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Social Inclusion and Service Delivery in a Fragile and Post-conflict Environment in Africa

Joseph R.A. Ayee



ACBF

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This Occasional Paper posits that the African post-colonial state has attracted much interest from scholars and development practitioners because of the recognition that development cannot take off without a functioning state. A state is expected to deliver goods and services to its citizens in order to uphold its legitimacy. However, in a fragile/post-conflict setting, state capacity to deliver services is hindered by inherent challenges – poor infrastructure, weak public service delivery and state institutions. The paper posits that a combination of the inability of fragile states to perform their governance functions and the adoption of “one-size-fits-all” strategies to deliver services have largely contributed to social exclusion in service delivery.

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Social Inclusion and Service Delivery in a Fragile and Post-conflict Environment in Africa¹

Joseph R.A. Ayee²

¹ An earlier version of this study was submitted as a Background Paper for the 2011 Africa Capacity Indicators Report (ACIR).

² Joseph R.A. Ayee is a Professor/Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

The post-colonial state in Africa has attracted great interest from scholars and development partners because of the recognition that no development can take place without a proper functioning state. The state is expected to provide and deliver goods and services to its citizens in order to promote its legitimacy before its citizens. However, in fragile or post-conflict states, the capacity of the state to deliver services to all citizens is not possible because of weak infrastructure, weak public service delivery and weak state institutions which lack the capacity to deliver service and thereby become illegitimate. This has led to the increasing recognition that service delivery interventions or initiatives in fragile states should aim to ameliorate the negative effects of social exclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Against this backdrop, this paper discusses how social inclusion can be promoted and improved by service delivery in fragile states in Africa in the light of the fact that their different contextual variables (such as history, politics, culture and geographical location) affect their ability to develop their capacity to deliver services to their citizens. In other words, why is social exclusion in service delivery in fragile states challenging and what are the reasons for it? The paper shows that a combination of the inability of fragile states to perform their governance functions as a result of their peculiar circumstances and the adoption of the “one-size-fits-all” strategies to deliver services have largely contributed to social exclusion in service delivery. It ends with some policy recommendations.

KEY WORDS: social inclusion; service delivery; state legitimacy and fragility; state capacity; fragile/post-conflict countries; governance functions; Africa.

I. INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial state in Africa has attracted interest in four thematic areas: state consolidation, state decline, state fragility or failure, and state capacity building. State consolidation, which came into vogue in the immediate post-independence era, emanated from the underlying assumption that the state was a major means to bring about societal change and fulfill economic and social aspirations with strong integrative and development objectives (Herbst 2000). The shift to state decline from the mid 1970s focuses on analyzing what went wrong with the state and the reasons for its weakness. The state proved incapable of bringing about intended changes in society and was seen as built on rather doubtful foundations of legitimacy. The state was variously characterized as “prismatic” (Riggs, 1964), “soft” (Myrdal, 1968), “weak” (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982), “overdeveloped” (Leys, 1976), plagued by “precapitalist affectation” (Hyden, 1983) and “anti-development” (Dwivedi and Nef, 1982) because of its inability to meet the aspirations not only of civil society but also those who occupied central political institutions (Azarya, 1988). This characterization was a major cause not only of economic decline experienced by most African countries during the 1970s and 1980s but also a weakening of governmental capacity and effectiveness, which in turn hindered efforts at economic revival via structural adjustment (Jeffries, 1993).

Given the incapacity of the state to implement structural adjustment programs (SAPs), the World Bank and other donors in the 1980s moved toward “rolling back the state,” that is, restricting the role of the state, providing greater opportunity for market forces to assert themselves on the development process, and liberalizing the economy in an effort to induce economic development. The concern also involves building administrative capacity as an instrumentality of the development process rather than of a spoils system and the development of more efficient and, in a sense, more autonomous state machines. Various panaceas have been suggested, including administrative reform covering areas such as organizational development, manpower development, training, and the introduction of management techniques along the lines of the New Public Management School (Schaffer, 1969; Levy, 2004; Haque, 2001).

State fragility or failure refers to states that have mostly emerged from conflict and are regarded as lacking the political commitment, will, and capacity to develop and implement pro-poor policies, which has led to either dismal or no service delivery and social exclusion (OECD/DAC, 2005). The U.K. Department for International Development in 2005 referred to these states as “difficult environments.” To deal with the problems of fragile states, a Fragile State Group was formed within the Development Aid Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) in 2005.

Behind this great interest in the state is the recognition that the state is the pivot that will promote socioeconomic development. The basic function of state, which comprises a number of institutions that make and implement decisions with regard to interests of various kinds, is to provide goods and services to citizens based on “realization and representation of public interests and its possession of unique public qualities compared to business management” (Haque, 2001: 65).

The a link between service provision and taxation creates a contract between the state and citizens and thereby promotes state legitimacy. People pay taxes because they see it as a fiscal contract between them and the state, which they expect in return to provide services. For example, South Africans are found to be more likely to pay for local service charges if they felt that the government was providing services equitably, collecting revenue fairly, and using the revenue to provide services (Fjeldstad, 2004). Legitimacy comes in large part from government delivery of services that people want and need. Fiscal capacities are needed to build a legitimate state. Democratic elections do not themselves ensure state legitimacy. Neither do “quick impact projects” in which foreign aid agencies seek to fill urgent needs. Unfortunately, however, in most African states, public services provision is unreliable, and services are regarded as of poor quality where they have been provided. The weak link between taxes paid and services provided to citizens has exacerbated poverty in most African countries and sometimes eroded the legitimacy of some governments (Brautigam et al., 2008).

The effective provision of basic services, such as water and sanitation, security, justice, health, education, electricity, and agriculture extension, is a major challenge for development (World Bank, 2003). In many developing countries, the poor—especially the rural poor—receive inferior services in terms of access, quantity, and quality. This situation is exacerbated or magnified in fragile or post-conflict societies where destruction has left the state without the resources to provide the services and vulnerable groups are excluded. Poor people and marginalized groups such as women and children lack access to services in fragile states for a number of reasons. These include deliberate social exclusion (on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, tribe, race, or political affiliation), remote geography, inappropriate services, high real and/or opportunity costs, or security concerns. There is therefore the issue of dealing with social exclusion—ensuring that institutions and communities do not engage in practices that deliberately exclude access for particular groups (Berry et al., 2004).

Why is social exclusion in service delivery in fragile states such a daunting challenge? Fragile states are unable to perform their governance functions as a result of their peculiar circumstances. The problem is exacerbated by the adoption of “one-size-fits-all” strategies that too often have compounded social exclusion in service delivery. This paper explores how social inclusion can be promoted and improved by service delivery in fragile states in Africa when strategies take into account the way their different contextual variables (such as history, politics, culture and geographical location) affect their ability to develop their capacity to deliver services to their citizens. It is instructive to note that Africa has 20 fragile or post conflict countries/areas, majority of which are among the poorest in the world and where social exclusion is regarded as one of the major reasons behind the conflicts. With the exception of North Africa, fragile states exist in the remaining sub-regions of Africa probably because of their heterogeneity unlike the comparatively homogenous Arab-speaking North (see Table 1).

Table 1: Post-conflict countries/areas in Africa

1. Angola	7. Eritrea	14. Rwanda
2. Burundi	8. Ethiopia	15. Sierra Leone
3. Central African Republic	9. Gambia	16. Somalia
4. Chad	10. Guinea	17. Sudan
5. Congo, Democratic Republic	11. Liberia	18. Togo
6. Côte d'Ivoire	12. Mozambique	19. Uganda
	13. Niger	20. Zimbabwe

Source: Compiled from World Bank, "Conflict-Affected Countries," Washington: World Bank, 2006.

Fragile environments or states are weak in infrastructure, public service delivery, state institutions, and lack the capacity to deliver service and thereby become illegitimate. In other words, fragile states lack developmental capacity; they are unable to design and implement policies and programs for growth or to provide good governance to their societies and markets. They are characterized by a lack of political will, which means that policy makers and politicians will not push forward a pro-poor agenda. The state lacks the capacity to supply services to poor people. They are frequently weak in policymaking, implementation, and monitoring systems, and exhibit a lack of organizational providers and front line workers as well as limited financial resources. Infrastructure is also weak or non-existent, with few buildings or health clinics (Call and Wyeth, 2008). While this may be true of many developing countries, in fragile states the problems are particularly acute and exacerbated by such factors as limited access to certain parts of the country because of challenges of geography and security. In these situations, it will be difficult for the government to supply medicines or textbooks in some areas; and teachers, doctors, and nurses are reluctant to work in remote or inaccessible regions. In contexts with high HIV and AIDS prevalence, the human resources available to staff clinics or schools, or to manage the provision of services, are decimated (Berry et al., 2004; Goby, 2006; Mcloughlin, 2009).

The complex interplay between political will and state capacity poses major obstacles to access and participation of poor people in service delivery. Where political will is lacking, certain groups have been deliberately excluded from social services on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, or political affiliation. In situations of weak state capacity, marginalized groups are unable to access services either because of their geographical location or because the services available do not meet their needs or have high real and/or opportunity costs. Where security is a problem, access has been curtailed because of the behavior of different parties to the conflict (Berry et al., 2004; Goby, 2006; Mcloughlin, 2009).

Above all, fragile states also lack good governance, which in turn does not permit them to create and maintain accountable and efficient institutions. In the midst of all these problems, they urgently need to provide and deliver services to gain legitimacy or respect from citizens and thereby promote social inclusion. To do this, state institutions will have to be built, transformed, and strengthened to provide services for all citizens. Where state building is the central objective, states gain legitimacy by being seen to provide services as part of the social contract with the citizens (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009).

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN FRAGILE/POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS

Fragile states pose a different development problem for service delivery. Consequently, the importance of service delivery in a fragile environment cannot be over-emphasized, given that failure to deliver basic services such as security, health, education, and justice is regarded as both a cause and a characteristic of fragility (van de Walle, 2006). The literature has indicated the impacts of fragility on service delivery. They include inequitable coverage and access leading to social exclusion; the proliferation of non-state service providers, including international non-governmental organizations; and the breakdown of long-standing route accountability (Collier, 2007 a; b; DfID, 2005; Vallings and Moreno-Torres, 2005).

Service delivery is seen as mitigating social exclusion, which itself is often regarded as a driver of fragility and conflict. The delivery of basic services is regarded as a central task of poverty reduction because water, education, health care, and personal security have been identified as poor people's highest priorities, while expanding inclusive service delivery is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDG targets represent a global commitment to realizing the rights of the poor to services and livelihood opportunities. They will not be met without increased access to services in fragile environments (World Bank, 2003).

Basic service delivery and improvement may also be an entry point for major or broader governance reforms. It is instructive to note that where upstream governance weaknesses or lack of capacity are contributory factors, the governance reforms that are necessary to promote longer-term social and political change have more chance of success if linked to reforms in service delivery, which have tangible results and benefit the public in a noticeable way. When visible to the public, service delivery reforms are regarded as offering a more promising entry point for broader governance reforms, since they can then lead to pressure for wider, more systemic reforms. For instance, in 2004, targeted improvements in policing in Nigeria sent a powerful message to inspire others and created a policy space with the potential to conduct more comprehensive reform (Thompson, 2004).

There is a link between service delivery and peace building. Therefore, in post-conflict countries, service delivery helps to alleviate the suffering of large war-weary populations and contributes to consolidating the peace process. Delivery of services such as health and education can play an important role in preventing conflict or exacerbating it. Distribution of resources and the accessibility by or deliberate denial to different groups may either address or heighten existing social inequalities. Improved service delivery has the potential to promote equality and inclusiveness and to be a tool for peace-building. Service delivery can strengthen the representation of excluded people, for example, through user groups. Reducing inequalities in access to basic services reduces potential causes of violent conflict. The literature on the role of horizontal inequalities (that is, the inequality between groups in society often based on ethnicity or other group characteristics) in conflict highlights the importance of considerations of equity in the provision of services. This work argues that group exclusion along social, economic, and/or political lines is a source of differentiation and is one of the potential triggers of conflict (Stewart, 1999; Klugman, 1999; Ostby,

2003; Berry et al., 2004). Access to services is one of the factors contributing to such differentiation. Exclusion from services, in particular education, has been highlighted as a factor in conflict in countries as diverse as Burundi, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Kosovo (Jackson, 2000; Perera et al., 2004; High Level Forum on the Health MDGs, 2005; Vaux and Visman, 2005; Fragile States Group, 2007; Eldon and Waddington, 2008).

Service delivery can improve gender balance and therefore reduce gender inequality, given that one of the most universal forms of social exclusion (and one that is prevalent in the context of fragile environments) targets women, girls, and children, who suffer disproportionately as a result of conflict or instability. The importance of service delivery to mainstreaming gender and accountability has been recognized by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness¹, the Accra Agenda for Action², and the MDGs. They all point to equal rights for women and men in access to service delivery because men and women are affected differently by the poverty, lack of access to justice, and physical insecurity that often characterize fragile states. The sensitivity to an understanding of these differential impacts has also engaged the attention of the donor community (World Bank, 2007; Baranyi and Powell, 2005; DfID, 2008; BRIDGE, 2003). The point to note is that gender analysis is seen to have assisted in identifying the differential impacts of fragility on men and women; how gender affects access to resources and power; and social and cultural constraints on promoting gender.

To what extent is gender a strong thread running through thinking on fragile states, and what opportunities exist to enhance the systematic integration of gender equality? Addressing these questions has led to the publications of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) (2009) and Braxton (2007) on gender budgeting³. They give examples of some fragile states, such as Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, that use gender budgeting as a tool to improve transparency and accountability in the fight against inequity and poverty, both of which are issues of governance. The publications drawing on the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) highlight national and sectoral gender budgeting experiences in the three countries and offer best practice models for other African countries. Perhaps its major finding is: “Budgets are not gender neutral. They affect women and men in different ways, reflecting the uneven distribution of power within society as economic disparities, different living conditions, and ascribed social roles. Despite being signatories to the major international agreements that call for gender equality, most African countries have fallen short of their promises as their gender initiatives are facing a host of challenges relating to policy implementation, programme design, management and tracking, and capacity building issues” (ACBF, 2009: 3-4). Thus, capacity building in the area of budgeting has the potential to promote social inclusion in service delivery among women and men.

¹ See The High Level Forum, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, March 2, 2005.

² The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (The Accra Agenda for Action), September 4, 2008.

³ Gender budgeting may be defined as the incorporation of processes and tools to ensure sensitivity of government budget and its impact on gender. See Braxton, G. (2007) “Gender Budgeting as a Tool for Poverty Reduction: Concepts, Practices and Capacity Building Implications”, ACBF Working Paper No. 13 (September): 1-39.

Service delivery has been regarded as an entry point for local governance reform in fragile states. Local governance in fragile states does not totally collapse. There are mainly four not mutually exclusive situations in local governance in fragile states (Stewart and Brown, 2009; Pavanello and Darcy, 2008). They are:

- (i) strong state centralization and control of local level state institutions; these may lack democratic participation and central state/government will, but not capacity to serve all citizens equitably with services for promotion as well as lack of strong civil society organizations. An example of this situation could be found in Angola;
- (ii) extensive formal democratic decentralization and a long history of active civil society organizations, but de facto state-centralized control that undermines democracy and equitable service provision. Non-state authorities such as traditional leaders are often co-opted by the regime. There is a lack of central government will, but not state capacity to distribute equitably services. Zimbabwe is an example of this situation;
- (iii) decentralization by default where non-state actors fill the gap of absent state and formal local government institutions in terms of service delivery and security. Non-state actors may include traditional authorities (chiefs/elders), warlords, militias, religious leaders, vigilante groups, and non-governmental organizations. The examples are Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Liberia; and
- (iv) state officials and local government institutions present in local arenas, but detached from central state regulation and linked to informal, non-state power-holders (warlords, commanders, customary authorities, religious leaders), and partly financed by illicit economics as in Afghanistan (DIIS, 2008; Samson and Macquene, 2006; Paul, 2005; Berry et al., 2004; Collier, 2007a).

These four situations not only produce social exclusion in service delivery but also have led to the risks of reproducing state fragility, which has been partly caused by the informal decentralization of governance, and strengthening centrifugal forces and fragmentation. It is to reduce these risks that service delivery becomes an appropriate entry point for reforming local governance, given that in all four situations there are high levels of poverty among local populations and inequitable distribution of services and marginalization, irrespective of the degree or quality of service or who delivers them. Service delivery can improve the livelihoods of poor populations and thereby boost the legitimacy of the state and of local governance institutions. Furthermore, it is also an entry point for capacity building of local service providers and triggers local democratic action by mobilizing citizens around demands for services and participation in planning processes (Joshi, 2008; DIIS, 2008; Brosio, 2009).

In short, service delivery does promote and enhance social inclusion and thus mitigate social exclusion because of its emphasis on coverage, access, quantity and quality of service delivered. It may provide large long-term returns in terms of the equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of the services provided. Service delivery has the potential of breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty, can increase economic opportunity, and can promote cooperation across social dividing lines. The Chars Livelihood Programme in Bangladesh, for instance, developed a useful conceptual model in 2000 of how service delivery interventions incorporated opportunities for the poor to exercise their voice, create political space, and, in the long term, fundamentally alter their relationship with elite groups (Hobley, 2004; Stewart and Brown, 2009; UNU-WIDER, 2008).

The challenge of delivering basic services to poor people and in a fragile environment is more urgent than ever and is central to achieving the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2004 World Development Report (WDR) emphasizes that improving services is not just about providing resources, skills, and technical solutions. It also puts the spotlight on politics and on the institutional arrangements that create incentives for different stakeholders. It captures much of what has been learned about different forms of provision; employs an analytical framework based on principal-agency relationships to explore why accountability links between policymakers, service providers and citizen consumers so often break down; and looks at ways of strengthening these, including more direct action by poor people to seek accountability from service providers (World Bank, 2003; Institute of Development Studies, 2005).

Service delivery in fragile states is also key because the twenty-first century witnessed an extension of governmental functions beyond all precedent. The concept of the service and welfare state is almost universally accepted. The public sector has taken upon itself responsibility for the direction and utilization of manpower, natural resources, and the fast-growing technology of the modern world for the creation of an environment conducive to widespread economic and social well-being. Citizen demands on the public sector have become insistent as people grow less and less resigned to lives of poverty, hunger, disease, and ignorance. And more and more, particularly in developing countries, the public sector is seen as the agency to meet these urgent demands and devise new forms of public administration to overcome social and economic deficiencies (Lane, 1993; Braibant, 1996; Haque, 2001).

In a nutshell, service delivery is seen as mitigating social exclusion, which itself is often regarded as a driver of fragility and conflict. The renewed interest in service delivery and social inclusion may therefore be summarized as follows:

- Fragile states are not on track to meet the MDGs.
- Poor governance mechanisms inhibit poverty reduction and pro-poor service delivery.
- Fragile states generate adverse externalities regionally and globally (such increased potential for conflict or supporting organized crime).
- Ethical and humanitarian reasons require continued engagement.
- Fragile states inhibit the exchange and growth of global public goods, such as eliminating infectious diseases, improving the environment, and enhancing trade opportunities.

(Source: DfID, 2010)

Service delivery that is pro-poor in nature has also become important because:

- If the aid community does not provide assistance to service delivery in fragile states, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be achieved.
- There is a humanitarian imperative to intervene where people's access to basic services has been reduced or withdrawn.
- Service delivery may offer an entry point for triggering longer term pro-poor social and political change.
- Service delivery may help to prevent some states from sliding into, or back into, civil conflict.

(Source: DfID, 2010)

Basic service delivery and improvement may also be an entry-point for major governance reforms. Long-term social and political changes supporting good governance have more chance of success if linked to reforms in service delivery with tangible results. When these improvements are visible to the public, they can lead to pressure for wider and more systemic reforms (Collier, 2007a). Improvements in services can be a “tangible peace dividend in countries emerging from conflict—especially 'quick wins' or quick impact projects that tackle high visible problems.” (Berry et al., 2004:12). Moreover, improvements in service delivery can potentially strengthen long-term accountability, that is, the critical relationship between citizens (clients) and policy makers. A central challenge and opportunity in post-conflict states is to find ways of building new mechanisms for accountability into service delivery initiatives (Fragile States Group, 2007). This has led some scholars to recommend a rights-based approach to programming as crucial in the achievement of long-term and sustainable empowerment of marginalized groups (Evans, 2008; Stewart et al., 2007; DIIS, 2009).

III. THE FIVE GOVERNANCE FUNCTIONS OF FRAGILE STATES

Fragile/post-conflict countries face special problems and challenges. They include state incapacity to deliver services, fewer resources available for public health as most funding is diverted to military spending, emigration of health personnel, large numbers of refugees, continuing civil disorder, run-down infrastructure, small industrial and service sectors, and very poor data collection capabilities (Meagher, 2008). Accordingly, the most immediate and important task facing post-conflict countries is strengthening their capacity to carry out the following five categories of governance and redevelopment functions (UN, 2007), which are contained in Table 2. The table shows that thirty two expected interventions will have to be undertaken by governments and the international community if the five governance functions will have to be effectively performed to promote social exclusion.

Table 2: Governance functions in fragile/postconflict societies

Functions	32 Expected Interventions
1. Establishing safety and security	(i) enforcing peace agreements; (ii) reconstituting security forces; (iii) ensuring public order and safety; (iv) demobilizing and disarming ex-combatants; (v) securing territorial borders; (vi) strengthening police; and (vii) reintegrating ex-combatants.
2. Establishing or strengthening constitutional government	(i) enacting a new or amended constitution; (ii) establish mechanisms for election and citizen participation; (iii) strengthening executive, legislative and judicial agencies; (iv) providing for local governance; (v) guaranteeing freedom for civil society and the media; and (vi) protecting human and political rights.
3. Strengthening justice and reconciliation organizations	(i) rebuilding the justice system; (ii) protecting human and property rights; (iii) strengthening oversight of police; (iv) establishing truth and reconciliation organizations; (v) enhancing community rebuilding programmes; and (vi) integrating belligerent groups in society
4. Implementing recovery and reconstruction programmes	(i) restoring public services; (ii) re-building infrastructure; (iii) providing shelter and food relief; (iv) reopening and extending education and health facilities; (v) assisting refugees and displaced persons; (vi) extending social protection of vulnerable populations; and (vii) developing public-private partnerships for reconstruction.
5. Growing the economy equitably	(i) stabilizing the currency; (ii) reforming financial, economic and regulatory institutions; (iii) increasing production; (iv) promoting trade and investment; (v) strengthening the private sector; (vi) promoting job creation; developing and extending safety nets; and (vii) developing human skills.

Source: Adapted from United Nations (2007) *The Challenges of Restoring Governance in Crisis and Post Conflict Countries*, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/101 (New York: UN), p. 17

1. **Strengthening governance and participation:** This involves the creation of a strong state in a timely fashion to strengthen the governing authority ability to provide security, eliminate violent conflict, protect human rights, generate economic opportunities, extend basic services, control corruption, respond effectively to emergencies, and combat poverty and inequality (Rondinelli and Montgomery, 2005). A fundamental problem fragile environment face is the government's weak absorptive capacity and weaknesses in infrastructure, human resources, domestic financial resources, and administrative capability. What is required, therefore, is some degree of political stability and legitimacy and respect for law, which requires strengthening not only the legislative and judicial systems, but the executive branch as well.

To restore governance, it is also necessary to create or strengthen mechanisms for widespread participation in governance and public decision-making (UNDP, 2004). In its reconstruction efforts in Uganda during the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example, the World Bank (1998) found that its economic rebuilding efforts could have been improved by giving more attention to consensus building and wider participation in decision-making. In many post-conflict countries, such as Ethiopia and Mozambique, civil servants had to prepare quickly for elections to establish a legitimate government and expand participation in the democratic process. In some countries, this came through early elections; in others like, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, it came by creating and extending institutions for participative local and regional decision-making through some form of decentralization, federation, or power-sharing (Rondinelli, 2006; UNECA, 2003; Devarajan and Widlund, 2007).

It is instructive to note that the governments of post-conflict countries need the capacity to carry out all their tasks at the same time while ensuring the accountability, transparency and integrity of their actions. Failure to attend to one set of problems often had a negative impact on a government's ability to deal with others. Widespread corruption often undermines government's capacity to carry out all of the other reconstruction tasks and weakens trust in public sector leaders. For example, in Sierra Leone, a high level of corruption in the post-conflict period was a serious problem. It threatened the legitimacy and efficacy of the government, which had limited success because it did not have the authority to prosecute, had few trained professional investigators, and relied on police officers from the old corrupt system to investigate and refer cases to the Attorney General's office for prosecution. As a result, very few cases were prosecuted. The lack of tangible results led to frustration and disillusionment among both the people of Sierra Leone and the donor community (UN, 2007; International Crisis Group, 2004; Call and Wyeth, 2008).

Other important tasks that public administrators are called on to carry out are strengthening public information systems; stabilizing fiscal management; and reestablishing basic government services in all parts of the country. Local governance and administrative systems may have to be created, restored, or reorganized, and local government or sub-national administrative units may have to be staffed or re-staffed (World Bank, 1998).

2. **Establishing safety and security:** In most post-conflict countries, the government must have public administrators who can move quickly to secure the peace and provide protection and

safety. Experience in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Rwanda, and Ethiopia illustrates that unless the governing authority can quickly ensure security and a peaceful settlement of conflict, little progress can be made in establishing a strong national government, reconstructing infrastructure, and creating the foundation for economic growth (Caplan, 2002; Rondinelli, 2006).

In countries such as Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Liberia, where UN peacekeeping forces played an important role in maintaining internal security and ending the civil war, governments must quickly build up their own capacity to protect their citizenry through reforms of the civil service, police and civil defense forces, and justice systems. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, government had to strengthen its capacity to pursue disarmament, demobilize and reintegrate fighters, repatriate refugees, and improve security, protect civil rights, and prevent criminal capture of the economy (International Crisis Group, 2004).

- 3. Providing for emergency humanitarian needs and social wellbeing:** Crucial functions of government that fall heavily on public administrators, either directly or in conjunction with NGOs, include providing for emergency humanitarian needs, resettling ex-combatants and internally displaced persons, and providing basic social services throughout the country. In many post-conflict countries, the civil service may have to play a strong temporary role in reintegrating ex-combatants and returning migrants into the economy and society in order to reduce social tensions and prevent future outbreaks of hostilities or rampant crime and violence. The experiences of the International Labour Office (ILO) in the war-torn countries of Mozambique, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and others led it to conclude that the employment options in the years following cessation of conflict are limited for ex-combatants and that those who are reintegrated find employment most often in micro and small enterprises. Government has a vital role in creating the conditions that allow expansion of small enterprises and in preparing ex-combatants and displaced migrants to participate in income-earning activities (Specht, 2000; Rondinelli, 2006).

As the World Bank found in its assistance programmes for reintegrating ex-combatants into the economy in postwar Mozambique, the government often needed to develop programmes that concentrated on informal-sector apprenticeship training and provide grants to master craftsmen and small and micro-enterprise employers for equipment, salaries, and materials. Sustaining the retraining and employment programmes for ex-combatants in Mozambique was closely linked to access to markets, transport, and credit and to weaning beneficiaries off grant dependency quickly so that they developed a self-reliance mentality (World Bank, 1997).

To succeed in post-conflict reconstruction and development, government must strengthen its administrative capacities to develop human capital, reduce poverty, promote social equity, and alleviate social problems, while at the same time strengthening the economy and rebuilding the state. For example, although Uganda is often cited by international assistance organizations as a model for post-conflict reconstruction, the World Bank acknowledges that structural adjustment and economic growth policies would have been more successful had the Bank and the government given more attention to health sector reforms and found ways of improving the efficiency of educational investment (World Bank, 1998a).

4. **Stabilizing the economy and providing infrastructure:** Stimulating economic growth and rebuilding infrastructure—for the country as a whole and especially for areas where hostilities were most intense—have been essential functions of government officials in fragile societies. Nearly all government ministries and agencies must rebuild or replace the physical infrastructure through which they deliver services, and public administrators must work with the private sector in situations where government alone does not have the technical, managerial, or financial resources to provide infrastructure effectively (World Bank, 1998b). Governments in post-conflict countries also face myriad challenges in restoring destroyed or damaged economies. They must often restore confidence in their currency, strengthen fiscal policies and revenue collection, reform tax administration, and reestablish financial institutions. Creating capacity for debt management and effective resource allocation, liberalizing trade policies, and revising legal and regulatory frameworks to make doing business easier are preconditions in many post-conflict countries for stimulating economic growth. This function has proved to be a daunting task in spite of several interventions by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. For instance, it was found in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire that stabilizing the economy and providing the needed infrastructure were not achieved as was expected in spite of massive funding by the donor community. This notwithstanding, the case of Rwanda is different as donor interventions led to the stabilization of the economy while infrastructural improvement was also recorded (UN, 2007; World Bank, 1998b; Call and Wyeth, 2008).
5. **Strengthening justice and reconciliation organizations:** The ability of government in post-conflict countries to establish safety and security and provide for humanitarian and social needs depends heavily on its ability to strengthen justice and reconciliation organizations. Among the varied tasks facing such governments are creating, strengthening, or expanding indigenous police forces; establishing or enhancing the criminal justice system; and protecting human and property rights. In some countries where minorities were persecuted or fighting factions brutalized the population, governments must establish war crime courts or truth and reconciliation organizations (Stone et al., 2005).

Often, in post-conflict countries, public administrators must focus specifically on protecting the rights of women and providing services that help make them productive members of society and active participants in community-development decisions. Governments in post-conflict Rwanda and Sierra Leone faced complex challenges in responding to the need to increase the economic, social, and political participation of women and women's organizations. Gender-based programmes of assistance in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Rwanda were especially beneficial in the rural sector and to the poorest elements of the population. In helping organize women's groups, these programmes provided support to microfinance services that improved conditions for a local population, opened educational opportunities for females of all ages, and supported equal-opportunity standards in employment and promotion in both the public and the private sector (Kumar, 2001; World Bank, 1998b; UN, 2007).

Each of these sets of functions is crucial in contributing to post-conflict reconstruction and is inextricably interrelated with each of the others. The boundaries among these set of functions are blurred and the ability to deal with one often requires strengthening other government capacities as

well. Some problems cut across several or all sets of functions that governments must perform during the period of post-conflict reconstruction. The interrelationships among them make the tasks more challenging and the need for stronger government capacity to carry them out more urgent (Gobyn, 2006; UN, 2007).

According to the UN (2007) the inextricable relationships among governance functions appeared as well in attempts by international organizations to strengthen the government in Liberia after the civil war. Improving the Liberian government's capacity for providing security required wider political, economic, and administrative changes. Technical assistance to the Ministry of Defence alone would have little impact without also creating an adequate constitutional framework that could legitimize the government, strengthen mechanisms for making the reform process accountable, improve parliamentary oversight and civilian leadership of defence forces, increase civil society involvement in maintaining security, and create mechanisms for civilian disarmament (Ebo, 2005).

The interrelationships among these tasks was also seen quite clearly in the enormous challenges international assistance organizations and the government faced in providing the infrastructure and services required to improve human welfare and living conditions in Sierra Leone. The entire government and the civil service had to be restructured to deliver services effectively. Sierra Leonean government initiated the task, with the help of the international community, by enacting decentralization. Following local elections in 2004, many of the functions of service provision were devolved to the local councils and chiefdoms. The Ministry of Local Government was successful in getting 19 local councils fully functional in providing basic social services to the people. These services included health and sanitation, agriculture, forest and food security as well as education, local commerce, and communication and transportation infrastructure. The government had to develop new ways of making inter-governmental fiscal transfers and of ensuring that local governments had adequate financial capacity to carry out their functions and responsibilities (UN, 2007; DfID, 2010).

As the extant literature suggests, providing for emergency humanitarian needs, resettling ex-combatants and internally displaced persons, and providing basic social services throughout the country, while at the same time ensuring safety and security, revitalizing the economy, creating or rebuilding a competent justice system and reconciling continuing hostilities among political, sectarian, ethnic or other factions — all of these are difficult tasks and each affects the ability of government to find satisfactory solutions to all of the others. For example, in many post-conflict countries (Ethiopia, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Burundi) the government may have to play a strong temporary role in reintegrating displaced people into the economy and society in order to reduce social tensions and prevent future outbreaks of hostilities or rampant crime and violence (Call and Wyeth, 2008).

It is clear from what we have so far said that post-conflict states in Africa have not been able to adequately perform their five governance functions entrusted to them because of the myriad of challenges that have faced them. Even though there is provision in the functions for extending social protection to vulnerable groups, this has not been possible because of the extenuating circumstances in which post-conflict societies find themselves. Support and assistance have been

offered by the donor community, but the ineffective and weak capacity of the states in terms of resources and sometimes even legislation as well as their different histories and politics and have largely undermined their ability to perform the five governance functions. Moreover, the functions to be performed are more intimidating than those performed by functional states (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009).

IV. THE THREE STRATEGIES OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN FRAGILE STATES

Three strategies have been used for service delivery in fragile/post-conflict countries in Africa. They are: (i) purely humanitarian, project-based, short term approach; (ii) state delivery of services; and (iii) non-state delivery of services (DfID, 2005; BMZ, 2006; Collier, 2007a; Berry, 2009). It is, however, instructive to note that the strategies have exhibited three key features. First, they exhibit support for pro-poor service delivery as a highly complex long-term activity given the institutional and governance failures and protracted periods of violence and crisis. Second and more important, the strategies appear to be “one size fits all” approaches. Rather than take into account a sound and robust political analysis of specific context and sector, they have been accepted as universal blueprints. They have therefore been implemented in all fragile states in Africa and other developing countries with varying degrees of success (Mcloughlin, 2009; Gobyn, 2006; Chataigner and Gaulme, 2005). As Rondinelli (2006: 21) rightly points out in terms of implementing administrative reforms:

Because one size does not fit all, all reforms in post-conflict societies must be based on strong assessments and diagnoses of country needs, political conditions and implementation visibility. One of the enduring lessons of experience is that reconstruction of public administration can succeed in post-conflict societies only if it meets indigenous needs; fits national economic, social and political conditions; and has the support of “champions” among the political and bureaucratic elites.

Third, it has been difficult to find the appropriate balance between responding to immediate humanitarian needs and building long-term capacity, engaging with the public sector and non-state providers (NSPs), and supporting and working with central and lower-level institutions (Pavanello and Darcy, 2008; Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009).

The purely humanitarian, project-based short-term approach is the dominant mode of engagement in service delivery in post-conflict countries. It involves emergency relief provided by the UN and the international community in conjunction with national NGOs in an effort to stave off a humanitarian crisis. Newly established governments depend on large amounts of external assistance to be able to extend services, especially to marginalized and vulnerable groups. Providing health and education services, especially in refugee camps that can easily become recruitment grounds for militants, plays an important role in preventing renewed conflicts (Collier, 2007b; Joshi, 2008).

However, this mode of engagement has led to a fragmented and uncoordinated response that inadequately addressed the institutional failures and governance deficits that are the core of state fragility. The promotion of vertical, non-integrated programs, such as the creation of multiple

vertical or special programs to address the same health issues, has been perceived as creating mechanisms that bypass rather than include state institutions and systems. This, in turn, has undermined the already weak relationships of accountability and even created “new and often deeper institutional failures” (Commins, 2005; Berry et al., 2004; Meagher, 2008; Newbrander, 2007; Joshi, 2008). Consequently, it has been recognized that sponsored service delivery initiatives by the international community should be designed to involve rather than bypass the state so as to strengthen the institutional apparatus to ensure long-term, sustainable service provision and delivery.

The negative effect of the humanitarian approach has been emphasized in “Liberia: The Risks of Rebuilding as Shadow State,” a chapter of *Building States to Build Peace* (2008). The author, Michael McGovern, reviews the experience of the international community in Liberia during its post-conflict transitional period and finds that deeply intrusive forms of intervention often risk long-term sustainability for medium-term success. The work argues that unless reforms and reconstruction are rooted in consultation and a sense of local ownership, they are likely to collapse as soon as donor interest and resources shift elsewhere.

As noted earlier in this paper, effective reconstruction requires governments to create a strong state quickly and in such a fashion as to strengthen the capability of the governing authority. This enables the state to provide security, eliminate violent conflict, protect human rights, generate economic opportunities, extend basic services, control corruption, respond effectively to emergencies, and combat poverty and inequality (Rondinelli, 2006). “[I]n post-conflict situations, such as in Sierra Leone or Somalia, establishing some form of credible representative government that can provide essential services is increasingly seen as an essential part of the first stages of post-conflict reconstruction” (UNDP, 2004:3).

Consequently, the first best solution for ensuring effective targeting of essential services in post-conflict countries is to have a willing and capable state take responsibility. This is important for two reasons. First, states gain legitimacy by being seen to provide services as part of the social contract with citizens. Non-state provision of core state functions is seen to have a potentially negative impact on the legitimacy and sovereignty of the state (Ghani and Lockhart, 2005: 11). Second and more important, even if non-state actors are the direct providers of services to clients, there are some specific services (for example, vaccination) and some indirect coordination, oversight, and purchasing functions (setting policy frameworks and ensuring service provision by setting standards, coordinating, regulating, and financing) that independent providers left alone will not provide efficiently or at all (Collier, 2007a; Call and Wyeth, 2008).

For these reasons, in countries where there is some willingness and some capacity at the central government level, the national government is used as a partner by the international community in pro-poor policymaking to deliver services by strengthening state capacity and working directly with the state and its structures. Decisions as to where to engage, whether at the center or at lower levels, are based on a political analysis of the specific context aimed at locating capacity and will at different institutional levels (Berry et al., 2004). This is of crucial importance because in countries such as Rwanda and Sierra Leone, where lack of willingness at the central level was a significant

constraint to pro-poor service delivery, the international community found “pockets of willingness” or “entry points” within certain ministries or at least lower levels of government. In this way, the international community was able to build on existing pro-poor political will and work with lower-level institutions aimed at integrating initiatives into government processes and structures in the longer term (Berry et al., 2004; Ranson et al., 2007; Meagher, 2008). Similarly, after the war in Uganda, UNICEF adopted the Ministry of Health by providing strong leadership and close collaboration in the health program. Eventually, responsibility was returned to the Ministry, which had developed significant capacity under UNICEF's mentorship (Carlson et al., 2005).

In some dysfunctional environments in Africa (for instance, Sierra Leone), the best option for ensuring service delivery to the largest number in need has been to use local governments and traditional authorities because they exercise real authority and retain more legitimacy than the national government (DIIS, 2008). However, even though local service delivery may be ideal for certain services such as potable water, the decision to work with local governments has incurred either the hostility of some national governments or added to the incoherence among disparate service initiatives across the countries (Meagher, 2008).

In some post-conflict countries (for instance, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Ethiopia), the international community, apart from dealing with *de jure* state actors also dealt with *de facto* actors and structures such as dissident political movements or rebel groups in order to ensure access and continuity of service provision (Berry et al., 2004; Carlson et al., 2005; Call and Wyeth, 2008).

Non-state delivery of services is used where the dominant role of centralized line departments in the provision of public services has receded in the face of financial constraints, as public resources are inadequate to sustain significant levels of provision. Sustained conflict has prevented the central government from reaching populations in parts of a territory affected by conflict, with insecurity rendering consistent provision impossible. Policy initiatives to tackle such problems have emphasized alternative forms of service provision through private and non-governmental agencies. This means more limited involvement with government or, if necessary, avoidance in favor of non-state providers. Delivery of services by private firms or NGOs is not necessarily inferior to delivery by the state, and in some countries is preferable, but state fragility inevitably reduces the role of the public sector in favor of non-state actors or non-state providers (NSPs) (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009). It is instructive to note that the guiding principle of engagement with NSPs should be the international community engaging and partnering NSPs while also strengthening public institutions. It is important that initiatives premised on engagement with NSPs are not totally disconnected from the public service delivery track and that handover mechanisms are incorporated in program planning and designing from the very beginning to ensure the eventual transition from NSPs to state actors (Commins, 2008; Meagher, 2008).

V. IMPACTS OF THE STRATEGIES ON SERVICE DELIVERY

The purely humanitarian, project-based short-term approach has been commonly used in all fragile countries in Africa and indeed, all over the world. It is the first entry point in trying to restore basic services to fragile environments; consequently, there is no doubt that it has led to a vital start of reconstruction activities and the delivery of vital public services such as health care, education, water, shelter, food, and internal security (UNECA, 2003; Berry et al., 2004; Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009). However, its long-term effect on service delivery has been questioned, as it is largely geared to addressing service delivery challenges temporarily and in the short term. It is an emergency relief or stopgap approach, and like all emergency approaches, it lacks sustainability. Moreover, it is a “one-size-fits-all” approach that does not take into account the peculiar contexts of the countries involved, such as elite capture, geography, and history of the war. Thus, in some countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, Mozambique, and Burundi, the approach has tended to compound problems of access to services by marginalized groups such as women and children (Mcloughlin, 2009).

To what extent has the delivery of service by state institutions contributed to equity across disparate groups and helped to repair societal fractures? Is there a relationship between state responsiveness and service delivery? Studies on this question in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Cambodia have shown that the relationship is not straightforward because the level and nature of fragility, violence, patronage, ethnicity, and economic growth all played a part (Eldon and Gunby, 2009). Furthermore, health sector strengthening, for example, can contribute to state building in the health sector, but its impact on wider state-building remains unclear. In stabilization contexts, the particular challenge is how, given that the state often lacks the capacity to ensure reliable services, provision by external actors and donors has enhanced state legitimacy and not weakened it (Eldon, 2008; Call and Wyeth, 2008). From these studies, it seems that visible service delivery by state institutions has not resulted in state legitimacy, strengthening of the social contract, and hence the promotion of state-building.

The absence or weakness of state services usually means that the majority of services are delivered by non-state actors (including international and local non-governmental organizations, traditional and commercial service providers), particularly in the early recovery phase. Studies have found that this results in the fragmented and uneven provision of services in fragile environments in Africa (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009). There is also concern that the delivery of services through non-state providers (NSPs) has a negative impact on the development of state legitimacy and capacity. There is concern that states with weak capacity cannot effectively perform the indirect stewardship roles of managing, coordinating, and financing NSPs of basic services. In addition, there is the question of how non-state providers can support the development of state capacity for direct provision in the long-term.

NSPs use contracting mechanisms, widely on the theory that they increase service utilization and quality and improve efficiency and reduce service fragmentation. However, they have actually promoted precipitous decentralization in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Rwanda, eroded NSPs' independence, and fragmented service provision, as the NSPs are seldom able to provide an overall framework in which they operate (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009; GSDRC, 2009; BMZ, 2006; Berry et al., 2004; Moreno-Torres, 2005; PATHS, 2008; Zivetz, 2006).

The strategies confirm that improving pro-poor service delivery is increasingly a prominent feature of engagement in post-conflict countries. State fragility and service delivery are seen as interrelated and mutually reinforcing: state fragility has a negative impact on service delivery, whereas pro-poor service delivery interventions have the potential to address the root causes of state fragility. However, the impact of the strategies on social inclusion seems limited given their “one-size-fits all” nature and the different contexts in which they were implemented (Pavanello and Darcy, 2008).

VI. CAPACITY CHALLENGES CONFRONTING FRAGILE/POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES IN RESTORING BASIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

There is evidence in the literature that the roles and functions of government, at least during the first stage of reconstruction, will be very different from many of those that governments perform in non-conflict countries. The roles and functions also differ in the first stage of transition from those that government will have to perform to later within the same country. During the early years of transition, the civil service must often recruit personnel who can implement the tasks of post-conflict reconstruction and make progress toward a more stable system of government. The most urgent tasks on which government must focus in the immediate post-conflict and transition periods are to define the essential functions of public management and the types of administrative capacity that the government needs to carry them out (Rondinelli, 2006; UN, 2007).

Given the five essential roles that governments have to perform in the aftermath of a conflict, several capacity challenges confront post-conflict countries in their quest to restore basic services and infrastructure. They include the following:

(i) *The complexities of restoring governance and re-establishing the legitimacy of the government:* Restoring effective governance is at the crux of post-conflict reconstruction. In many post-conflict countries, re-establishing the government's legitimacy depends on political leaders' ability to gain the support of diverse and sometimes hostile constituencies, rebuild a shattered economy, and extend or re-establish the authority of the central government over an entire national territory. Sustaining the peace also depends on the capacity of the public administration to restore service delivery, reconstruct infrastructure, and reintegrate those who have participated in or suffered from conflict into a more unified polity. Good governance and trust in government are essential conditions for maintaining peace and reconstructing countries that have been devastated by war, because countries emerging from crises remain vulnerable to continuing tensions (Rondinelli, 2006). Rebuilding infrastructure and restoring services can be a complex process, especially when sporadic or regional hostilities continue or when the government's administrative and financial resources are weak (UN, 2007; Call and Wyeth, 2008).

(ii) *Reforming public administration:* In all stable countries, restructuring bureaucracies has usually been a politically contentious long-term process. This difficulty is exacerbated in post-conflict countries by a number of complexities. Many governments are either still struggling to establish their legitimacy and support or are focused on regaining stability. They are always challenged with

urgent and fundamental tasks of maintaining sometimes fragile peace agreements and unifying diverse political factions. Taking on politically contentious changes such as public administration reform often falls to the bottom of their list of priorities. However, when the civil service is bloated, ineffective, incompetent, corrupt, or lacking in the resources to extend and improve public services and implement national policies, reunification and reconstruction become far more difficult and uncertain (Rondinelli, 2006).

Poor coordination between central ministries and regional and local governments creates further challenges in rebuilding facilities and restoring services. Faulty information management and the lack of administrative data in sectors like health and education compound these problems. Furthermore, budget management in the various sectors is fragmented. Sometimes there are disagreements over the forms of support for reconstruction and long-term development between the government and international assistance organizations, as happened in the case of Angola, which resulted in the non-materialization of the expected shift of focus from humanitarian aid to development (UN, 2007; Call and Wyeth, 2008; Collier, 2007a).

(iii) Limited feasibility of reform interventions: Social, economic, political and military environment in a country coupled with weak absorptive capacity of the government can limit the feasibility of interventions. This is further aggravated by three distinct but related stages of reform that require different types of administrative capacity and government personnel:

- the immediate post-conflict reconstruction stage, often lasting five to ten years, in which the government must address fundamental and urgent issues of maintaining peace and security, re-establishing governance, redeveloping the economy and reintegrating society;
- a transition stage of an additional five to ten years, during which the government stabilizes the country's economy and governance structure and the civil service moves toward performing the types of functions usually carried out in more stable political systems and societies; and
- a stage of stabilized governance beyond transition, in which the government effectively and efficiently performs its functions and the civil service performs those roles normally identified with growing economies and institutionalized governance.

Each of these stages requires different functions and responsibilities of public administration. Each may require cadres of public servants who differ in their orientations, perceptions of the roles of government, competencies, and support systems. This raises the questions of whether conventional public administration reforms in stable governments are in appropriate in the first two stages of reconstruction and whether civil servant types will have to change at each stage of progress toward greater government stability (Rondinelli, 2006; UN, 2007; Collier, 2007a; Call and Wyeth, 2008).

The limited status of reform interventions is further complicated by the government's status after cessation of hostilities and its transformation from an authoritarian, dictatorial, or elite-controlled system to a more representative one, which is accompanied by the orientation of the civil service (Rondinelli, 2006).

(iv) The status of post-conflict situations: The types of public administration reforms needed are also affected by the status of fragile or post-conflict situations. Three types of post-conflict situations require different responses by government:

- cessation of hostilities brought about by a decisive victory by one side that creates a self-enforcing peace (for example, Eritrea);
- a mediated conflict cessation, agreed by two or more warring factions, but not including other dissident groups or some elements of society that are unable to participate or voice concerns (for example, Mozambique); and
- conflicted situations, in which one side achieves military victory without a comprehensive peace settlement (for example, Rwanda).

(See: Rondinelli, 2006; Call and Wyeth, 2008.)

Government's role differs in each of these three situations. In a self-enforcing situation, the government focuses more quickly on reconstruction and restoration activities and transition to a more stable government system. In mediated and conflicted situations, the government has to focus more intensely on building trust and legitimacy, providing security, dealing with intermittent outbreaks of violence, peace building, and integration of dissident groups into the governance process, all of which can delay both reconstruction and transition to stability, as is the experience of Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ethiopia (Rondinelli, 2006; UN, 2007).

The aforementioned four challenges are further compounded by:

- internal organizational factors (such as weak administrative accounting capacity, unqualified staff, vested professional interests and inadequate information);
- inter-organizational factors (such as mistrust, blurred responsibilities and the gap between design and implementation); and
- external institutional factors (such as weak and inconsistent regulatory framework, political and economic instability, lack of policy continuity).

Taken together, these factors have constrained the effectiveness of the state in performing regulation and contracting functions, which are considered “higher risk roles” of states (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009) (see Table 3).

The analysis on the capacity challenges facing fragile states has taught us two lessons. First, the variations in conditions and needs in post-conflict societies often render conventional public sector reform prescriptions inappropriate for restoring governance and strengthening government. Solutions to governance problems must be tailored, at least in the short run, to the specific types of tasks and functions that governments must perform in order to reconstruct war-torn societies. The specific types of institutional and organizational changes required will likely differ in countries in different categories (Collier, 2007a; UN, 2007).

Second, although no standard set of reforms fits all post-conflict countries, experience suggests that there is a widely shared perception of the characteristics needed in a government to perform essential public functions in the immediate post-conflict and transition periods. Whether governance reform begins more broadly or more narrowly, each stage of progress in the post-conflict

period is likely to be tied to larger issues of public sector institutional or structural change. In most crisis and post-conflict countries, restoring governance and building trust in government requires public administration reform (Call and Wyeth, 2008).

Table 3: Factors constraining state effectiveness in fragile/post-conflict countries to perform higher risk roles (regulation and contracting)

Factors	Regulation	Contracting
Internal organizational factors	<p>Weak administrative and accounting skills and capacity for monitoring, performance assessment and enforcement</p> <p>Vested professional interests</p> <p>Inadequate information on price and performance</p> <p>Lack of experience of regulation</p> <p>Retention of qualified staff</p>	<p>Weak basic administrative and financial systems and skills</p> <p>Poor information systems to compare and monitor contractors</p> <p>Staff resistance and lack of incentive</p> <p>Lack of experience and contracting, design, performance assessment, and enforcement</p> <p>Difficulty retaining qualified staff</p>
Inter-organizational factors	<p>Mistrust between regulator and non-state providers</p> <p>Blurred boundaries between state and non-state activities – the regulators and the regulated</p>	<p>Lack of trust, credibility and legitimacy between actors</p> <p>Poor definition and coordination of roles between state agencies and with non-state providers</p> <p>Gap between central contract design and local implementation agencies</p>
External institutional factors	<p>Weak and inconsistent regulatory framework</p> <p>Economic and political instability</p> <p>Political pressure on regulator, and lack of political will for enforcement</p> <p>Weak demands of civil society</p> <p>Neutrality of regulatory role not understood</p>	<p>Weak framework of contract law</p> <p>Lack of policy continuity</p> <p>Economic and financial instability; absence of guaranteed long-term funding</p> <p>Social and political resistance to privatization</p>

Source: Batley and McLoughlin, “State Capacity and Non-state Provision in Fragile and Conflict-affected States”, *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Issues Paper*, February 2009: p. 33.

VII. CONCLUSIONS: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Fragile states' inability to perform their governance functions as a result of their peculiar circumstances, combined with the adoption of "one-size-fits-all" strategies to deliver services, have contributed to social exclusion in service delivery. As social inclusion, state capacity, and service delivery are linked in fragile/post-conflict environments, this places Africa in a double bind.

State legitimacy is important in mobilizing citizens for reconstruction and development. For this to happen, the state must be able to fulfill its part of the social contract it has signed with the citizens. It must have or be able to develop quickly administrative capacity to establish safety and security, strengthen governance and participation, stabilize the economy and provide infrastructure, provide for emergency humanitarian needs and social welfare, and strengthen justice and reconciliation organizations.

These roles have major implications for the coherence of service provision as well as the role and capacity of state agencies to monitor standards, quality, and access, and to ensure consistency across different social groups and geographical boundaries. It also has implications for the role of the line department functionaries for whom a core responsibility is the management of public resources and the appointment and remuneration of government staff. Pluralization of service provision and delegation of responsibility to lower levels of government highlight the importance of state regulatory capacity to guard against excessive fragmentation and the erosion of policy coherence (Joshi, 2006; Devarajan and Widlund, 2007; Krishna, 2007; Birner and von Braun, 2009).

One of the most important effects of state legitimacy on social mobilization for reconstruction and development is the development of values that support self-determination, inclusion, participation, and empowerment in governance and economic spheres. Each of these is essential to overcome the status quo and prevent relapse into conflict. To emerge from state failure and re-establish sustainable governance, stakeholders must be convinced by the state that it is in their interests to negotiate and create democratic structures, a collective identity, and authority patterns with shared power for the common good (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2002). The focus is on fostering national unity and building national pride, each of which is predicated on some sense of shared values and national identity. Since trust is problematic, the success of these efforts depends upon building confidence. Governance that incorporates these values can help develop confidence through transparency and accountability mechanisms as well as specification of contracts, roles and responsibilities, and standard operating procedures (Luhmann, 1988). However, in situations where identity-based politics have deeply embedded conflict within the society, the most that a democratic government may be able to achieve is "accommodation amongst ... conflicting interests, hoping that value change will follow in the long run" (Crook, 2001: 1).

Furthermore, it must be pointed out that if conflict resolution, consensus-building, and creating citizen ownership for change are necessary for reconstruction, then the establishment of some democratic processes must be considered as first steps in governance reconstruction. Ignoring democratization can also undermine stability in the long run by signaling that socioeconomic or political development is subject to the whims of a limited set of actors. By dealing with this problem, the state will also ensure its legitimacy for social mobilization (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2002).

In designing policy measures to improve service delivery for social inclusion in fragile/post-conflict situations, the challenges are to find and use appropriate approaches and options that fit different and often rapidly changing needs and conditions; balance complex and sometimes countervailing objectives and pressures; and act in a timely manner to properly sequence aid in achieving goals over time (Rondinelli, 2006; UN, 2007).

Determining the most appropriate and feasible ways of improving social inclusion, state legitimacy, state capacity, and service delivery in fragile and post-conflict situations can be accomplished only by understanding the needs and conditions in each situation. Careful diagnosis of the requirements and needs of government to perform recovery and reconstruction tasks is essential in designing appropriate assistance policies and for successfully implementing them. This requires not only the formulation of appropriate, balanced, timely, and effective approaches, strategies, and options but also the integration of the crucial sets of factors into plans and programs.

Policy measures to improve social inclusion, state legitimacy, state capacity, and service delivery in fragile or post-conflict situations are likely to be more successful if they clearly reflect the following:

- (i) An understanding of strategic conditions and needs within fragile/post-conflict countries, including the challenges that governments face, their strengths and weaknesses in meeting those challenges, the most critical tasks and functions that governments must carry out in a five-to-ten-year timeframe, and the deficiencies in government capacity for providing services and implementing reconstruction policies (UN, 2007);
- (ii) A recognition of potential obstacles to reform, including the potential for overcoming or preventing the most frequent bottlenecks or hurdles to restructuring government (Rondinelli, 2006);
- (iii) An assessment of the feasibility of approaches to international assistance, including the ability to implement an assistance program that meets all or most of the donors' principles for preventing aid dependency (Batley, 2004);
- (iv) A clear recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative assistance approaches and options and of the conditions under which they are likely to be feasible (Rondinelli, 2006);
- (v) Acknowledgment that service delivery is ultimately a public responsibility and interventions should be devised so as to restore the public service delivery track in the long term. It is therefore important that handover mechanisms be designed from the very outset of programs so that initiatives can be linked to and ultimately incorporated into the public service delivery track (Mcloughlin, 2009);
- (vi) Recognition that the strategic coherence of the donor community is important and alignment and harmonization are key efforts to further this agenda. The issue of building state capacity is at the very core of alignment efforts: alignment with government's systems and/or priorities reduces the possibility of undermining state institutions by creating parallel mechanisms of service delivery. Efforts to harmonize the response of the donor community are key to making efficient use of resources and, where possible, reducing transaction costs and fragmentation under government guidance and the overall policy framework (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009);
- (vii) Understanding that the instruments and funding mechanism used to finance service delivery initiatives should be flexible, predictable, reliable, and longterm. This is of crucial importance

for building state capacity, a long term and difficult task, and for ensuring that states are not underfunded during the crucial the transitional phase (Call and Wyeth, 2008);

- (viii) Recognition that more efforts from the donor community should target poor and vulnerable groups that are most affected by state fragility and by ineffective service delivery. Efforts should aim to remove, or at least mitigate, supply- and demand-side barriers of access to services that may limit or prevent those groups from accessing basic services (Paranello and Darcy, 2008);
- (ix) Commitment to designing and implementing service delivery interventions that are premised on sustainability. However, while sustainable service delivery interventions need to be promoted, it is equally important to keep in mind that building sustainable systems for service delivery in the short to medium term may be unrealistic and an overly ambitious plan. In this connection, the concept of “good enough governance,” in which initiatives should be realistic and achievable, aims to attain “visible results in the short term, however modest, to build momentum for future reform” (DfID, 2005: 21); and
- (x) Capacity development, which is lacking in fragile/post-conflict states, must be achieved via a holistic approach that has buy in from all the major stakeholders. Uncoordinated aid for reform by multiple donors that places heavy administrative, financial, or technical burdens on already weak government ministries and agencies is unlikely to succeed in post-conflict countries. Consequently, the most appropriate way to strengthen public administration is through the gradual but progressive transformations to meet emerging needs and challenges as fragile or post-conflict countries go through a process of reconstruction, transition, and stabilization (OECD/DAC, 2008 a; b).

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The African Capacity Building Foundation
7th Floor, ZB Life Towers
Cnr. Jason Moyo Avenue/Sam Nujoma Street
P.O. Box 1562
Harare, ZIMBABWE

Tel: (+263 4) 702931/2, 790398/9, 700208, 700210/11
Fax: (+263 4) 702915, 700215, 792894
Email: root@acbf-pact.org
Web site: www.acbf-pact.org

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