

## 11. Recommendations

### 11.1 Overall Recommendations for Complex Emergencies, including Afghanistan

1. The knowledge management capacity of the MFAs/aid agencies of Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden should be strengthened to make them able to accumulate and use experiences from complex emergencies. The Donors should ensure that sufficient and adequately skilled manpower is available in the home offices and in the field to:
  - a. Manage donor participation in costly and complicated aid interventions
  - b. Enhance the coherence between the use of political, military, humanitarian and development instruments
  - c. Ensure realistic political analyses of the local contexts
  - d. Deliver greater emphasis on needs assessment and stocktaking.

*This recommendation addresses needs arising from the relative novelty of complex multi-dimensional interventions, as elaborated in 'Lessons Learned', Section 12 below. In the smaller donor nations, the recommendation may imply some reorganisation within the concerned offices, and possibly the application of additional recruitment criteria, given that staffing levels are unlikely to be expanded.*

2. The Donors should address the problem of their image in the local environment in order to avoid counterproductive clashes between the objectives of international community presence and the local population's perceptions of its actual role.

*In Afghanistan, the international community is perceived by local people as enjoying excessively high housing and living standards, their symbolic large vehicles contributing to permanent traffic congestion in the capital and to security-imposed closure of some main routes. A rethinking of the needs of the international community might lead, for example, to the use of smaller cars and to lower cost housing.*

3. The donor community at large should closely coordinate their practices in relation to the recruitment and remuneration of staff in order not to out-compete local government and to avoid the creation of a skewed labour market. The Donors should bring up this issue in the relevant fora, underlining the proven gravity of the problem, since it cannot be solved by individual donor action, however commendable the attempt.

*Financially, it is estimated that the above recommendations all contain a potential for significant savings. In the case of recommendation 1, however, these will occur only in the medium to long term.*

### 11.2 General Recommendations Regarding the Afghanistan Intervention

4. The Donors should reaffirm their long-term commitment to support the development of Afghanistan for at least the next ten years. Their interventions should be connected with the Millennium Development GoAls and take into account Afghanistan's income generation potential as well as need for flexible aid provision in the case of new, major changes in the political and security environment in Afghanistan.

*This commitment is already underway in at least two of the five Donors. Denmark has elaborated a Draft Strategy for continued aid at existing levels for the next five years. In Sweden, a new five-year strategy is under elaboration, pending this evaluation.*

5. High priority should be devoted by the Donors to the effective installation of the rule of law and to the fight against corruption. This should be combined with the full implementation of the constitution and with its further dissemination to the public.
6. To enhance the ability of the GoA to assume full responsibility for future development, the Donors should link aid, with consequent benchmarking of results to be obtained within fixed time-limits, to the existence of adequate management capacity at all levels of government. This then should be combined with support for the formulation of an interim National Development Strategy, capacity building and institutional development and for meeting immediate needs at the sub-national levels.
7. The Donors should endeavour to achieve a more even geographical distribution of aid with particular emphasis on vulnerable and high-risk areas that are easily neglected. They should investigate whether factors other than security are creating obstacles to even distribution and seek alternative implementation channels such as civil society organisations and local entrepreneurs.
8. In order to safeguard the humanitarian and development contributions of the NGOs working in Afghanistan, the Donors should actively continue to counter unwarranted criticism, correct misinformation and use their influence to ensure that adequate Government supervision and self-regulation of the NGO community is put in place.
9. The Donors should continue to provide support for the ARTF, ensure a formal inclusion of the GoA in a policy forum, and gradually hand over increased financial control to the government.

*Recommendation 4 entails significant future costs, to be regarded as unavoidable when embarking upon multidimensional system change in a large and poor country. Recommendations 5-9 probably entail modest cost increases in the short run, but with the potential to make large savings in the longer term. Essentially, all six recommendations (4-9) are more demanding politically than financially.*

### 11.3 Cross-cutting Sector Recommendations

The Donors should:

10. Prioritise support for research and the collection of reliable statistical data on Afghanistan, including further support for the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit.
11. Insist on proper needs assessments and the setting of benchmarks to enable progress monitoring, evaluations and impact assessments, when considering project proposals.
12. Demand increased transparency from UN agencies in the form of detailed reporting on how funds were spent, including a breakdown of the costs of sector interventions and of administrative expenditure.
13. Ensure, together with all stakeholders, that pressure is placed on the GoA to continue to build on the momentum established in improving the situation for women and girls, and that implementing organisations include women in project planning and prioritisation in a culturally acceptable manner, bringing the men along.
14. Pay attention to the serious environmental problems in Afghanistan, which pose a grave threat to future livelihood and sustainable development, and support, financially and morally, the establishment of an Afghan Environmental Policy and capacity building in the GoA.

*Cost-wise, recommendations 13-14 entail extra costs, whereas there is a potential saving in nos. 11-12.*

The implementers (UN, NGOs and IOs) should:

15. Recognise and respond collectively to the need to:
  - Review their profile;
  - Harmonise salary payments;
  - Increase capacity building of their Afghan staff and the GoA;
  - Present their aims and activities to the GoA and the Afghan public;
  - Assess whether alternative security measures or implementation channels or methods might be used to ensure a more even distribution of assistance;
  - Address corruption and refuse to pay or accept bribes, be that during bidding processes, when obtaining governmental services or on demand from commanders/warlords;
  - Adopt a more uniform, beneficiary oriented and regular needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation practice, where results are shared, changes made to the programmes when warranted and actions coordinated.
16. Acknowledge that security will continue to be a challenge, that natural disasters will occur and that organisations will need to maintain a high degree of flexibility in years to come and to develop a consequent preparedness.

*These recommendations will not contribute to any major increase in project implementation costs.*

### 11.4 Nation- and State-building and Stabilisation

The donor community at large should prioritise support for:

17. The Ministry of Justice in leading the CG effectively in order to promote a comprehensive reform of the justice institutions, including:
  - The reconciliation of the application of different sources of law, including customary and religious law;
  - The establishment and enforcement of merit-based criteria for the appointment of judges;
  - The improvement of institutional relationships between the police, the justice sector and the AIHRC;
  - Capacity building and reform of the judiciary sector.

For the Donors, this implies that Italy as lead donor in the Justice Sector should be encouraged to take a more active stance and be offered assistance, if needed, to do so in collaboration with the UN.

18. The Donors should prioritise support for the GoA in:
  - The fight against corruption and the protection of state assets and resources;
  - The enforcement of a reliable system of vetting candidates for government posts;
  - Improving communications between the national, provincial and district levels of the civil service and between the authorities and the citizens;
  - Improving the infrastructure of the sub-national administration;
  - Bridging the gap between the two parallel public sectors (the GoA and the international organisations) by ending inflated salary levels and downscaling international operations in favour of assisting the government directly;
  - Combining capacity building with civil service career plans and employment contract commitments in order to achieve long-lasting impacts.

In the absence of an existing body mandated to cover all the above issues, it is recommended that the UK, as a major donor in this field, initiate a forum of concerned donors to find ways of mounting a concerted attack on the problems, including those mentioned in recommendation 6. It is recommended that Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden participate actively in this forum.

*Some of the proposals under recommendations 17-18 imply modest additional expenditure; this is more than outweighed by the potential savings.*

#### **The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission**

19. The Donors should adopt a more active stance with regard to enhancing the effectiveness, connectedness and impact of the AIHRC through:
  - Fostering partnerships and strengthening the capacity of potential partners that can expand implementation of project activities, including Afghan human rights NGOs;
  - Utilising its resources better to interact with and oversee government performance, and human rights violations by non-state actors, in a systematic way;
  - Supporting its capacity to monitor the performance of the judiciary and the police from an international human rights law perspective.

This recommendation is particularly directed towards Denmark and the UK as active donors in the human rights field and especially as donors to AIHRC.

The recommendation is considered cost-neutral.

### **The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme**

20. The Donors should strongly support, through advocacy and assistance to the ANB-UNDP, a DIAG programme which will continue the DDR process but incorporate:
- A longer time perspective;
  - A stronger focus on reintegration and on community involvement;
  - An element of moral/psychological support for ex-combatants.

*This recommendation implies the allocation of resources of a similar magnitude to the costs of the DDR programme.*

### **The Provincial Reconstruction Teams**

The PRTs from Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK should:

21. Concentrate on their areas of comparative advantage: provision of stability and support for the security sector. Engagement in development activities should be restricted to small projects in support of establishing a government presence and which can be implemented by available military resources.
22. Enhance their use of accumulated experience, and counteract the negative effects of rapid staff turnover, by developing better handover mechanisms.
23. Advocate within NATO that the name 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams' be changed to 'Provincial Stabilisation Teams'.
24. Refrain from the use of white vehicles.
25. Include traditional civil society and relevant national NGOs more actively in their local information gathering.

In accordance with the existing PRT practices, recommendations 21, 22, 24 and 23 can be implemented by the concerned Donors without further procedures.

*It is estimated that the materialisation of recommendation no. 21 will imply significant savings, while recommendation no. 22 contains the potential for significantly improved efficiency.*

## **11.5 Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons**

The Donors should:

26. Continue their support to UNHCR's and MoRR's return and reintegration programme to ensure that the remaining caseload is able to return and that the (increasingly) vulnerable refugee population is assisted.

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27. Provide political support and financial backing for UNHCR's efforts to establish a more permanent migration system between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, and make efforts to ensure that migration issues get the deserved attention by the GoA.
28. Assist the GoA and UNHCR in the process of enabling permanent return, protection and reconciliation for IDPs displaced from northern Afghanistan, and in finding alternative solutions for the *Koochies* and drought-displaced IDPs.
29. Ensure that the MoRR and the UNHCR maintain a long-term focus on the protection needs of the remaining IDPs, such as unaccompanied women and children, dissemination of the IDP Guidelines and staffing and financial ability to respond to new displacements in a still fragile situation.

*The materialisation of the recommendations under section 11.5 implies costs of a considerably smaller scale than the expenditures hitherto incurred in this sector.*

### 11.6 The Education Sector

30. Donors, UN and NGOs should address the quality aspects of education, while maintaining the steady progress in the construction of schools.
31. Donors' existing support for institutional and capacity building at MoE should be increased after a thorough review, accompanied by the full implementation of a transparent benchmarking system, and extended to the provincial directorates.
32. The Donors should support and fund implementation of a common monitoring system to be used by all actors in the education sector.
33. UNICEF and the SCA should initiate steps to improve the professional capacity of supervisors to enforce teaching standards.

Given its high commitment within the education sector, it is recommended that Denmark initiate action on recommendations nos. 30-32.

*The recommendations under section 11.6 are considered cost-neutral in relation to present costs.*

### 11.7 The Health Sector

34. The Donors should plan for long-term commitment to avoid wasting initial investments, including support for the consolidation and expansion of the BPHS, if needed, in order to keep pace with population growth.
35. The Donors should initiate as soon as possible an assessment of the impact of the BPHS on the beneficiaries, including clarification of its (intended and unintended) impacts and of the need for the government to be involved in service delivery in the future.

36. Donors should initiate a debate with the relevant Ministries on how to improve the linkage between the NSP and the health programme (and other national programmes).

Given its high commitment within the health sector, it is recommended that Sweden initiate action on recommendations nos. 34-36.

*The recommendations under section 11.7 are considered cost-neutral in relation to the present.*

### **11.8 The Water and Sanitation Sector**

37. The Donors should give the highest priority to water resource management and the protection of the groundwater aquifer against over-exploitation and pollution, including active steps to curb the drilling of wells.
38. The Donors should fund the immediate development of a long-term strategy for integrated water resource management in Afghanistan and research on adequate alternative latrine design and composting technology.
39. Donors should demand and support systematic impact measurements, as these are crucial for activities and programmes with behavioural change objectives (health and hygiene education), even against an emergency/relief background.

*Recommendations 37-39 imply modest extra costs.*

### **11.9 The Livelihood Sector**

40. Donors should plan for a long-term commitment to the NSP to ensure national coverage, and for further development of the CDCs as an entry point for all rural services, and especially to enhance the capacity of the female CDCs. NSP should increasingly be linked to and coordinated with other rehabilitation and development programmes and strategies. However, the NSP should maintain its core objective of combining community-based development with nation-building, and should not be used in more politicised or short-term processes.
41. For MISFA, Donors should support the establishment of a strong management to ensure a first-class micro-finance industry based on international best practice, and thus avoid MISFA being drawn into the alternative livelihoods sector.
42. Donors should engage the WFP in a discussion of how best to reassess their food support strategy, as cash or food may be preferred at different times of the year, and to avoid harmful effects on local food production.
43. Donors should support the replacing of opium production. It should be acknowledged that it requires a long-term and multidimensional strategy, with sustainable livelihood interventions, based on community mobilisation processes and prioritising agricultural infrastructure and rural job generation.

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44. Donors should take a more critical approach to small-scale livelihood interventions, demanding business planning and realistic assessments of sustainability.

Given its high commitment within the livelihood sector, it is recommended that the UK initiate action on recommendations nos. 40-44

*Overall, it is estimated that the above recommendations do not entail extra costs compared to the present level, with the exception of the recommended overall long-term commitment to assistance to Afghanistan.*

### **11.10 Suggested Issues for Further Study and Consideration**

45. Finally, it is recommended that the Donors should initiate follow-up studies in ten key areas where the Evaluation identified important issues which it was unable to pursue in depth due to the paucity of available information or the lack of mandate. The suggestions included in Annex IV will all help to inform future decisions by applying comparative analyses of relevant cases. They include:

- 1) The lead agency model for IDP assistance;
- 2) Tendering processes and national synergies;
- 3) Gender mainstreaming versus targeting;
- 4) Cost-effectiveness of military versus civilian implementation;
- 5) NGO definition and supplementary role in relation to national government and international organisations;
- 6) Cost-effectiveness under crisis situations;
- 7) Needs assessment under crisis situations;
- 8) Resource assessment;
- 9) Countermeasures to crime and corruption in conflict and post-conflict areas;
- 10) Return of rejected asylum seekers and the use of diaspora human resources.

## 12. Towards a New Paradigm: Lessons Learned

### Introduction

The Afghanistan intervention is unique in addressing a complex emergency within the context of an ongoing state- and peacebuilding process. However, it takes place within a new, supplementary framework paradigm that began to emerge in the early 1990s and reached its peak after 11 September 2001. While earlier interventions related either to the humanitarian imperative of helping disaster victims or to the accommodation of the poverty-related needs of economic and social development, the new paradigm for donor action typically includes a comprehensive set of political, economic and military imperatives:

#### *International political imperatives:*

- The 'war'/struggle against terror;
- The wish to avoid large movements of refugees arriving in the donor countries;
- The struggle against organised, international crime, including the drug trade.

#### *National political imperatives:*

- The introduction of democracy into the recipient country, often equating to the creation of a new polity;
- The enforcement of respect for human rights;
- The promotion of gender equality.

#### *Economic imperatives:*

- The creation of an open market economy, integrated into the globalisation process;
- A corresponding lean and efficient state.

#### *The military imperative:*

- The use of armed forces and combined civilian-military activities (CIMIC) activity to enforce peace and to promote humanitarian, rehabilitation and development action.

This new paradigm implies interventions that are both more ambitious and more complicated than the humanitarian response to a disaster or the strengthening of ongoing development processes. Given the prevalence of preconditions similar to Afghanistan, it would not be surprising if further interventions of this type were to occur.

Evidently such interventions have to cope with novel problems on different levels, for which ready answers are as yet scarce. These include: how to deal with 'spoilers', where the main options are either to co-opt them or to fight them; how to rally support for a new and different political system; what to do with transitional justice and how to deal with crime and corruption resulting from the breakdown of norms that typically accompanies multidimensional systemic transition.

In addition, there are questions of how the international community can best organise joint interventions; how civilian and military interventions can be coherently combined; and, in participating donor nations, how to organise interventions involving cooperation between agencies that have little or no previous experience of cooperating and that often lack the knowledge and analytical capacity that are required to deal adequately with unfamiliar local settings.

In the light of this perspective, it appears that the following lessons from Afghanistan will be useful for the donor community.

### **1. Equip Home Offices for the New Paradigm**

There is a strong need for:

- Strengthened knowledge management and analytical capacity to deal with multi-dimensional crisis-related interventions in the responsible agencies in the donor countries. This includes maintaining sufficient numbers of adequately experienced staff; developing mechanisms for the accumulation and transformation of experience into usable knowledge; strengthening contacts with relevant external resources and exploiting the potential for synergy with earlier interventions, even when these have been performed by other actors, such as NGOs.
- The establishment of adequate and constructive cooperation procedures between the relevant home agencies in the donor nations, including those responsible for foreign affairs, development, humanitarian aid, defence and immigration.

### **2. An Efficient Justice System is Required to Counteract Risks of Transition**

There is an inherent risk of a steep increase in corruption, political clientelism, national and internationally organised crime as a result of regime change and the breakdown of social norms following violent conflict. As a result, it is not enough to concentrate the most urgent state-building efforts on creating the traditional minimal prerequisites for a lean and efficient state: budgetary and fiscal administration and state coercive powers. It is equally important to create an impartial, equitable, transparent and efficient justice sector, which requires a minimum of connectedness with prevailing religious and customary law. A well working police force requires a functioning judiciary.

While transitional justice is desirable following atrocities under prolonged conflict, this has proved difficult to initiate under several crisis interventions, including in the present Afghan political reality. However, given this limitation it becomes of prime importance to prioritise the effective rule of law and respect for human rights and human security in order to rally support for the new polity.

### **3. Efficient Law Enforcement and Employment is Needed to Counteract Organised Crime**

Furthermore, concrete measures against the likely proliferation of organised crime, often with international repercussions, appear necessary. The breakdown of the formal economy and of social norms, combined with the widespread availability of arms and men skilled in their use and the presence of the 'raw material' for criminal incomes, create the conditions for black economies to proliferate. Widespread trafficking of drugs, humans and arms has occurred in several West Balkan states and territories as well as in Afghanistan. However, the Afghanistan example suggests that the strategy of co-opting potential spoilers into the new system because of a perceived need to fight terrorism may also carry an inherent risk of promoting the growth of crime.

However, without employment opportunities for ex-combatants, the struggle against crime becomes difficult. Some prudence in imposing radical economic changes combined with a lean state is therefore called for. The immediate priority should be to promote alternative employment initiatives in order to limit the numbers of the population returning to the gun.

#### **4. State-building Is of Primary Importance**

State-building is of primary importance in multi-dimensional interventions such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Cambodia, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq, where existing regimes have been ousted and replaced by new regimes. New regimes may be recognized by the international community, but lack legitimacy in the eyes of their own populations. In these circumstances, there is an understandable focus on the political processes of nation-building to restore peace and unity. However, more humble state-building processes are also necessary for the creation of a working polity which can respond to the needs of its citizens, and these can be easily overlooked in the eagerness to portray the new regime as a new, independent, and worthy representative of the nation.

One of the consequences of the 'political rush' is the excessive neglect of civil servants and other public employees, who, especially given coercive state powers, are identified with the ancien regime and perceived as illegitimate and, more often than not, as failing to live up to the standards of the new paradigm. This may be harmful to state-building. In the first place, the effect may be that ambitious state-building objectives become more cumbersome since the new incumbents often lack the professional skills to match their political credentials. Citizens may therefore experience a long period during which basic public services do not function very well, and this experience may be detrimental to the viability of the new regime.

Other consequences of the emphasis on politics, which are often pushed aside, are that the new regime is prone to corruption and lacks management capacity. It may be implicitly believed that the substantial influx of aid compensates for the lack of management capacity within the regime. However, the effectiveness of the aid is reduced if the state is not working well. While there is now growing awareness within donor community of the problems in Afghanistan, recognition of these problems has been delayed partly because of the donor community's general satisfaction with the new Afghan government being visibly in the driver's seat. For the donor community to assume responsibility for problems related to state-building, some challenging rethinking of its relations to the GoA and how best to engage in difficult debates while respecting the latter's national authority is required. It is much easier to offer the observation that things are broadly moving in the right direction than to acknowledge that a professionally demanding and politically delicate task lies ahead.

New ways of thinking about the conditionalities and rewards of aid will be required in the new paradigm of donor intervention. Professional and good governance must be prioritised. This may require a revision of the current insistence on the need for a modern, lean state and of prevailing attitudes to the use of the human resources of the ancient regime.

#### **5. Long-Term Thinking to Supplement Short-Term Action**

The multi-dimensional transformation of a polity and an economy is a major endeavour. It is therefore necessary to anticipate and confirm long-term commitments and to take a long-term perspective alongside required short-term action. Long-term solutions may imply the prioritisation of:

- Maintaining the working parts of the existing state rather than displacing them in favour of a provocatively expensive parallel system. This means working systematically on capacity building and skills training for rehabilitation and development processes, improved working conditions and facilities, and a salary level which does not

automatically lead to corruption, in order to enhance performance for the benefit of society at large.

- Interventions to enhance the legitimacy of the new system with effective service delivery and employment programmes. While considerable effort has been devoted to the provision of basic public services in Afghanistan, internal economic recovery processes could have been supplemented with a higher priority for employment creation programmes.

### **6. Silent Victims Are Easily Forgotten in Political Crises**

Under a complex and somewhat chaotic crisis regime, where high priority is given to political and market economy imperatives, the conventional priorities in development cooperation for poor and vulnerable sections of the population – and for environment and human security – can be easily bypassed. In Afghanistan, this has been the case in relation to the relatively low priority assigned to the emancipation of women, as well as the agricultural sector, which so far has only been addressed indirectly through livelihood interventions with some benefit for the rural economy. Environmental problems, which are normally severe after many years of war, have also been given low priority.

### **7. Professionalism Under Crisis Conditions**

The distribution of aid in an insecure conflict area can easily become geographically skewed to the detriment of its long-term impact. Awareness of the problem within donor agencies may be limited because the assessment and monitoring of needs are themselves limited. Furthermore, aid provision easily becomes accompanied by steep cost inflation and tough competition for limited staff resources to the detriment of the local public sector.

Sound professional awareness of these problems, and appropriate and adequate counter-measures on the part of the whole donor community, are therefore important. The cost-effectiveness of the operations should also not be overlooked in spite of the politically decided availability of funds and the pressure for quick results. Funds for international development cooperation are limited; when used in one place, they will be missed somewhere else.

### **8. The Military Works Best in its Core Areas**

The overall rationale for the foreign military presence in crisis situations is that the military can:

- Fight spoilers who have not been co-opted into the power-holding coalition;
- Enforce stability, extend government authority, and assist in the creation of an enabling work environment for the humanitarian and development agents;
- Implement various civilian projects, either because the military is the only actor in place or to win hearts and minds in order to enhance force protection.

Regarding the second task, the performance of the ISAF PRTs in Northern Afghanistan appears to have been instrumental in producing the desired results. However, performance has been relatively poor and expensive when the PRTs have taken on development activities. In addition, beneficiaries in the Southern parts of Afghanistan often claimed that the behaviour of the Coalition-led PRTs had been conducive to more warfare in their region, not less.

The lessons from Afghanistan in this field, therefore, appear to be that:

- Military intervention works best when it sticks to its areas of comparative advantage. Armed forces should, therefore, only embark on civilian activities upon request and in relation to small, quick impact projects. The chief exception is emergency situations, where the armed forces may be the only possible aid providers. Even so, one should avoid the pitfall of letting military considerations determine humanitarian and development action.
- Excessive use of military power can easily prove counterproductive in relation to peace enforcement.

### **9. The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations**

The new paradigm also requires a working international and national NGO community. Interventions should draw on NGOs' past project experiences, staff, networks and community acceptance and, in the early transition period, explore the possibility of their inclusion within government plans to assist in capacity development (instead of external consultants, as is currently the case). The aim should be to develop voluntary and constructive synergies between NGO and state interventions, while avoiding the creation of a local NGO elite which out-competes the public sector for staff because of its better remuneration.

Donors, the international and local NGO communities, as well as local civil society organisations (CSOs), need to find ways of regulating NGOs, of fostering self-regulation, and of developing the profiles of NGOs and CSOs in order to avoid misuse of the NGO concept. Priority should be given to the development of genuine, self-reliant NGOs and CSOs, which are at least partly independent of donor funding.

A certain tendency towards a strategic substitution of the NGO sector with CIMIC activities has been identified amongst the donor decision-makers. This calls for prudent awareness of the simple question of what these different players do best.

### **10. Utilise the Diaspora**

Before a prolonged conflict leads to an international crisis response, millions of people have normally become refugees. While the vast majority of these generally remain in neighbouring areas, a substantial minority makes its way to more distant and more affluent countries. With immigration increasingly a key issue for their electorates, European governments tend to impose stricter asylum and immigration rules. This is leading them to prioritise interventions that ensure that

- Refugees remain in areas neighbouring their country or region of origin;
- They return as soon as possible, from neighbouring areas and from Europe, including by providing them with various financial incentives to go back;
- Rejected asylum seekers are returned to their country of origin, although this may be difficult when identification and security concerns are respected.

While some diaspora people return to attractive positions in their country of origin, the prevailing tendency is for refugees who have reached affluent countries to remain there. Financial incentives seem to be relatively ineffective in this context. From a capacity building point of view, this is regrettable since refugees often possess skills that are badly needed in their country of origin. However, allowing them to stay on for a limited period of time to obtain higher education or specialised job experience could help to generate valuable human resources for the home country.

Financial remittances often become an important additional source of income for their country of origin. However, while these are important for the relatives in the country, the overall balance of their contribution to the economy has been disputed. The diaspora often spends vacations in their country of origin and undertakes construction and business activities. This can have a positive impact on the economy, but also cause inflation and have distorting effects on productive activity. In addition, the creation of a new 'local, global elite' has important societal effects, by defining young people's aspirations and encouraging further emigration. Recognising the opportunities and limitations of the diaspora will remain a major challenge, and further understanding of the complex pros and cons is needed to make use of the human resources it possesses.