



New Deal and Post-Ebola Recovery

Defining the implications of the use of the New Deal Framework for Engagement in Fragile States in Post-Ebola Recovery

KEY MESSAGES

- ❖ **Recovery must aim to address fragility and build resilience.** The history of conflict and fragility in the three affected-countries necessitates a fragility focus in the design and implementation of the recovery strategies. The New Deal for engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected states provides the best framework and strategy that could be adopted.
- ❖ **Donors, governments, and civil society should work together to use existing country systems and capacities as much as possible in the recovery effort.** Circumventing country systems might be necessary in the short term and during humanitarian response, but to achieve sustainable recovery and resilience, national leadership and ownership of recovery support and coordination is key and should never be bypassed.
- ❖ **Implementation of the post-Ebola recovery strategies must be based on a comprehensive country-specific mutual accountability framework agreed with donors, governments, private sector, and civil society.** Such a framework should commit donors to provide predictable funding to recovery efforts, and governments demonstrating transparency and accountability in the use of the funds to achieve the agreed results. Tracking mechanisms for both commitments should be put in place and monitored by an oversight body that comprises all four stakeholders (government, civil society, private sector, and development partners).
- ❖ **How assistance is channeled and what it is invested in matters.** The New Deal focuses on addressing the root causes of fragility (building trust between states and citizens and addressing institutional weaknesses). Therefore:
 - Governments of the affected countries must commit to rebuilding basic service delivery systems that are close to the people
 - International partners, on the other hand, must invest in systems building, recognizing that although this may not yield immediate results, return on investment in the future is high;
 - Recovery must be done in ways that advance inclusive societies and peacebuilding as well as re-establish trust between governments, development partners, and citizens.

Introduction

At the summit of the Mano River Union in February 2015, the Presidents of the three affected countries called for the application of the framework of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States to the recovery of their respective countries from the ravages of the Ebola virus disease crisis. They demanded the space to drive their own recovery and to use their own country systems and human resources. They agreed to establish mutual accountability frameworks as the basis for the partnership with the international community, on the one hand, and their respective civil society, on the other. The MAF will ensure accountability, transparency, and prudent management of recovery resources for maximal results. Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone are members of the g7+, a network of self-identified fragile states committed to the application of the New Deal in all their development efforts in order to accelerate their transition out of fragility. This paper highlights how elements of the New Deal Framework can be used to frame post-Ebola recovery efforts.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

Humanitarian interventions can inadvertently make fragility worse, because they tend to bypass or undermine state institutions with multiple agencies and procedures, often acting independently and making multiple demands on already weak governments. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States lays out a framework for new ways of working between governments, international organizations and civil society in fragile and conflict affected environments. The Framework combines basic aid effectiveness principles with best practice in peacebuilding and statebuilding. This means aid in fragile and conflict affected environments, whether invested in post-crisis recovery or longer term development, must aim to rebuild trust between governments and their people by:

- Investing in five **Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals** (Inclusive politics, Security, Justice, Building economic foundations and improving the capacity of governments to raise revenues and provide services);
- Committing donors to using country systems, building capacity, pooling risks, providing transparent and predictable aid and committing countries to lead the process;
- Encouraging fragile and conflict affected states to be in the driver's seat by ensuring that a **fragility assessment** exercise, in which they analyse the causes of their own fragility, precedes recovery design and is monitored during recovery implementation through well-defined indicators of progress;
- Operating based on **one national vision and plan** with **Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF)** and a **compact** between donors and national authority;
- Adopting integrated and whole of society approach that involves all line ministries and sectors and non-state actors (private sector and civil society, notably women and youth who tend to be most marginalized from planning post-crisis recovery and peacebuilding processes);

Lessons from EVD Response that strengthen the case for a New Deal Approach

- **Emergency response tends to inadvertently weaken already fragile systems.** Fragility means weak institutions and limited capacity of the government to deliver on core government functions, including delivering basic services to its population. This weakens trust and contributes to poor state-society relations. These weaknesses are often compounded when response efforts in emergency situations are led by the international community—often bypassing the use of country systems including the leadership of local and national governments. After a slow start, the international Ebola response was considerable and effective in tackling the disease and mobilizing a groundswell of civic actions. However, unfortunately, institutional capacity in the three affected countries was not adequately strengthened in the emergency phase. In most cases, especially at the national levels, parallel coordination and implementation systems were established.
- **Civic momentum, often spurred on during times of crisis, can be the foundations for resilient recovery, if targeted for support during recovery interventions.** Local and national efforts had a significant impact on the reduction of the virus transmission and ultimate eradication (more so in the case of Liberia). Communities organized themselves into social mobilization groups, burial teams, and care givers for orphans. This captured the attention of many and highlighted the critical importance of local systems and resources in crisis response, recovery, and long-term development. These efforts set the momentum for recovery. Investing in them accelerates recovery and promotes resilience. Bypassing them distorts recovery and entrench the foundations for fragility.
- **Where there is relatively strong social cohesion within and across communities, crisis response is more effective; where communities are divided politically, recovery is more difficult.** Social cohesion is vital in crisis response. It makes it possible for communities to organize themselves, engage in collective action, and trust the decisions of their leaders. In the Ebola crisis where trusting information from leaders was key to disrupting the chain of transmission, without considerable degree of cohesion this would have been impossible. In communities where social cohesion is weak, it is proving difficult to beat back the virus. Just as response depended on cohesive communities, social cohesion is equally critical to recovery. Promoting social cohesion should be mainstreamed across all recovery interventions.

Application of the New Deal in implementing the Recovery Strategies

- ❖ **Stick to the single national recovery strategies and the visions that they contain.** National and international actors must all marshal their resources on the agreed national recovery strategies and be guided by the coordination mechanism they define. Experience shows that fragility is often aggravated by a multitude of different and sometimes contradictory planning and coordination frameworks in the same country and in addressing the same crisis. Also, recovery strategies work best when they are based on a limited number of highly important targets and benchmarks that governments and donors are committed to achieving together and are mutually accountable for. Monitoring, reporting and government/donor dialogue on progress should be based on these benchmarks, and should – to the extent possible – take place within existing aid coordination and aid management frameworks, not through new recovery coordination platforms.

- ❖ **Recovery should address the drivers of conflict and the fragility revealed.** This means mainstreaming the peacebuilding and statebuilding goals across all the priorities in the strategies. For instance, recovery efforts should strengthen inclusive politics and state-society relations; it should guarantee the security and safety of the vulnerable, particularly the over 11,000 orphans from the crisis; focus on generating employment for the poor to contribute to local economies and generate domestic revenue. Communication, coordination, and participation structures should be inclusive, allowing for the full participation of citizens and local communities in all aspects of implementing the strategies.
- ❖ **Galvanize private sector contributions.** The private sector, domestic and foreign, made important contributions to the emergency response. These contributions must be harnessed in the recovery phase. This means engaging the private sector in inclusive dialogue – again through government led and coordinated strategy. Building solid economic foundations will be critical to the recovery and development prospects of countries in the region, and is a core priority goal of the New Deal (Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal 4)
- ❖ **Focus recovery efforts on quickly returning the countries to more resilient development trajectories.** The national Ebola recovery strategies complement but should not be alternatives to the development plans of the affected countries. They are short, targeted support that should quickly get the countries back on track with their respective development plans. Yet the Ebola outbreak also revealed deep fragilities within institutional arrangements and systems. As part of the recovery effort, national development plans must be revised to take into account any systemic weakness revealed and/or exacerbated. The notable area of focus is paying greater attention to strengthening decentralized social service delivery systems.
- ❖ **Recovery support from donor and national leadership for implementation should be clearly defined and agreed through a mutual accountability framework and compact at the outset of implementation.** Aid flows going towards Ebola recovery should be reported and accounted for in a fully transparent way by donors, international partners and governments together, building on IATI standards. This should include the establishment of **a state-of-the-art aid information management system in all three countries.** The compact should include regular review of progress and a broader monitoring and oversight body. Where there is Statement of Mutual Commitment on peacebuilding, like the case of Liberia, the recovery compact could be integrated in that. Discussions on developing a Mutual Accountability Framework and a compact should be used as a forum for trust building and negotiations between the affected Governments and development partners as well as the governments and their civil society groups.
- ❖ **Commit to the use of country systems.** The use of country systems is not just about budget support, although this is very important. It can also include the use of country systems in all stages of the expenditure chain from procurement, to auditing and planning. Use of country system is a gradual incremental process that requires a focused effort to build the necessary capacities. Key successes should be built upon, and expanded; notably the willingness of some donors to channel recovery funds through budget support incrementally as absorptive and delivery capacities strengthen. The recovery strategies should therefore include clear and realistic benchmarks for expanding the use of country systems in each of the three countries. They should reflect the fact that country systems also include local authorities and community groups and civil society organizations that have proved so effective during the crisis in combating the epidemic.