



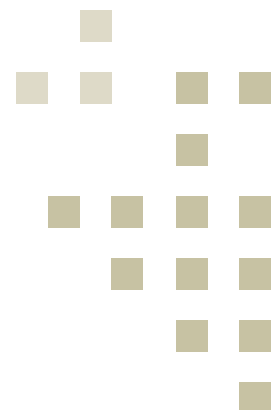
«Challenges to Collective Security»
Working Papers from NUPI's UN Programme

Transition Management

Anja T. Kaspersen

Paper No. 5 – 2004

Norwegian Institute
of International
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Executive summary

Executive Summary: The emerging consensus on the need to establish more effective United Nations mechanisms for managing the transition from conflict to peace, and on the importance of addressing the nexus between development and security, is not sufficiently reflected in the organisational structure or logic of UN operations. This report argues that tailored policy responses should be introduced or strengthened at the institutional, intergovernmental and regional levels, to deal effectively with the challenges of peacekeeping, peace-building and transition management. The debate about the need for more improved transition management and better coordination mirrors the larger debate about the role of the organisation and UN system integration.

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Transition Management

«A Stradivarius violin is nothing more than an assemblage of wood and catgut. It takes a musician to get the harmony out of it. But if the player is at fault, there is no sense in blaming it on the instrument – still less in smashing its principle.» (Sir Alexander Cadogan, United Nations Security Council, 1946)

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1. Introduction

Managing transitions from conflict to peace has become the primary responsibility of the United Nations in the 21st century. Though the world organisation has recorded several successes in this field in recent years, it has also come under international scrutiny for failing to achieve tangible or lasting results in rectifying conflict situations. The implications have been disastrous for the millions around the world ravaged by war. If the UN is to improve its record and adapt its institutional structure to respond more effectively to these crises, it will have to reconsider the way it addresses the synergy between development and security in conflict areas. Conceptually the UN has come a long way, but operationally it still lags behind. This is due in part to uncertainties related to the heavily political dimension of peace-building activities, and in part to the gap between political realities and strategic, tactical and operational abilities. A key issue is the organisational relationship and policy coordination between the field of development and the field of security.

Today, more than any other time in the UN history, the UN diplomatic community has recognised the need to address the ‘root causes of conflict’ and thereby anticipate eruptions of violence. However, meaningful progress has been slow. What is needed is a

¹ This paper is based on a study by NUPI, commissioned by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Norway and of Sweden. Anja Kaspersen has been the main researcher and author of this document, under a NUPI project directed by Espen Barth Eide. The author is grateful to Espen Barth Eide, Torunn L. Tryggestad, Ståle Ulriksen, Ole Jacob Sending, Kjersti Brathagen and Nicolas Ruble for their valuable comments and support.

more sustained focus on preventing conflicts by investing in long-term development policies, or «structural prevention».

The UN is currently covering only part of the job by focusing on law-enforcement functions in post-conflict areas. New problems of governance require new and more sophisticated policy responses. Merging policy tools from the security sector and the development sector can help render responses more effective. Otherwise, it is the situation in the field at the end of hostilities, at the end of the mediation process or the peace-enforcement campaign, which fundamentally determines the conditions for long-term stability and political development. Any cease-fire or peace agreement will structure the post-conflict political system. Conflict management should therefore be coupled with long-term peace-building activities as a whole, rather than as two separate processes. A key objective of any process of transition from war to peace is to establish channels and rules of the game through which political disagreements can be settled without resorting to violence.

2. Transition to What?

For the UN, transition denotes «the period in a crisis when external assistance is most crucial in supporting or underpinning still fragile cease-fires or peace processes by helping to create the conditions for political stability, security, justice and social equity».² The overarching goal of any transition is to consolidate peace through reform measures aimed at recasting government institutions in the image of a coherent and robust state order. Recent experiences in Haiti, Liberia and Kosovo indicate that current approaches are flawed. There are no quick fixes: a change in responses will require a well-planned, holistic approach.

Peace building³ is a critical supplement to preventive efforts, peacemaking and peacekeeping. Because these three instruments are complementary but synchronous, the transition from one to the other may be uncertain. Where does one transition phase end and the next begin? This in turn complicates the projection of a peace-keeping exit strategy.

From the outset it is essential that parties clearly spell out the «endgame» parameters, meaning the set of conditions that must be

2 Report of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues, Para 13.

3 According to the UN Secretary General, peace building consists of a series of «actions undertaken at the end of a conflict to consolidate peace and prevent a recurrence of armed confrontation».

matched by realities on the ground for a transition to be deemed successful. They further need to assign specific responsibilities and tasks to legitimate authorities, since determining the division of labour will ultimately dictate the appropriate means and mechanisms to employ. The object of the peace-building phase is more a question of transition than of reconstruction. Hence, while protagonists of the «security-development» nexus recognise security as a precondition for development, they also take a positive «development» approach to change. In contrast, traditional security thinking tends to be geared towards maintaining the status quo.

What is still lacking within both the UN and in the wider international community is an agreed recognition of the specific direction of change that we, the international community, want to encourage. While most would agree that «peace» and some kind of economic progress are desired outcomes, the diplomatic community has remained vague on the specific nature of the state and society structures it seeks to nurture over the long term.

2.1 Universalism versus pluralism

If the UN is to progress toward advancing institutional reform, it will need to look introspectively and to find its role within a larger international context marked by a shift from pluralism to universalism. While originally geared towards managing intergovernmental relations between states with highly differing political systems, the tension between a pluralist vision and a more universalistic principle of minimum conditions of statehood was introduced already in the 1948 Declaration on Human Rights. However, in peace and security terms the UN remained overwhelmingly pluralist throughout the Cold War. This was a matter of necessity: the superpower conflict, with strong powers with veto rights representing both sides of the East–West divide, made sure that the UN did not take sides, for instance as to the desirability of a market-based or a state-controlled economy, or between competitive democracy versus one-party rule.

To what extent may an international community that includes a large number of authoritarian states claim that the only serious source of legitimacy is democracy? To be sure, efforts to develop good governance, the rule of law, gender equality and security-sector institutions respecting human rights and similar concepts linked to so-called universal values have been introduced as part of state building. But they have been introduced in piecemeal and technical ways rather than as part of a coherent strategy to reach a clearly

defined goal. An in-depth discussion of the complexities and implications of transporting certain universalistic values based on pluralist ideas is both timely and necessary.

If the international community cannot agree on the desired outcome of change for a particular country, the final outcome will not be a result of one grand plan but will depend on the interplay between various strategies and policies seeking to achieve limited goals, and the ability to implement them. Today, interventions labelled as state-building exercises are conceived of in terms of incremental «phases». A conflict phase is separated from a varying number of post-conflict phases. Even documents calling for more holistic approaches to state building tend to ignore the combat phase, including the violence wielded by the intervening party. Some calls for a holistic approach to post-conflict activities notwithstanding, there has as yet been scant conceptual progress and even less progress in implementing such an approach on the ground.

An increasing willingness to describe «minimum conditions of statehood» and to qualify state sovereignty with state legitimacy would greatly facilitate internationally assisted processes of transitions. Following through on these would help to answer the fundamental question: *transition to what?* Local ownership and traditional customs must be taken into account. We fundamentally believe that these principles, if carefully balanced, can be reconciled with a more «universalistic» understanding of the role of the state in a world which still cherishes diversity, but which is no longer divided into two distinct political camps.

2.2 Mission impossible? Transforming rhetoric into reality

With such widespread consensus on the need and aims for creating sustainable peace, one could be forgiven for thinking that the prospects for peace building worldwide were promising. But why and how then, after civil wars end, do grievances become re-inflamed and conflict situations ultimately rekindled? Varying experiences in post-conflict peace building so far raise more questions than they provide answers. Still, one certainty stands out: the absence of stability, security, the rule of law, respect for human rights and resources spent on development will rarely translate into lasting peace. Stability, in turn, is possible only as long as those affected by war are given hope for the future and experience improvements in their daily lives. This is doubly true if an intervention raises the expectations of the affected population. Failure to meet, at least in

part, those expectations may provoke hostility and resentment toward the intervening authority. The reintegration of former combatants, for instance, has seldom worked well in the past. Ensuring a more coherent bond between security and development activities – such as generating jobs – could go a long way toward enhancing the effectiveness of reintegration, thus lessening the risk of a return to violence.

The international community has agreed that the complexity of this issue requires coherent strategies, more coordination and effective and concerted action. Yet, the same advocates of peace generally remain absent when it comes to putting their chips on the table and committing meaningful political and financial capital. Neither is there agreement as to who should determine the benchmarks of success. While the rhetoric may be interventionist, peace-building efforts have been somewhat ad hoc, and few seem concerned about the quality of the peace that they want to build.

A recent report by the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues stressed that local host governments, however weak and inexperienced, must play an active role in all development activities of the post-conflict phase. But in an extreme post-conflict situation, local communities are unlikely to be able to lead or assume ownership of the transition process. The UN must be prepared to fill this leadership vacuum, maintaining responsibility and even assuming control for transition/peace-building activities. Some donors are reluctant to provide aid or funding without commitment from the local host government. This means that the commitment to working with extreme cases may wane quickly, with a greater likelihood of a relapse into conflict. The international community need to develop more creative, innovative and well attuned responses with regard to strengthening local capacities.

It is sometimes difficult to sustain a more continued engagement, as it may be perceived as an infringement by the UN on the sovereignty of a given country. What constitutes a «major» emergency may be dictated by political or strategic interests and – for better or worse – by the media. When the risk of violent conflict has passed and the situation has entered a post-conflict phase, it usually means a reduction in international attention. Lessons learned have shown that this normally implies less funding to rebuild the country and consequently increased risk of backsliding into conflict. Evidence suggests that focusing on ways to increase growth and create awareness of the importance of signalling the government's intentions in a post-conflict setting are the best ways of preventing backs-

liding into conflict.⁴ Moreover, further attention needs to be paid to cutting off financing for rebel groups. Particular focus should also be given to the role of diasporas in prolonging conflict, on the one hand, and to aid policies and programme objectives, on the other. Fostering long-term social and economic growth is the best means to prevent the recurrence of civil war.

2.3 Building sustainable peace

A major flaw with the UN system is that it becomes too concerned with supplying solutions rather than constructively addressing the problem. It is important that the specific goals of a transition process are identified, from the outset, yet remain flexible.

Three main concerns arise: First, the division of labour between peacekeeping and peace-building operations. The grey area between peacekeeping and peace-building makes it difficult to draw a clear distinction, and it would not be very fruitful to do so. It is important to include both peace-building objectives and transition strategies from the start of the mission, preferably in the mandate and in the exit strategy as well, to ensure continuity and backstopping of longer-term peace-building tasks. In existing missions where post-conflict peace-building elements have not been incorporated at the outset of a mandate, recommendations concerning the transitional period should be included in the final phasing-out of the operation. The military actions taken to create peace or take over control of the country in question will have lasting influence long after the last shot is fired. It is, in this sense, vital to design the military campaign plan to support the long-term goal. Today, those campaigns are normally more influenced by the nature of the coalitions and armed forces carrying them out, than by coherent plans for long-term political development. The strategies, doctrines and organisation of the armed forces and the strategic cultures of the international institutions and alliances, as well as of their member states, are vital pre-conditions for action. They heavily affect the outcome of the conflict phase, and thus the starting point for the post-conflict phases.

Second, it should be acknowledged that investing in peace building means investing for the future and prosperity of a country, and if done properly such an investment can prevent a reoccurrence of

4 Collier, Paul (et al.): *Breaking the Conflict Trap. Civil War and Development Policy*, a World Bank Policy Research Report, co-publication of the World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003.

conflict. The clear engagement of the host country is crucial in achieving these objectives; without it, outside assistance will ultimately fail. The UN itself will never have adequate resources to do the enormous job that serious peace building entails. But it can and should serve as a facilitator and coordinator of the wider UN system and the international community.

Third, coordinating peacekeeping and peace building activities requires strong leadership authorised to make decisions, and a clear division of labour. To ensure a credible process, conditions for full cooperation must be established and the level of authority given to decisions made by the variety of already established coordination mechanisms must be agreed upon. It is important to clarify who should «own» the processes and initiatives. Projects and programmes need to be designed and management processes structured to encourage national commitment, including civil society and local NGOs. National ownership must be sustained for long-term programmes in the face of high staff turnover, policy shifts and economic disruptions. Helping to manage relationships, working to increase trust, communication and mutual accountability and collaboration – these are key tasks of the UN system.

Reconstruction and economic development projects are often launched in isolation from DD&R processes.⁵ It is an obvious fact that demobilisation in a society where economic activity has stalled almost completely will cause massive unemployment. It is also obvious that the creation of a large castaway group of idle young men and women trained for combat and then stripped of their one source of income can scarcely promote stability. Nevertheless, large-scale reconstruction projects have been launched in both Iraq and Afghanistan to rebuild roads or industrial complexes as fast as possible, often with imported labour, without a single thought for the idle ex-combatant workforce. On the other hand, in instances where DD&R is said to work, it may create the impression that former combatants are being rewarded for their past. While people who have committed themselves to the peaceful upholding of society during crisis may not benefit from aid, former warriors who have often lived by plunder may receive financial support as a group and, individually, a neat sum of money if they hand in their weapons. Such signals may give the impression that violence is rewarded.

An important issue rarely discussed is the need to acknowledge the role of culture in peacekeeping. Attention should be given to

5 Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants.

international and national attitudes, the formation of a common mission identity with a common purpose. A further challenge is managing issues of interoperability and organisational cultural differences – particularly in light of the increase in hybrid and integrated missions – among mission components, non governmental organisations, military, civilian police and in interactions with local population, with regard to law, politics and conflict resolution practices, gender roles, economic and subsistence practices. Ultimately, the substantive legitimacy of peacekeeping is supported at the international and national levels by practice, symbols and rituals. This is evident in the conventionalised actions through which peacekeeping missions are created (i.e. Security Council consultations and resolutions authorising tasks assigned to peacekeeping troops ceremonies). In hybrid or integrated operations there are fewer opportunities for synchronising a common frame of reference. Relations with local populations are affected by the expectations of these populations about peace operations, so it is critical to have a well-planned common public information strategy from the outset of the mission. Since conflict alters traditional cultural patterns, restoring a society requires an understanding of these as a baseline. This must be reflected both in mission planning and in the training given to all personnel prior to deployment, as well as providing an opportunity to act with future counterparts in the field in joint mission exercises or simulations, including local counterparts.

3. Intergovernmental, Regional and Institutional Processes

3.1 Intergovernmental processes

Numerous reports and resolutions adopted by UN Member States have stressed the importance of rapid and well-coordinated responses backstopped with resources to ensure a smooth transition to peace. Can this need for an improved link between rapid reaction and sustained resources be met when the international community seems to thrive on duplication and redundancy, and political will and commitment remain largely rhetorical?

3.1.1 Funding

According to the UNDG/ECHA report, the keys to effective transition are adequate, flexible, sustained funding and early donor enga-

gement in critical sectors and support for national capacity building, including governance.

Issues of quality and accountability have generated a debate on the role of the UN, international financial institutions, various regional organisations and bilateral aid. At a high-level OECD meeting held in Paris in April 2004, the need to reconsider the international developmental architecture was stressed, but not met. It was agreed that development and security are inextricably linked, and that this synergy should be reflected across all relevant parts of government. The debate about allowing donor countries to use ODA-approved funding to support peacekeeping activities is complex and long overdue. The normative reasons given for not financing peacekeeping operations with development money may be valid, but this also raises questions about the normative reasons for not supporting such actions when these are aimed directly at promoting human security through reducing and solving violent conflicts. There is also general consensus on the need to strengthen the harmonisation between multilateral and bilateral initiatives, yet, harmonisation in the field remains elusive, due in part to the difficulties that the multilaterals face with donor earmarking. National demands for so-called «visible aid» might in fact lead to more harm than good. There is a need to assess how donors can work more effectively to ensure that bilateral efforts are well coordinated with, and complement, projects initiated through the UN system and regional organisations, to avoid fragmented efforts. Competing demands and rigid donor regulations have made cooperation on critical areas difficult.

3.1.2 The feasibility of a subsidiary UN Security Council «clearinghouse»

In his Millennium Implementation Report, the UN Secretary-General proposed the establishment of a Security Council subsidiary body responsible for issues relating to transition management and post-conflict peace building.

The Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations was established according to the Presidential Statement in January 2001 (S/PRST/2001/3). The Working Group met regularly throughout 2001, and although few actual results were produced, important topics were discussed. Since then, it has not met on a regular basis and has in many ways been marginalised. A recent Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2004/16) reiterates the importance of the working group and looks at ways to strengthen and expand

its work agenda. One option would be to transform the working group (including the ad hoc working group on conflict prevention) into a subsidiary organ with the elements required to ensure a smooth transition to the process of peace. This could prove useful in the work of the Security Council, especially when the Council itself is concerned with new, more acute crises. Such a «revised» working group would advise the Council on matters related to post-conflict transition as well as peacekeeping and the process leading up to sustainable peace building. The group would take the form of a «clearing-house» mechanism where information on relapse into conflict, elements to shore up new-found peace etc, would complement that of early warning signs and information on available personnel and equipment. The structure ought to include representatives from the political/diplomatic plenary, the operational actors and a bureau of support and expert staff. Planning efforts could draw on resources directly linked to peacekeeping, as well as experience from transitional phases where peacekeeping operations are coming to an end. This would require good and transparent relations with other related mechanisms, like the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant executing funds, programmes and agencies on the ground.

To function as a «clearing-house mechanism», the organ should receive relevant reports and analyses from UN funds, programmes, agencies etc., to have available all internal reports on issues relating to post-conflict transitions to durable peace. This, together with information from the field and regional partners, should enable the «clearing house» to report to the Security Council on situations where societies are close to relapsing into violent conflict, or where early warning signs of an imminent crisis have been noted. It would also enable the «clearing house» to report on what resources are available within the UN system or from regional partners. With its information base, such an entity could enhance the planning capabilities and coordination of operations as well.

3.1.3 ECOSOC

Any reform of multilateral institutions, including the international financial institutions and the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), must reflect current political realities in terms of representation, voting, participation and coordination. The need to start from scratch and establish an altogether new economic body has been widely debated in recent years. If such a body were to be

established, all stakeholders should be brought on board to ensure accountability for its functions. Today's ECOSOC is seen as unfocused, too large and unwieldy for real decision-making. The need for reform is acknowledged, but remains highly contentious.

A fundamental problem of the global multilateral system on the economic side is that it is so dispersed: there is ECOSOC and the UNDP (and the UN Development Group) within the UN, and the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) outside the UN «proper». Coherent action in economic development often requires the holistic application of macro-economic measures, development aid and trade policies. However, there exists no forum that can address all of these effectively. After several reform attempts, it remains uncertain whether ECOSOC is capable of fulfilling this overarching role. At best, it could serve as the focal point for ensuring such broad-based policies; at worst, it could degenerate into a black hole into which considerable energy is channelled but where no decisions of real importance come out.

To date, reforms have yielded limited results. Some have gone as far as to suggest that ECOSOC should be abolished altogether and replaced with new mechanisms to ensure genuine policy coordination between operational actors both within and outside the UN as such. This report argues that even if such a fundamental rethink of the international economic organisation were to become the favoured solution, it is unlikely that it would gain sufficient political support. Not least because of resistance from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). With over 70 per cent of the UN's workload being of a social or economic character, there is clearly a need for an effective body to deal with these concerns. It would be opportune to identify ways of strengthening and alter the current system by tasking ECOSOC with the monitoring of emerging conflicts, or conflicts with a potential to reoccur; overseeing humanitarian activities; reinforcing the mandate of the Chief Executive Board to coordinate such activities; managing UN efforts in post-conflict situations together with the Security Council; and initiating a debate on the universality of democracy, the division of labour and the role of ECOSOC versus UN funds and programmes.

In addition to the thematic approach currently adopted by ECOSOC, adopting the Arria Formula could prove useful in improving contact with the civil society and academia.⁶

6 The Arria Formula is an informal arrangement that allows the Security Council greater flexibility to be briefed about international peace and security issues.

3.2 Regional processes

The increasing number of peacekeeping operations, and the deficit in troops and police contributions, have forced the international community to rethink the role *regional organisations* can and ought to play in accordance with the UN Charter. Creating a sense of ownership for long-term solutions to regional problems is crucial, and regional initiatives enjoy obvious advantages. Such initiatives should be stimulated to prevent countries emerging from war from backsliding into conflict, and to promote democratic development while supporting the transition to peace.

The specific role of regional organisations in policing will naturally vary from organisation to organisation and from region to region.

Creating a sense of regional ownership for long-term solutions to regional problems is crucial. The United Nations and donor countries should ensure that efforts, including bilateral donor-funded projects, are implemented in such a way that they are not counter-productive to the long-term objectives of the region.

It is necessary to approach Africa's peace and security challenges from an African perspective to identify how the range of different actors can play their roles within a broad framework – with assistance attuned to the immediate realities and challenges of the continent.

The UN and specific regional institutions like the EU, NATO and soon the AU have devoted huge resources to creating military rapid-response capabilities with standing command structures and prepared plans for deployment. Except for the ongoing work to create a European civilian crisis-handling mechanism in the EU, there have been no comparable projects on the civilian side. Such concepts should be discussed with other regional organisations, and conceptually further developed. In order to facilitate rapid response – and to avoid friction between agencies every time a new mission is launched – pre-prepared and exercised civilian deployable multifunctional units should be formed. Such units could be formed by regional institutions, by coalitions of states, or by the UN itself (or any combination of these through complementing each other). Recent efforts by the UN and the EU working together to define

The Arria Formula enables a member of the Council to invite other Council members to an informal meeting, held outside Council chambers, for the purpose of briefings by one or more experts on a given topic or matter of concern to the Council. Source: Global Policy Forum Home Page (www.globalpolicy.org).

the practical modalities for such cooperation (including the need for further elaboration on the implications of «re-hatting» or so-called «bridging models» versus stand-by arrangements) are an important step. Similar arrangements should be considered with regard to other regional organisations. Moreover, the staff exchange programme, between the United Nations and the AU, that was initiated in 1999 (S/1999/1008) but never implemented should be revitalised and expanded to include other regional organisations, with the objective of familiarising counterparts with each other's work, facilitating exchange of experiences and creating awareness about systemic opportunities and constraints; this applies to civilian personnel as well.

Within the AU there has been considerable focus on the need for regional peacekeeping brigades, and efforts are underway to set these up. But the willingness to engage in the military aspects of peace operations probably far surpasses the AU's capacities to do so. The need for regional capacities for managing transition and peace building should be given equal if not more emphasis. A common African agenda needs to be reset on the regional level, linked to the governance framework and long-term needs of the continent.

It should be a responsibility on the collective African level to assist in state building within the member units. The recurrence of conflicts in Liberia and Haiti, the tragedy of Darfur and the signing of a peace agreement in the long-standing conflict in Sudan point up the need to re-think the issue of transition from post-conflict to durable peace. The most constructive role for the AU and its sub-regions is arguably to take on particular responsibility in this area. Moreover, the scope of external engagement needs to be examined, and bilateral engagement aimed at protecting specific national interests should be shunned.⁷

Another important aspect of the successful management of fragile transitions is the development of effective regional strategies to deal with the problem of spoilers;⁸ conflict-fuelling economic resources in war zones; smuggling; mercenaries; and trafficking – to mention but a few. Efforts should be intensified to allow for joint cross-border policing patrols.

Lastly, willingness to stay the course is critical. Although, The

7 For example: multinational corporations and nations seeking oil supplies while turning a blind eye to criminal engagement elsewhere, or efforts like the US bilateral Joint Task Force and «training» initiative to strengthen the African response to terrorism.

8 Stephen J Stedman «Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes», *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1997), pp. 5–53.

EU's Operation Artemis was recognised as a huge success, it also raises some critical questions for similar engagement in the future: Did the EU leave too early? How long is long enough? Could the Artemis capacity realistically have been sustained under MONUC, and would that have prevented the events that later transpired?

3.3 The UN Secretariat, funds and programmes

Effective intervention starts with making the right diagnosis through an adequate analysis capacity to prescribe the right cure. The UN Secretariat still suffers a great deficit in this respect. Contrary to popular belief, the problem is not lack of information, but the proper capacity to analyse and manage this information. The need for an information-gathering and analysis capacity has been noted in numerous UN reports, as well as in independent studies and reviews, and is still being debated. Also the present report stresses the importance of establishing such a capacity. Recent tragic events and eye-opening reports on issues like personnel security clearly demonstrate the need for such a capacity. On the other hand, mere analysis is not enough without the political will to convert rhetoric into reality.

The Secretariat, funds and programmes have been ambiguous in interpreting the relationship between humanitarian and political action, in particular whether and how the former should be subsumed under a wider peace-building agenda. The debate surrounding integration and independence is also complicated by the lack of systematic assessment of evidence on the practical and unintended consequences of various arrangements. This report endorses intensified efforts to undertake frequent real-time evaluations⁹ and impact assessments.

3.3.1 Existing arrangements for coordination

The Secretariat, funds and programmes are still struggling to establish an effective framework for coordination. The problem is not due to any lack of efforts – quite the contrary. It would seem that every time the issue of coordination is addressed, another mechanism is created. To name but a few, the Chief Executive

⁹ Real-time evaluation is a diagnostic and problem-solving tool designed to provide an alternative approach to assessing complex and rapidly changing situations on the ground. It ensures that instant input can be fed back in time to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of mission planning and implementation.

Board (former Administrative Committee on Coordination) was established by ECOSOC in 1946 with a mandate to convene the executive heads of all organisations of the UN system, chaired by the SG, to focus on questions of coordination and crosscutting policy. In addition, the SG organised four sectorised Executive Committees (EC) in 1997, to bring together all relevant departments, funds and programmes under the headings of the EC on Peace and Security (chaired by the Department of Political Affairs, DPA); the EC on Humanitarian Affairs (chaired by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs); the EC on Economic and Social Affairs (chaired by the Department of Economic Social Affairs); and the EC – Development Group (UNDG, chaired by the United Nations Development Programme). These committees have not been as successful as anticipated in pursuing their mandate. The current four-pillar structure also shows that the gap remains between the apparent consensus on a development–security nexus and the existing system for coordination. The SG also established a Senior Management Group (SMT) to address management issues and a Strategic Planning Unit to identify and review crosscutting issues and trends.

Still, all these mechanisms, no matter how well they work, will have little impact without the necessary leverage and authority. The Secretary-General could and should utilise the powers entrusted to him/her and enforce greater coordination through the mechanisms available. A persistent obstacle is that the authority of the SG ends where that of the agencies begins. However, the normative power vested in the SG is underrated. If the SG would take a firmer stance, many of the coordination bodies could be streamlined and followed up more actively.

The basic aim of coordination is to reduce the duplication of programmes and to harmonise the often-conflicting strategies of the actors involved by defining common principles for action. Such coordination may range from information sharing and informal meetings to joint policy and strategy making and programme planning. An important first step is to move away from the turf culture and the «agency approach» symptomatic of the UN Secretariat. Instead of creating yet another mechanism without a comprehensive review of the current bodies tasked to coordinate, one should concentrate on why these do not work sufficiently well and identify ways to consolidate, streamline and strengthen their authority.

In many ways the number of coordinating bodies and the constant pursuit of more transparency point up the seemingly contra-

dictory nature of the UN. In practice, coordination has not come easy, least of all among donors. This poses problems for accountability and, in the long term, impedes both learning and attempts to identify best practices. A case in point is ECOSOC, which has no power vested in it to make binding decisions. Hence, agencies, funds and programmes within the UN family handling social and economic affairs are not obliged to implement decisions by ECOSOC. On the other hand, the agencies, funds and programmes are governed by some of the very same UN Member States (Executive Boards). Seen from a purely technical perspective the contradiction is stark, but, given the inherently political nature of all UN activities, it further demonstrates the importance of recognising that restructuring the Secretariat is only part of the solution.

As for the division of labour in maintaining peace and security, the current structure is arguably not an effective way of addressing increasingly complex challenges in the field. Institutional change in the UN's conflict-management structures has always been improvisational, lagging behind the realities of operations on the ground. Both peacekeeping and its method of financing are products of innovation and an ad hoc approach. Despite almost six decades of operations, peacekeeping is still being dealt with as something impermanent, with large parts of the peacekeeping budget dependent on voluntary funding. Member States need to reflect on what role they see for the UN. If the world organisation is to reinforce its credibility in maintaining peace and security, it will need to be enabled with all means to face up to that challenge.

Another issue that has become more pressing with the increasingly complex nature of UN engagement is the quality of personnel recruited, both at headquarters and in the field. Not only is there a need to recruit people with appropriate backgrounds for the task at hand, in particular with hands-on experience from local governance and administration. It is also vital to provide appropriate training programmes that can address cultural diversity. In a multicultural context, lack of understanding and articulation of the nature and influence of one's culture may be a serious stumbling block to building synergies.

Moreover, as «hybrid and integrated missions» authorised by the Security Council increase the challenges to cooperation in the field, this also calls for an in-depth scrutiny of issues of interoperability between organisations and actors. Military, civilian police, political, civilian and humanitarian actors alike, working in an increasingly complex conflict environment, should be provided with comprehensive joint pre-deployment training.

In addition to quality and training, the importance of having enough personnel cannot be stressed enough. Member States need to recognise the importance of providing necessary support in terms of financial and human resources. Several countries have established rosters to meet the needs of the United Nations. In 1996, all non-salaried personnel were banned in the UN system, making it difficult to use existing Member States mechanisms for rapid deployment. Nonetheless, the demand for qualified personnel has continued to grow. It might be time to raise this issue again in the appropriate UN fora.

4. Final Remarks

It is important not to opt for facile solutions, and to remain wary of abstract institutional reform proposals as a panacea. The key to understanding how to «reform» the UN lies less in trying to be innovative and more in realising why past initiatives have failed and how strategies and tactics could be improved. Member States have tended to address the need for a multidimensional and coherent approach by simply seeking to expand the mandate to include tasks beyond what is realistically achievable. Designing «a strategically informed mandate» requires consensus on all decision-making levels on what the UN wants to achieve, well planned and locally attuned sequencing of efforts, and will depend on whether the UN Member States are «able, ready and willing to do it».

The UN can be no more than the sum of its Member States; hence some may argue that this is ultimately a question of political will and resources. The difficulty with most discussions of «political will» is that more time is spent lamenting its absence than in analysing what it means. Thinking about «political will» as a single, simple factor in the equation underestimates the sheer complexity of what is involved. Ultimately it is a question of *priorities*. Thus, as the challenges become more complex, it is important not to yield to the temptation of making the UN into a jack of all trades. If multilateralism indeed is under siege, it is time for the Member States to define what architecture and role they do see for the UN – particularly concerning the transition phase. Working in concert to head off conflicts before they start, means recognising that an ounce of conflict prevention is indeed worth a pound of peacekeeping cure. Ultimately, where consensus exists, reform can be enacted; where political will is lacking, it will founder.

5. Recommendations

1. ***Create a comprehensive transition «roadmap».*** The preferred *modus operandi* has been to rely on ad hoc approaches, with a certain amount of built-in flexibility. However, lessons from the past decade have highlighted the need for common overarching principles. A systematic review of lessons learned and best practices in transition management are necessary. Furthermore, ***initiate a systemic review of the UN structure and hierarchy of guidance,*** to clarify and agree on the mechanisms governing the hierarchy of guidance of competencies that determine decision-making processes. ***Existing guidelines, procedures, and instructions should be synchronised; agree on common terminology and level of authority; and ensure uniformity in presentation.*** Such guidelines and procedures, must be made available and accessible during induction training at all levels and sections of the system.
2. Explore the ***wider role of cooperation between the UN and regional organisations on transition management.*** More attention should be given to strengthening the capacities of regional organisations, especially in Africa, to perform such transitional functions. In addition, the importance of streamlining funding and projects in the field should be stressed, and efforts to promote regional and sub-regional security and development visions and objectives should be intensified. A UN backed framework in support of inter-regional initiatives in the fields of transition management should be created.
3. Conduct an ***analysis on the strategic cultures of the security and development segments,*** of national and international institutions responsible for planning and implementation and the interplay between them. As many newly independent states have inherited their ideas of government from the colonial administrations, it would not be surprising if an administration placed in a country by the international community would have a similar effect. The meaning of a practice and timing of efforts as understood in the local discourse may differ greatly from the meanings attached to that practice in the international discourse.
4. Launch the idea of an ***in-depth analysis of the unintended consequences of peacekeeping and peace-building activities in the field.*** Understanding the role of culture in

peacekeeping is a necessary, yet not sufficient, component of success. It is also important to identify ways of managing issues of interoperability and organisational cultural differences, not least in light of the expected increase in integrated and hybrid missions. Gaining a firm grasp of the culture that underpins substantive legitimacy also helps to create a frame of reference for collective and individual actions on the ground and how these are understood locally. Conflict alters traditional cultural patterns. Restoring a society thus requires an understanding of these patterns as a baseline. This must be reflected in the mission planning and training given to all personnel prior to deployment. In addition, it ought to be reflected by Members States, donors and financial actors, by encouraging reviews of current criteria and objectives for disbursement.

5. Establish a *funding window for transition in the regular budget* of the United Nations; alternatively in the format of a trust fund (*Transitional Budget Line*) based on cooperation between the United Nations system, International Financial Institutions and donor countries. To establish a trust fund the UN could expand the terms of reference of the Fund for Preventive Action to facilitate a broader spectrum of interventions, including Quick Impact Projects and structural prevention activities during transition periods.

