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HUMANITARIAN POLICY GROUP

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## About HPG

The Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute is Europe's leading team of independent policy researchers dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice in response to conflict, instability and disasters.

## In Brief

- This HPG Briefing Paper examines the idea and practice of 'coherence' between political and humanitarian action.
- It concludes that the present emphasis on integration of these two policy domains is counterproductive and risks violating humanitarian principles.
- It argues for a revived political response to chronic conflict in non-strategic areas that is distinct from the humanitarian response.



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# The Politics of Coherence: Humanitarianism and Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era

## Introduction

Humanitarian action has always been a highly political activity. The provision of humanitarian assistance and protection has relied upon engaging with political authorities in conflict-affected countries, and thus influenced the political economy of conflict. At the same time the provision of humanitarian assistance has been influenced by domestic political considerations in donor countries, reflected by the fact that different emergencies, and different groups affected by them, have received more or less relief aid. The issue is not *whether* humanitarian aid is political, but *how*.

Despite, indeed because of, the inherently political character of humanitarian action, those responsible for the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection sought to define a set of rules to guide their relationship with warring parties (and by extension with donor governments). Most important of these is the principle of impartiality: the rule that non-combatants are entitled to assistance and protection on the basis of need and not according to their political affiliation, religion, race or creed. More practically, humanitarian access has been contingent upon observing the principle of neutrality, ie, not taking a political position with regard to the justness or otherwise of any particular cause. Importantly, these principles implied a separation of what might be called 'humanitarian politics' from the partisan

politics of the warring parties and the foreign policy interests of other states. In donor countries, this separation was marked by institutional and funding arrangements that underscored the independent and unconditional character of emergency assistance.

The past decade has seen profound changes in the relationship between humanitarian and political action. Increasing recognition of the political origins of vulnerability in complex emergencies led the 1996 *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Genocide in Rwanda* to famously conclude '...that humanitarian aid cannot be a substitute for political action', and to call for increasing coherence between political and humanitarian efforts. Thus, the Rwanda experience challenged the idea of separation, and urged closer integration between aid and political responses. This report added momentum to a new approach to security articulated by the UN Secretary-General in 1992 in his *Agenda for Peace*. This sought to overcome the conceptual and bureaucratic divisions that had previously separated aid and politics, by pursuing a new vision of what was called 'human security'. The analysis of the causes of conflict was broadened to include social, economic and environmental factors, and the UNSG called for the mobilisation of political, military and aid assets in a coherent manner to build peace and security.

This *HPG Briefing Paper* summarises the findings of an HPG study<sup>1</sup> that analysed the evolution of the concept of coherence in the last decade and its implications for the relationship between humanitarian and political action. The study focussed on the global policy responses of two donor governments – the UK and the Netherlands – and of the United Nations, to complex political emergencies. In addition, it looked at particular examples of approaches to coherent humanitarian programming in Afghanistan, Macedonia and Serbia.

## The Origins of ‘Coherence’

The coherence agenda has emerged amidst complex changes in the geopolitical landscape. It has also been driven by more parochial changes in domestic public policy in donor countries and in aid policy.

### Coherence: the geopolitical context

International intervention in the internal affairs of states – including humanitarian intervention – was limited during the Cold War by an unconditional respect for states’ sovereignty. Such respect was a key premise of the decolonisation process, in that it protected the right to self-determination, free of external interference, and was functional in containing the risk of direct confrontation between the superpowers.

In the post-Cold War era, unconditional respect for sovereignty has given way to a much more interventionist regime of international relations. Of itself, sovereignty is no longer a sufficient qualification for membership of the international community. Instead, states must be able to demonstrate their commitment to uphold international law and to adhere to basic principles of economic and political behaviour. States that do not adhere to these values are increasingly excluded from the mainstream of international relations, and are subject to a range of punitive measures. These range from punitive conditionalities on economic aid, to sanctions, to full-blown invasion. Until NATO’s intervention in Kosovo in 1999, these experiments in political and military intervention were regulated by the UN Security Council.

These experiments have coincided with a redefinition of security. States and international bodies such as the UN and EU, no longer define security primarily in terms of armies, alliances and treaties. Instead, national and global security is seen to embrace not only political and military dimensions, but economic, social, and environmental factors. Thus, for example, addressing the root causes of conflict in developing countries for example, is seen to be important in preventing large refugee flows into the West.

This renewed scope for intervention has coincided with the emergence of new patterns of conflict. During the Cold War, the superpowers were an important source of finance and political legitimisation for allied states and their opponents. This gave the Permanent Members of the Security Council considerable leverage over their respective allies. This influence was sometimes used to remind warring parties of their obligations under international law and to promote peace settlements. In the post-Cold War era, political disengagement by the major powers from various proxy wars has meant that their influence over many contemporary conflicts has diminished. The withdrawal of superpowers’ subsidy for proxy wars in the South has also meant that warring parties have come to rely upon extracting resources from civilians and exploiting primary commodities such as gems, oil and forest

products. This process has served to loosen the ties of reciprocity between civilians and armed groups that characterised revolutionary and independence struggles, and created the conditions for massive abuse of human rights and destruction of livelihoods. It has created an economic rationale for sustaining conflict.

Thus, while many conflicts have become more lethal for civilians, so the means of international political influence over the belligerents have diminished. Although there is now greater consensus on the international community’s right to intervene in other people’s wars, there is much less agreement regarding what types of intervention are legitimate and effective.

### Coherence and the need for a new paradigm

The search for new instruments to manage insecurity has led to increasing claims regarding the role of official development assistance in peacebuilding. These claims were driven in part by the fact that in the post-Cold War era, official aid actors needed to demonstrate their increased relevance and so reverse the trend of declining official aid flows. They were driven too by the fact that increasingly aid actors were the sole representatives of international policy in countries that were no longer seen to be strategically important in terms of trade or military threat.

The broadening of the concept of security also paved the way for the idea of aid as peacemaker. Analysis of the causes of conflict shifted from a focus on competing ideology, to a focus on poverty, environmental decline and population growth; all areas in which aid actors could claim a particular competence. The redefinition of security, and changing rules regarding sovereignty, also allowed aid agencies to expand the scope of their activities out of the domain of economics. Appealing to both principles of aid effectiveness and human rights, aid agencies now claim a legitimate concern with regard to the internal affairs of recipient governments. This concern has translated into renewed powers to judge the quality of governance in recipient countries and, if necessary, withhold resources on political grounds.

Thus, at the same time that *development* assistance could make a significant contribution to conflict prevention, increasingly tough conditionalities on this assistance meant that *relief* became the primary aid instrument available in the most politically challenging environments, particularly those affected by conflict. Throughout the early 1990s, relief budgets increased significantly in absolute terms and as a proportion of official development assistance. This trend attracted increased scrutiny of the workings of relief, particularly in conflict situations.

By the middle of the decade, two key critiques began to dominate humanitarian policy circles:

- First, that relief assistance was failing to reduce the vulnerability of populations in the medium- to long-term. Emergencies were dragging on without an obvious end in sight; relief interventions were not sustainable, nor were they necessarily the most effective way of helping populations to maintain their dignity and re-establish their livelihoods.
- Second, evidence began to mount that, as part of the diversification of the financing of contemporary conflicts, warring parties were turning to relief to sustain themselves. Relief, it was argued, was doing more harm than good.

In this context a tantalizing proposition emerged. As relief might fuel conflict, so more skilful delivery might serve to dampen it.

### Coherence and domestic public policy

The search for coherence between humanitarian and political action reflects broader trends in domestic public policy in donor countries. These are shaped by the demands of globalisation and the need to demonstrate the effectiveness and thus legitimacy of governmental action.

Globalisation has meant that it has become increasingly difficult to define the boundaries between domestic and foreign policy. Most government ministries have an interest in international issues as they seek to respond to the complex challenges of migration, climate change and the deregulation of international trade. They also have to ensure effective representation in the diverse fora that exist to regulate global relations. These trends are posing new challenges to bureaucracies that previously worked according to relatively strict disciplinary boundaries. Effective governmental action means ensuring that different departments think in a 'joined-up' way, complementing, or at least not undermining, each others' interventions. This means identifying common objectives across departments that might have different mandates.

In the international sphere, definition of common objectives between, for example, ministries of foreign affairs and those responsible for aid, has been made easier by what in the UK is called 'Third Way' politics. The new government's emphasis on an ethical dimension to foreign policy has sought to do away with the old dichotomy between realism and idealism, and to replace it with the idea of good international citizenship. This advocates the idea that in the era of globalisation, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and free trade – the values of a 'liberal peace'<sup>2</sup> – is in states' own self-interest.

Fundamental to the study reported on here is that this idea of 'Third Way' foreign policy provides an umbrella under which aid actors as well as diplomatic actors take common shelter. Thus, the objectives of 'aid' and 'politics' are increasingly converging around the idea of promoting good international citizenship. The question that remains, however, is what do aid and political actors do when other actors do not conform to the values and principles espoused by this approach. It is precisely in conflict-affected countries where these values are most challenged and, therefore, where calls for coherence between aid and political responses become most challenging and most problematic.

As the analysis above suggests, the idea of coherence between humanitarian and political action has been driven by very diverse analyses and expectations and has evolved at a time of rapid redefinition of the context and rules of international relations. Given its confused, often contradictory origins, it is not surprising that the implementation of the idea of coherence has proved deeply flawed and often self-defeating.

### Coherence and the Architecture of the 'New Humanitarianism'

The framework of coherence has been important in influencing the architecture of international relations. Of particular interest here are changes in the relationship between ministries of foreign affairs and aid departments, and within aid departments.

The UK government has experimented perhaps more than any other in Europe in seeking to integrate aid and political responses to complex emergencies. At first sight, this is paradoxical given that the creation of the Department for International Development (DFID) was designed to separate the aid and political objectives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The paradox disappears, however, on recognition of the fact that there has probably never been greater unity of purpose and principle between aid and foreign affairs than since 1997. Both Departments share the values of liberal peace outlined above. This has enabled the old division of labour between aid (Overseas Development Administration) and politics (FCO) to be redefined. The new DFID has assumed responsibility not only for the delivery of economic aid, but for the definition and promotion of the UK's political strategy in relation to countries where there is an aid programme. Essentially, DFID has become the 'Ministry for International Policy in Non-Strategic Countries'.

This broad policy framework, that combines aid and political tasks, is reflected in the mandate of the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), established in 1998. CHAD has taken the lead within DFID for the design and implementation of a coherent humanitarianism, known as the 'new humanitarianism'. This approach moves away from the old idea that the role of donor governments is to act as the chequebook for relief agencies, towards playing a much more active role in the definition of humanitarian principles and practice. The broadening of the mandate of the department to include conflict management objectives was also seen to provide a means of better integrating humanitarian aid within a wider framework of political and military responses to conflicts. So, for example, in addition to funding relief, CHAD would input into the UK Security Council position on certain conflicts, and has also financed conflict resolution activities at community, national and regional levels.

The former Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, was an international force driving the coherence agenda. Under his leadership, the remit of the Dutch humanitarian aid department expanded from one dedicated to financing relief aid to embrace much more complex objectives, including rehabilitation and peacebuilding. His reliance on humanitarian, as opposed to development, aid instruments to promote the coherence agenda was driven by the delegation of development assistance to the embassies, and increasing selectivity in its provision. This meant that humanitarian assistance was one of the few instruments available at headquarters level that had the flexibility to meet the demands of the approach to peacebuilding outlined in successive policy documents.

In the UN, similar trends towards integration of humanitarian assistance and conflict management objectives can be discerned. This has entailed the establishment of Executive Committees to facilitate cross-departmental and cross-agency working on key issues such as humanitarian affairs and peace and security. These have proved effective in facilitating information exchange, but have not delivered the expected gains in terms of unified policy formulation.

The UN Secretary-General (UNSG) has interpreted the coherence agenda to mean the integration of humanitarian and political objectives, and new management structures have been designed to deliver this.

This has triggered an ongoing debate within the UN system regarding the relationship between the political representatives of the UNSG and humanitarian operations. At the core of these debates is the question about who should drive the integrated UN approach – the political or humanitarian representative of the UN? At present this debate remains unresolved, with considerable difference of opinion existing between the UNSG and the operational agencies.

A third key reflection of coherence in practice in the UN is the creation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 1998. This superseded the Department for Humanitarian Affairs. OCHA shed many of its predecessor's operational responsibilities, allowing for greater involvement in humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy. Reflecting its new mandate, OCHA has been playing a more and more active role in briefing the Security Council and other political fora. While welcoming its increased access to, and credibility among political actors, OCHA's political activism has also led some to question whether its primary purpose is to promote humanitarian action or to contribute to an integrated strategy of peace-building.

Comparing the organisational changes that have taken place in the two donor governments and the UN two common themes emerge:

- Initially, the concept of coherence outlined by the UN and others envisioned aid acting alongside a reinvigorated political track. There was little articulation of who would be responsible for defining the precise content of common programming between aid, political and military actors, but it was assumed that a shared vision existed across these domains, and internationally, with regard to how to achieve peace and security. However, this revitalised political track has not materialised in the majority of complex political emergencies. In fact, there has been progressive diplomatic abandonment. This political disengagement is obscured by the concept of coherence, that has provided for the delegation of responsibility for political management into the aid sphere.
- Second, the initial formulation of the idea of aid as peace-maker emphasised the role of development assistance in conflict prevention. An era of tougher conditionality on poor performing countries, has meant excluding many conflict-affected countries from receiving development assistance. This has left humanitarian aid as the primary instrument available for aid actors to engage in conflict-affected countries. The newly defined division of labour means that humanitarian aid actors are playing an increasingly strong role, not only in the provision of relief, but in informing international political responses to complex political emergencies.

Thus, the concept of coherence has been quietly reinterpreted from one that implied deployment of development, political and defence assets in order to prevent conflict, to one where aid actors, and humanitarian actors in particular, became primarily responsible for the design and implementation of an international response to violence in non-strategic countries. This reframing has assumed that humanitarian and conflict management strategies are complementary. However, experience suggests that blurring humanitarian and conflict management objectives serves to undermine the effectiveness of both.

## Coherence in Practice

### Aid as a tool of conflict management

One of the primary arguments driving the coherence agenda has been that, as aid can fuel conflict, used well it might support peace. This analysis suggests that it is both feasible and desirable to use humanitarian assistance as part of a strategy of conflict management. Such an approach implies delivering (or withholding) aid not on the basis of need, but according to an analysis of its likely impact on the conflict dynamic.

This approach has coincided with a parallel debate regarding ethical and effective humanitarian aid. Here, the aim is only to relieve poverty and suffering rather than end the war per se. Adherence to humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality is an important precondition for effective relief, since this can determine access, security and whether or not aid is reaching those most in need. Operationalising these principles means making sure that there is independent access for assessment and monitoring, adequate security for staff, and a sufficiently robust political analysis in place to minimise the abuse of aid by warring parties.

The implementation of the idea of coherence means conflating the peace imperative and the humanitarian imperative. In the process, the unconditional character of relief is being replaced by *de facto* political conditionality on humanitarian assistance by some donors and in relation to some countries. This convergence has important ethical and technical implications. These are demonstrated by a number of cases from recent experience.

The UK government has been accused by agencies and other governments of withholding aid to Sierra Leone in 1997 and Afghanistan since 1996 as part of a political strategy to influence the respective conflicts. The UK government denies this, arguing that its strategy has been informed by an analysis that suggested that conditions were not in place for effective and principled aid programming. Problematic is that the UK adopted very clear foreign policy positions in relation to these conflicts that emphasised isolating the incumbent authorities in order to exert leverage. There was thus a convergence of foreign policy and humanitarian objectives, leading to a widespread perception that the process of determining whether the conditions were in place for effective humanitarian action, was in fact political conditionality in disguise. This perception meant that the UK was seen by operational partners, other donor governments and belligerents to compromise the principles of impartiality and neutrality. This had significant negative ethical and technical implications.

At a technical level, the extent to which humanitarian assistance is likely to prove useful in meeting the peace imperative is also questioned in practice. In Serbia, for example, the EU established Energy for Democracy (EfD) project provided heating oil to opposition run municipalities. This Dutch-Greek sponsored initiative was intended to send a political message to the Serbian people regarding the gains of closer cooperation with the West. Initially an attempt was made to distinguish oil provided by this programme from that provided through the humanitarian track, but soon EU politicians sought to maximise political capital by portraying such supplies as humanitarian, even though it was not provided impartially. There is little evidence that EfD had a

significant impact on the conflict dynamic in Serbia, but it did signal a willingness on the part of some EU politicians and bureaucrats to seek to use humanitarian instruments for domestic political ends. It is interesting to note that both the UK and Dutch aid programmes resisted providing additional aid funds to support this initiative, on the grounds that it did not fulfil humanitarian or developmental criteria.

### ‘Bilateralisation’ of humanitarian aid

Historically, the role of donor governments was confined to providing financial support to UN and NGO agencies who would design and deliver relief programmes. Compared with the management of development assistance, donor procedures for managing relief aid were light, with little appraisal, monitoring or evaluation of donor-supported interventions. This was seen to be important not only in ensuring a swift response to urgent need, but also in safeguarding the independence of humanitarian organisations.

In part because of the coherence agenda, donor governments have become much more involved in humanitarian decision-making, both in terms of the organisation of the humanitarian system and in relation to specific emergencies. This trend, frequently referred to as ‘bilateralisation’, comprises a number of different elements. These include:

- greater earmarking of contributions to UN agencies;
- direct contracting of NGOs (rather than multilateral organisations contracting operating partners);
- increasing proximity of donor governments to operational decision-making through the use of donor coordination bodies such as the Afghan Support Group and Somalia Aid Coordination Body;
- the proliferation of ‘Friends of...’ groups to lobby particular agencies or system-wide responses in respect to particular countries;
- increasing operational presence, for example, the establishment of field offices.

These strategies have been partially driven by increasing donor emphasis on improving the performance of their humanitarian partners, particularly in the UN, and a concern that existing mechanisms of accountability, such as Executive Boards are not functioning adequately.

These are valid concerns. However, the evidence collected by this study suggests that these strategies encourage the perception of the ‘politicisation’ of humanitarian response as donor governments become nearer and nearer to field operations. In the process, the independence of humanitarian action, its defining feature, becomes compromised without a corresponding political benefit in terms of conflict management.

Donor pressure on operational agencies can serve an important function. For example, the Afghanistan Support Group played an important role in pressing the UN agencies to follow the Strategic Framework initiative, designed to enhance the coherence of UN action. However, there is a risk that greater bilateral involvement can also weaken the global capacity of the multilateral system. This risk is twofold. First, selective investment in multilateral action

precludes the strengthening of multilateral institutions. The predominance of donors working outside the UN in the Kosovo crisis is widely seen to have carried an opportunity cost for multilateral action globally. Second, donor governments are rarely consistent in terms of the direction that they wish multilateral partners to go in. Donors have differed widely, for example, in their positions regarding energy supplies in Serbia and security in Afghanistan.

Arguably, the value of independence and of multilateralism *per se* needs to be set against the need for accountability in the use of public funds. The process of ‘bilateralisation’ of itself does not guarantee greater accountability. In fact it may undermine it if the accountability agenda is perceived to be coopted to justify a new form of political humanitarianism.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The original concept of coherence envisioned a collective rallying of military, political, economic and humanitarian assets to support peace and security. It assumed a common understanding of the nature and dynamics of conflict between these different domains, and a shared vision of the means of resolving such conflict and of the nature of peace. While the concept of coherence has been used to justify and inform some significant changes in the architecture of international relations, its design and implementation have proved deeply flawed.

The concept of coherence has been confused in that it assumes a shared vision of peace and security internationally, and assumes the complementarity of humanitarian and conflict management objectives. Thus it is presented as good in itself, hiding the fact that the values driving it are not shared universally. Incorporating humanitarian action into the framework of ‘liberal peace’ is both ineffective as a means of managing conflict at the periphery, and diminishes the ability of humanitarian action to reduce suffering in conflict areas. It legitimises this risk, by arguing that in the long-term there is a significant political gain. However, this gain is impossible to prove and there is no mechanism for holding those responsible for making such calculations accountable.

This suggests that rather than pursuing closer *integration* between humanitarian and political action, the emphasis should be on increasing their *complementarity*. It also requires acknowledging that there may be legitimate conflicts of interest between humanitarian and political objectives. In practice, this means:

- Reaffirming humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence of humanitarian action, underscoring that its primary purpose is the alleviation of suffering not to resolve conflict or achieve a particular political objective. Donor governments should move to codify these principles in law, working with the DAC and other relevant bodies to develop appropriate and comparable definitions in line with international law. In the UK, the proposed new International Development Act provides an important opportunity to clarify in law the purpose of humanitarian assistance.
- Donor governments should underpin their commitment to impartial allocation of humanitarian resources globally by publishing data reporting on the distribution of assistance by country, and working to enhance the methodologies used to calculate need and to match this with response.

- The United Nations should clarify quickly the relationship between its political and humanitarian operations in situations of active conflict. The present tendency towards an integrationist interpretation of coherence, that promotes political control over humanitarian assets is unfortunate and should be redressed by clearer separation of these functions at field level.

The coherence agenda meant that it has become easy to conflate concern for ensuring the necessary conditions are in place for effective and principled action with political conditionality. Ensuring clarity of the purpose of humanitarian assistance through more robust policy guidelines and legislation would help to resist the trend that is becoming evident among the donor community towards integrating humanitarian assistance into a wider foreign policy framework. In addition, it is desirable that:

- Governments, the UN and non-governmental humanitarian actors (NGHAs) work to ensure consistency across countries in the definition and interpretation of the conditions required for effective humanitarian action, perhaps through agreed 'minima' or bottom lines. This would ensure a more consistently principled approach, and avoid accusations of politicisation.
- The trend towards 'bilateralisation' reinforces the impression among humanitarian organisations and indeed belligerents that donor governments are using humanitarian assistance to pursue political objectives. Donor governments should undertake a review of this trend, with particular attention to its implications for the independence, performance and accountability of humanitarian action.
- Poor adherence to humanitarian principles and programming quality by humanitarian organisations is being used to justify greater donor involvement in humanitarian decision making. Operational agencies should therefore review their commitment to these principles and standards and agree mechanisms by which adherence to them can be enhanced.
- While NGHAs call for political action, they are uneasy regarding the 'politicisation' of humanitarian assistance. NGHAs therefore need to articulate more clearly and consistently their own 'humanitarian politics' and their institutional relationships with, and understanding of, 'politics' in both recipient and donor countries. Such a clarification implies recognition of the potential conflicts between humanitarian principles and claims to contribute to peacebuilding and developmental objectives.

The vision of coherence mapped out in the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda has been revised almost beyond recognition. The concentration of development aid to a tightly defined number of countries that perform well, the withdrawal of diplomatic actors from many countries at the periphery, and an increasing awareness of the potential impact of humanitarian aid on conflict dynamics has resulted in a tragic mislearning of the lessons of the international response to Rwanda. Relief commonly remains the only instrument of international policy deployed in many of the most vulnerable, conflict affected countries. But the mantle of the 'new humanitarianism' means that relief is no longer simply a substitute for political action, it is the *primary form* of international policy at the geopolitical periphery. 'Politicisation' is thus not

primarily about politicians coercively directing aid operations, but a more subtle process whereby many humanitarian organisations assume a set of values associated with the political culture of the West and volunteer to contribute to a wider process of peacebuilding.

If coherence is to make sense, humanitarian action has to be coherent with a form of international politics that is both vigorous and based upon the need of conflict-affected people rather than the domestic politics of powerful states. Making a reality of the redefinition of security requires diplomats as much, if not more than, aid workers. Without such politics, coherence is merely a smokescreen for continuing inattention. Thus:

- Donor governments should reconsider the emerging *de facto* division of labour between aid and foreign ministries, and invest in political analysis and intervention, not rely primarily on humanitarian assistance-led strategies in non-strategic areas.
- The UN's capacity for independent political analysis and engagement should be strengthened within the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations. This would entail critical evaluation of past political performance, and facilitating exchange of political expertise between UN departments and agencies.
- There has been a shift in emphasis from the idea of 'preventive development' to that of using humanitarian aid as an instrument to reduce active conflict. This has come about in part because humanitarian assistance is the only aid instrument available to engage in that are performing well in economic and political terms. However, humanitarian assistance has proved ill-equipped to deliver either conflict prevention or developmental objectives. Many of the poorest countries are also those where the conditions for effective bilateral programming are lacking. If the objective of official development assistance is to aid the poorest countries, then there is a need to broaden the range of aid instruments available to engage in poor performing countries, in particular those affected by ongoing conflict.

The full report on which this Briefing Paper is based is available from ODI entitled: Macrae, J & Leader, N (2000) *Shifting Sands: the search for 'coherence' between political and humanitarian responses to complex political emergencies*, HPG Report No 8. London: Overseas Development Institute. Further information regarding the coherence project and other publications are available from: [www.odi.org.uk/hpg/appp/forpol.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/appp/forpol.html) or from [hpgadmin@odi.org.uk](mailto:hpgadmin@odi.org.uk)

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Macrae, J & Leader, N (2000) *Shifting Sands: the search for 'coherence' between political and humanitarian responses to complex political emergencies*, HPG Report No 8. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- <sup>2</sup> Dillon, M & Reid, J (2000) *Global Governance, Liberal Peace and Complex Emergency*, Mimeo. Lancaster: University of Lancaster.