



Integrated Development Planning in South Africa: Lessons for International Peacebuilding?

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Abstract

South Africa is a post-conflict society unlike many others: its transition from conflict to peace during the 1990s was marked by unrivalled levels of political and social reconciliation; and, during this critical time, government institutions were quickly transformed to promote ‘true’ development and democracy. Unfortunately, the same picture cannot be painted of other African states emerging from conflict. Indeed, a number of challenges have caused, and keep on causing, several post-conflict countries in Africa (and elsewhere) to slide back into violent conflict. One key challenge often cited by policy-makers and academics alike is the lack of coordination between the world’s major peacebuilding actors. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission,

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unveiled in 2005, was specifically established to address this problem. In essence, the Commission's key organisational function will be to reduce the inherent complexity of the UN peacebuilding architecture and move towards a single, more 'integrated' post-conflict development planning process. But despite its laudable aims, the founding resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission are imprecise as to exactly how the body will function and what it will be able to deliver. This uncertainty is based, in part, on the fact that the United Nations still lacks an integrated system of planning for peacebuilding. Among several encouraging methodologies, this paper proposes that South Africa's self-styled 'integrated development planning' approach, implemented after 1994 to overcome Apartheid's violent history, deserves closer scrutiny by international peacebuilding experts. This is because South Africa's approach to development – although not perfect – is centred on integrated governance and has, to some extent, played an important role in accelerating service delivery in previously disadvantaged and conflicting communities. The paper argues, therefore, that South Africa's post-Apartheid development project may reveal some important lessons for the design of integrated peacebuilding strategies in countries emerging from conflict, as the Peacebuilding Commission intends to do.

Development initiatives must meet...people's problems as they perceive them, not as distant policymakers imagine them – Andrew Natsios¹

Introduction

South Africa is a post-conflict society unlike many others: its transition from conflict to peace during the 1990s was marked by unrivalled levels of

1 Comment made by Andrew Natsios, the current administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. See Natsios 2005:7.

political and social reconciliation; and, during this critical time, government institutions were quickly transformed to promote 'true' development and democracy. Unfortunately, the same picture cannot be painted of other African states emerging from conflict. Direct war damage to critical infrastructure has left several governments with little capacity to provide security, health, power, and jobs – essential ingredients for any post-conflict setting (Binnendijk & Johnson 2004:27). In addition to this, the international community has struggled with its ongoing commitment to rebuild war-crippled countries. Typically, in the immediate aftermath of war, development aid can take months to arrive, internationally-imposed peace agreements are fragile, and the momentum needed to sustain post-conflict reconstruction is wanting. These and other post-conflict challenges have caused, and keep on causing, a number of countries – particularly in Africa – to slide back into violent conflict.

To overcome these problems, the United Nations (UN) recently established the Peacebuilding Commission, a 'new advisory body aiming to shore up wobbly peace agreements...and to help prevent war-ravaged countries from lapsing back into deadly conflict'.² The Commission's key organisational function will be to reduce the inherent complexity of the UN peacebuilding architecture and move towards a single, more 'integrated' post-conflict development planning process. In short, the new UN body is expected to serve as a platform for joint planning for the world's major peacebuilding actors.

But despite its laudable aims, the founding resolutions³ establishing the Peacebuilding Commission are imprecise as to exactly how the body will function and what it will be able to deliver (Deller 2006:12). This uncertainty is based, in part, on the fact that the UN still lacks an integrated system of

2 Opening address by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at the Inaugural Session of the Peacebuilding Commission, 23 June 2006. For more information on the Peacebuilding Commission, visit the Commission's official website at <<http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/index.html>>.

3 In December 2005, the UN General Assembly and Security Council passed corresponding resolutions, A/RES/60/80 and S/RES/1645 respectively, to establish the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body in the UN.

planning for peacebuilding.⁴ As one study explains, ‘experience in integration has been gained in a range of different UN missions, but there has been no clearly defined model for integration...[instead] a variety of practices have emerged based on different actors’ and different missions’ own interpretations of the concept [of integration], some more successful than others’ (Eide et al 2005:3, 21). This begs the question: what planning approach(es) will the Peacebuilding Commission utilise to design integrated, or at least closely coordinated, peacebuilding strategies?

Presumably, what the UN requires is a well-designed and enforced planning system for post-conflict development, explicit on the distribution of roles and responsibilities of different actors working under different budget regimes and planning procedures. Among several encouraging methodologies, this paper proposes that South Africa’s self-styled ‘integrated development planning’ approach, implemented after 1994 to overcome Apartheid’s violent and unjust history, deserves closer scrutiny by international peacebuilding experts. Underpinning this argument is that South Africa is addressing, with some degree of success, many of the same developmental challenges that other post-conflict countries in Africa are battling with today, above all, the lack of service delivery; and while the post-Apartheid development doctrine is not perfect, it is placing a great deal of emphasis on how different spheres of government and other sectors can work together to promote socio-economic development.

Integrated Planning: Initial UN Attempts

What is ‘integrated planning’? Broadly speaking, integrated planning is about different actors and sectors working together under a commonly-designed

4 Another serious problem with peacebuilding in general relates to the fact that, to this day, there is surprisingly little clarity or consensus about what needs to be done to rebuild war-torn countries, not least because a standard theory on peacebuilding/post-conflict reconstruction is *missing* – a problem which needs to be sorted out sooner than later.

agenda and re-aligning individual supply-chains to produce a commonly-defined objective or product. Good planning is *integrated*, since it takes into account diverse perspectives and impacts, allowing decision makers to find optimal solutions to critical issues, as well as effective ways to respond to those issues (Litman 2006). Why is integrated planning important for the UN? In essence – and this point has been reiterated a number of times by UN officials – the lack of coordination between diverse civilian and military actors has prevented otherwise sound peacebuilding strategies from being converted into concrete achievements.⁵

Some progress was made in the area of civil-military coordination following the recommendations of the *Brahimi Report* in 2001, which suggested that new specialised units be created in New York and in the field to facilitate joint planning and decision-making across UN departments and between non-UN agencies (United Nations 2001). This paved the way for the establishment of Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTFs) and Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) teams in a number of new missions. It is worthwhile to briefly explore these two concepts in more detail.

Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTFs)

The UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was one of the first UN missions to employ the IMTF concept in which humanitarian aid and development agencies were subsumed in the peacekeeping mission from the outset, including in the early stages of planning. The concept has also found some implementation in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Liberia (UNMIL), and Sudan (UNMIS). In practice, however, IMTFs have proceeded so far with mixed results: in some cases, as in Afghanistan, IMTFs were prematurely disbanded well before missions were fully deployed; in other cases, IMTFs performed below expectations, as acknowledged by the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in a recent report: ‘While the mechanism has functioned well as a forum

5 Other problems include, as always, sustained international funding and commitment (Wiharta 2006:141).

for information exchange, it has been less successful at providing strategic planning and management' (United Nations 2005c:9). The same report reveals that mission planning has remained far from being 'integrated' because IMTFs have lacked the authority to make decisions – more precisely, the UN has failed to second staff with decision-making authority to IMTF structures.

Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC)

Attempts to institutionalise high-levels of civil-military coordination among UN and non-UN actors have also resulted in all current UN peace-keeping operations establishing CIMIC branches. Broadly speaking, CIMIC's main purpose is to ensure that there is a continuous process of information sharing and joint planning among and between diverse mission actors, including UN agencies, development aid organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local representatives.⁶

Overall, CIMIC activities seem to have enjoyed more success than the IMTF concept. This is evidenced, for example, by the introduction of 'Quick-Impact-Projects' – short-term, small-scale infrastructure and development projects – in some peacekeeping operations, the implementation of which CIMIC teams usually oversee.⁷ But, as the following section will show, increased civil-military cooperation through CIMIC structures has not automatically translated into integrated planning *per se*, not least because soldiers and civilians have differed widely in terms of priority settings, resource allocation, and time-horizons when preparing for operations. This has meant that CIMIC teams, like IMTFs, have served less as instruments for integrated planning and more as forums for comparing notes – which, by itself, is not a bad thing but is insufficient to arrive at real integrated planning.

6 For a more detailed analysis of CIMIC in peacebuilding, see, for example, De Coning 2005.

7 Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are short-term, small-scale infrastructure and development projects – rebuilding strategic roads and bridges, restoring electricity and water supply, and so forth – aimed at making early improvements in a local population's quality of life.

Integrated Planning Problems

Since Brahimi, integration has become, at least on paper, the overarching principle for both peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. However, UN efforts to improve system coordination in peacebuilding through IMTF and CIMIC structures have usually fallen short of needs and expectations. Even worse, there is as yet no common agreement on what exactly constitutes an integrated mission. These and other problems were raised by the *Report on Integrated Missions* (Eide et al 2005:41), which revealed that:

- Most representatives of UN agencies in the field have been involved in programme design and implementation, but few have been exposed to proper integrated planning methodologies;
- Mission planning does not reflect an overall strategic vision of what the UN is supposed to achieve in terms of durable peacebuilding;
- Senior officials from different UN departments rarely join forces to discuss the overriding imperatives of a given situation;
- Planning has consistently lacked anything that approaches adequate dialogue and exchange with national and local authorities, as well as with civil society groups and local non-governmental organisations; and
- Operational plans are rarely subjected to systematic and rigorous reviews to update and adjust overall strategies and operational objectives (Eide et al 2005:20-21).

These findings were instructive because they clearly revealed the need for the UN to create a dedicated institutional home for peacebuilding, endowed with enough muscle to coordinate activities for post-conflict reconstruction and development to which the entire UN system can work. This insight, coupled with the UN's experiences in the last decade of failing to stabilise societies after an initial period of military peacekeeping, largely informed the decision by the UN to establish the Peacebuilding Commission.

Enter the Peacebuilding Commission

The Peacebuilding Commission, or PBC, was unveiled in December 2005 to strengthen UN capacity for peacebuilding where peacekeeping missions have been deployed, and to develop integrated responses for post-conflict reconstruction and development. The concept of a 'Peacebuilding Commission' was first introduced in December 2004 in a UN High-Level Panel Report (United Nations 2004), and later gained momentum in March 2005 when Kofi Annan released his report, entitled *In Larger Freedom* (United Nations 2005a). In this report, Annan noted a 'gaping hole' in the UN's effort to assist countries recovering from war to make the transition from war to lasting peace. The PBC was specifically established to fill this institutional gap, and 'will, for the first time, bring together all the major actors in a given situation [and this means] that money will be better spent and that there will be a real link between immediate post-conflict efforts on one hand and long-term recovery and development on the other'.⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 1645 (United Nations 2005b:2 par 2(a)-(c)) outlines the PBC's work in greater detail:

- To serve as a central node to bring together different international actors, marshal resources, and propose integrated strategies and overall priorities for post-conflict peacebuilding in general terms and in specific country situations;
- To focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for the functioning of a state; and
- To develop expertise and best practices, with a view to ensuring predictable and sustained financing, as well as sustained international attention to peacebuilding activities.

8 United Nations, United Nations Peacebuilding Commission – Questions and Answers, accessed at <<http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/questions.htm>>.

The PBC is not planned to be operational on the ground; its purpose, rather, is to *propose* post-conflict recovery strategies to the UN Security Council and other key institutional players. As Ponzio (2007:8) explains, ‘the PBC is only a *consensus-based advisory body*. Its influence...stems entirely from the quality of its recommendations, the relevancy of information it shares, and its ability to generate additional resources for a conflict-affected state’. Although the PBC’s advisory status may seem inadequate to ‘serve as a central node’ for peacebuilding, the Commission is unique in the sense that it will bring together a membership drawn from the three principle organs of the UN – the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council – as well as major financial donors, troop-contributing countries, international financial institutions (like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), and local representatives from the country on the UN agenda.

The PBC will consist of two configurations, namely the Organisational Committee and the Country-Specific Meetings. The Organisational Committee, made-up of 31 member countries,⁹ will be responsible for, *inter alia*, setting the PBC’s agenda, issuing invitations for country-level meetings, and reviewing annual reports. The Committee is expected to meet at regular intervals. Most of the PBC’s work, according to the UN, will be conducted in the Country-Specific Meetings ‘where [the PBC’s] participation will be tailored to each [post-conflict] case – to involve country representatives as well as all the relevant contributors such as regional organizations, regional banks and international financial institutions’.¹⁰ Country-level meetings will be convened as necessary.

9 These include: seven from the Security Council (including permanent members); seven from the Economic and Social Council; five from the top-10 financial contributors to the UN budgets; five from the top-10 troop contributors to UN missions; and seven additional members to redress remaining geographical imbalances, to be elected by the General Assembly.

10 United Nations, United Nations Peacebuilding Commission – Questions and Answers, accessed at <<http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/questions.htm>>.

While the founding resolutions of the PBC do not provide a formal seat for civil society at the country-level meetings, they nonetheless acknowledge the importance of ensuring local buy-in and the need to promote the principle of local ownership (Deller 2006:10). This point was stressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Per Stig Møller, at the inaugural session of the PBC in June 2006 when he remarked, ‘the aim [of the PBC] should not be to create an additional layer of coordination at [UN] Headquarters level, but rather to support and reinforce local coordination at the country-level... without the strong cooperation of the country on the agenda, the [PBC’s] efforts risk failure’.¹¹

In Search of an Integrated System of Planning for Peacebuilding

Another important structure of the PBC is the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which is expected, *inter alia*, to gather and analyse information relating to development planning and reviewing best practices in peacebuilding (Ponzio 2007). In this regard, the PBSO plans to develop ‘Integrated Peace-building Strategies’ for countries on its agenda that ‘would provide an agreed framework [to] support peacebuilding activities, ensure greater coherence and coordination and address identified [peacebuilding] gaps’.¹² In this way, the Commission hopes to ‘find its niche’¹³ within the complex UN architecture by developing strategies that can guide the activities of all UN departments and agencies.

This effort will not be easy for two reasons. First, within the UN system, the plethora of departments, funds, programs and agencies involved in peace-

11 Address by the Security Council President, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Per Stig Møller, at the Inaugural Session of the Peacebuilding Commission, 23 June 2006.

12 Peacebuilding Support Office, Draft Concept Note on the Design of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies (IPBS), 27 February 2007, accessed at <<http://www.reformtheun.org>>.

13 A main concern about the efficacy of the PBC is that it will duplicate UN efforts already underway in a variety of post-conflict countries.

building has been a perpetual challenge to integration.¹⁴ Second, documenting best practices from post-conflict situations will be tricky since good examples of peacebuilding are in short-supply – in fact, the overall impact of peacebuilding worldwide, especially in Africa, is reported to be weak and ineffectual, this despite substantial development inputs from seasoned aid agencies.¹⁵ Of course, there are cases where UN peacebuilding has made a difference – e.g. in East Timor, Kosovo, El-Salvador – but few practical lessons on integration have been collected thus far since the concept of integration itself is relatively new to the UN.

That said, the UN is not the only actor in search of better post-conflict solutions. There are examples at the national level in which integrated planning has been used to promote sustainable development in post-conflict settings, long before the UN decided that integration was important for peacebuilding. South Africa's post-Apartheid development project is a case in point – even though it must be noted that few, if any, development agencies have paid serious attention to their successes (or failures). This is surprising for a number of reasons: first, South Africa is a nation which faces similar service delivery issues to other post-conflict states in Africa; second, since 1994 South Africa has institutionalised integrated planning principles in government to reach its developmental objectives; and third, South Africa's approach has been specifically designed to enable multi-agency and stakeholder coordination, with an eye to accelerate service delivery in poor, previously conflicting communities.

With this in mind, the next section will look more closely at South Africa's

14 This particular point was made at the Seminar on Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies, 1 March 2007, New York, co-organised by the International Peace Academy and the Centre on International Cooperation, accessed at <<http://www.ipacademy.org/news/2007/04/16/integrated-peacebuilding-strategies/>>.

15 The UN reported in 2004 that around fifty percent of countries emerging from war fall back into violent conflict within the first five years of signing a comprehensive peace agreement. This figure is stated to be even higher in Africa. See United Nations Development Group (UNDG)/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (ECHA) Working Group 2004:14.

post-Apartheid ‘peacebuilding’ experiences. Particular attention will be given to a key product of South Africa’s inter-governmental planning approach, termed an Integrated Development Plan, which aims to bring about coordinated action among different spheres of government – national, provincial and municipal¹⁶ – and other major players to maximise development impact at sub-regional level, i.e. at municipal level.

Planning for Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Brief Overview

Over the last number of years, it has become increasingly evident that development interventions with a strong sectoral emphasis are not sufficient to deal with the complexity of the developmental *problematique* (Escobar 1995:64-76). Instead, there has been a gradual shift toward the simultaneous – rather than sequential – pursuit of diverse objectives, such as poverty eradication, gender empowerment, provision of basic human needs, governmental transparency and accountability, and environmental sustainability. This thinking was formalised by the UN’s Agenda 21 programme in 1991, which called on countries to adopt national strategies for sustainable development that should ‘harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country’.¹⁷ Of the many countries that have repeatedly reiterated their commitment to Agenda 21, South Africa is one country that has actually made an effort to concretise the link between sustainability and integrated planning, in a manner tailor-made, of course, for the post-Apartheid policy context.

16 South Africa is a unitary state consisting of three spheres of government. It currently comprises nine provinces and two hundred and eighty three municipalities.

17 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Agenda 21: Chapter 8, accessed at <<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter8.htm>>.

South Africa's integrated planning approach was launched after 1994 as a platform for previously marginalised municipalities to: directly partake in service delivery planning; reform old and build new institutions; and to identify and prioritise strategic development interventions with both short- and long-term impact. This process has provided an opportunity for municipal, provincial, and national representatives, as well as other major players, to debate and agree on long-term development strategies (over a 25-year period) and on more immediate ones (over a 5-year period) for a given municipality.

Much like post-conflict peacebuilding, the main focus in South Africa was, and still is, to increase the rate of service delivery, challenge the dualistic nature of its economy, and generate sustainable economic growth. To achieve these goals, the planning process has specifically addressed the following key issues:

- Restructuring the Apartheid spatial form;
- Transforming local government structures to ensure that they promote human-centred development;
- Establishing democratic, legitimate and transparent planning processes; and
- Fostering a culture of cooperative governance and developing multi-sector development plans (Oranje 2002).

Several pieces of legislation and policies influence the nature of planning in South Africa, all of which focus on improving integration.¹⁸ Central to this are Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), which are strategic planning instruments that inform all planning, budgeting, management and decision making of local municipalities. In essence, IDPs were intended to assist municipalities in achieving their developmental mandates and to guide the activities of any institution or agency operating in the municipal area (Oranje et al 2000:19).

18 See Republic of South Africa 1996, 2000, and 2003; South African Department of Provincial and Local Government 1998; and The Presidency 2006.

The Integrated Development Plan: Key Principles

The IDP process, managed by the relevant local government structure, normally begins by defining the vision of a municipality (i.e. the desired end-state); then moves on to identifying key developmental objectives; and proposing various strategies to address these objectives; after which these strategies are translated into programmes and projects, which are budgeted for, and ultimately implemented and monitored. Significantly, IDPs are not only structured to inform municipal management for development, but also planned to guide the activities of any institution or agency operating in the municipal area.

Three core principles underpin the IDP process. Firstly, as *consultative* process, the IDP approach stresses that appropriate forums should be established where local residents, government representatives, NGOs, civil society, and external sector specialists can come together to:

- Analyse problems affecting service delivery;
- Prioritise issues in order of urgency and long-term importance;
- Develop a shared vision/end-state and common strategic framework;
- Formulate relevant project proposals;
- Compile an inventory of proposals and integrate proposals; and
- Assess, align, and approve IDP plans.

Secondly, as a *strategic* process, the IDP approach aims to ensure that:

- Local knowledge is combined with the knowledge of technical experts;
- Service delivery delays are overcome through consensus building within given time periods;
- Both the underlying causes and symptoms of service delivery problems are addressed;
- Most effective and efficient use is made of scarce resources; and
- IDPs are not planned and budgeted in isolation, but rather integrated from the start with other complementary sectors.

Lastly, as an *implementation-orientated process*, the IDP aims to become a tool for better and faster service delivery by ensuring that:

- Concrete, technically-sound project proposals are designed;
- Planning-budget links are created with feasibility in mind; and
- Sufficient consensus among key stakeholders on the planned projects is reached.

It is important to mention that IDP strategies, programmes and projects are not typically cast in stone, but are subject to continual change as conditions in either the internal or external environment fluctuate. Accordingly, IDPs are reviewed annually in line with broader national planning and budgetary process, and evaluated every five years to understand their true impact on the ground. In this regard, while it has been acknowledged that IDPs, and the supporting inter-governmental planning system, have not been effective in meeting all their intended objectives, Oranje (2002) suggests that they have, in some measure, enhanced inter-governmental planning and improved the capacity of some district municipalities to deliver on their developmental mandates. Patel (2005:9) concludes his examination of the IDP process with the sobering remark that ‘there are remarkable stories of IDP success...but the challenge is still huge’.

There are indeed many issues that are limiting the impact of IDPs, among these that national departments have not always managed to participate in municipal integrated development planning processes in meaningful and sustainable ways.¹⁹ For that reason, the need for better inter-governmental interaction has become increasingly important for South Africa to realise the level of integration that it seeks.

19 See Oranje 2002 and South African Department of Provincial and Local Government 2005.

Three Ways to Ensure Integration

In recent years, several studies²⁰ have been commissioned in South Africa to outline better strategies to support integrated development planning. Although differing in several respects, these studies have proposed that multi-agency planning for development requires three basic ingredients: structured and systematic interaction; alignment of different planning instruments; and targeted interventions. These three ingredients are summarised below:

Essential Ingredients for Integrated Planning in South Africa

Structured and systematic dialogue

- Because local needs are often inconsistent with national priorities and interests, outside actors should engage directly and regularly with local representatives in the field to: deliberate issues on service delivery; develop a shared understanding on which objectives to focus on; and to determine the best strategies to reach those objectives.
- Local participation should happen during all phases of the planning process and not be applied exclusively for initial assessments and prioritisation of needs.
- Both municipal officials and external agents should have a say in, and are responsible for, the development of the area in question.

Alignment of planning instruments

- Three types of inter-governmental planning instruments should be aligned to ensure unity of effort, namely: planning processes, monitoring mechanisms, and budgeting cycles.
- Area-specific programmes should be aligned with provincial and national

20 See Oranje 2002; Rauch 2002; and Oranje & Van Huyssteen 2004.

ones. While local authorities should develop their own development plans, provided that these are consistent with overall national goals and policies, they should also make inputs into national plans.²¹

- Diverse monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be aligned to jointly measure whether actions are taking place in accordance with set outcomes and resource allocations, in the right amount and at the right time, and to take corrective measures when and where necessary.²²
- The sequences of budget cycles in different spheres of government and the implementation of local projects should be aligned with the time-frames of national development spending programmes.

Targeted interventions

- Investment decisions should be informed by the concept of ‘potential’ and planners should distinguish between two types of regions:²³ regions with development potential (i.e. the best areas for economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation) and those with limited potential.²⁴
- Regions with development potential (commonly referred to as ‘areas of impact’ in IDP parlance) should become the primary focus areas for

21 This form of planning is known as the ‘counter-current principle’ i.e. each planning level must take account of the objectives of higher-level plans, whilst every lower-level authority must be allowed to participate in the preparation of higher-level plans.

22 With regard to monitoring and evaluation, South African development planners rely extensively on Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to assess the rate of service delivery. In other words, spatial analysis forms an integral part of the planning process.

23 What is meant by a ‘region’ means different things to different people; in South Africa’s case, the concept is understood to mean a distinct spatial entity comprising a wider set of economic connections and institutional obligations.

24 The following assumptions underpin this thinking in South Africa: dynamic qualities of areas are developed historically and culturally over a long period of time; globally, socio-economic development is distributed unequally, and spatial variations in the incidence of poverty differ widely; and some regions develop more effectively and efficiently than others. See Mohamed 2006.

government spending and infrastructure development over the short to medium term; ultimately, these regions should serve as pivotal sites or building blocks for longer-term development processes.

- High potential areas should also serve as basic units that drive multi-sectoral planning and budgeting between various spheres and sectors. Thus, different role players should jointly prioritise and concentrate developmental actions and resources in the context of a *shared* 'area of impact'.

It should be borne in mind that South Africa has yet to fully implement the above-mentioned policy recommendations. As Padarath (2006:11) explains, 'a lot has been accomplished [but] key tasks lie ahead in improving, consolidating and sustaining the changes that have been made thus far'. That said, South Africa's desire to create a seamless inter-governmental policy environment for development is unquestionable and also noteworthy with respect to current international attempts to develop integrated peacebuilding policies.

Post-Apartheid Development: Policy Implications for Post-conflict Peacebuilding?

In his 2006 Budget Speech, the Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Mr Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi, remarked that, although IDPs were originally conceived as strategic plans for local government, their potential impact for other developmental processes has become increasingly important.²⁵ Likewise, CSIR Project Manager, André Brits, noted on one occasion that '[i]nformation generated and maintained as part of the IDP process is a national, strategic resource of exceptional value, yet many potential users are not aware of this valuable resource...'.²⁶ Ostensibly, the operative principles

25 South African Government, Minister for Provincial and Local Government, Mr Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi's Budget Vote Speech to the National Assembly, 24 May 2006.

that inform South Africa's integrated development planning approach – from conceptualisation to formulation, through to execution and evaluation – do seem relevant with respect to the international peacebuilding discipline. This is especially true if one considers, for example, how the principles that underpin the IDP process echo a set of peacebuilding guidelines identified in a study by the current Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Andrew Natsios.²⁷

On the basis of South Africa's philosophy on integrated planning, it is possible to identify a number of policy implications for international peacebuilding, in particular for the work of the PBC:

- The PBC's attempts to document and analyse lessons learnt and best practices from post-conflict situations could be enriched by understanding the principles that underpin South Africa's IDP approach (consultation, strategic planning, and action-orientated), and the planning methods used to ensure that these principles are adhered to.
- The PBC's country-level configurations should ensure a more balanced platform for deliberation and decision-making around development and service delivery to enable systematic and structured local inputs into peacebuilding policies.
- The participation of local representatives in developing integrated peacebuilding strategies should not be regarded as a *compliance* issue, but rather as a *consultative* process to ensure that residents of the country in question are mobilised as partners in delivery.

26 CSIR, Helping South Africa's Municipalities to plan for the future, March 2002, accessed at <http://www.csir.co.za/plsql/pTl0002/PTL0002_PGE038_ARTICLE?ARTICLE_NO=7012117>.

27 The 'Nine Principles of Reconstruction and Development' as identified by Natsios are: (1) local ownership; (2) capacity building; (3) sustainability; (4) selectivity; (5) assessment, (6) results, (7) partnership; (8) flexibility; and (9) accountability. See Natsios 2005:7-18.

- Initial peacebuilding assessments and plans cannot be prepared from New York. Rather, international staff should be given the opportunity to engage directly with locals on the ground to develop a *shared analysis* of the root causes of conflict; this analysis should find concrete expression in agreed development goals underscored by the unique values underpinning the country and/or community in question; this process, in turn, should provide a basic starting point for the PBC to develop *strategically-focused* peacebuilding policies for the UN Security Council.
- Institutionalising a well-designed and enforced planning system for peacebuilding may be possible if the PBC is given the authority to align and synchronise different planning processes, monitoring mechanisms, and budgeting cycles of different UN departments and other major peacebuilding actors and the post-conflict country in question.
- The PBC should explore the advantages of incorporating the concept of ‘shared areas of impact’ into its strategic plans. Invariably, some areas of a post-conflict country will be easier to develop than others. Thus, in order to create the momentum needed to jumpstart development, it may be useful – at least in the short to medium term – for the PBC and its local partners to prioritise investment and focus spending in areas with greater development potential.
- Integrated peacebuilding strategies should aim to reverse the time-honoured, but questionable, international practice of post-war programmes serving the interests and priorities of foreign actors (not least, the financial requirements of international contractors and service providers). More emphasis should be placed on catalysing indigenous capabilities in peacebuilding; if not, local support for peacebuilding, and development in general, is likely to be jeopardised from the very start.

Conclusion

No amount of integration will win the peace. Ultimately, the transfer of power, resources and capacities to local actors will define the effectiveness

of international peacebuilding. In other words, real peacebuilding means building – not replacing – local capacities.

That said, it is widely acknowledged that unity of effort between the world's major peacebuilding players is an important ingredient for successful peacebuilding. However, this realisation has not in itself resolved the issue of conducting more 'integrated missions', in so far as peacebuilding experts have lacked meaningful and effective interfaces for joint planning. To address these problems, the UN recently established the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), an inter-governmental body designed to improve international and local coordination of peacebuilding activities and funds. Although the PBC will provide UN actors with a framework for inter-governmental and inter-agency relations, the new UN body still lacks a well-designed and systems-wide planning methodology for peacebuilding.

The search for best practices that will improve planning for peacebuilding is therefore important for the PBC. In this regard, this study has proposed that UN officials should take a closer look at South Africa's integrated development planning approach as it may shed some light on the question of how best to enhance joint planning in post-conflict conditions. At the very least, the arguments presented in the discussion do justify additional research in exploring in greater detail the potential implications of South Africa's inter-governmental planning system for the international peacebuilding discipline.

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