

health of the wider host government apparatus. The financial crises of the 1980s weakened government departments generally, and it was difficult for any one department to make progress when the others it depends on for services and policy input were also enfeebled. The same applied to businesses and voluntary associations depending on government services and decisions.

The creation of an enabling environment was also part of the thinking behind the "policy reform" or "structural adjustment" thrust of aid donors in the 1980s. It was thought that the success of many N-S collaborations and of development efforts in general depend on a macro-economic policy framework that avoids market-distorting policies by governments. Policies which encourage and reward economic efficiency rather than political clout, consistent central direction of the public sector, and an efficient apparatus of policy-making and management of services are all important for the effective functioning of any particular government department, voluntary agency, or business in which N-S collaborations take place.

Finally, the environmental emphasis points out the susceptibility of N-S collaborations to environmental disruptions, that is, to the more extreme negative scenarios that can sometimes nullify efforts at acquisition of skills and institutional capacity-building.

There appear to be three main negative scenarios that can more or less ruin N-S collaborations. The first is that of catastrophic civil disturbances (e.g., Somalia 1992, Rwanda, 1994), which can prevent projects from taking place or can lead to the collapse of viable institutions and loss of trained personnel to emigration or death.

Somewhat less dramatically, in today's increasingly internationalized labour market, any serious ongoing "brain-drain" problem, for whatever political or economic reasons, can gradually siphon off skilled local personnel, making sustainable institutional development much more difficult.