



CONFLICT PREVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION IN AFRICA: A POLICY WORKSHOP

SESSION 1 KEYNOTE SPEECH

Development Cooperation and Human Security

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It is my great honor to participate in the Wilton Park Conference on "Conflict Prevention and Development" in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program, and in the presence of a wide range of researchers and policy makers. The ultimate objective of the conference is indeed a daunting one, to explore new approaches to conflict prevention. Since the 1990's, development cooperation has sought ways not only to ameliorate poverty, but also to contribute to economic management and state governance. The development community has definitely become more fully involved in post-conflict recovery and peace building operations. However, as yet it has not successfully identified its role, nor adjusted its policy with regard to conflict prevention.

In fact, there is growing recognition among United Nations and government circles of the vital importance of addressing conflict prevention. The support for preventive action grew in the aftermath of the disastrous consequences of the experiences of the 1990's, particularly the genocide in Rwanda and massacre in Srebrenica. However, looking back on the major conflicts of our times, we note that we have tended to overlook the preceding periods of economic, social and political downturns which led to large scale and devastating conflicts. Interventions came, generally too late and too little by military action, political negotiation or humanitarian protection and assistance.

Development cooperation, on the other hand, has rarely dealt with emergency situations. By nature, development assistance addresses long term problems of poverty, economy and social inequities. Its impact can be proven over a period of time, through rise in per capita growth, or extension of life expectancy or spread of literacy. The development community has tended to look at people as recipients of aid, and turned to the state for planning and management. Security questions have been regarded as matters of state. The "fragility" of state has been identified as the clue to identifying and correcting governance and thereby the insecurity that threatens people's lives and well being. Frequently, state fragility has been a pronounced feature in many poorer countries.

On the other hand, in the globalizing world of the new millennium, money, goods, people and information move quickly across borders and within states. The increasing openness in trade and investment contribute to remarkable economic growth across borders and within different segments within states. The globalizing world increases interdependence of states and peoples, but turns them more vulnerable to adverse developments elsewhere. Moreover, terrorist attacks in New York on September 11th, 2001, proved to the world that even the most powerful state could not protect the security of its people even within its own borders. States have been faced with the challenge of ensuring the defense of their territory and people against global net works of non-state actors.

It was against these backdrops of the changing world that the concept of security was broadened from state security to embrace “human” security. Human security entered the stage of international policy debate. At the UN Millennium Summit, Secretary-General Kofi Annan advocated the building of a world embodying the ideals of “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want.” In the mind of the Secretary-General, the challenge of conflict prevention and development assistance were closely interlinked. Security and development were twin goals requiring comprehensive solutions. The Japanese government also noted the close affiliation of security assurance and development cooperation, and co-sponsored the launching of the Commission on Human Security.

I had the honor and challenge to co-chair the Commission together with Professor Amartya Sen, the Nobel economist from India. The Commission identified “people” at the center in formulating policies and building institutions. People were to be protected in violent conflicts and from the proliferation of arms. People were to be saved from chronic insecurity caused by illness and poverty. The way to save and protect people would be through their empowerment. A host of empowerment agenda was laid out ranging from education of girls and women, universal access to basic health care or empowerment of workers in order to access the market. Social safety measures were essential to save them from serious and sudden downturns in socio-economic and political conditions. At the heart of the Commission’s philosophy was the belief that people should be freed from “fear” and “want”, and should pursue the attainment of all realizable human aspirations. A clear linkage was made between security and development. State plays the complementary role of protecting and advancing human security together with empowered people in the main stay.

Now reverting to the original purpose of the Wilton Park conference to examine the relevance of development cooperation to conflict prevention, we should first recognize the serious influence that the concept of human security had on programming development assistance. JICA, for example, has incorporated "human security" in its basic principles, and has pursued the policy of focusing on community development across a wide range of sectors. As to the question of addressing the Commission's warning over serious and sudden down turns that lead to conflicts, the international community as a whole and specifically the development community has remained unprepared. For economic downturns of the kind that traumatized the people of Asia in 1997, the international financial institutions were in possession of some rescue mechanisms, even if not adequate. Financial assistance was extended to troubled countries combined with severe domestic adjustment measures. What became clear was the need to further accelerate the resort to social safety measures, in order to help cover the "human security" of affected population.

When it comes to situations of serious downturns that threaten the security of people within states, there are no ready made international security mechanisms that can trigger quick action. The existing security system is geared towards stopping aggression between states, and to control or limit the spread of warfare. However, when conflicts turn rampant within states, and when the state authorities possess neither the will nor the capacity to protect their people, there are no international mechanisms or procedures to intervene. People are left to the protection and assistance by humanitarian agencies or hope for success resulting from ad hoc mediations or limited rescue operations, depending on the scale of the catastrophe.

It took the contributions from the Canadian led International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and the UN High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, to broaden the "human security" framework to address the need for action related more directly to conflict management and collective security. The issue of humanitarian intervention became hotly debated within the United Nations. Though some "emerging norm" seems to be growing for "a collective international responsibility to protect", with Security Council authorization, military action with regard internal conflicts has to be exercised with utmost care. Such intervention would inevitably be exercised "amongst people" who hold diverse political allegiance and are frequently on different sides. The United Nations or coalitions of concerned states are currently facing several internal conflict situations in Africa, --- Sudan and the

Democratic Republic of Congo---, and in other parts of the world such as Afghanistan, and Iraq.

I think it is appropriate that the Wilton Park conference devotes its attention to conflict prevention in Africa, as it will be in the continent of Africa that development cooperation will play a central role while facing major conflict challenges. For the large majority of the people in Africa, "human insecurity" is a chronic condition that has to be ameliorated by a host of poverty reduction measures. The development millennium goals provide concrete goals for individual contributing countries to orient their assistance programs. However, if we were to adjust our individual assistance with conflict prevention in view, greater attention would have to be directed to grasping and addressing trends that show serious and sudden down turns.

During my ten-year tenure as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, there were a few cases of international action --- peacekeeping operations dispatched to Somalia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone in support of humanitarian operations or as part of international peace-building exercises. However, development cooperation would be suspended when violence turned rampant and conflicts broke out. When violence receded, and governments were restored, development assistance returned to the scene, as post-conflict peace building efforts came to be seen as legitimate function of development assistance.

In many of the African states which suffered conflicts in recent decades, international efforts were directed mainly to peace building after the conflicts. Let me refer to the case of Rwanda which stands as the outstanding example of the failures of the international community that eventually led to genocide. To cite a few salient points in Rwandan history, it should be recalled, that since colonial times the country was ruled by powerful chiefs, mostly Tutsis. Deprived of political power, the Hutus challenged the Tutsi led domination and became increasingly supported by the Belgian administrators. Gaining social consciousness, the church also turned sympathetic to the Hutus. Tension grew between the Tutsis and Hutus to explosive point by 1959. Belgium agreed to let go the League mandate and declared by acclamation the independence of Rwanda. In the legislative election that followed, the Hutu party won by a wide margin, and political power moved away from the traditional Tutsis.

Because of growing tension and confrontation, a large number of Tutsis left

Rwanda to neighboring countries. In order to understand the serious downturns that took place in Rwanda at the time, I think the refugee factor merits special attention. Between 1959 and 1964 according to UNHCR estimates, 120,000 took refuge in neighboring countries escaping the violent seizure by Hutu power. By the end of the 1980's, some 480,000, which comprise about half of the Tutsi population in Rwanda, had become refugees, primarily in Burundi (280,000), Uganda (80,000), Congo (80,000) and Tanzania (30,000). Over the next twenty years, the refugees made repeated attempts to return to Rwanda by force which resulted in provoking renewed violence and further refugee outflows.

The refugees from Rwanda faced difficulties in the neighboring countries of asylum. They were often excluded from local labor market, while sought opportunities for education and work. Many moved beyond the Great Lakes area, and even on to Western Europe and America. In spite of the geographical dispersion, the exiled Tutsis remained in touch with each other. They formed clubs and associations, and circulated publications. In August 1988, a world congress of Rwandese refugees was held in Washington D.C., which passed a strong resolution over their "the right of return." but the Hutu government of Habyarimana remained intransigent.

In spite of the tensions and conflicts caused by changing power sharing arrangements, the Habyarimana regime succeeded somewhat in obtaining international confidence. Tutsis were politically marginalized, and institutionally discriminated. Though authoritarian, Habyarimana represented a democratically elected majority party government, reasonably stable and bringing in some economic progress. The Catholic Church came to admire the Hutus and to support their rule. Reliance on foreign aid grew rapidly in size. International assistance which had represented less than 5 percent of GNP in 1973 rose to 11 percent in 1986 and to 22 percent by 1991.

For the donors, until the end of the Cold War period, internal political conditions were mostly outside their realm of concern. The human rights record of the Habyarimana regime went largely unquestioned. Belgium remained the main donor, followed by France and Germany. France, intent on maintaining the French influence throughout the Great Lakes region, courted Rwanda with military assistance as well. Germany as an early colonizer, maintained its interest in Rwanda. The main areas of assistance by the European donors were education, health and agriculture. For Switzerland, Rwanda ranked first among the recipients.

Japan at the time under the "doubling ODA policy" was increasing assistance to a wide range of African countries. Rwanda was favorably assessed as a better managed country, attempting to overcome political confrontation. The close support by the Catholic Church was taken as a positive factor by comparison to Burundi which continued to face distrust from the church. The Habyarimana government was considered friendly to Japan as proven by its consistently supportive voting record in various international elections. Much of Japanese assistance to Rwanda centered around Kigali. It covered water supply, communication infrastructure, and technical education. The socio-political problems underlying Rwandan government was not noted by Japanese government officials or aid specialists as well as other donors.

On hindsight, it is clear how little those involved in development cooperation had the ability or inclination to read overall social and political trends. To grasp various signals possibly leading to serious downturns, would have required some knowledge that could put together changing political power relations, economic trends, and a host of social mores and population movements. As the Rwanda economy turned critical in the 1980's due to the fall in the coffee price, support from foreign aid sources grew larger in relative importance for the ruling regime. Resources deriving development cooperation, whether from bilateral donors or multilateral financial lending, became a source of contention within the governing circles.

Throughout this period, one clear signal of the downward trend that the international community ignored was the refugee factor. The presence of close to half a million Rwandan refugees in neighboring countries and beyond was a factor that should have drawn closer attention, and invoked clearer reaction. Instead, the refugee issue in the region remained unaddressed for three decades. Among the Rwanda exiles, in the meanwhile, those in Uganda had turned increasingly militant. Trained in guerrilla fighting in Uganda, while helping Museveni's National Resistance Army's return to power, they formed the Rwanda Patriotic Front, and invaded Rwanda from the north in January 1991. Civil war broke out, while peace was being negotiated, but after the shooting down of the presidential plane on April 6, 1994, all out violence erupted in Rwanda. Genocide was followed by the exodus of more than one million and a half Hutus from Rwanda. Large refugee camps were set up in Congo and Tanzania.

When the repatriation of Rwandan exiles started in 1994, especially in large

scale after the attacks on the camps in Congo in October 1996, the repatriation had to be carried on an emergency basis. The rehabilitation work had to move as refugees returned, and could not wait careful planning by the development community. The Rwanda government insisted that a quarter of the entire Rwanda population consisted of returning refugees, and therefore had to be addressed by UNHCR on emergency terms. UNHCR had to carry out simultaneously repatriation and reconstruction work.

Immediate solutions had to be found to meet the shortages of schools, equipment, teachers and funds. Most urgent were the needs of shelters and public service facilities. To make repatriation sustainable, we had to examine the circumstances and causes of the Rwanda conflict, and directly address the underlying problems. In short, our contributions had to aim at rebuilding Rwandan society, while advancing national reconciliation.

There were three pillars of assistance for UNHCR to address. First, we would provide shelter for the returning refugees. Second, we would assist in restoring justice as a way to promote reconciliation. Third, we would empower women who were the main group of surviving victims. Over a five year period between 1995 to 1999, UNHCR spent \$183 million for reconstructing or rehabilitating almost one hundred thousand houses to cover the shelter needs of half a million Rwandans. The beneficiaries would make adobe bricks. We would provide two wooden doors, four windows, corrugated iron roofing sheets, poles and plastic sheeting for each house. Labor would come from the people.

Building the judiciary system was an exceptional effort. It ranged from provision of the most basic office supplies and equipment, rehabilitation of court rooms, tribunal buildings, and prosecutors offices in the provinces. We supported the training of judicial personnel, from judges, attorneys, police officers to prison authorities. The rebuilding of judiciary took place against the backdrop of overcrowded prisons where more than 130,000 genocide suspects were awaiting trial.

The main objective of the Women's initiative was to empower women to be proactive in the country's development. In post-conflict countries, families headed by women and girls look after several younger brothers and sisters. As the reintegration and participation of women in the economic, social and cultural activities were the keys to the country's recovery, a host of training programs were installed. Provisions were

made to strengthen women's legal rights to land and property and overall need to strengthen the level of gilds education was emphasized.

When I went on a return visit to Rwanda last year upon the invitation of the Rwandan government, I was amazed to find so much progress in the interim period. Clearly, I saw housing launched by UNHCR spreading all over the hills. I saw functioning public institutions, and witnessed the traditional gacaca courts supplementing the state judiciary system. The education facilities had advanced enormously. I visited two schools: one a girls boarding school for science teaching, another a mixed technology school for practical training. The women's center was carrying out mass literary training programs for women at Kigali, but also in the provinces. A good deal of the emergency immediate post-conflict rehabilitation programs had been followed up and further developed.

The one major lesson that I could confirm was the relevance of speedy immediate post conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction work by those who had been involved in the conflict and knew the most basic reform needs. Development cooperation should take over as rapidly as possible with larger resources and greater expertise. But it was fortunate that rehabilitation needs of the people, their basic aspirations and patterns of communal life could be transferred over to the incoming developers. Development cooperation stands on both developing new and advanced constructs, but also cooperation with the people and society who will continue to be the permanent masters.

To conclude, the message to be passed on by the Wilton Park meeting is the close linkage of development and security. First, people should be regarded not only as objects or recipients of aid, but active bearers and promoters. "Human security" primarily means people's security. Second, to prevent conflict, development cooperation must be alert and response to significant trends of social, economic and political changes. Particularly signs of downturns must be grasped. They are frequently reflected in growing human rights violations, increasing imprisonments and refugee outflows. Third, for post-conflict peace building operations, development cooperation must deal with the root causes of the conflicts, quick in response and straight forward in ameliorating the fundamental causes.

Thank you very much.