



ARTICLES

PERPETUAL PEACEKEEPING? LESSONS FROM RWANDA ON STRUCTURAL CONFLICT PREVENTION IN THE NEW AID ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This paper reviews the history of development assistance to Rwanda since the genocide of 1994 in the light of the lessons learnt from the pre-war experience. The study highlights the continued lack of analysis and understanding among donors of the impact of development assistance on structural causes of conflict. Where analysis exists, it is rarely linked to aid allocation decisions, and where actions are taken in this direction, they are rarely consistent across donors. The paper argues that the United Nations could play a role in bridging the gap between development and conflict prevention by extending some key political monitoring functions currently carried out as part of peacekeeping missions to post-conflict and fragile states that are not currently in crisis.

Introduction

Through the 1994 genocide, Rwanda became a symbol for the failure of the United Nations to live up to its charter's promise 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'. The nature and causes of the failure of the peacekeeping mission have been thoroughly analysed, as has the role of development actors, who were instrumental in shaping and financing Rwanda's state institutions for the three decades that preceded the war. However, comparatively less attention has been paid to the post-war period and the role of international institutions in the grey area between war and peace when neither strictly military nor purely developmental responses are applicable.

The paper argues that, notwithstanding recent innovations in the delivery of aid, prompted in part by the Rwandan experience, the donor community still fails to understand and

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adequately monitor the impact of development assistance on structural causes of conflict. This analytical weakness stands in sharp contrast to the heavy political monitoring machineries that are commonly deployed as part of Security Council-mandated UN operations and raises the question of balance and linkage between the development and security arms of the broader

UN system (including Bretton Woods institutions), especially in low-income countries that have a higher propensity to fall into violent conflict. Ginifer (1996) and others have

already convincingly argued that development operations should be integrated into peacekeeping missions to ensure the durability of peace processes. This paper explores the reverse question: the extent to which political monitoring functions should and could be extended to non-crisis countries where the UN operates without the explicit political mandate of the Security Council, to ensure a better integration of structural conflict prevention with development planning.¹

While it is difficult to build a general argument on a single case study, Rwanda provides a good basis for exploring the above question for several reasons. First, the failure of development assistance in Rwanda has given birth to a large literature and a new sub-discipline within development practice dealing precisely with the linkages between development and conflict. Second, Rwanda has had considerable success in attracting new donors since the genocide and in advancing new forms of development assistance, particularly in the form of direct budget support, which places new requirements on donors to monitor the utilisation and impact of aid. Finally, Rwanda was selected in 2007 as a pilot country for the implementation of the 'Delivering as One' reform of the UN's development operations, which has left the UN struggling to redefine its identity and find its value added in the new aid environment.

The Case of Rwanda: Genocide, Aid and Donor Politics

As Uvin (1998:40) reminds us, far from being seen as a failed state, Rwanda had a generally good reputation among aid donors before 1994 and had even come to be seen as 'the jewel in the crown' of several donors (Adelman 1999). At this time, Rwanda, which had already ranked as one of the largest per capita recipients of foreign aid on the continent since its independence in 1962 (Lemarchand, 1999:162), became the largest recipient of aid from Canada, Belgium and Switzerland in per capita terms (Adelman 1999:189; Uvin 1998:42). However, while donors were praising the government's success, little attention was being paid to 'the state's discriminatory practices, human rights abuses, increasing militarism and high levels of corruption' (Piron & McKay 2004:31). In fact, many aid workers tended to see Rwanda 'as a successful non-communist *Entwicklungsdiktatur*', or 'development dictatorship' (Andersen 2000), whose centralised, authoritarian style of government provided the necessary control and stability to effectively administer and report on development projects (Gourevitch 1998:76).² Hence, the 'development ideology' (Uvin 2000:164), which was endorsed by the international community, provided a substitute for electoral legitimacy by depoliticising the development discourse and promoting the idea 'that the sole objective of the state is the pursuit of economic development for the masses' (Uvin 1999:257).

It was only after the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion in October 1990 and the initiation of the Arusha peace process that the international community started to impose political conditions on the disbursement of aid. However, these conditions came too late to reverse the destructive dynamic that had been put in place through decades of political manipulation of ethnicity (Andersen 2000). Instead of calming the political situation, the stop-and-go policy of aid disbursement had the effect of destabilising the president and thus strengthening the hand of the multiple Hutu extremist movements that had flourished during the democratisation process.

The blindness of the donor community to the political realities of Rwanda throughout the 1980s, and its inability to manage the conflict once it surfaced in the early 1990s, must be seen in light of what Storey describes as a total 'absence of any political analysis of the state's relationship with Rwandan economy and society more generally' (2001:375). It had

already been noted that World Bank experts tended to have an extremely shallow understanding of the local context, in that they were typically based in Washington, spoke only English and came to the country for missions of 15 days or less (Hanssen 1989:24). The only donors who had the capacity and the interest to undertake systematic and continuous political analysis were France and Belgium. However, this research was undertaken by their foreign offices or military intelligence and was not linked to the development operations in any way relevant to conflict prevention. The United States did not have any significant presence in the country, but became involved via the Arusha Peace process in the 1990s. It was not until January 1993 that the State Department produced its first comprehensive desk-level report on the situation, followed by a CIA report in January 1994, which correctly estimated conflict scenarios with up to half a million casualties (Adelman & Suhrke 1995:61).

In the absence of a Security Council mandate, the UN system, which had the most extensive presence in the country – and at provincial level through its relief operations – ‘was inhibited from systematically collecting and analysing critical information and communicating the analyses to those with the power to take action against the genocide’ (Adelman & Suhrke 1995:61). It was not until October 1993, less than six months before the start of the genocide, that the Security Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), which was supposed to monitor the implementation of the Arusha peace agreement. The establishment of the peacekeeping mission came too late to stop the country’s descent into chaos as a result of the social and political disintegration of the Habyarimana regime under the twin pressures of the RPF invasion from Uganda and increasing domestic hostility from Hutu extremists.

Shifting Aid Flows since 1995

At more than \$60 per capita, Rwanda currently ranks among the countries in Africa receiving the most official development assistance (ODA) in per capita terms. In 2006, it received a total of \$548 million, representing 22% of GDP, and donors financed more than

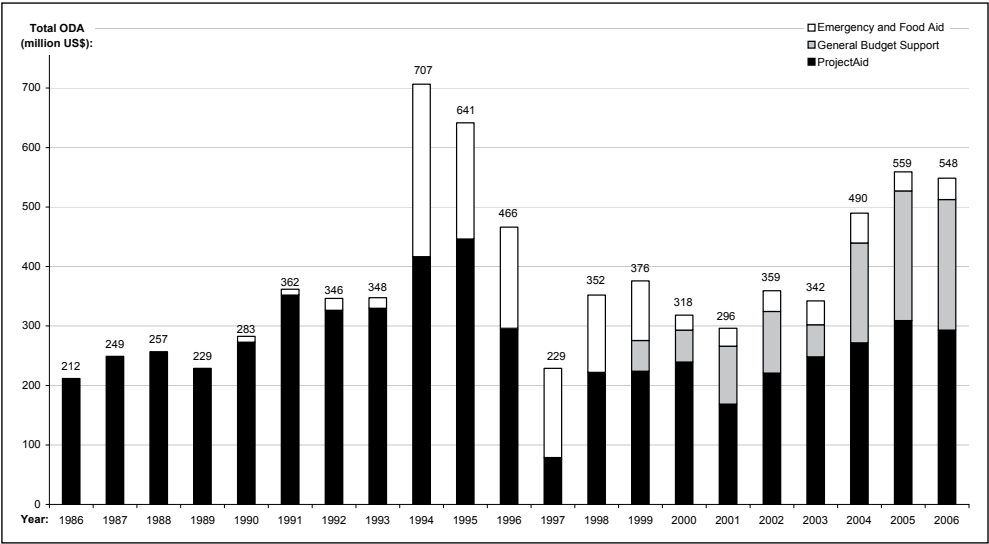
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half of the national budget. While there has been a significant increase in ODA to Rwanda in the last few years, a historical perspective reveals a remarkable degree of constancy in the aid flows in the longer term. Apart from the period 1994-1995, when there was a surge in humanitarian assistance peaking at close to \$300 million, aid flows have been almost

constant at \$386 million on average for the years 1997-2006, against \$334 million on average for the period 1990-1993 (see Figure 1). In the preceding decade, aid flows were slightly lower at \$283 million on average (in constant 2000 prices) for the period 1980-1989.

The most striking feature of the aid flows to Rwanda is not the quantity of aid, but the source and nature of this aid. While almost all aid before the genocide came in the form of stand-alone projects, directly implemented by donors or NGOs, more than half of all aid now goes directly to the government in the form of direct budget support. Furthermore, by comparing the major bilateral donors before and after the war, we can see a clear shift away from Rwanda’s traditional donors. The three largest donors to Rwanda in the period 1990-1993 were Belgium, Germany and France, accounting for \$118 million in aid per year. By 2005, these three donors combined represented only \$44 million. Two other major donors, in relative terms, were Canada and Switzerland, which gave more aid to Rwanda in per capita terms than to any other country. Between 1990 and 2005, their contributions

Figure 1: Overseas Development Assistance to Rwanda 1990-2006



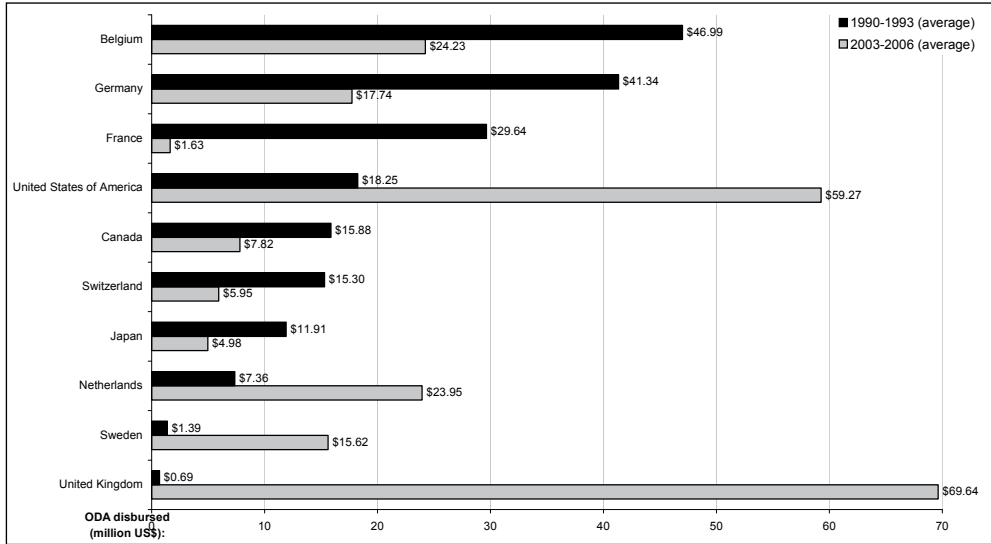
Source: OECD-DAC International Development Statistics: General Budget Support data based on estimates from Purcell *et al* (2006) and subsequent updates by the Ministry of Finance’s External Finance Unit.

to Rwanda decreased by almost 60%. At the same time, a number of new countries have emerged, notably the United Kingdom, Sweden and the Netherlands, which together contributed \$109 million per year during the period 2003-2006. The United States also significantly increased aid to Rwanda over this period, from \$18 million in 1990-1993 to \$59 million in 2003-2006. To this we should add the contributions of multilateral agencies, such as the Washington-based World Bank, whose contributions increased from \$21 million to \$115 million between 1990 and 2005, the European Commission (\$36 million to \$91 million), and the African Development Bank (\$19 million to \$30 million).

These drastic shifts are largely explained by Rwanda’s special status and high public opinion profile in the West after the genocide, as well as the neglect by traditional donors who had supported the Hutu regime. The move towards Anglophone donors may also partly reflect the changing geostrategic balance in the region as a result of the victory of the largely English-speaking RPF over the francophone regime of President Habyarimana. The resulting lack of continuity in the donor community probably hampered the transmission of institutional memory and restricted donors’ ability to internalise the lessons of the pre-war failures. Marriage, for instance, has suggested that DFID’s involvement in Rwanda after the war was ‘disproportionate to its brief experience in the country’ even by its own standards (2006:481).

Incoherent donor conditionality

The cultural and strategic divide between donors may also have contributed to reinforcing natural divisions in the development community and prevented the emergence of a shared analysis of political risks and a coherent strategy for dealing with Rwanda’s reconstruction (Holvoet & Rombouts 2008). The donors’ lack of consensus on how to approach such crucial issues as democratisation and reconciliation was illustrated, for instance, during the 2003 presidential election, when ‘the Netherlands froze its aid because of concerns

Figure 2: Major bilateral donors to Rwanda: 1990-1993 & 2003-2006

Source: OECD-DAC International Development Statistics

about the disappearances of opposition politicians' (Piron & McKay 2004:28). The British, on the other hand, decided to maintain their support of \$1 million, as did the EU (€500,000), for the organisation of elections, which President Kagame won with 94.6% of the votes (EU 2003).

While aid coordination structures do exist, they are mostly technical entities focusing primarily on the allocation and utilisation of financial resources. Furthermore, as Piron and McKay (2004) note, donors still lack the capacity to undertake advanced political and socio-economic analysis. Some of the largest bilateral donors have carried out independent studies on conflict risks.³ However, these remain largely stand-alone reports that do not inform or guide programming in any substantial or systematic way (House of Commons 2006). Attempts were made by the United Nations Development Programme in 2007 to carry out a conflict analysis with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission as part of the preparation for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). However, the exercise was never completed due to the sensitivity of some of the issues raised.

The separation of donors into regional zones of influence has similarly prevented the emergence of a coherent response to the conflict that has continued to rage across the border in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Browne 2007). After Rwanda's second invasion of Congo in 1998, for instance, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank approved large reconstruction grants for Rwanda,⁴ thanks largely to British and U.S. support, leading to a substantive increase in aid flows in the period 1998-1999 (see Figure 1). Shortly afterwards, a report produced for the Security Council by a panel of experts, with strong backing from France, suggested that part of this aid might have been diverted towards the war effort, which in turn generated at least \$250 million in illicit revenue for Rwanda, mainly from the exploitation of coltan in Eastern Congo (UN 2001b:43).

Even though aid flows to Rwanda decreased in subsequent years, the use of direct budget support – which gives the government more control over resources and is widely seen as a

political sign of endorsement of government policies by the donors – increased from 2000 onwards, despite the explicit recommendation in the report to suspend budget support to Rwanda and Uganda until the end of the war (United Nations 2001b: 227). In 2002, the head of the UN panel of experts, Safiatou Ba-N'Daw, was removed under pressure from member states who considered him too close to France. Reporting on the looting of Congolese resources was finally discontinued in 2003, before the planned publication of the third report dealing with the involvement of Western companies in the trade of illicit mineral resources from Congo (Grignon 2003).

By end 2004, several bilateral donors decided temporarily to withhold disbursements of planned budget support to Rwanda after reports of renewed involvement in Congo (Purcell *et al* 2006). Consequently, disbursements of aid to Rwanda decreased in 2004 for most donors compared to the previous year. Despite this, total ODA disbursements to Rwanda increased by 43% between 2003 and 2004 largely due to a \$116 million increase in IDA grants from the World Bank and significant increases from the UK. Following renewed fighting in North Kivu in 2008, a new report to the Security Council confirmed Rwanda's continued involvement in Congo on the side of the CNDF, the *Congres National pour la Defense du Peuple* (United Nations 2008), prompting Sweden and the Netherlands to announce the immediate suspension of direct budget support. On the day the report was released, however, the UK minister for International Development, Ivan Lewis, pledged to continue providing budget support to Rwanda, despite the report's renewed call for international sanctions against the involved parties (APA 2008).

Structural Conflict Prevention: Bridging the Gap between Aid and Politics

As the Rwandan example illustrates, the aid system still suffers from many of the same problems that contributed to fuelling the Rwandan conflict in the years leading up to the genocide, namely: 1) there is a dearth of analysis of the socio-political context in which aid is being allocated; 2) where such analysis exists, it is usually ad hoc and not systematically linked to the aid allocation process; 3) the attempts at linking aid decisions to political contexts have been piecemeal and uncoordinated. These three issues are examined in the following sub-sections.

Political analysis

Since the Rwandan genocide, and partly as a result of that conflict, significant efforts have been made to improve the so-called conflict sensitivity of aid. Most donors now have programmes of support in areas such as human rights, transitional justice and democratic governance that used to be considered too 'political' for development agencies even though such activities often remain largely symbolic and prosaic (Uvin 2001:181). In addition to direct interventions on the levers of conflict, several aid agencies have developed their own tools and guidelines to assess the impact of development projects on conflict,⁵ based on methodologies such as Anderson's 'do no harm' approach, Reyhler's 'conflict impact assessment systems' or Bush's (1998) 'peace and conflict impact assessment'.

One of the major limitations of these methodologies in the current context is that they largely focus on micro-level analysis and are therefore more suited for small-scale projects than for budget support (World Bank 2004:10), which has expanded significantly in recent years (see Figure 1). There is no evidence yet that budget support will weaken the link between aid and conflict,⁶ although it may shift the focus from the localised dynamics of

conflict (e.g. group or clan rivalries over land or water sources) to macro (historical and social) dimensions. If anything, budget support carries with it a strong political signal of endorsement of the recipient government, which risks implicating donors more directly in conflicts. Yet there is little indication so far that the shift towards budget support means that donors understand the political economy of the countries in which they operate any better (Boyce 2004). The World Bank is structurally prevented from engaging in political issues by its articles of agreement, which explicitly prohibit Bank officers from interfering 'in the political affairs of any member' or being 'influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned' (World Bank 1989: Article 2, Section 10).

By contrast, in complex peacekeeping missions, the UN has at its disposal sophisticated systems to collect and analyse hundreds of pages of data from the field, which are processed and communicated to headquarters daily. In addition to military personnel, a large peacekeeping operation typically comprises scores of political affairs officers, as well as human rights, civil affairs and protection officers, reporting daily from across the area of operation on military, political, humanitarian and economic issues. In-depth political analysis and reporting is provided via code cables on selected topics, as well as the quarterly reports submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary General. Following the recommendations of the Brahimi report (Durch *et al* 2003; Adelman & Suhrke 1995:76), peacekeeping missions have developed strategic analysis capacities, usually in the form of a 'joint mission analysis cell', which makes medium- to long-term projections on issues relating to security, political developments, ethnic tensions, etc. While this information is primarily tailored for political and military decision makers, most peacekeeping missions today are integrated across the UN's different areas of intervention. This means, for instance, that the resident coordinator of the UN country team, who is responsible for humanitarian and development operations, has access to the same analysis as the political and/or military heads of the mission in his capacity as deputy special representative of the Secretary General. Furthermore, the new guidelines on integrated mission planning are geared towards ensuring that this information is taken into account in planning both the military and development operations.

After the withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission, the resident coordinator would remain as the most senior representative of the UN system in the country, but without access to the wealth of information a deputy head of mission is entitled to, even in the face of extremely complex political realities long after the conflict. The contrast is especially striking

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for fragile states or low-income countries such as Rwanda, where security, state-building and development issues are intertwined and may require several switches between peacekeeping and development operations before a sustainable development process can be initiated. The UN's Peacebuilding Commission, which was established in 2005 to provide multi-dimensional support to countries that are at risk of relapsing into conflict, may help to ensure a more gradual transition from peacekeeping to development

after countries have been removed from the Security Council's agenda (Ponzio 2005). The commission's work is presently restricted to post-conflict countries, however, and will therefore not help to monitor conflict trends in countries not recently affected by conflict (Rubin 2005:383). Furthermore, as with all exception mechanisms, referral to the commission can have a stigmatising effect that creates resistance from affected countries.

Linking analysis to prevention

In many cases, of course, including peacekeeping missions, the primary problem is not the lack of information but the inability to use it effectively. In order to have an impact, analytical capacity thus needs to be institutionalised and systematically linked to conflict prevention mechanisms. On the political side, efforts were made following the Rwandan genocide to strengthen early warning systems linked to mechanisms aimed at preventing the degeneration of crises into violent conflicts (Paffenholz 2005; Krummenacher & Schmeidl 2003). Though attempts to strengthen the UN's political monitoring role quickly ran into opposition from member states, due to the sensitivity of some of the issues raised (United Nations 2001a), systems have been established with some success at the regional level – most notably in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).⁷ More recently, there have been discussions within the African Union to create a continental early warning system (CEWS) under the Peace and Security Council (Cilliers 2005). These remain essentially political tools focused on operational conflict prevention, however. This

In order to be effective, operational conflict prevention mechanisms should be seen as a response of last resort in a continuum of interventions and monitoring systems that can identify and prevent conflict risks before a crisis erupts – at which point it often is too late to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict.

means that there needs to be an initial trigger, such as a conflictive event that prompts the activation of the early warning system (Srinivasan 2006:7). Countries such as Rwanda, for instance, which have graduated from a post-conflict status, would not be covered by the CEWS, as currently envisaged (African Union 2008). By contrast, the Boutros Ghali and Kofi Annan reports on conflict prevention took much longer term views that

emphasised the importance of addressing the root causes of violent conflict through structural interventions on economic and social development (Ackermann 2003). In order to be effective, operational conflict prevention mechanisms should be seen as a response of last resort in a continuum of interventions and monitoring systems that can identify and prevent conflict risks before a crisis erupts – at which point it often is too late to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict.

At the moment on the development side, there is no equivalent systematically linking monitoring and analysis to structural conflict prevention measures that can be implemented by development partners. While the political sections of embassies may carry out more sophisticated political analyses, they are still seen as largely independent of the 'technical work' of development agencies. Even though there has been an effort in recent years among bilateral donors to improve information sharing between foreign affairs and cooperation ministries through the establishment of integrated field offices, for instance, this is not likely to have an impact the operations of multilateral donors, particularly the World Bank, which still represents the most important source of financing in many low income countries.

For most donors, the PRSP remains the reference framework for development planning, which is presented as a technical exercise focused mostly on sector-specific and macro-economic issues. In most cases, little or no effort is made to account for the political environment in which the development strategies are being implemented, partly because of the lack of attention given to these issues in the joint staff assessments done by the World Bank and IMF, which do not have a strong political expertise. In principle, the PRSP focus on poverty reduction and social sectors would make it an appropriate framework for engaging in structural conflict prevention issues. Furthermore, its systematic coverage of low-income countries under the HIPC debt relief initiative means that it focuses on the group of countries that have a heightened risk of falling into conflict (Auvinen &

Nafziger 1999). Using a standardised instrument like the PRSP could also help reduce stigmatisation associated with measures that single out conflict-prone countries. In some post-conflict countries, attempts have been made to include conflict analyses or mainstream conflict prevention issues in the PRSP (World Bank 2005). The current reality of PRSP processes, however, is not conducive to a genuine and thorough treatment of conflict-related issues. In low-income countries in particular, the PRSP process relies heavily on the inputs of international consultants or experts brought in to produce specific components to the standards required by donors. Such experts will typically be selected on the basis of their sectoral expertise rather than their in-depth knowledge of the country, resulting in strategies that look very similar from country to country. The requirement of government ownership (or at least approval) in the PRSP process can also constitute a constraint on the objective analysis and treatment of sensitive issues, especially when the government is clearly identified with one party of the conflict, as would be the case in Rwanda. Currently the UN does not possess powers that would allow it to carry out on the political side 'independent'⁸ or critical assessments similar to those that are routinely carried out by the World Bank and IMF on macro-economic policies as part of the PRSP process, as well as under the IMF's powerful Article IV provisions.

Ensuring a coherent response

As we have seen in the case of Rwanda, even when information is available donors rarely manage to agree on a coherent response to address the identified issues. To the extent that these discrepancies are due to misinformation and lack of coordination rather than competing political interests, it should be possible to improve coherence through existing coordination mechanisms, provided they are allowed to deal with political issues. Even political differences can be mitigated, if not resolved, through the provision of standardised, credible and independent analysis. The recommendations of the ill-fated panel of experts on Congo, for instance, may have been more difficult to manipulate and reject had it been a permanent institutional feature of the reporting to the Security Council rather than an ad hoc initiative supported by one member state.

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office would be naturally placed to help facilitate such an in-country dialogue because of its mandate in aid coordination, as well as the UN's 'explicit mandate to promote peace and security' (Evans *et al* 2003:7). Furthermore, in contrast to the World Bank, which relies largely on Washington-based sector experts, the UN typically has an extensive presence in almost all low-income countries, including at sub-national levels. Even in countries where it does not maintain peacekeeping operations, the UN system routinely generates a wealth of information as part of its ongoing operations (e.g. on refugee flows, food security, socio-economic conditions, etc.), which is crucial to monitor both structural and acute trends in conflict. However, the system does not currently have the capacity to centralise and analyse this information, let alone influence aid allocations.⁹

As Srinivasan showed in his analysis of the build-up to the Darfur crisis, the disconnect that exists between the UN's political units, such as the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and its representation in the field makes it difficult for the organisation to engage effectively in political issues at country level in the absence of a Security Council mandate (Srinivasan 2006:8). In most countries, including crisis and post-conflict countries, the UN is represented primarily by specialised technical agencies, and/or by humanitarian agencies, both of which emphasise their political neutrality as a basis for their engagement with governments. And while the UNDP has started to engage more proactively in the field of governance in the last decade, this engagement remains primarily programmatic and technical rather than political.

It is too early to tell whether the ongoing 'Delivering as One' reform will change this.¹⁰ On paper, the reform makes a clear distinction between the primarily technical work of heads of UN agencies, which engage at the ministerial level, and the more political/diplomatic function of the resident coordinator, who can engage directly at the level of the head of state if necessary on behalf of the UN system (United Nations 2006). In practice, however, the reform is likely to run into the same strong opposition from the Group of 77 developing countries as previous attempts at reform. The G77 has so far been averse to the idea of a strengthened resident coordinator who could hold governments accountable on human rights and other sensitive issues in much the same way as the World Bank and IMF routinely call governments to account on their economic policies.

By insulating the resident coordinator from day-to-day programmatic activities, the reform may, however, enable a more systematic treatment of strategic issues, including political ones, in development contexts. Even if the resident coordinator may not always be in a position to take on sensitive political issues, the function could provide the missing institutional linkage with the political side of the organisation by providing an institutional home for DPA, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other parts of the system that carry out analysis that is relevant to conflict prevention. In Rwanda, which is a pilot country for the 'Delivering as One' UN reform, the OHCHR has already seconded a human rights advisor to the resident coordinator's office. Without a strengthened mandate, such additional capacity is, however, likely to remain untapped.

Conclusion

The case of Rwanda illustrates how the missing institutional linkages between the global development and security architectures have undermined the effectiveness of the international community's efforts to bring sustainable peace and development to the Great Lakes region.

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Memories may be short, but not so long ago Rwanda was considered 'an African model of development' (Ansoms 2005:496) and was widely regarded as 'one of the most stable and peaceful [countries] in Africa' (Reyntjens 1996:247). Then, as now, the international community poured millions of dollars into apparently successful development projects without really understanding how these interventions impacted the structural social and

political causes of the yet unresolved conflicts that have affected the country with dreadful regularity since its independence. At the same time, billions of dollars are being spent separately on a vast peacekeeping operation on the other side of the border to contain a conflict whose origin and solution lie largely in Rwanda itself.

This article has argued that stronger political analysis would be required in order to inform development programming in countries emerging from conflict or at risk of falling into conflict. At the moment such analytical capacities are largely restricted to countries with ongoing conflicts, where the UN maintains Security Council-mandated operations. The analysis produced would need to be of sufficient quality (and impartiality) to facilitate the emergence of a coherent strategic vision among donors on the objective means to preserve long-term peace and stability. In order to be effective, the proposed function should be permanent and universal (at least for the group of countries that are most prone to conflict) to avoid stigmatisation and ensure that crises can be detected and addressed through structural conflict prevention measures before they become acute. This would help to systematise a monitoring

and reporting function that is largely performed on an ad hoc basis by the media and NGOs with the consequence that peripheral crises get under-reported.

Most importantly perhaps, the political monitoring function would need to be linked to the aid allocation process. Giving the UN a more explicit political responsibility in the aid allocation process would also help to clarify its value added in the global development architecture at a time when its efficacy and relevance in this field are increasingly being questioned.

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Endnotes

¹ By 'structural conflict prevention' is meant long-term interventions in institutions and structures aimed at addressing the social, economic and political root causes of conflict (Ackermann 2003:341); 'operational conflict prevention', in contrast, describes short-term political, diplomatic and military interventions aimed at preventing crises from degenerating into violent conflict.

² Uvin (1998:44), for instance, has documented the recurrent emphasis in bank reports on 'the country's political stability ... the government's concern for the rural population, its effective administration, and its prudent, sound, realistic management'.

³ A conflict vulnerability assessment carried out by USAID in 2002, for instance, concluded that 'the lingering threat of potential, large-scale violent conflict in Rwanda (whether or not it takes a specifically genocidal turn) remains very great – perhaps among the greatest in Africa' (Weeks *et al* 2002).

⁴ *Concertation Chietienne Four l'Afrique Centrale* and the Great Lakes Advocacy Network 2000, 'A Call for a European Policy in Central Africa: 12 Proposals for France and its EU Partners', Brussels, June.

⁵ See, for instance, DFID's Strategic Conflict Assessment tool, as well as UNDP's and the World Bank's Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment tools.

⁶ The relatively recent but rapidly growing literature on the specifics of budget support does not for the most part focus directly on conflict countries, where such aid modalities remain fairly rare (Cordella & Dell'Ariccia 2003, 2007; Paffenholz 2005).

⁷ Other regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in the Horn of Africa have launched similar initiatives with varying degrees of success.

⁸ 'Independent' only in the sense that they do not require government approval. In practice, these can be highly politicised processes, which rarely escape pressures from donor governments.

⁹ Drawing on Sellwood, E., 'Informing the United Nations: The Practice of Analysis in the Department of Political Affairs,' 16 December 2002 mimeo:12-14, 18. Sellwood conducted interviews in the DPA in August and September 2002.

¹⁰ The first comprehensive evaluations of the 'One UN' pilots are not expected until late 2009.

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