Diaspora engagement programmes can also put pressure on resentments against those who escaped hardships, and upon return, be perceived to have favored status. In general, any effort to build human or institutional capital in a context in which those in power are distrusted and/or partial will play into issues of distrust and questionable legitimacy.

#### PROPOSED APPROACHES:

- To navigate perceptions and resentments along lines of social division, capacity development approaches could incorporate stakeholder mapping, political economy and conflict analysis tools into the design stage of programmes and proactively create a dialogue space for a diverse range of national players and development partners to acknowledge the dynamics of fragility at the outset of new programmes.
- UNDP has sufficient risk management tools and organizational flexibility/resilience to deal with political risk, and as such, our approach should not be excessively cautious in these contexts. In light of these risk management practices, UNDP is in the position to engage more assertively in complex political contexts, managing these risks proactively, instead of adopting a neutral, technocratic approach in an effort to avoid political risk.

#### KOSOVO - SUPPORTING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL DIVISIONS

Since the end of conflict in 1999, vast financial and human resources have been invested in Kosovo, but progress in strengthening public institutions has been limited and often unsustainable. In addition, the entrenched ethnic tension that continued to deepen cleavage lines during Kosovo's post-conflict recovery and early development have placed a premium on stakeholder involvement, but assistance has not always been linked to the needs articulated by stakeholders nor focused on developing capacities for public participation, dialogue and empowerment.

UNDP Kosovo's support to capacity development has placed a premium on managing stakeholder involvement strategically and sensitively; UNDP has designed programmes based on diverse stakeholder feedback and driven by the demands of various Kosovo institutions (Ministries, departments, agencies and offices). In addition, UNDP has supported a number of programmes designed to for the sustainability of national institutions, e.g., improving national systems rather than creating standalone implementation units; facilitating on-the-job placement of advisors/mentors, mostly local though some Diaspora; and supporting the establishment of the Kosovo Public Administration Institute.

<sup>4</sup> SURGE is a UNDP-wide programme that provides unique standard operating procedures to facilitate the rapid deployment of relevant expertise and resources to Country Offices in crisis situations, through operational practices such as recruiting from pre-vetted rosters.

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### Prioritize Support to Partners in Making Tough Choices:

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UNDP should ensure that support is focused and realistic. Concretely, better prioritization and sequencing tools/facilitation guides for field-based practitioners must be developed

3. ***Institutional reform in fragile contexts:*** Building institutions to deliver the core functions of a state in fragile contexts is one of the greatest challenges for capacity development efforts and broader development agendas, and requires a balance of short-term activities and long-term investments. While there is a spectrum of different stages of fragility, ranging from semi-manageable to total devastation and crisis, the more severe and protracted a situation is, the greater the damage to systems of governance and social services is and the more entrenched a culture of corruption can become. Given the scale of this challenge, a massive amount of technical solutions are galvanized. However, various manifestations of institutional failure, along the spectrum of fragility, indicate a complex mix of socio-cultural forces that inhibit progress, such as corruption, an unwillingness to share information/operate with transparency, and the lack of will to deliver services.
  - Can capacity development interventions either navigate or address these forces instead of simply being subject to them? Issues of performance management, values and integrity need more serious critical treatment in programme design approaches.
  - Further, efforts to focus capacity development on the state itself can reveal that there may not be an agreed upon understanding/vision of what the state should be.

### PROPOSED APPROACHES:

- Identify which or what type of institutions should be prioritized for capacity development support and ensure that timeframes for support are realistic given the long-term and highly uncertain nature of reform processes. The experience from various country cases validates the view that increased legitimacy can be slowly built up if select, pivotal institutions receive sustained support, whether they are institutions that advance transparency, justice, and anti-corruption, or institutions that safeguard citizen security or accountability for the use of public resources. As such, sequencing support for these specific institutions up front will further improve the enabling environment for subsequent capacity development support for other institutions and/or processes.
- Ensure that capacity development efforts complement the country's efforts to define a shared vision.
- Facilitate dialogue on what core state functions are most essential for realizing peace dividends.<sup>5</sup>
- Balance the creation of formal institutions with traditional/customary institutions and practices that may have worked to some degree in the past.

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<sup>5</sup> While there are several definitions of core state functions, the 2011 World Development Report of the World Bank defines core state functions as 1. Citizen security; 2. Justice, and 3. Supporting job creation, prioritizing institutional support in these areas, as they yield the greatest peace dividends to the people. Another valuable framework for considering core state functions is the functional framework utilized by the UN Civilian Capacities Review, which is also the guiding framework for the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Public Administration and Local Governance.

- Define realistic priorities, given the scale of the transformation agenda.
- Facilitate agreement on realistic sequencing of efforts since reform and transformation processes are very long-term, endogenous processes.
- Exploit promising areas for capacity development investment, which become apparent through contextual analysis – often at the local governance level where UNDP can have strong impact.
- Introduce performance management and practices to change work culture through concrete and simple actions that can be implemented because they are not too elaborate. Specifically, it was recommended to emulate the practice in Southern Sudan, in which UNV Advisors, upon their deployment, conduct a ‘rapid scan’ of capacities within their organization (UNDP provides a tool for the rapid scan) and this is used to develop a workplan, coaching strategy, and milestones for successful exit/transition.

#### SOMALIA -SUPPORTING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN A FRACTURED AND FRACTIONAL POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

National capacity development in Somalia continuously navigates four major obstacles: 1. the absence of a recognized Government across the entire country, resulting in radically weakened institutions with little legitimacy; 2. dramatic variation in the political landscape from region to region and shifting power and allegiances shift over time; 3. serious threats to staff security resulting in remote management of capacity development initiatives; and 4. the importance of trying to ensure UN neutrality in a complex situation.

In this dynamic and challenging environment, UNDP Somalia manages the balance between short-term capacity interventions needed to secure a peace settlement and support to longer-term capacity development as part of an overall strategy to rebuild legitimacy and deliver services.

Taking into account the differences within the governance frameworks in each area, UNDP Somalia has devised comprehensive capacity development programmes that are unique and flexible and specific to each region: Somaliland (diaspora experts, project implementation units, technical assistance, policy development); Puntland (institutional partnerships, diaspora experts, technical assistance, learning exchange visits with the same institutions in Somaliland); and South-Central Somalia (short-term interventions, south-south exchange, study tours, technical assistance, third-party monitoring, training programmes).

The design and delivery of these initiatives are clearly political – influenced by donors externally and stakeholders internally, seeking control of key institutions, which generate or control resources, to change the course of the conflicts. UNDP Somalia works within this context – managing the significant differences across regions and delivering short-term outputs while laying the foundation for longer-term more sustainable results

4. *Relationship between central and local-level power/the state and non-state actors:* Fragile contexts in which accelerated democracy and/or decentralization agendas are promoted pose additional risks for development efforts, as the pace of change introduced can play into social insecurities in unpredictable ways. Further, sharing power, influence and responsibility for social well-being between Government and civil society players is a balancing act as the decisions to prioritize support for particular components of the state architecture or segments of civil society can touch upon sensitivities or be perceived as implicit designations of legitimacy on some groups/players over others.
  - Rebuilding infrastructure is often the most immediate development aim for the state to project any legitimacy as access to cut-off populations is essential for giving Government some visibility with the people. Often, programmes that seek to restore good governance in post-conflict contexts are limited to the capital cities and the seat

of centralized power, it is, however, necessary to ensure that these programmes also reach the local level.

#### PROPOSED APPROACHES:

- Support both state and non-state actors at centralized and decentralized levels of governance, but pursue modest agendas that could be scaled-up if needed, to ensure that issues related to power dynamics are not ignited, but dealt with through careful dialogue involving diverse stakeholders.
- Explore the right balance between traditional/customary systems and formal state systems in cases in which it is not fully certain which approach has the greatest legitimacy and practical chance for success, thereby building citizen confidence.

Regardless of the particular aspects of a specific country situation, fragile contexts tend to have a near overwhelming donor presence in which multiple agendas and programme/operations approaches complicate matters enormously. UNDP can be a very small voice at the table, at times, but given the breadth of the organizational mandate and development expertise, is well-positioned to “sit on the side of the table” with Government and national counterparts to support the coordination of the development agenda and the leadership capacity of national actors. Furthermore, UNDP’s organizational incentives should be brought into better alignment with the actual requirements for the contribution that is valuable and impactful, entailing a different dialogue around results and donor support - UNDP must be able to say “no” where there is no comparative advantage of UNDP’s contribution relative to other development partners, or the requested support is not within our core areas of expertise.

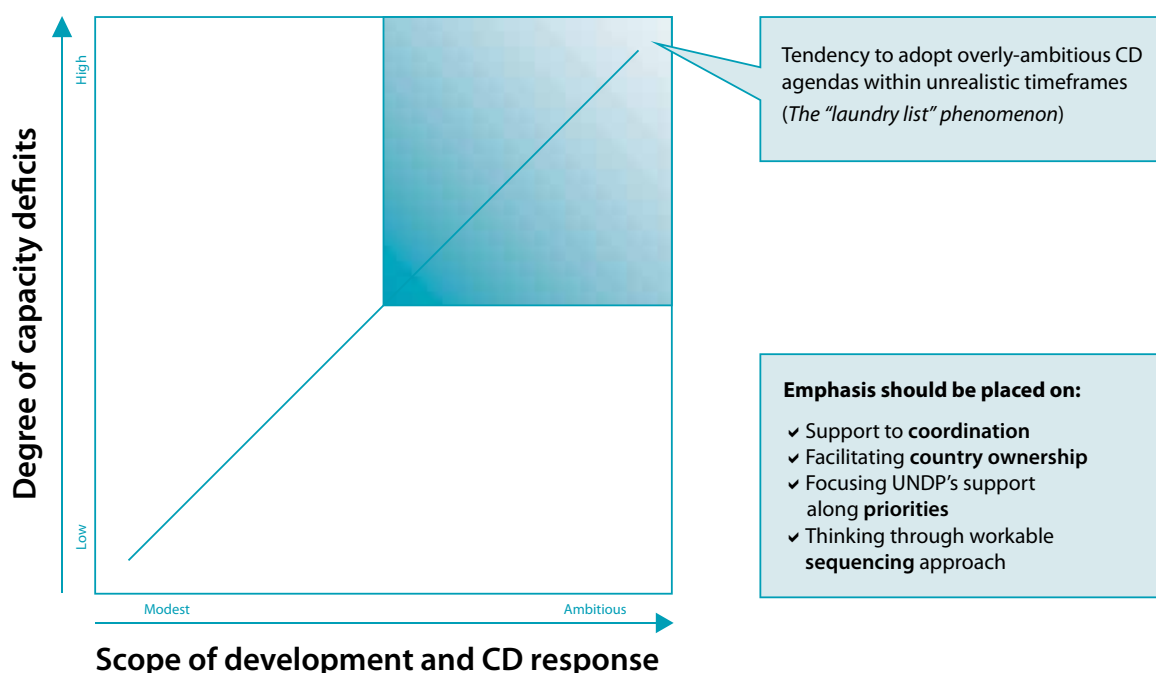




## **PART IV**

ADAPTING AND APPLYING THE  
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH  
IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS - THE "HOW"





While the points above speak to managing the influence contextual factors have on the “when” and “what” of capacity development support, the points below address adapting and applying the capacity development process – the “how” – based on the specifics of fragile contexts. Evidence and experience in capacity development design and implementation in fragile contexts clearly suggest the need for adaptive approaches in fragile contexts:

1. **Pursuing ‘light’ and focused capacity assessments:** Case evidence and logic suggest that effective capacity development interventions are based on an understanding of existing and desired national capacities and the gap between them. This logic informs UNDP’s capacity development process and resonates with national counterparts who request assessments. Special care should be taken when designing capacity assessments to accommodate the special circumstances inherent in fragile contexts.
  - Regardless of context, capacity assessments can vary in scope, complexity and duration: they can be detailed, conceptual or abstract, and long, or they can be streamlined, focused on technical aspects, and quick. In fragile contexts, the cost of a burdensome design can be particularly high in that it can cause delay and thereby displace the ownership of national champions and/or fail to mobilize forward momentum for effective capacity development.
  - Capacity assessments in select fragile contexts (such as initial state-building, post-conflict countries that have suffered tremendous brain drain) can lose their purpose, as measuring baseline capacities can appear to be a meaningless, or worse, demoralizing exercise, when capacities are scarce and an assessment does lead to workable starting points or priorities.
  - Assessments can become projects in themselves, absorbing time and energy that could be productively allocated elsewhere.

#### Ensure Rapid Response:

UNDP should make resources available at the country level to tailor approaches for programmatic support, and provide more peer-to-peer and South-South exchanges.

## UGANDA - PURSUING LIGHT AND FOCUSED CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

To reflect the national context and needs, a capacity development team, consisting of the Government of Uganda, UNDP (Uganda CO, BCPR and BDP) and national consultants, worked together to tailor UNDP's approach to supporting capacity development, particularly the capacity assessment phase.

The team adapted the capacity development process to focus on local government capacities for peace building, socio-economic recovery, and conflict resolution, and streamlined the capacity assessment tool. A capacity self-assessment was conducted by district authorities in Northern Uganda, and capacity development action plan was subsequently formulated.

Adapting the process to suit the context promoted national ownership of the overall capacity development initiative and of the recommendations for action emerging from the process. In addition, making the process light and the tool focused allowed more time for engagement and dialogue and provided national counterparts the opportunity to internalize and adapt definitions, concepts and targets through extensive discussion and collaboration. It also allowed for more direct engagement with a diversity of stakeholders, including political representatives, technical staff, CSO representatives, traditional leaders, and development partners. Importantly, a lighter approach built early momentum that national counterparts could carry forward throughout the entire capacity development process.

### PROPOSED APPROACHES:

- Recognizing that assessments are necessary for anchoring a capacity development process, they can be made light and focused on very straightforward and relevant indicators to properly inform priority setting and consensus building.
  - Realistic prioritization is essential for getting a capacity development process moving. The risk of getting tied down with overly complex capacity assessments instead of building on the direct points of consensus on priorities which may be articulated already, can burn energy and challenge the nascent momentum at the beginning of a capacity development process, which threatens the staying power of champions and working-level counterparts.
  - Emulate successful practices (countries such as Kosovo, Uganda, the Occupied Palestinian Territories) in investing more in facilitating participation, stakeholder engagement and dialogue in the goal-setting process to support a clear and simple formulation of priorities and the capacities needed to realize them versus adopting an overly sophisticated/comprehensive capacity assessment methodology.
2. ***Balancing extraordinary needs with realistic agendas and sound prioritization:*** Typically, national actors and partners are frustrated that capacity development initiatives are “fragmented,” “uncoordinated,” and “limited,” while embracing the conceptual outlook that capacity development is a “process” that is “cross-cutting.” Further, in fragile contexts, capacity issues are usually crippling development and capacity deficits are manifest in nearly all areas of society and partners feel that we cannot address such an extensive challenge without an over-arching strategy. However, the case evidence suggests that big, complex strategies are achieving limited results, due to some specific challenges:



## SOUTH SUDAN - BALANCING EXTRAORDINARY NEEDS WITH REALISTIC AGENDAS

UNDP Southern Sudan anchored its capacity development support within the Government of South Sudan's (GoSS) Statebuilding process – a truly daunting process, as South Sudan established 32 new Ministries and 17 Commissions from scratch. Given the massive scale of needs identified for a functioning State in South Sudan, UNDP worked with national counterparts and international partners to conduct a “ruthless prioritization” of State “survival functions.” Through an intensive and extensive consultation process, consensus was reached and a “core governance functions” compact between GoSS and international partners the GOSS was established.

To bring the compact to life, several capacity surge and supplementation initiatives are being implemented. These initiatives utilize a standardized performance management approach and emphasize coaching and skills transfer. Two examples of surge/supplementation initiatives are the following:

**Rapid Capacity Placement Initiative:** Embedding 150 international UNVs in positions in GoSS Ministries, working on line functions side-by-side with national counterparts, accountable to the Government.

**IGAD Regional Initiative:** “Twinning” 200 skilled civil servants from IGAD member countries with GoSS civil servants in core Ministries to transfer skills in a collaborative working approach. IGAD “twin” civil servants are contracted directly by the GoSS through MoUs.

The exit strategy for these initiatives is a medium-term Capacity Development Strategy and additional assistance for civil service strengthening and civil service training capacity.

The ruthless prioritization, undertaken early on in the statebuilding process, was a critical first step in the capacity development process. The capacity development response of surge and supplementation was then designed to respond to the areas of greatest need and in such a way as to ensure the greatest impact and sustainability of capacities developed.

- While a national capacity development strategy may facilitate the formulation of policies on how capacity development efforts are managed and may elevate the urgency and political commitment to capacity development initiatives, they tend to be too far reaching for national actors to implement, especially in light of the exceptional capacity challenges in fragile contexts and difficulty in facilitating agreement on priorities and realistic sequencing of efforts.
- Conceptual frameworks underpinning national capacity development strategies tend to get confused with other, related frameworks, such as overall national development plans, aid coordination, civil service reform, and sector reform frameworks. Leaders and development partners lose time by articulating how “these frameworks are clearly linked,” instead of simply focusing on implementation and adaptation.
- National capacity development strategies tend to be normative in approach, which poses difficulties in reconciling the contextual factors of working in fragile contexts, such as unclear and shifting power dynamics, issues of legitimacy, and deep social divisions.

**Avoid Known Traps:**

This includes introducing and building formal structures without factoring in the roles and merits of traditional structures, or introducing new teams/secretariats without critically considering sustainability.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

TA has proven to be both popular and a target for criticism in fragile states, including East Timor, Sierra Leone, Liberia, DRC, etc. — Immediate results for institutional functionality are realized, while longer-term goals for sustainability and actual knowledge transfer are not realized to the degree anticipated.

**PROPOSED APPROACHES:**

- Utilize large-scale and/or high profile national development agendas to focus on the coordination of numerous capacity development activities.
  - Place more emphasis on country ownership and sustainable leadership through coordination support instead of analyzing and programming capacity development investments across all sectors, which can become overly complex.
  - Emulate the practice in UNDP Southern Sudan of using a national capacity development strategy to formalize a protocol for capacity development with national counterparts, which sets minimum standards for how donors support capacity development, focusing on requirements for working with national counterparts and investing more in knowledge management.
  - Ensure that expertise in high-level dialogue for CD prioritization processes is compiled and made available to CO in a rapid manner.
3. ***Achieving sustainable results in knowledge sharing and skill development in the context of Technical Assistance and Project Implementation Units:*** As a tool, Technical Assistance (TA) has worked to “get the job done,” but has also been an obstacle for transferring the knowledge needed for counterparts to work independently.
- While TA projects have some form of knowledge transfer and coaching/mentoring explicitly and prominently outlined in their ToRs, the anticipated capacity development is usually not achieved, and this is not for lack of trying; most TA advisors are saddled with such an overwhelming need to deliver functional expertise that there is no time left for knowledge-sharing, coupled with the genuine challenge to find trainable counterparts.
  - Similarly, Project Implementation Units (PIUs) facilitate the execution of projects rapidly and efficiently in instances in which there is limited or no national implementation capacity, and thereby apply project management and oversight policies and practices from the funding institutions and not from country systems.
  - There is wide consensus that a constant flow of training does not transform people or organizations. Development partners are keen to support capacity development strategies that address systemic and organizational challenges to creating a sufficient supply of capable human resources; for example by strengthening institutions that build human capital such as universities and learning institutes.

**PROPOSED APPROACHES:**

- Introduce Technical Assistance resources purely focused on knowledge sharing and skill building instead of expecting technical experts to deliver functional results and also build sustainable capacity, which is often unrealistic. Given that TA often boils down to capacity substitution and can fail to deliver the objectives for which it was designed, ideas are being

shared for defining a TA profile exclusively focused on delivering advice and support with knowledge management, coaching through feedback and performance management and on-the-job skills development. This approach values the central need to spend more time on actual capacity development instead of providing technical backstopping for numerous functions.

- Fundamentally revise project implementation support based on lessons learned from unintended consequences of PIUs, which in many cases, have operated as stand-alone, isolated units. If PIUs must be introduced, plan to invest in extensive institutional change management support, which significant resources directed to coaching and knowledge sharing.
  - Since many capacity development approaches support and incentivize the top-level management, increase engagement with middle and lower levels in organizations, Including change management support approaches for middle management.
  - Recognize that a semi-skilled workforce in a given institution cannot be developed through Technical Assistance alone, but that deep investments must be made in all levels of education, including higher education and vocational training for adults.
  - Empower nationals in institutions receiving Technical Assistance/institutional capacity development support to participate in the design of new organizational structures, processes, services, etc. to inspire the existing workforce to take ownership for their services, internalize changes and elevated expectations, and motivate incrementally improved performance.
  - South- South approaches should be amplified to ensure that Technical Assistance resources have more relevant comparative experience to offer national counterparts.
4. *Effective exit strategies for incentive programmes/salary augmentation arrangements:* Examples from the field have shown that UNDP is diligent about defining exit strategies at the beginning of a strategy/programme, but that following these exit strategies as envisaged eludes us (as well as other donors and national counterparts), as the need for assistance often remains large.
- The challenges of exit strategies are very apparent in “salary top up” programmes. When successful, these incentive-based, performance management efforts are extremely challenging to retire.
  - In addition, in fragile contexts, salary top-up arrangements risk fomenting resentment along lines of social divisions and can easily distort the local labor market.
  - Most programmes are designed to be “absorbed” into the civil service, assuming the pay scales are recalibrated and revenues are secured in a timely manner. Unfortunately, this assumption does not typically hold in fragile contexts, and the agreed upon timeframe are consistently extended.

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### Respect for Counterparts:

The international community can be a heavy presence in fragile contexts, bringing a great deal of influence with resources. As such, UNDP should continue to support national counterparts and protect country-owned processes and priorities.

### PROPOSED APPROACHES:

- At the stage of initial programme design, facilitate a dialogue with national counterparts and donors on the challenges of exit strategies, presenting quantifiable data on comparative programme closures in other contexts, including expected vs. actual programme duration, costs, and risk mitigation practices.
  - Better link UNDP advisors as a cost-effective way to strengthen the quality (and prospects for success) of our programme design and dialogue with partners. Responsible and well thought-through programme design and exit strategies in such complex contexts comes with experience, and UNDP has a rich network of very experienced, knowledgeable and effective advisors who are the best resources we have for addressing these challenges.
5. *Facilitating country ownership and long-term investment:* Most of the issues cited above are related to the risk that the relationship between donors and national counterparts becomes one of dependency and counterproductive incentives, which undermines country ownership and contributes to outcomes that are unsustainable, despite very earnest efforts to the contrary. There is an emerging acknowledgement that development institutions are looking for results too quickly and are under-investing vis-à-vis the needs to be addressed in order to realize those results.

### LIBERIA -BALANCING A LONG-TERM APPROACH WITH QUICK WINS

Liberia has achieved a remarkable transformation over the past decade: after 14 years of civil war, it has transitioned from a post-conflict to early recovery development setting. Its staggering capacity deficits, however, threaten its trajectory toward sustainable development; in fact, national leaders consider low level of national capacity as the “binding constraint” in delivering on the current National Development Plan (2008–2012) – Lift Liberia. Recognizing the need for a sustained national capacity development effort, Liberia developed a National Capacity Development Strategy (NCDS), aligned with its National Visioning 2030. The strategy builds on a number of emergency capacity development initiatives (TOKTEN, SES, LECBS) launched in tandem with Liberia’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy, and provides an overarching framework under which these and other initiatives can contribute to the development of sustainable capacities and achievement of national development goals.

UNDP supported the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs in developing the strategy and establishing a National Capacity Development Unit (NCDU). The Unit, comprised of talented Liberian nationals and situated in the Ministry, represents a shift in ownership, with the Government of Liberia directly managing the NCDS and no longer relying on direct execution by donors. As of 2011, all donors had aligned support behind the NCDS and the NCDU.

While the NCDS has provided a comprehensive and long-term perspective on the country’s capacity development needs and responses, the scale of the effort – including coordination and implementation – has created a significant workload for nascent Liberian institutions, the results of which have not been immediately realizable. To demonstrate results in the short term, generate momentum, and build on the limited capacities available, the NCDS might well be complemented with smaller, more targeted efforts.



### PROPOSED PRINCIPLES:

In addition to a better understanding of the context of fragility, there are some global reflections emerging from all cases that help to solidify the following principles that should guide UNDP's process of learning and adaptation:

- Capacity development results simply require more time to become manifest, requiring decades to facilitate transformation in societies that are in a state of persistent fragility;
- Working in fragile contexts necessitates flexibility over formula, the implication of which is that UNDP and national counterparts must be vigilant in adapting technical approaches to better address particular socio-political dynamics as well as re-consider several implementation factors, including anticipated timeframes for results to be achieved, what sequencing logic may be the most constructive, how to set real priorities when everything could be considered a priority, and how to work with the right champions at the right time.
- Capacity development approaches can be informed by the multiple approaches, intervention logics, tools and case examples, and we can work with national counterparts to apply these resources selectively, in combination, or use them as inspiration to innovate in new directions. Understanding the context is paramount for deciding on an approach, and the value of informed analysis and judgment cannot be underscored enough.

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In summary, while the above points reflect how unique scenarios require specific approaches, several recommendations were considered "global" for helping to determine what to do, and what not to do, when providing capacity development support in fragile contexts.



## Do's:

- Understand the context (especially highlighting political dimensions and inexplicit social forces)
- Better integrate analytical tools into our approach, including conflict and political economy analysis
- Adopt a supportive and facilitative role, not a leading role
- Invest much more time in identifying champions and in building partnerships
- Think carefully about entry and exit strategies
- Position UNDP's support to improve coordination and facilitate coherence among all external support
- Seek consensus on priorities to focus the agenda on realistic outcomes
- Favor simple, direct approaches over large, complex strategies (treat national CD strategies with caution)
- Articulate risk mitigation approaches for known challenges in TA, capacity substitution, salary top-ups, PIUs initiatives, etc.
- Take principled stands when it is the right thing to do, and promote organizational flexibility
- Build meaningful bridges with partners, esp. UN peacekeeping missions to engage in political issues, when it makes sense

## Don'ts:

- Treat Capacity Development interventions as purely technical
- Assume normative models and approaches will work
- Assume certain or fixed lines of legitimacy in relation to institutions and/or champions
- Introduce and build formal structures without factoring in the roles and merits of traditional structures
- Introduce new teams/secretariats without critically considering sustainability
- Treat capacity assessments as ends in themselves/"projectize" assessments
- Acquiesce to pressure from counterparts and partners without challenging assumptions and agendas
- Shy away from the political realities of working in conflict and fragile contexts
- Consider expenditures and delivery rates as the primary measure of results achieved and impact

All the above outlined challenging environments, proposed responses and approaches to CD programming have interrelating aspects which can be applicable and relevant depending on the specificity of the context. The more it is critical to acknowledge the need of understanding its dynamics well, reading the risks and opportunities and responding with a nuanced approach consisting of a tailored CD programme.

## ANNEXES



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## ANNEX A: DETAILED WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

The following session summaries outline the main points and discussion items that constituted the substance of the workshop.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

This workshop builds on case experiences from numerous UNDP Country Offices and partner initiatives in Capacity Development, to advance the following objectives:

- Review the experiences of UNDP, national partners and international actors in supporting capacity development in conflict and fragile contexts to draw lessons learned, identify trade-offs, dilemmas and promising practices;
- Discuss the spectrum of capacity development support, from provision of technical advice to facilitation of south-south support to longer-term institutional strengthening; and
- Identify ways to enhance UNDP's policy and programmatic impact by addressing operational arrangements and identifying existing and needed knowledge products.

The workshop participants were colleagues from BDP's Capacity Development Group and Democratic Governance Group, BCPR, and Country Offices in conflict and fragile contexts that are advancing significant capacity development efforts, as well as other partners from the UN system. A list of workshop participants and contact information is included in Annex B.

### OPENING REMARKS

The workshop was officially opened by **Mr. Nils Boesen**, the Director of BDP's Capacity Development Group, and **Ms. Marta Ruedas**, Deputy Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Both stressed the need for critical evaluation and innovative thinking in supporting capacity development in fragile contexts and affirmed the active partnership between BDP and BCPR in this area. In particular, the following comments set the stage for the workshop:

- Supporting capacity development in fragile contexts is challenging, as the environments tend to be hyper-politicized, chaotic, complex, and extremely active with donor-led development support. In parallel, there is a tendency of development players and national counterparts to outline overly ambitious agendas that are not practically feasible and are not sensitive to the delicate and dynamic socio-political realities on the ground.
- Such environments demand innovative and flexible approaches to Capacity Development. Therefore, UNDP is working to create 'virtuous cycles' of learning from field experience and technical expertise at the nexus of BCPR and CDG/DGG.
- This partnership is critical for UNDP as we have a clear mandate to lead on capacity development and we have a role to play in the INCAF (OECD-DAC) and International Dialogue on Capacity Development.



## SESSION 1: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATES ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

**Chair:** *Nicholas Leader, Democratic Governance Group*

**Panelists:** *Patrick Kueleers, Jago Salmon, Niloy Banerjee, Eugenia Piza-Lopez*

**Topic:** *Discussion of UNDP's role in the context of the International Dialogue on Capacity Development as framed by the World Bank's World Development Report, the G7+ and INCAF/OECD-DAC work on Capacity Development, the UN Inter-Agency Review of Public Administration in crisis contexts, and the UN Secretary General's Report on Peace Building and the Review of Civilian Capacities.*

### Main Points

Each of these frameworks and processes has implications for how UNDP positions itself. It is clear that UNDP has a strong mandate in this area and is being looked to for strong technical and coordination support.

#### World Development Report (WDR) – World Bank

- The emerging context is that fragility is a core concern of the development approaches in the international community. The primary problems today are growing insecurity and fragility, which may even challenge the emphasis placed on the MDG targets.
- The WDR affirms that development should focus on the minimum, core State functions of 1) the establishment of citizen security, 2) the provision of justice via state institutions; and 3) the provision of jobs.
- The WDR seems to equate capacity development with institution building. This position is interesting for UNDP's consideration as there may be a case to maintain a broad focus on capacity development at multiple levels (individual, organizational, and enabling environment) or there may be some arguments for consolidating support at the institutional level.

#### UN initiative for Public Administration in post conflict countries

- The UN Review for Public Administration in post conflict countries is evaluating results and lessons learned as public administration has been flagged as an area where support has not always been timely, predictable and well-coordinated, leading to mixed results.
- The PA working group has recently been established (includes the key agencies DPKO, DPA, PBSO, DESA, UNCDF, UNV, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNHABITAT), and will be finalizing recommendations in the coming months.
- Within UNDP, BCPR and BDP are taking the lead on this work, and are focusing on the following case studies: Liberia, Burundi, Guinea Bissau, Kosovo, Timor Leste, and desk reviews of both Afghanistan and Sierra Leone.
- The key principles emerging are:
  - State-building approach: Public administration should be viewed as a bridge between state and people and a means to improve state-citizen relationships in post-conflict settings. The tendency is to think about public administration as machinery that needs to be fixed, but it is not so simple. All state functions and public administration influence the relationship and perceptions between people and the state (e.g. the way the state institutions distribute information, engage citizens, and a myriad of other functions, clearly shape the perception of citizens, building or undermining legitimacy)

- To analyze what is feasible with PAR efforts in the initial years after the conflict one needs to look beyond immediate issues and reflect back on the context and socio-political issues that continue to influence reform efforts.

### **UN Secretary General's Report on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict**

- This report gives UNDP the leadership role to work on Capacity Development efforts in the context of crisis, post-crisis and fragile contexts.
- The report challenges the UN to achieve coherence in our support, and thereby challenges UNDP to provide much stronger coordination support.
- Report identifies 5 bottlenecks seen in all conflict/post-conflict countries: 1) Support to leadership teams on the ground (UN leadership) which are fragmented; 2) Alignment of resources and priorities; 3) Promoting national ownership/strengthening core capacities; 4) Rapid deployment of expertise and funding; 5) Need for flexible and fast funding, with enough risk tolerance.
- Solutions proposed include practical recommendations for joint analysis and avenues for using the Peacebuilding Fund for catalytic activities and for managing PBF funding in a more integrated manner.
- However, these commitments do not come with binding institutional arrangements or additional resources - It is purely a voluntary basis for reform.

### **The International Dialogue about capacity development in fragile contexts**

- What is different about the capacity development agenda in the international discussion surrounding issues of supporting fragile countries is that our approaches are being informed by clearly articulated priorities and targets from several complementary international dialogue processes and fora, including the G7+ group of nations and the OECD-DAC. In adapting capacity development approaches in fragile contexts, it is wholly relevant to focus tremendous analysis on issues of inclusion and legitimacy from a state building and peacebuilding lens. This goes well beyond the purely technical aspects of capacity development interventions. This insight and lessons are drawn from:
  - OECD/DAC INCAF work on conflict and fragility;
  - International Dialogue/G7+ countries focus on capacity development in fragile and conflict contexts as a key area that needs further reflection and change in practices;
- In concert with these broad, international consensus-building processes, UNDP is reinforcing its internal and external partnerships to review capacity development approaches in fragile contexts, including:
  - UNDP/WB Initiative on State building in Liberia and Sierra Leone;
  - BCPR/CDG work on capacity development in fragile contexts ("Capacity *is* Development" global event papers, joint assessments in 3 countries)
  - BCPR work with selected COs on capacity development and statebuilding
- Key lessons have shaped how we think about capacity development in fragile contexts, indicating that:
  - Multiple stakeholders perspectives on what the problem is and where the country should go that determines decisions of what capacities are required, priorities and how to get there
  - Analytical effort is considerable and not always available (understand history/context/dynamics/real politic of power systems both formal and informal)
  - Focus on gaps and not enough on strengths and centers of excellence that survive the crisis
  - Shifting the approach from normative views of how we go about setting priorities and measuring perceived gaps towards a feasibility-based approach, which values "good enough" outcomes.

- Further, a ‘do no harm’ approach to capacity development in fragile contexts underlines the imperative not to weaken the state/strain the state-citizen dynamic by uneven treatment of center/periphery, unpredictable financial flows, emphasis on international technical assistance (TA), including brain drain, focus on external priorities and not recognizing what is there, dependency, and adopting a technical fix approach (TA, training, study tours, etc.)
- In summary, understanding sources of legitimacy is key to state building, and therefore key to capacity development. Therefore:
  - This is an area of evolving thinking and practice: Flexibility, innovative approaches, and a better understanding of contexts and actors are KEY
  - And, contextual analysis is a major area of work, not just “lip service.” Analytics are impactful, but very resource intensive. UNDP really needs to evaluate the degree to which we invest in analysis.

### Key Issues Discussed

- In this context, multiple transitions are needed – we cannot disconnect institution building (through capacity development) from the political process of peace consolidation. The interplay between state building/peace building and capacity development is ever evolving and involves different patterns of change.
- Given these complexities, let’s shift away from “post conflict” to terminology that focuses on persistent fragility, because the issue of violence and fragility is the issue for influencing development.
- There is strong consensus that greater investment is needed in contextual analysis, including political economy and conflict analysis, within the capacity development processes.
  - We need to acknowledge our assumptions. In many cases, we assume that a Government has the will to restore security and confidence between state and citizens, but the dimensions of this assumed arrangement all need to be questioned.
  - Further, there is a suggestion to develop scenario-based approaches, for example, contingency plans for re-anchoring capacity support in light of changes in political parties securing power; aligning capacity development support along different models/timeframes of decentralization; adjusting the scale of support depending upon the evolution of UN Peacekeeping presences, and their eventual draw-downs, etc.
- In addition to analysis, there is consensus that there should be much more emphasis on UNDP’s support to Government counterparts in coordinating multiple donor interventions, as well as the internal UN coordination. At the same time, it was acknowledged that resources set aside for coordination are typically insufficient.

## SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:** *Eugenia Piza-Lopez*

**Panelists:** *Krenar Loshi (Kosovo) and Geoffrey Prewitt (Occupied Palestinian Territory)*

**Topic:** *The cases of Kosovo and the Occupied Palestinian Territory were presented to demonstrate the contextual factors that influence the capacity development approach.*

### Main Points

#### **Kosovo – Review of the Stakeholder Engagement component of UNDP's capacity development support**

- In Kosovo, stakeholder engagement was the method for defining the capacity development agenda and areas of priority.
- UNDP's approach was to embed advisors in Ministries - technical assistance approach. The advisors facilitated stakeholder engagement efforts.
- Based on stakeholder feedback, UNDP first started to support institution building, and 5 years down the road, helped to establish the Kosovo Public Administration Institute.
- These institutional development priorities were derived from Government requests, as it endeavored to secure legitimacy (as a non-politicized, competent set of institutions, etc.)

#### **Occupied Palestinian Territory – Overview of how complex political landscapes/occupation influences context and how stakeholder interests are navigated.**

- The context of occupation in OPT places such enormous constraints on how the international community can work, and on UNDP. The OPT is one of the most complex governance contexts in the world.
- There is near complete dependency on ODA to finance public administration, and as such, donor interests are very strong and influential of where development efforts are focused.
- Such entrenched stakeholder positions have undermined the role of civil society to maneuver and to help shape the direction of development efforts.
- In conclusion, three recommendations for stakeholder engagement were shared:
  1. Be bold and frank – From passive to assertive engagement
  2. Do not focus on one sector of a nation-state in isolation of the other
  3. Invest in the tools that allow it to happen

### Key Issues Discussed

- Discussion focused on whether or not capacity development efforts should even be mounted in contexts in which stakeholder engagement is so strained/political positions are so divided and entrenched given the limited prospects for transformation. Capacity development in the OPT is not traditional, but there is room for recovery and development work to address requirements for service delivery regardless of political power arrangements.
- In such contexts, UNDP must carefully engage and navigate changing political forces to get the political context right. As we have become under attack (sometimes literally) the organization has tried to become apolitical and focus on a purely technical approach. The impact of this is not that compelling to some and there is a belief that we cannot escape politics, so we should engage political issues far more seriously.

- Stakeholder engagement needs to go beyond working with representatives that happen to occupy official positions considered de-facto ‘legitimate’ to also include individuals/institutions that have earned the confidence of the public, which is a demonstrated form of legitimacy.
- In such contexts, it is recommended that UNDP works far more closely with political affairs units in peace keeping missions to keep political analysis at the forefront of our development work.
- In reflecting on the balance between the political and the purely technical, experience has shown that institution building dynamics faithfully follow the political economy, and must ‘self-correct’ with changing political power. Development players cannot really control how to rationalize the institutional map and we must accept that institutions are organic.
- Especially in very tense situations, being unaware of the political environment carries its own set of risks.

### SESSION 3: CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS AND MEASUREMENT

**Chair:** *Niloy Banerjee*

**Panelists:** *Nigel Coulson (CDG/Uganda support); Raghed Assi (Lebanon); Jozef de Beus (DRC)*

**Topic:** *Review of systematic capacity assessment processes and how planning and monitoring/evaluation efforts were enabled.*

#### Main Points

##### Uganda - Overview of capacity assessment (CA) approach in fragile state context

- The CA approach placed emphasis on being rapid, nationally articulated, and cross-practice.
- A rapid and quick approach was necessary for practical purposes, and while “quick assessments” can sometimes be criticized for not being fully comprehensive, in the case of Uganda, the assessment was carried out along the exact lines as laid forth by national players, which was essential for the exercise to be well received.

##### Lebanon - Overview of capacity assessment approach in Lebanon

- Capacity development efforts focused on strengthening governance capacity, especially at local levels.
- The overall objective of the capacity assessment was to inform an approach that would focus on a better local governance structure, more informed development actors, who could have a more effective role in and implementation of development initiatives, all resulting in better living conditions at the local level.
- Main finding is that the legal framework is still lacking and is a major challenge for local governance.

##### DRC – Review of efforts to initiate and generate momentum for capacity development support in a context in which the relationship with Government counterparts is complex and the donor landscape is weighty.

- In terms of context, the citizens only know the negative associations with the state.
- There has been no formal, overall capacity assessment conducted to guide UNDP’s support.
- UNDP is trying to mount capacity development at local levels, provincial levels, and at the national level.
- Challenges:
  - Government does not want anyone to interfere in security sector reform – so this highly relevant area for capacity development is a ‘no-go.’



- It is unclear who is taking the lead of the coordination of the stabilization program.
- Development players are splitting aid to different parts of the country.
- There is significant donor fatigue.

### Key Issues Discussed

- The capacity assessment approach is very tricky in fragile contexts and needs to be re-engineered to reflect fragile contexts/complement political economy analysis.
- Why are assessments so tricky?
  - They trigger allocation of resources, and there are winners and losers in resource allocation decisions. As such, stakeholders defend interests just as much as provide objective information on benchmarks and targets.
  - They can be “too heavy,” as in time consuming, challenging to explain and tailor.
  - Capacity baselines are sometimes meaningless because the more gaps there are, the longer the list of needed investments is. And the needed investments are too massive/beyond our realistic resources.
  - They are not geared to informing priority setting by design, but in practice, national counterparts often expect capacity assessments to elucidate how a response strategy should be formulated instead of looking to themselves to identify priorities and forecast realistic needed capacities for a future state.
  - Unless they come tied to real funding, there will probably not be political will for the Government to lead/own the assessment.
- CAs also tend to be focused on technical issues that can be quantified. There was a call to integrate a state building approach to an assessment and share insights on how this would differ from a “typical” CA.
- There is a concern that we need to identify the information we really need to know to inform our approaches so that we do no harm instead of collecting voluminous data, which can sometimes be irrelevant data.

### SESSION 4: ACHIEVING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

**Chair:** *Noura Hamladji*

**Panelists:** *Erastus Ethekeon (Kenya); Helen Olafsdottir (Iraq); Lisa Lange (Liberia); George Conway (Southern Sudan); Jean Kabahizi (Burundi); Fernando Traversi (Colombia)*

**Topic:** *The “WHAT” of Capacity Development in Conflict and Fragile Contexts: Adaptation and Innovative Approaches*

### Main Points

#### Kenya – Support to long-term reforms outlined in Kenya’s peace agreement.

- UNDP is focusing its support on leadership development and constitutional reforms to advance the larger peace building agenda.
- Tendency to support pockets of institutions that are influential at a given time.
- Approach to build “collaborative leadership” and engage with governance institutions in an inclusive manner and to counteract the ‘zero sum’ game of political power that is prevalent in Kenya.

### **Iraq – Overview of several programmes, including leadership development, supporting the electoral commission, and supporting the national development plan.**

- Poor governance is considered the root of conflict. Even sectarian issues dovetailed with political issues that were problematic beyond the purely sectarian dimensions of conflict.
- The notion of democratic representation and governance is not really internalized among any segments of society.
- Emphasis on ‘social cohesion’ given the difficulty introduced when discussing conflict (due to conflict fatigue and the risk of politicizing the issue further, when there is sectarian violence).
- Corruption is so ripe that support to oversight institutions and transparency processes (e.g. the central audit entity) is very strategic.

### **Liberia – Overview of dilemmas to policy making and implementing a National Capacity Development Strategy**

- The Liberian Government asserted very strong leadership for a National Capacity Development Strategy, and the Strategy was approved by Cabinet and became national policy at the beginning of 2011.
- Many challenges were encountered in developing a national capacity development strategy that urge caution and careful approaches in future contexts, including:
  - Since capacity development is a cross-cutting issue, a comprehensive capacity development strategy can ‘over-step’ into other strategic frameworks and processes, especially when trying to articulate capacity development goals by sector without ‘re-writing’ the sector development strategies.
  - National capacity development strategies, in countries with severe capacity constraints, can become very large and ambitious, which can make implementation near impossible, given the extensive capacity gaps.

### **Southern Sudan – Capacity development within a statebuilding process**

- The most notable aspect of UNDP South Sudan’s approach is the application of a state building framework to the capacity development agenda, based on an immediate plan to prevent state failure. The focus was to outline the most essential state functions and prioritize where support should be directed with a conviction to make the tough choices on priorities. This was referred to as “ruthless prioritization,” and the value of this step, to pare down the list of priorities, resonated strongly with workshop participants.
- To advance capacity development goals within the core institutions of the state, UNDP has supported the deployment of experts within Ministries and Institutions, primarily UNVs and national resource persons.
- UNDP is now working with Government counterparts to articulate a medium term capacity development approach to complement interim PRS process.

### **Burundi – Initial considerations for a capacity development support agenda for Burundi**

- Burundi has not been operating in a “capacity development culture” but the needs are great, so UNDP is mobilizing to support capacity development investments within the context of the PRS and Burundi’s national vision 2025.

### Colombia – Peace building approach in support of civil society

- The peace building process entails inherent challenges in navigating political dynamics, which suggests that working with civil society can be an effective way to avoid being perceived as taking a stand along political fault lines.
- While political analysis is important, there is also a tendency to do endless analysis of the political situation, and analysis is greatly colored by the biases of the individual.
- Good practices for working with civil society have included focusing on working with networks, supporting knowledge sharing of peace building initiatives, and conducting field assessments before projects are defined.

### Key Issues Discussed

- The issue of “getting stuck” was discussed in the context of each country case, mainly due to political factors and/or fatigue on the part of national counterparts or donors. There was agreement that it is better to have a smaller agenda that has a chance to gain implementation momentum, especially which is nationally-driven, than to develop an overly intricate strategy that for which implementation is extremely challenging to coordinate.
- It was noted that in the country cases, there was little emphasis on M&E of capacity development results. The unique reality of capacity development results is that they are intertwined with such long-term agendas that the results need to take many years to manifest. As a result, many in UNDP feel that there is a need to develop a new narrative on results in this area, that is informed by factors other than delivery amounts and rates.
- There was wide agreement and many examples for the fact that achieving results and gaining traction is really dependent upon relationship building, i.e. “a lot of drinking tea.”
- There was support for UNDP to work closely with DPKO missions, especially the political affairs colleagues, to ensure that political issues informed the UN’s approach in advancing capacity development policies and programmes.
- It was noted that many of the teams/secretariats that UNDP helps to create to lead the ongoing implementation of capacity development efforts become bottlenecks themselves, as they encounter capacity constraints’ and can fall a bit dormant. It is an ironic phenomenon on many levels. However, such teams need to be supported (more than we might forecast) to ensure that these processes are country-driven.
- In Southern Sudan,
  - UNDP worked to provide immediate support in the critical phase of conflict cessation, and has realized good results by focusing on immediate building, not medium-term activities. The reason for this choice is to develop an enabling environment for future support. In so doing, the discussion on Southern Sudan focused on how to emulate the success realized so far in designing a well-phased strategy.
  - As the referendum process advanced, the issue of ‘spoilers’ emerged, as decisions related to the constitution and the provision of social benefits continue to spark threatening acts to the process of independence for Southern Sudan. These difficult-to-predict conflict factors are monitored closely.

### Group Work – Do's and Don'ts/3-5 key lessons for capacity development support in fragile states

This session allowed small groups to reflect on the country cases discussed to define “do's and don'ts” for capacity development initiatives in fragile contexts. The summary of this discussion is captured in the following graphic:

## Do's:

- Understand the context (especially highlighting political dimensions and inexplicit social forces)/think through multiple scenarios
- Integrate analytical tools into our approach, including conflict and political economy analysis
- Adopt a supportive and facilitative role, not a leading role
- Invest much more time in identifying champions and in building partnerships
- Think very carefully about entry and exit strategies
- Position UNDP's support to improve coordination and facilitate coherence among all external support
- Seek consensus on priorities to focus the agenda on realistic outcomes
- Favor simple, direct approaches over large, overly complex strategies (treat national capacity development strategies with caution)
- Articulate risk mitigation approaches for known “traps” (TA/ capacity substitution, salary top-ups, PIUs, etc.
- Accept a sensible amount of risk, take principled stands when it is the right thing to do, and promote organizational flexibility
- Build meaningful bridges with partners, esp. UN peacekeeping missions to engage in political issues, when it makes sense

## Don'ts:

- Treat Capacity Development interventions as purely technical
- Assume normative models and approaches will work
- Assume certain or fixed lines of legitimacy in relation to institutions and/or champions
- Introduce and build formal structures without factoring in the roles and merits of traditional structures
- Introduce new teams/secretariats without critically considering sustainability
- Treat capacity assessments as ends in themselves/“projectize” assessments
- Acquiesce to pressure from counterparts and partners without challenging assumptions and agendas
- Shy away from the political realities of working in conflict and fragile contexts
- Consider expenditures and delivery rates as the primary measure of results achieved and impact

## SESSION 5: ACHIEVING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS (CONTINUED)

**Chair:** *Geoffrey Prewitt*

**Panelists:** *Noura Hamladji (East Timor); George Conway (Southern Sudan); Emma Morley (Somalia); Cleophas Torori (Sierra Leone)*

**Topic:** *The “how” of capacity development: Adaptation and Innovative Approaches*

### Main Points

#### East Timor – Technical Assistance in civil service and justice sector

- UNDP’s support followed an “audit” conducted to identify 300 essential posts and 200 posts that were critical. So, UNDP supported the deployment of 200 expatriates – large scale Technical Assistance effort.
  - The reality of the situation required “capacity substitution,” because it was required for basic functionality and achieving some progress.
  - The trap of substitution – TA is very popular with counterparts/UNDP is continually under pressure to keep supporting TA
  - Advisors are not always good at transferring knowledge and have a vested interest in not building capacity (the knowledge sharing aim did not work in Timor).
- Recruiting and managing the 200 contracts was an extreme challenge – needed a roster of CVs and experts in different areas of government.
- Quality assurance of profiles selected was really tough in technical areas in which UNDP had no expertise (such as aviation engineers).
- In terms of recommendations from experience:
  - East Timor invested in the creation of training institutes (e.g. in the Justice Sector) to deliver more sustainable knowledge and skill building support instead of extending TA ad infinitum.
  - We should develop a surge roster (thematic focus) for projects, not just for COs.
  - We need to draw attention to the guidance already developed for how to provide programme support/TA for universities, training institutes, and not just ministries.
  - No guidance or tools for dealing with traditional systems, we only work in formal approaches, which are not always relevant in the context.

#### South Sudan – South-South cooperation

- Capacity surge programmes. UNVs work in state structures for the last 5 years.
- Ministry of Labor and Civil Service Agency approached UNDP to look into models for deploying civil servants from other southern governments (who maintain their status within their governments) to work within institutions in Southern Sudan.
- The Government and UNDP are in discussion with the AU about scaling this up even further.
- Performance Management: When the UNV is deployed, they conduct a ‘rapid scan’ of capacities within their organization (UNDP provides a tool for the rapid scan) and this is used to develop a workplan, coaching strategy, and milestones for successful exit/transition.
- In summary, UNDP does not consider this approach capacity substitution and not TA. Instead, this approach is referred to as is capacity surging/placing additional capacity, in Southern Sudan.



### **Somalia –The Use of Different Capacity Building Tools in Varying Conflict Ridden Environments**

- UNDP's operating space is so very constrained by the conflict in Somalia:
  - Officials have to go out to other countries for learning – it is too hard to bring people into to Somalia
  - So tough to conduct political analysis because UNDP cannot be on the ground
  - Different technical interventions in different pockets provoke political suspicion of favoritism
- So much emphasis on policy development and legislation, but not work on real work and implementation (things get stuck here).
- UNDP has a lot of tools but not a way of managing the process and 'pulling it all together.'
- Capacity development support is anchored in political scenario projection.

### **Sierra Leone – Emergency capacity substitution**

- Technical Assistance is part and parcel of Sierra Leone's civil service reform program.
- Focus on establishing a lot of TA in the president's office (policy making think tank).
- In addition, a Diaspora project is in place to deploy expertise in service delivery functions.
- As seen in the East Timor case, UNDP Sierra Leone also wrestles with the issue of dependency on TA and difficulty in following the original exit strategy set forth.

### **Key Issues Discussed**

- The challenges associated with the tendency for Technical Assistance to morph into capacity substitution resonated strongly with colleagues, and there was much discussion and debate. The consensus position was that this approach works in traditional environments but consistently causes distortions in fragile states. In terms of alternatives/adaptation:
  - Acknowledge that in some circumstances, direct capacity substitution may be warranted to help realize immediate results. In such cases, capacity substitution should be used deliberately and clearly in a time-bound nature – To do so, additional guidance is needed on how to navigate issues that tend to emerge around these arrangements, including guidance on formulating sound exit strategies.
  - In cases in which we want Technical Assistance to deliver knowledge, skills and facilitate transformation (instead of serving as capacity substitution), UNDP may consider defining roles for technical assistance that are purely focused on facilitating knowledge transfer, coaching/mentoring, and on-the-job training, and separating this TA from TA that is used to deliver technical results/perform functions. We need to acknowledge that the failure to realize sustainable knowledge transfer demands new approaches and invest much more in supporting learning.
  - The model of mentoring is still problematic, because it is still insufficient, even if we really focus on it and invest in mentoring. In stable states, professionals receive formal education + time being mentored to be proficient. Conversely, in fragile contexts, there are varying levels of success with effective mentoring, as timeframes are often unrealistic, the objectives and incentives for both mentors and mentees are not always crystallized, etc.
  - UNDP should support long-term investments in universities and training institutes instead of running numerous training efforts that are small, short-term, and consistently coming up short in transferring skills and knowledge.
  - The transaction costs of TA are outrageously high.

- UNDP Afghanistan learned from East Timor – UNDP contracted with InWent to train its TAs in mentoring, and did an intergovernmental MoU with India to secure south-south arrangements for deploying expertise.
- UNDP should invest in a formal evaluation of its approach to TA/capacity surging/substitution and identify why and where it has worked and where it has not.

### **Group Work – Capacity Development Programme Approach for 3 country typologies /scenarios**

This session allowed small groups to design capacity development programme approaches for three different country scenarios/typologies:

1. A new state being formed after state failure/conflict
2. States in complex transitions/ongoing conflict
3. Ethnically divided states

### **Main Points**

The following design considerations and outcomes/outputs were common for each scenario:

- All three groups affirmed the need to conduct extensive contextual analysis and risk identification before designing an approach as the socio-political dynamics are equally, if not more so, determinant in achieving results than the technical needs to be addressed.
- All groups stressed the need for tough prioritization. Emphasis was placed on the institutions that are responsible for supporting the basic functions of the state, security, justice and economic development/jobs.
- Counterbalancing the need to prioritize very select institutions and entry points, all groups proposed working on national and local levels and partnering with Government and civil society organizations. While we cannot work everywhere, there is agreement that we cannot work exclusively with centralized Government authorities as this could reinforce entrenched hierarchies and limit the ability for UNDP to understand the broader context.

### **New state:**

- In cases in which capacity was assumed to be drastically low, the scale of needed reconstruction and likely absence of institutional functionality suggests that an approach of deploying large-scale technical assistance was recommended. This approach is seen as a necessary measure to accomplish any results – and evidence has shown that it is effective in some aspects of restoring institutional performance.
- However, in light of the fact that TA approaches and PIUs have proven unsuccessful in transferring knowledge in a sustainable manner, it was proposed to deploy advisors to work within institutions, not in a technical capacity, but in a role that is exclusively focused on coaching, mentoring, knowledge development and sharing, and building the foundation for future performance management.
- In tandem with technical support for institutional capacity, it was recommended to develop a communications and outreach approach that opened a two-way dialogue with citizenry to discuss the pace and scale of the reform and capacity development process. The intention here is to manage unrealistic expectations and attempt to form a contract of sorts between the state and the citizens.
- Lastly, large-scale resources were recommended to target the institutions that should build human capital – universities and training institutions.

**Complex transition:**

- The entry point prioritized was the Ministry of Planning/Finance to help the state quickly deliver core services and work to depoliticize the development process.
- The first step would be to facilitate donor coordination by supporting the Government's aid coordination mechanism and decision-making processes.
- Tremendous emphasis should be placed on ongoing partnership building with Government leaders and civil society players.
- In terms of sequencing technical support, work would begin with public financial management reforms, Rule of Law and basic security, local governance and local development, and anti-corruption bodies.

**Ethnic division:**

- Emphasis on decentralization and the restoration of service delivery to provide legitimacy.
- Assuming that interim institutions are introduced, focus should be placed on intensive institutional capacity development.
- Support should quickly transition to assisting with the design of a National Development Plan that emphasizes inclusive development and local-level revitalization.
- It is anticipated that deep civil service reforms would be needed to depoliticize public institutions and restore faith that civil servants serve due to their competence and not ethnicity.

**Key Issues Discussed**

- It was noted that despite efforts to prioritize areas of support, each group presented a relatively ambitious programmatic line-up.
- There was also a tendency to resort to normative understandings of what state structures should look like, despite clear calls for adopting flexible and innovative approaches that are responsive to the political economy analysis.
- It was difficult to resolve the concern that these interventions would distort the local labor markets.

**SESSION 6: LESSONS LEARNED BY OTHER ENTITIES IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS**

**Chair:** *Christian Lotz (BCPR)*

**Panelists:** *Patrick Keuleers (Joint Review of UN Public Administration Reform); Susanne Mikhail Eldhagen (UNICEF); Leanne Smith (DPKO/DFS)*

**Topic:** *Capacity Development approaches recommended by the Peace Building Commission, Joint Working Group on PAR, UNICEF, and DPKO*

**Main Points****Peace Building Commission: Brief overview of the Civilian Capacity Review**

- Capacity development is a main interest of the Peace building Commission, and emphasis is on deploying international experts to the field
- Better organization of roles and responsibilities of organizations working together in response

- National capacity is the priority (interest in collocating national and expatriate expertise in the field)
- In particular, the Civilian Capacity Review is exploring the capacities of UN actors, and is fielding numerous mission teams to analyze current practices and recommendations for strengthening the UN's ability to support national capacity development aspirations.
- Main recommendation relevant for this workshop is the need for clear guidance for how to strengthen national capacities, including how to strengthen national actors to exercise oversight of international technical assistance and measure progress
- Recommendation to focus on 'core' government functions, including public financial management and aid management
- A working group is being established to focus on these recommendations

#### **UN working group on public admin reform in post-conflict environments – Initial reflections**

- The IAWG on Public Administration and Local Governance is identifying good practices and lessons learned from the UN's support to Public Administration in the immediate years after conflict, from seven country cases: Timor Leste, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan.
- The review process is still ongoing, and as such, only initial reflections were discussed while recommendations are being developed. Some early issues included:
- Concerns about promoting Public Administration reform processes from a purely technical approach without sufficient understanding of political realities, which easily undermine institutional capabilities.
- Concerns about placing too much emphasis on creating ideal models and introducing new institutions too quickly.
- On a related point, there is concern that there is a tendency to pursue modernization projects instead of restoring basic approaches that may have been in place, which can create additional capacity gaps instead of allowing the civil servants to learn and adapt to modest, new process changes.

#### **UNICEF**

- UNICEF recognizes UNDP's mandate to lead on capacity development support, but also feels the need to invest in better capacity development approaches in their work due to significant evidence that results were not being achieved through ad hoc support.
- As such, UNICEF has launched "evidence-based reviews" of several country operations and has developed a technical note on capacity development, which is currently being shared within the organization.
- The context for this effort is that:
  - In humanitarian situations, there was no capacity assessments and plans that were developed in the cases that the UNICEF team reviewed.
  - UNICEF is really trying to get away from ad-hoc interventions, especially ad hoc trainings, and is promoting on-the-job trainings and broader project approaches

#### **DPKO/DFS (Best Practices Division)**

- DPKO/DFS has an Interest in the UN working together on capacity development, especially leveraging the political mandate of the mission to align technical capacity development support to an approach and timeframe that is constructive in light of the political processes that influence the terrain for development activities.

- The Best Practices Division is considering the following challenges and dilemmas/questions that were posed to UNDP and colleagues in the workshop:
  - When we invest in capacity development in ministries, how do we ensure that these staff are retained in the institutions we are trying to build?
  - How do we develop a capacity development strategy for places in which there is almost no capacity in country?
  - How does the UN deal with its benchmarks for withdrawing its presence especially when it comes to capacity development efforts?

### Key Issues Discussed

- How can UN agencies capitalize on the political space and influence that UN peacekeeping missions have to help set our technical support into politically aware approaches?
  - Political coordination mechanisms and aid coordination mechanisms are not joined up, and they could be. DPKO has done some work with 4 pilots to see how the UN could bring these streams together.
  - Idea to have technical advisors to report to a panel of representatives from DPKO, UNDP, and other UNCT representatives (done at a project level, but could be done at higher levels of planning and strategy).
  - There's no reason why a mission could not provide a political briefing at the beginning of all UNCT meetings, which would help crystallize the political context for capacity development efforts.
- How does DPKO think about the civilian capacity review in light of its relatively short time in country?
  - By default, the work objectives and results are just short-term changes, but
  - They can be catalytic for longer-term work by longer-term resident agencies
- How does UNICEF reconcile investing in capacity development in its work in humanitarian response contexts?
  - While capacity development is part of longer-term development more than an immediate, humanitarian response, UNICEF has been investing in extensive training efforts that are not yielding the results hoped for, and UNICEF believes that deeper investments are needed to overcome these challenges even in the very early stages of humanitarian relief.
  - As yet, the UNICEF capacity development group is receiving support from country operations that must adapt their programme and project formulation approaches to meet new capacity development criteria set forth.

### Group Work – Outlining tools and approaches for capacity development in fragile contexts

Small groups explored what tools are needed (either new or tailored tools) to improve our capacity development approach in fragile contexts.



## Main Points

- All groups agreed that there is an abundance of quality tools and resources within UNDP, and the core challenge is learning about what is available already. As such, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen the role platforms like Teamworks and UNDP's practice networks can play in disseminating resources around the organization.
- It was recommended to develop a best practice handbook or web space of some sort to house the most useful resources for capacity development support in fragile contexts.
- Better operational modalities were highlighted as areas for improvement, including:
  - A tailored approach for utilizing the surge roster/express roster to deploy expertise in the area in which capacity development intersects with peace building/state building
  - The possible creation of a team, or development of retainer contracts, for very high-level, experienced professionals should be considered as a method for sending "heavy hitters" to country-level at critical junctures in partnership building, programme definition, etc.
  - The formation of a BDP-BCPR Rapid Advisory Group to support effective and innovative programme development
  - A modality for linking 'break-through countries' with countries that are transitioning through a long-term capacity development agenda, e.g. Brazil and India
- A guidance resource is needed for exactly how political economy analysis should be integrated into capacity development efforts, including guidance on when to conduct the analysis and with whom it could be shared.
- A more flexible and 'lighter' tool for assessing capacity, which emphasizes realistic goal-setting and prioritization over comprehensive assessments of baselines.
- A detailed practice note on Technical Assistance in fragile contexts – acknowledging short-comings and sharing any models that have yielded more sustainable success.

## CLOSING

As a formal closing, Niloy Banerjee expressed the groups' gratitude to the facilitation team and provided the following reflections:

1. UNDP should consider an alternative narrative on results if only to counter pressure to demonstrate results within such short time frames, such as 3 - 5 years. Capacity development processes are much more long-term (10-15 years +) especially in countries in complex transitions and fragile contexts.
2. In addition, the organization is in a position to apply more investment in communicating our work, internally and externally.
3. Lastly, there was an affirmation of the value of the partnership between BDP and BCPR to enhance UNDP's contributions to development processes in fragile contexts. There is clearly a great deal of passion and seriousness among colleagues in UNDP and it is clear that this is a very rich collaboration.

## ANNEX B: AGENDA

WORKSHOP: “SUPPORTING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS”		
<b>WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the experiences of UNDP, national partners and international actors in supporting capacity development in conflict and fragile contexts to draw lessons learned, identify trade-offs, dilemmas and promising practices</li> <li>Discuss the spectrum of capacity development support, from provision of technical advice to facilitation of south-south support to longer-term institutional strengthening</li> <li>Identify ways to enhance UNDP’s policy and programmatic impact in fragile and conflict affected contexts by addressing operational arrangements and identifying existing and needed knowledge products</li> </ul>		
DAY 1: THURSDAY, 28 <sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL		
	SESSION	KEY QUESTIONS ADDRESSED
8:30 – 9:00	BREAKFAST AND PARTICIPANTS REGISTRATION	
9:00 – 9:20	WELCOME AND SITUATING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS: CDG DIRECTOR AND BCPR DEPUTY DIRECTOR	
9:20 – 9:45	PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS FACILITATED BY CDG	
9.45 – 11:00	<b>SESSION 1: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATES ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS</b> <b>PANEL PRESENTATION: BCPR/CDG/DGG</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implications for UNDP of the World Bank’s World Development Report (Jago Salmon)</li> <li>Implications for UNDP of the UN Secretary General report on peacebuilding (Niloy Banerjee)</li> <li>Implications for UNDP of the UN policy Committee Decision on Public Administration Reform and Local Governance in Post-Conflict (Patrick Keuleers)</li> <li>Implications for UNDP of the World Bank’s World Development Report (Jago Salmon)</li> <li>Current debates on capacity development in the International Dialogue and INCAF (Eugenia Piza-Lopez)</li> </ul> Plenary discussion Chair: Nick Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the current international debate on capacity development in conflict and fragile contexts? What is its relevance for UNDP?</li> <li>What is the relevance for and impact on UNDP of the UN Secretary General report on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict and the Review of Civilian Capacities?</li> <li>What are the initial hypotheses of the UNDG Working Group on Public Administration review of UN experiences in supporting post-conflict capacity development at the national level?</li> <li>What is the relevant for and impact on UNDP of the World Bank’s World Development Report?</li> </ul>
11:00-11:15	COFFEE	

11:15 – 12:15	<p><b>SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS</b></p> <p>Panel Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Kosovo/UNSCR 1244</b> (Krenar Loshi)</li> <li>– <b>Occupied Palestinian Territory</b> (Geoffrey Prewitt)</li> </ul> <p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Chaired by: Eugenia Piza Lopez</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does context influence the critical question of when do we engage in CD in conflict and fragile settings ?</li> <li>• How best to understand local conditions, including the dynamics of the conflict, to ensure that capacity development-related programming doesn't increase tensions or contribute to the undoing of political settlements or a relapse into conflict?</li> <li>• How to engage effectively with governments and other stakeholders?</li> </ul>
12:15 – 13:30	<p><b>SESSION 3: CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS AND MEASUREMENT</b></p> <p>Panel Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Uganda</b> (Nigel Coulson)</li> <li>– <b>Lebanon</b> (Raghd Assi)</li> <li>– <b>DRC</b> (Josef Debeus)</li> </ul> <p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Chaired by: Niloy Banerjee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we assess local capacities in conflict and fragile contexts? What do we see, what do we miss?</li> <li>• What are the best methods to assess existing capacity to ensure local systems are not overwhelmed and ownership isn't undermined?</li> <li>• Which assessment methodologies capture how governance is affected by conflict and the implications they can have for addressing state fragility?</li> <li>• How can analytical frameworks be used to better assess aspects of capacity in fragile states and provide insights for design and implementation?</li> <li>• How can we provide a more systematic approach to monitoring, reporting and evaluation?</li> <li>• How should capacity development indicators be adjusted for conflict and fragile contexts?</li> </ul>
13:30 – 14:30	<b>LUNCH</b>	
14:30 – 16:00	<p><b>SESSION 4: ACHIEVING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS – PART 1</b></p> <p>Panel Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Kenya and Iraq: Leadership</b> (Erastus Etheke and Helen Olafsdottir)</li> <li>– <b>Liberia: Policy Development</b> (Lisa Lange)</li> <li>– <b>Southern Sudan: Whole of Gov Approach</b> (George Conway)</li> <li>– <b>Burundi and Colombia: Peacebuilding Capacities</b> (Jean Kabahizi and Fernando Travesi)</li> </ul> <p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Chaired by: Noura Hamladji</p>	<p><b>THE “WHAT” OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS: ADAPTATION AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the most effective capacity development responses used in conflict and fragile contexts? Why have they succeeded (while others have failed)?</li> <li>• How have UNDP's capacity development responses (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and accountability) been tailored to conflict and fragile contexts?</li> </ul>
16:00 – 16:15	<b>COFFEE</b>	

16:15 – 18:00	<p><b>GROUP WORK #1 – THE “WHAT” OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>16:15–17:15</p> <p>Four working groups, each looking at key lessons learned and outlining successful approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Supporting institutional reform and change management</li> <li>– Supporting leadership development</li> <li>– Supporting education, training and learning</li> <li>– Supporting accountability and voice mechanisms</li> </ul> <p>Facilitated by: Magda Cavanna, Capacity Development Group</p> <p>17:15–18:00</p> <p>Plenary presentations</p> <p>Chaired by: Cleophas Torori</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the do's and don'ts in designing and implementing capacity development responses?</li> <li>• What are key factors for progress and success?</li> <li>• What are the innovative paths to deliver results?</li> <li>• How to adapt best to local conditions to achieve results?</li> <li>• Key points /factors for successful UNDP interventions/programmes and achieving capacity development results</li> <li>• Key innovations/most successful approaches</li> </ul>
<b>DAY 2: FRIDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL</b>		
	<b>SESSION</b>	<b>KEY QUESTIONS ASKED</b>
9:00 – 10:00	<p><b>SESSION 4: ACHIEVING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS – PART 2</b></p> <p>Panel Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Timor-Leste: Technical Assistance</b> (Noura Hamladji)</li> <li>– <b>Sierra Leone: Emergency capacity substitution</b> (Cleophas Torori)</li> <li>– <b>Southern Sudan and Somalia: South-South Cooperation</b> (George Conway and Emma Morley)</li> </ul> <p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Chaired by: Geoff Prewitt</p>	<p><b>THE “HOW” OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS: ADAPTATION AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to change programming/be innovative to achieve results for developing capacity in conflict settings?</li> <li>• What models are being proposed? Potential breakthrough ideas?</li> <li>• What have been the opportunities, challenges and lessons learned in working with different models of capacity development?</li> <li>• What are the lessons learned from various entry and exit strategies?</li> <li>• How to measure the transfer of knowledge through the different models?</li> </ul>

10:00 – 12:15	<p><b>GROUP WORK #2 – THE “HOW” OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>10:00-11:00</p> <p>Four working groups, each looking at key lessons learned and outlining successful approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Technical assistance</li> <li>– Emergency Capacity Substitution</li> <li>– South-South cooperation</li> <li>– Short-term vs. long-term engagement</li> </ul> <p>Facilitated by: Magda Cavanna, Capacity Development Group</p> <p>11:00-11:15</p> <p>Coffee</p> <p>11:15-12:15</p> <p>Plenary presentations</p> <p>Chaired by: Geoff Prewitt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the do's and don'ts in the thematic areas?</li> <li>• What are key factors for progress and success?</li> <li>• What are the innovative paths to deliver results?</li> <li>• How to adapt best to local conditions to achieve results?</li> <li>• Key points /factors for successful UNDP interventions/programmes and achieving capacity development results?</li> <li>• Key innovations/most successful approaches</li> </ul>
12:15 -13:30	<b>Lunch</b>	
13:30 – 14:45	<p><b>SESSION 5: LESSONS LEARNED BY UN ENTITIES IN SUPPORTING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS</b></p> <p>Panel presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– UNICEF (Susanne Mikhail)</li> <li>– DPKO (Leanne Smith)</li> <li>– UNDP Lessons learned on capacity development from the UN Inter-agency review of public administration in crisis contexts (Patrick Keuleers)</li> <li>– UNDP – The Interagency Review of Civilian Capacities (Christian Lotz)</li> </ul> <p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Chaired by: Christian Lotz</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are partners' experiences and approaches to building capacity, with models, exit and entry strategies and critical lessons learned?</li> <li>• Examples of successful cooperation and coordination as well as challenges?</li> <li>• How can we strengthen UN system-wide packages and common approaches?</li> <li>• What are ways to improve cooperation and coordination among UN and external partners and agree on common frameworks?</li> </ul>
14:45 – 15:00	<b>COFFEE</b>	



<p><b>15:00 – 17:15</b></p>	<p><b>GROUP WORK #3 – BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: SETTING PRIORITIES AND THE WAY FORWARD</b></p> <p>15:00-15:15</p> <p>Plenary discussion of available resources</p> <p>Facilitated by: Nigel Coulson , Capacity Development Group</p> <p>15:15-16:00</p> <p>Three working groups, looking at following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tools and support needed for innovation and successful adaptation</li> <li>– Support needed for staff to use existing knowledge/maximize impact</li> <li>– Internal UNDP mechanisms for effective learning and sharing</li> </ul> <p>Facilitated by: Magda Cavanna, Capacity Development Group</p> <p>16:00-16:15</p> <p>Coffee</p> <p>16:15-17:15</p> <p>Presentations of Group Work #3</p> <p>Chaired by: Emma Morley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What resources and knowledge products do we already use?</li> <li>• What support and tools are needed to innovate/adapt capacity development approaches to realities on the ground? (Group 1)</li> <li>• What specialist support to assist program staff to both integrate state building strategies and maximize the impact of existing activities on the development of capacity? (Group 2)</li> <li>• What mechanisms can be institutionalized within UNDP to ensure effective shared learning on capacity development in fragile states, and how to make them work? (Group 3)</li> <li>• Summary of main recommendations</li> <li>• What is the need for additional resources? – setting priorities and developing the action plan</li> <li>• Outline of next steps</li> </ul>
<p><b>17:15 – 17:40</b></p>	<p><b>Summary</b> by Rapporteur Lisa Lange</p> <p><b>Closing remarks:</b> CDG and BCPR</p>	





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