

Linking Relief and Development in the Greater Horn of Africa
USAID Constraints and Recommendations
May 1996

Executive Summary

A. Background

This paper has been prepared under the aegis of the President's Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI). It was written by the USAID staff on the GHAI Inter-Agency Team established to promote rapid transitions from relief to development. It looks historically at internal USAID constraints that have inhibited smooth transitions between relief and development programming in countries in the Greater Horn of Africa (Footnote 1). The transition experience in post-war Ethiopia was a central point of reference for this paper; experiences of USAID staff in Washington, Eritrea, Somalia and Rwanda and other Greater Horn countries were also drawn upon.

The team conducted a comprehensive review of the many challenges facing USAID staff in the Greater Horn of Africa region (GHA) as they sought to effectively respond to urgent needs of countries "in transition," that is, moving into or out of crisis, with the goal of making recommendations that could assure more timely, appropriate responses to transition situations.

The paper builds on the already significant USAID planning, programmatic and organizational efforts to integrate relief and development resources and improve overall responses during transition periods. These efforts include the development of an Agency goal that recognizes the importance of relief, rehabilitation and other transition assistance to the overall Agency mission of sustainable development; the empowerment of this Team to review current approaches and make recommendations for improved linkages; the creation of two relatively new offices within the Africa Bureau and the Bureau for Humanitarian Response which concern themselves with relief-development linkages; and the implementation of some key program approaches, for example in the areas of demining, demobilization and human rights monitoring, that address requirements of many countries transitioning from conflict to peace.

(Footnote 1: This region comprises Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania)
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B. Key Issues Identified

The Team identifies five areas where further adjustments can be made to improve linkages between relief and development. The key issues within those five areas are as follows:

- Within USAID's **corporate culture**, disaster and development experts are philosophically, fiscally and physically divided, with separate offices, programming systems and objectives, and funding sources. These lead to different values and agendas within country specific contexts.

- Some **legislative and regulatory requirements** inhibit effective transitions from relief to development. In addition, USAID staff do not always know what restrictions exist and how activities can be designed within those that do.

- **Financial and human resource** limitations as well as the way that USAID manages these resources constrain our ability to respond quickly or fully to needs identified in transition countries.

- While reengineering efforts promote integrated planning among USAID offices, **program planning** processes in the African context are still conducted in relative isolation from one another, limiting the Agency's ability to effectively combine resources to meet country needs. In addition, potential synergies between USAID and other U.S. Government programs are not fully considered, especially as they relate to areas with refugee or returnee populations.

- USAID has certain current **policies and procedures** that hinder successful linkages between relief and development.

C. Recommendations

The Team provides recommendations related to each of these five areas but recognizes that not all constraints can be removed. While flowing from an analysis of transitions in the Greater Horn, most of the recommendations have relevance outside of the Greater Horn region. Some of the key recommendations are:

- **Employee evaluation and promotion criteria changes** that will demonstrate the value the Agency places in staff who have experience working in complex emergencies and transition situations, and who can demonstrate their role in effectively promoting relief to development linkages.

- **New training programs** that can promote dialogue between relief and development experts, and promote greater understanding of what linking relief and development means and how we can work to implement basic principles (as outlined in this paper) of linking relief and development given existing legislative restrictions and flexibilities. Such training would be offered on an inter-Agency basis and with our implementing partners as well.
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- **Key program planning changes**, including the promotion of an Integrated Strategic Planning (ISP) process for designated transition countries. As outlined in this paper, the ISP process operationalizes the reengineering concept of participation within the Agency and promotes the active participation by other U.S. Government agencies working in a country on an integrated, inter-Agency strategy.

- **Supplementary guidance and technical support** to help Missions understand and operationalize USAID's new Results Reporting and Resource Request (R4) requirements. The requirements relate to incorporating into strategic plans a discussion of root causes of crisis and preventive actions that can be taken in a country to address those problems.

- **Agency adoption of the Team's Principles and Operating Guidelines** to Linking

Relief and Development as an Agency policy paper and reference tool for strategic planning.

- **A USAID, and possibly an inter-Agency, approach to Congress** both to identify problems that certain legislation creates – including earmarks – and to propose recommended changes. USAID options for relief from earmarks in the Greater Horn of Africa region are listed in the paper.

- **A series of policy and procedural changes** to improve relief-development linkages, including:

-- consideration of special procedures for operating in GHAI and/or designated transition countries. (For example, automatic exemption from certain reporting requirements; expanded use of the Disaster Assistance Response Team concept to assure staff with appropriate skills are immediately available in a transition situation; commitment of International Disaster Assistance funds for more than one year for rehabilitation activities, on a funds available basis; and honoring of the legislatively mandated two-year authority for obligation of development assistance funds.)

-- better support to host governments in a transition context, e.g., greater flexibility to allow the pooling of resources with other donors in support of host government programs; consideration of the pros and cons in the use of Non Project Assistance for new governments; and increased channelling of relief and rehabilitation funds through responsible host governments.

-- revision of Bureau for Humanitarian Response (BHR), emergency proposal guidelines to assure that appropriate elements of the basic principles of linking relief and development are applied in the design and approval of activities.

-- stronger BHR/Africa Bureau collaboration in each other's activity design and approval processes.
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-- establishment of alternative mechanisms to the traditional partnering between international and local groups to promote use of indigenous organizations

- New standards for Agency evaluations to assure that the activity under review is adhering to key principles of linking relief and development.

The Team will be presenting its findings and recommendations to USAID senior management with the hope that they will embrace its concepts and provide appropriate guidance to relevant Bureaus and offices to effect change along the lines outlined in this paper.

The Team also proposes that other U.S. Government agencies, other donors and our implementing partners conduct similar reviews of their own internal constraints in order that we might all work more effectively together in promoting rapid transitions from relief to development.

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