

Synthesis of Country Programme Evaluations conducted in Fragile States

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Introduction

S1. This synthesis of Country Programme Evaluations brings together findings from countries termed fragile states. Nine countries are included: four from the Asian region (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Nepal and Pakistan), four from Africa (Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan) and one from the Middle East region (Yemen). The timeframe for the evaluations is 2002–2009.

DFID's policy approach to engagement in fragile states

S2. DFID has developed a sophisticated, coherent and ambitious approach to fighting fragility in the world. DFID defines fragile state as countries “*where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to its people*”. This includes a wide variety of situations from collapsed states to strong states with little commitment to poverty reduction.

S3. Aid per capita in fragile states is low and unpredictable, and DFID is committed to finding better ways of delivering aid to fragile states. In recognition that development, politics and security are linked, DFID's strategic approach also involves a whole-of-government approach. DFID also stresses context analysis, prioritisation and sequencing, attention to the regional dimensions of insecurity and making more use of political and conflict analysis during programme design.

S4. DFID has traditionally put the effective state – as defined by the Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness (CAR) framework – at the centre of statebuilding. The 2009 draft Paper on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding provides a better balance in focus

with added emphasis on political processes and likely tensions that shape state-society relationship.

More and Better Aid

S5. DFID has more than doubled its support within the past five years to fragile states, spending over £1 billion, or 46% of its bilateral expenditure in 2007–08. In only four out of the nine countries studies has budget support been provided. Despite good internal guidance, the decision to provide budget support has not always been robust and, because of political risks, support had to be suspended in two countries. Yet budget support has also provided a platform for dialogue and new forms of budget support have underpinned reconstruction, service delivery and recurrent costs for salaries that have helped build stability.

S6. DFID has been less successful in supporting aid coordination where there was less appetite for this agenda especially from Government. Pooled funds have been widely used to mobilise resources and coordinate response. Although this demonstrates harmonised aid practices, the experience at country level is that pooled funds are slow to set up, costly to manage, and (with important exceptions) have achieved modest development impact.

Linking security with development

S7. Most DFID offices have pursued security and development objectives, and broaden their governance programmes to include democratic politics and/or security sector reforms. Other interventions, such as mining in DRC and counter narcotics in Afghanistan, were chosen because their links to

the conflict. Outside selected humanitarian assistance and community-recovery projects, conflict analysis was rarely used in practice to shape development programmes.

S8. DFID has supported dialogue and reconciliation, from grassroots initiatives to support to high-level peace negotiations. Despite a high reputational risk, DFID also earmarked significant funding towards the organisation of elections. This included reinforcing civic participation (notably women) and working with the media. Most, but not all, elections were deemed a success.

S9. DFID can now claim a comparative advantage in security and justice reform, with increased emphasis on human security and accountability. Results have been mixed and there is a need for a more political realism in what can be achieved.

S10. Performance in Sierra Leone shows that an integrated approach to peacebuilding and statebuilding, in which DFID, as part of wider HMG efforts and alongside other donors, carefully balance their choice of interventions, can be effective.

Focus on State-Building

S11. The main dilemma for DFID in fragile states has been to manage the tension between directly providing service delivery to the poor and building the capacity of the state to do so. In addition to supporting NGO-led post-recovery projects, DFID has made some attempts to involve central government in the provision of emergency services in countries where some capacity and/or willingness exists. The Afghanistan Stabilisation Programme was ranked as highly ineffective, but programmes elsewhere have shown some promising results. A cautious approach is still needed where government commitment to social equity is in doubt and capacity to act fast is low.

S12. DFID typically used technical assistance and capacity building programmes to support public sector reforms. The majority of capacity building programmes were deemed over-ambitious in their scope, but there have been better results around service delivery in different sectors including health, education, water and sanitation.

S13. DFID's strategies have involved support (direct and indirect) to indigenous civil society organisations and key public institutions in their role to hold the central government to account. Support to public institutions is relatively recent and has yet to show it can be effective in enhancing government accountability. Notwithstanding the move to larger programmes, support to civil society has yet to meet expectations. CPEs have warned that working through others will reduce direct contact with local partners, making it difficult to translate practical experience into strategic advice and policy.

Partnerships

S14. Country offices are generally managed to develop a close partnership with central governments. Development Partnership Arrangements or Memoranda of Understanding provided important signals of HMG commitment as well as managing risk around government commitment to human rights and poverty reduction. Weaknesses relate to a lack of agreed monitoring mechanisms, and an inadequacy to support dialogue in times of crisis. While working through central government was effective, DFID needs also to have a better understanding of sub-national government and of decentralisation issues.

S15. DFID has built a good reputation in acting fast, though it has also been over-ambitious. DFID's local presence, funding weight and history of relations with both multilaterals and bilateral donors has allowed it to play a go-between or catalytic role, and it has been willing to tackle sensitive areas such as human rights. DFID has supported reforms within multilaterals, especially where DFID funds were channelled through them, but with modest impact. DFID has established relationships with non-traditional yet influential partners (such as China, India and Saudi Arabia) in only some limited occasions.

S16. There is a strong record of cooperation between DFID and other UK Government Departments, especially the FCO, particularly in areas such as security sector reform, stabilisation and demobilisation. Difficulties have arisen where political and development agendas have not been well aligned for certain periods.

Challenges of working in fragile states

S17. Setting up delegated DFID offices has brought advantages including better alignment, flexibility and stronger influencing. Yet this has also brought demands in terms of staffing and security. Devolution has resulted in tensions between HQ policy evolution and local priorities. Some global initiatives have undermined country-driven approaches.

S18. Operating in a fragile state is typically more labour-intensive than elsewhere although the actual percentage of administration costs over total programme spend is generally in balance with non-fragile states. Some DFID offices have adapted well and developed good procedures.

S19. Conditions in fragile states make monitoring and evaluation difficult in terms of field access, weak data, and linking DFID's actions to non-linear peace processes as well as political stability and human security. Strategies are better prepared now, with sound analysis and indicators, however, monitoring plans have been weaker. There are good examples of adapted monitoring systems that use various sources of information for conflict, social impact and context monitoring.

Major Recommendations

S20. The main report contains a range of recommendations in Chapter 8. Some of the most critical are:

- a. DFID's regional directors should renew their commitment to have **more realistic expectations** of what can be achieved within a 5-10 year timeframe. Identifying government weakness as a main risk within programmes, only to express this again as a reason for weak programme performance should be avoided.
- b. DFID should **act as a bridge** between partners who exhibit different levels of alignment to the principles of engagement in fragile states as well as the principles of aid effectiveness. DFID should be better prepared to address sensitive issues such as human rights abuse, corruption and injustice.
- c. DFID should increase the use of **joint funding mechanisms** as a means to share

risk and bring significant resources, but it must improve the speed of operation, establish clear procedures and ensure more local ownership.

- d. DFID's political and economic policy teams should **review guidance on providing budget support within a fragile state setting**, and learn from recent experience of shadow alignment and delivery in specific sector or regions to reduce political and fiduciary risk.
- e. In their work with **multilaterals** in fragile settings, DFID country teams should give priority to the delivery of improved services rather than to using this relationship to pursue a reform agenda with that agency.
- f. DFID's International Dept. should develop stronger approaches and provide more resources to working with **non-traditional partners** (such as China, India, Saudi Arabia).
- g. Where DFID expands its funding in fragile states, its Directors for Human Resources and Regional Divisions must match this with **earlier build up and better sequencing of staff with sufficient seniority and experience**.
- h. DFID country teams in fragile states can improve **monitoring and evaluation** by designing more measurable, risk-focused, monitoring tools, looking at context and social impact.

DFID STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

DFID, the Department for International Development: leading the British Government's fight against world poverty. One in six people in the world today, around 1 billion people, live in poverty on less than one dollar a day. In an increasingly interdependent world, many problems – like conflict, crime, pollution and diseases such as HIV and AIDS – are caused or made worse by poverty.

DFID supports long-term programmes to help tackle the underlying causes of poverty. DFID also responds to emergencies, both natural and man-made.

DFID's work forms part of a global promise to:

- halve the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger
- ensure that all children receive primary education
- promote sexual equality and give women a stronger voice
- reduce child death rates
- improve the health of mothers
- combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- make sure the environment is protected
- build a global partnership for those working in development.

Together, these form the United Nations' eight 'Millennium Development Goals', with a 2015 deadline. Each of these Goals has its own, measurable, targets.

DFID works in partnership with governments, civil society, the private sector and others. It also works with multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Commission.

DFID works directly in over 150 countries worldwide, with a budget of some £5.3 billion in 2006/07. Its headquarters are in London and East Kilbride, near Glasgow.

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