
A number of conceptual clarifications were also raised. Some participants argued that greater clarity of purpose was needed regarding what donors ultimately wished to accomplish with post-conflict peace-building. A clear sense of objectives and realistic expectations was deemed necessary to guide policy, and to avoid the political tensions arising from the difference between the expectations of the war-torn societies and what is actually "deliverable" on the part of the international donor community.

SESSION III: TARGETING ACTORS IN RECONSTRUCTION

While conceptual analysis of post-war reconstruction has advanced considerably, the translation of this into effective *policy* and *operational coordination* lags behind, and is in fact much more difficult. To date, progress in these areas has been ad hoc and at the field level. What is required are fundamental reforms on the part of the donor agencies themselves, so that the unique demands of peace-building may be effectively addressed. Such institutional change is one of the most difficult things to accomplish. It must involve exceptionally dedicated and *skilled personnel*, *flexibility* in responding to new and risky situations, and *autonomy* for personnel in the field. The ICRC is one example of an organization that has been very successful in this regard.

One important factor that makes peace-building particularly unique at the policy level is the *highly-politicized environment* of conflicts. This aspect is perhaps the central reason why context is so important for policy-makers to consider. Post-war reconstruction must ultimately be directed towards a real political solution: a sustainable power-sharing and dispute resolution arrangement engaging all the relevant conflict actors. A related problem is that a substantial amount of donor assistance is linked with political considerations, and policy responses will have to be sensitive to the need for effective external reconstruction aid in such an overtly politicised local environment.

Peace-building activities are thus ultimately concerned with political development as an issue of human security, in an environment where there is little or no government legitimacy. Four major challenges may be proposed in this regard:

- 1) To *consolidate peace* by transforming conflict into a sustainable political settlement and the demilitarisation of society. This entails moving war-torn societies from conflict-habituated systems to peaceful systems.
- 2) To *increase humanitarian aid* after the end of a conflict, because people are on the move in large numbers. Conflict actors motivate these movements of their political constituencies so that the conflict can proceed at the level of politics and votes.