



Cooperation between International Organizations in Complex Emergencies in Eastern Africa

The Views of Danish Practitioners on Cooperation
from an Expert Seminar

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This report is a part of Centre for Military Studies' policy research service for the Ministry of Defence. Its purpose is to provide a conceptual and empirical context for Danish decision makers about the state of international development assistance in countries where the ability of local authorities to provide governance and essential services have been severely attenuated. International, nongovernmental, governmental, and private organizations have developed mechanisms for exchanging information about their activities, for dividing efforts amongst themselves, for reconciling conflicting efforts, and even cooperating on common objectives amongst themselves. These should be developed further and extended to incorporate local actors so that their capabilities to govern themselves and provide essential services on their own can be improved.

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This report is an analysis based on research methodology. Its conclusions should therefore not be understood as the reflection of the views and opinions of the Danish Government, the Danish Defence or any other authority.

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Abstract

This report is addressing the challenges of cooperation between international organizations in complex emergencies in fragile states of East Africa. An expert seminar was conducted on the basis of a paper on the subject to discuss problems, challenges, and possible solutions. Denmark and the rest of the international community often face the problem of poor coordination, lack of cooperation, and de-confliction of assistance in such situations. Countries and organizations are aware of these problems and have undertaken efforts to resolve them, but it remains insufficient. Attempts to better coordinate have been made at various levels—between governments, between organizations, and between local actors. Some improvements in effectiveness are being observed. Since 2005, Danish development policy has tried to take these efforts into account, as do policies that are still under development. The necessity of a comprehensive, coordinated, and fully analyzed approach are among the lessons learned. Local ownership and involvement is a must, and one way of doing so could be to follow the “New Deal” principles. The Danish approach is currently leaning in this direction, and Denmark must work to influence its partners to use this approach to achieve the best results possible in complex emergencies.

Dansk resumé

Denne rapport adresserer de udfordringer der eksisterer blandt international organisationer når de skal samarbejde i komplekse situationer og skrøbelige stater i Østafrika. Ved et ekspertseminar er dette emne blevet præsenteret, hvor problemer, udfordringer, og mulige løsninger er blevet diskuteret. Danmark har som resten af det internationale samfund ofte problemer i forhold til mangel/dårlig koordinering og mangel på samarbejde ved assistance til lande i komplekse nødsituationer. På trods af at både organisationer og lande er klar over problemet og at der faktisk foregår forsøg på at forbedre dette er det ikke godt nok. Der foregår forsøg på at gøre dette på forskellige niveauer såsom på regeringsniveau, i organisationerne og hos de lokale aktører. Sammenlignet med tidligere ses der tegn på forbedring af effektiviteten af hjælpen. Den danske regering har siden 2005 indopereret disse problemstillinger i deres udviklings strategier og politikker. Nødvendigheden af en sammentænkt, koordineret og fuldt analyseret tilgang er nogle af de lektier der er lært fra tidligere og nuværende programmer. Lokalt ejerskab og involvering er nødvendig og en måde at gøre dette på er blandt andet at følge principperne i 'New Deal', hvilket Danmark i øjeblikket forsøger. Danmark skal derfor forsøge at influere sine partnere i at følge denne tilgang for at opnå de bedst mulige resultater i komplekse nødsituationer.

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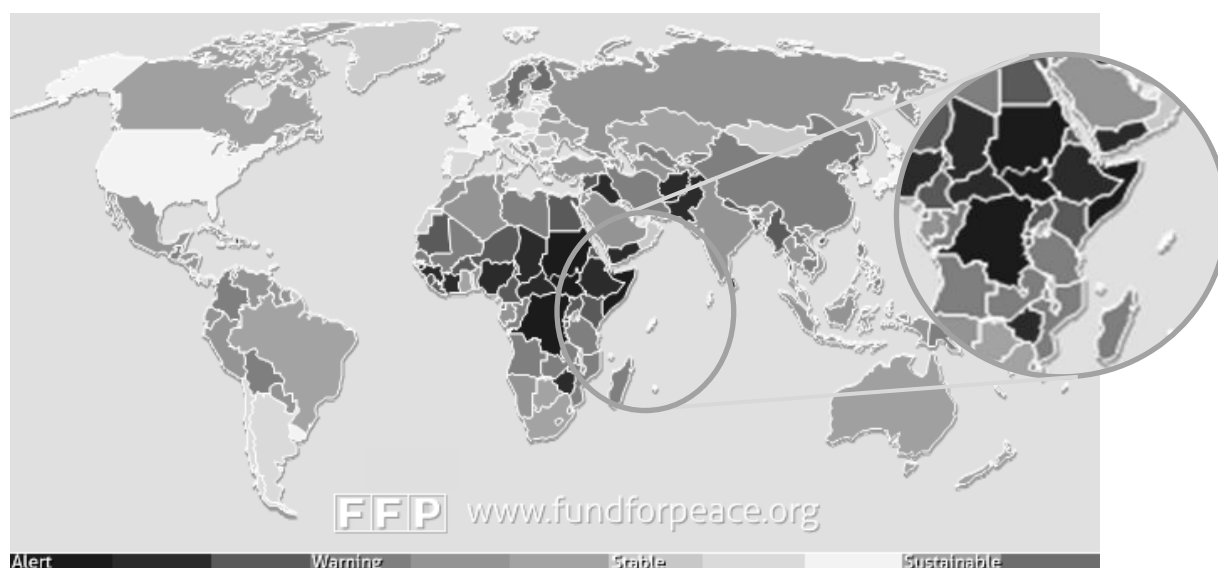
1. Introduction

The problems of failed and failing states have been high on the agenda of the international community since the end of the Cold War. These states lack the institutional wherewithal to govern their territories effectively or provide sufficient public services for the effective functioning of their respective societies and economies. Whether caused by conflict or natural disaster, these territories suffer from considerable social, economic, and political problems that have overwhelmed the ability of legitimate authority to manage, ultimately resulting in massive human suffering. Indeed, 1.5 billion people are living in countries or regions characterized as “fragile.”¹ “About 70% of fragile states have seen conflict since 1989.”² Tens of millions of people in 2011 were affected by natural disasters and political disorder around the world.³

Often these failed states are in a situation that can be characterized as a complex emergency. However, a fragile or failed state does not necessarily mean a complex emergency exists in that particular state. So what is a complex emergency? There are many definitions of what constitutes a complex emergency. Humanitarian organizations often use the term in connection with a humanitarian crisis, where war, violent conflict, ethnic cleansing, and genocide happen or co-exist.⁴

These complex emergencies can result in failed states and have a dramatic impact on the population. Looking at Africa, and more specifically eastern Africa, a large number of the states can be categorized as failed states or in danger of becoming a failed state. Eastern Africa is defined by the United Nations as consisting of Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Réunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.⁵ Ten of these countries are ranked in the top-40 of the failed states index, with Somalia holding the top spot, South Sudan as number four, and Zimbabwe as ten.⁶ Almost 30 million people live under poor conditions and endemic insecurity in these states.⁷

Figure 1: Failed States Index 2013 World Map⁸



Such complex emergencies invite the intervention of the international community to alleviate these difficulties. Intervention often involves multiple international organizations, governmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, for-profit nongovernmental aid organizations, religious charitable organizations, and even multinational corporations. None of these entities can resolve all of the difficulties to be encountered. They must therefore cooperate with one another to be effective, either through de-confliction, coordination, or cooperation.

The Danish government has expressed concern about the situation in eastern Africa. Prime Minister Helle Thorning has declared

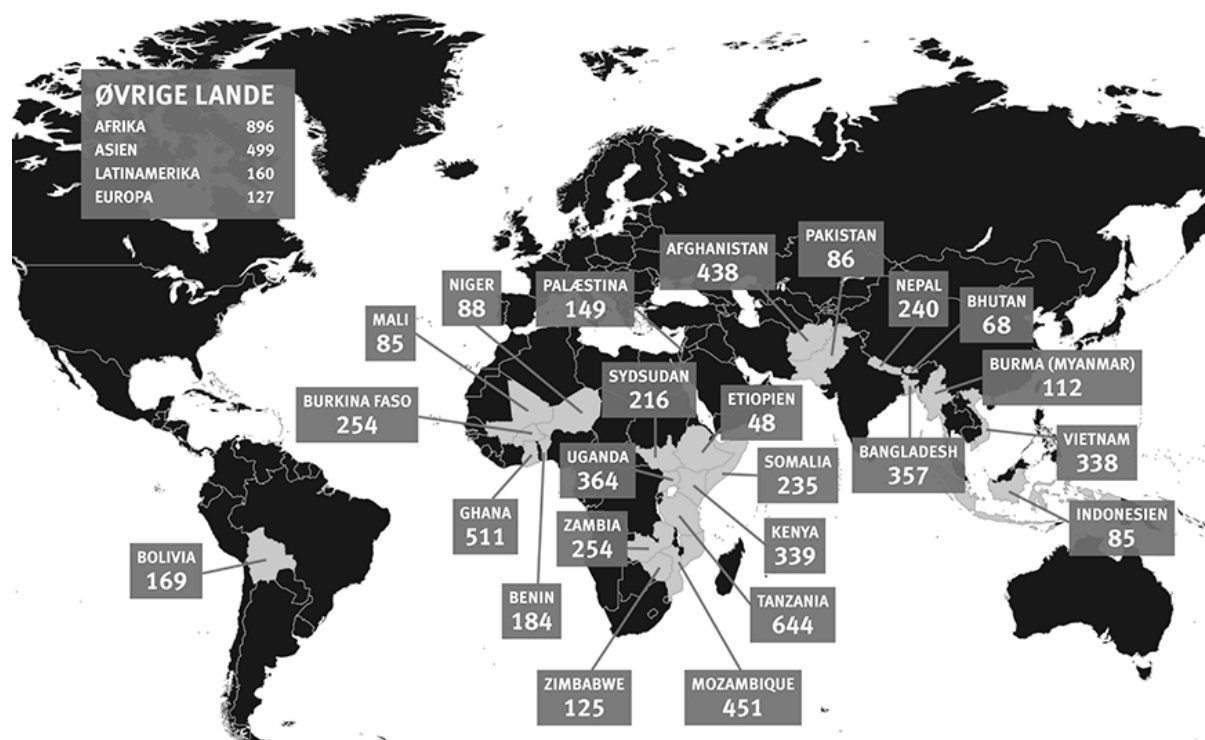
We are one of the richest countries in the world, and we should be proud that we can take part in helping outside our own borders. Not just for their sake, but also because it is a part of creating a more stable, just and safe world.⁹

Minister of Defence Nick Hækkerup has indicated that his ministry will take action to address the difficulties in eastern Africa. “In 2012, Denmark is chairing the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). We will use it actively, e.g. in East Africa for capacity-building, as well as strengthened political dialogue and multinational cooperation.”¹⁰

Denmark has indeed engaged in eastern Africa in a variety of development programs: development of state institutions, humanitarian assistance, advisors to governments, and security forces. Figure 2 shows how Denmark has chosen to focus its development aid.

Compared to Figure 1, the definition of the geographical area for East Africa, it becomes apparent that the majority of Danish development aid is aimed at eastern Africa.

Figure 2: Danish Priority-Countries¹¹



The Danish military is also increasing its involvement in the development of Africa and especially eastern Africa. Advisors have been sent to Ethiopia and Kenya to provide military support in the form of training, education, and consultancy. Furthermore, the Danish military is also focused on how to cooperate with other organizations to support development and how to handle difficult situations in particular countries, such as Somalia.

As part of this action, the Danish Ministry of Defence asked the Centre for Military Studies to explore the difficulties possibly facing international organizations when intervening in complex emergencies in eastern Africa. This report is the result.

2. Methodology

The project team utilized a common technique to elicit expert opinion from a community of practice: the expert seminar. Expert seminars provide opportunity for a diaspora of academic experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders to discuss their area of concern in a focused and guided manner. When skillfully conducted an expert seminar can elicit an effective

combination of expert judgment and extant experience to inform members about conceptual issues, theoretical approaches, and practical realities. Indeed, it is a means of quickly combining and validating or invalidating abstract notions and limited experience, thereby providing an effective quality control mechanism for the group's shared knowledge. A beneficial effect of this method is to provide the basis for this diaspora to develop into a community of practice that can be accessed when necessary to address the issues inherent in international humanitarian intervention in African complex emergencies.

As a basis for the expert seminar and parts of this report, Dr. Matthew LeRiche of the London School of Economics, an expert in humanitarian intervention in eastern Africa,¹² provided an analysis of the approaches that international organizations, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and corporations have taken to cooperate more effectively when operating together in eastern Africa. After providing an analysis of complex emergencies in theory and in the reality of eastern Africa, the paper discussed the nature, interests, and approaches to intervention taken by these different types of actors. The analysis then proceeded to the means that have been utilized to enhance situational awareness amongst these actors to provide a baseline for avoiding conflicts between their efforts, promoting coordination between related efforts, and supporting cooperation amongst efforts in the same problem and geographic areas. The discussion of how the suppliers of humanitarian assistance have attempted to make their efforts more efficient then led to an analysis of whether they have become more effective. This naturally led to discussion of the interaction of the international community with local actors and the problems encountered therein. These problems included different cultural expectations of the roles, purposes, interests, and capabilities of actors on each side, differences in their knowledge of the situation on the ground and one another, and the manner in which the problems were framed. This analysis set the stage for the seminar to finally consider potential solutions to these dilemmas as the next stage of advancing the cause of effective and efficient humanitarian intervention.

Dr. LeRiche's analysis provided a focal point for the discussion. The seminar produced legitimization of the paper's arguments and conclusions within the Danish context—i.e., amongst the Danish community of practice. The seminar participants agreed with and elaborated upon the notion that complex emergencies result from the absence of effective governance to provide for basic security, social stability, economic exchange, and essential services. There was substantial discussion of the degree of effectiveness to date of the

mechanisms for increasing the coordination and cooperation between these actors that led to further consideration of means of improvement. Finally, the practical judgment of practitioners combined with the conceptual arguments provided by the scholars in the community of practice produced a viable framework for characterizing and addressing the problems that the international community faces when interacting with local officials, leaders, organizations, and people in the area. These problems are those that will require further discussion amongst the extant community of practice that was originated by the expert seminar organized and hosted by the Centre for Military Studies.

The report proceeds in the following manner. First, we provide an overview of Danish Development Assistance, accounting for how Danish development aid has evolved since its introduction after World War II. This is followed by an analytic synthesis of the expert seminar. The work of Dr. LeRiche and the project team is intertwined to capture both the preparatory materials available to the members of the expert seminar as well as the subsequent discussion that built upon these arguments, facts, and judgments.

3. The Development of Danish Foreign Assistance

Development assistance has been an important tool in Danish engagement with the international community since the “Law on Cooperation with Developing Countries” was unanimously passed by Parliament in 1962. Throughout the period, development assistance—whether in the form of agricultural or medical demonstration projects, water and health clinics, or human rights and gender equality—has been designed to express and promote Danish values in the developing world.¹³

In the 1990s, a new approach to Danish foreign aid was taken. Denmark wanted its foreign aid to be more focused and have greater impact. Denmark wanted to engage in a different, more critical manner with the international and multilateral institutions and thus be able to promote Danish views.¹⁴ In the mid-1990s poverty reduction became a general objective of Danish assistance. This led to a new strategy involving a focus on sectors rather than individual projects.¹⁵ This approach has been the cornerstone of Danish development aid since, with refinements and the streamlining of policies, as well as a definition of priorities for Danish foreign aid in recent years. Since 2003, these sectors have included:¹⁶

- European development, environment, and democracy
- International stability, democratization, refugees, and the fight against terror
- Social and economic development
- Global environment

Denmark and the rest of the international community have been interested in harmonizing the administrative procedures of donors, the alignment of aid, and the ownership of the recipient countries of the development activities. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) issued recommendations in its report on how to make aid work better, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*.¹⁷ These recommendations are very similar to the five fundamental principles of the Paris Declaration from 2005:¹⁸

- Ownership
- Alignment
- Harmonization
- Results
- Mutual Accountability

In 2005 Denmark was one of the more than 120 countries to endorse the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.¹⁹ This was an important step toward trying to agree on standard ways to cooperate and coordinate. The Declaration has since become the norm for donors and aid recipients.

In 2010, the Danish policy towards fragile states, “Peace and Stabilisation 2010–2015,” was adopted. This policy clearly states Denmark’s focus areas when talking with respect to fragile states:²⁰

- Stabilization and security
- Promotion of improved livelihoods and economic opportunities
- Democratization, good governance, and human rights
- Conflict prevention
- Regional conflict management

Another important aspect of this policy is cooperation. The policy clearly states that “Denmark does not engage in fragile states in isolation, which is why coordination with other countries and organisations involved and with the authorities of the country is key.”²¹

The current Danish Policy highlights four specific principles that will guide Danish efforts in assisting fragile states:²²

- Alignment
- “Whole of government” approach
- Willingness to take risks
- Division of labor

These four priorities indicate that Denmark is aware of the coordination and cooperation difficulties facing development agencies. Denmark wants to ensure the proper analysis of the situation in each country it is engaged in as well as ensuring the proper coordination and cooperation from the outset of any engagement. This is seen as a corrective for UN efforts that “... at country level are often too fragmented and uncoordinated and without a common strategic direction.”²³ The Danish Government has initiated a whole-of-government approach between different Danish ministries and non-governmental actors, encompassing all Danish efforts—political, development, humanitarian, civilian, and military—to achieve more integrated cooperation.²⁴ The whole-of-government approach is being integrated in the defence force policy and strategy.²⁵ This is also being emphasized in the recently published “Denmark’s Integrated Stabilization Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected Areas of the World” where the importance of cooperation between civilian actors and the military is emphasized.²⁶

This framework has also resulted in the establishment of the Danish Stabilisation Fund. The fund “...has both development assistance and non-development assistance funds at its disposal. The aim of the fund is to enable an enhanced effort in the overlap between security and development, including interventions in fragile states.”²⁷ The fund has become a tool for Denmark to cooperate with other countries more effectively and to better engage in fragile states. Furthermore, the policy emphasizes that key actors, national and international, must be prepared to coordinate to avoid overlapping as well as contradictory efforts. Working with and in fragile states is not without risks (political, economic, or operational). Therefore, it is important that actors are willing to take risks in order to achieve their goals and desired end state.²⁸ Moreover, Denmark will focus on choosing its partners based on thorough assessments and analyses. It is important for Denmark that national and local authorities in the receiving countries also take responsibility.

Emphasis on local ownership and responsibility is in line with the “New Deal”²⁹ initiative of some African countries, Somalia being the latest country to adopt the New Deal principles.³⁰ The New Deal was initiated in 2011 by a group of G7+ and 19 post-conflict countries as a more inclusive and trusted framework for donor engagement with fragile states. Thus the New Deal is not a treaty or binding contract, but a framework—a set of promised guidelines—meant to promote a more effective and equitable development partnership between donors and beneficiaries, the government being in the driving seat. Countries are given the space to design their own compact based on a set of peace-building and state-building goals (PSGs), and then develop mechanisms between country and donor partners to coordinate and monitor aid to ensure that it effectively addresses national priorities. It applies many of the same principles of past aid effectiveness frameworks, but with greater emphasis on social cohesion, state-building, and national ownership. Eight African countries have signed up to implement the New Deal. That Denmark welcomes this approach and initiative is also emphasized by the fact that the co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peace building and State building for the New Deal is Christian Friis Bach, the former Danish Minister for Development and Cooperation.

The Danish approach and its commitment to the New Deal demonstrates a Danish commitment to achieving better coordination and cooperation amongst international actors in fragile states and complex emergencies. These are important tools and policies for reaching effective and successful solutions when assisting in complex emergencies. Denmark’s engagement and tools, developed together with the international donor community, represent the path forward to facilitate more effective aid and cooperation in the affected countries.

4. The Dilemmas of Complex Emergencies

On 4 March 2013, the Centre for Military Studies hosted a seminar to examine the difficulties and opportunities presented by the necessity of cooperation among the entities intervening in complex emergencies in eastern Africa. Led by Dr. Gary Schaub, a Senior Researcher at CMS, the seminar focused on a presentation by Dr. Matthew LeRiche of the London School of Economics and Political Science. The participants included Ms. Josefine Kühnel Larsen (doctoral student at CMS), Dr. Lars Bangert Struwe (Researcher at CMS), Dr. Henrik Breitenbauch (Senior Researcher at CMS), Mr. Salem Dandan (doctoral student at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen), Dr. Thomas Mandrup (Assistant Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College), Mr. Peter K. M. Jensen (Copenhagen Centre

for Disaster Research), Mr. Anders Bergen, Dr. Holger Bernt Hansen (Professor Emeritus, Centre for African Studies, University of Copenhagen), Mr. Flemming Nielsen (Head of the International Division, Danish Emergency Management Agency), Mr. Peter Frøslev Christensen (PFC Consulting), and Major Jens Jakobsen (Danish Army).

4.1. Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: Better than You Might Expect

Dr. LeRiche opened the seminar with a presentation of the three arguments in his paper: that complex emergencies present more difficulties than the intersection of substantial political, social, economic, health, and security problems would suggest; that the variety of entities that have chosen to intervene to ameliorate these problems complicate their ability to cooperate with one another; and that the UN has developed processes and procedures to facilitate cooperation amongst these organizations—and that it has been quite successful.

Complex Emergencies Are Complex

It is important to define a complex emergency. The term complex emergency originated in the 1980s, where it was introduced to describe a situation in Mozambique in which the international assistance organizations realized that the emergency aid and humanitarian assistance needs were caused by the then on-going armed conflict.³¹ Today, there is still no agreed-upon definition of a complex emergency. Many organizations have their own definitions that are similar in their own ways. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Secretariat's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) have very similar definitions:

- **WHO:** "... are situations of disrupted livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people, in which any emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security environment."³²
- **UNOCHA:** "... a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing United Nations (UN) country program."³³

In contrast, an organization such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) also includes a disaster possibly leading to a complex emergency but generally describes the typical characteristics of a complex emergency to be:

- **IFRC:** “Some disasters can result from several different hazards or, more often, to a complex combination of both natural and man-made causes and different causes of vulnerability. Food insecurity, epidemics, conflicts and displaced populations are examples. A humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country program (IASC).”³⁴

Such “complex emergencies” are typically characterized by: ³⁵

- extensive violence and loss of life;
- displacements of populations;
- widespread damage to societies and economies;
- the need for large-scale, multi-faceted humanitarian assistance ;
- the hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints;
- significant security risks for humanitarian relief workers in some areas.”

The three examples above are just a few of the many different definitions that somehow are alike, but there is not really any consistent definition when examining organizations’ definitions. This is also a cause of confusion and could lead to difficulties in cooperation, as the institutional definition of the same term is not in sync in the different organizations.

A leading scholar in the area, David Keen, has also defined the concept of a complex emergency as “humanitarian crisis that are linked with large-scale violent conflict—civil war, ethnic cleansing and genocide.”³⁶ Keen continues, explaining that “[c]omplex emergencies should be distinguished from natural disaster[s]—that is, from disasters caused primarily by drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tidal waves or some other force of nature.”³⁷ Thus both Keen and OCHA emphasize that complex emergencies are linked to internal or external conflict.³⁸ Examples of countries where a complex emergency exists include Afghanistan, Sudan, and Somalia.

At the expert seminar, Dr. LeRiche argued that complex emergencies are the intersection of massive political, social, economic, health, and security problems that are linked to large-scale violent conflict and cause humanitarian crises. They arise in areas where the state institutions have not developed or have been eroded or overwhelmed by the intensity, duration, and/or scale of these problems. Governance is lacking, in other words, and inventing or restoring it is a necessary condition for ameliorating the humanitarian crisis over the long term.

But, Dr. LeRiche argued, those who consider complex emergencies to be characterized only by these conditions fail to grasp the multiple objectives that local participants and intervening entities may have. It is not as simple as “victory” in a conflict. Indeed, not all actors are interested in solving the crisis; some may benefit from it as it provides opportunity for profit, undermines competitors, and advances political objectives. Organizations that intervene might also have reasons beyond “doing good.” They may be following media attention so as to demonstrate presence in areas of the highest salience to Western governments and publics, thereby increasing their donor base.

A Difficult Coordination Problem

Second, Dr. LeRiche argued that numerous types of entities have chosen to intervene in complex emergencies in eastern Africa: governmental organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), international organizations such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), secular non-profit humanitarian organizations such as *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (MSF), religious non-profit humanitarian organizations such as Samaritan’s Purse, for-profit humanitarian organizations such as Population Services International (PSI), and multinational corporations that are conducting business in the area, such as Chevron.³⁹ These entities vary in terms of their size, resources, motivation for being involved, mission, ethos, and willingness to overtly involve them selves in the local politics of the situation.

The variety of organizations poses difficulties for cooperation. Organizations of different size have different forms, bureaucratic procedures, different reporting requirements, and likely different resource endowments to apply to the tasks at hand. Larger organizations tend to prefer operating independently to cooperation with others that is not on their terms—and they possess the resources to act unilaterally. Different motivations for entry into the complex emergency can reduce the willingness of organizations to cooperate: religious and

secular organizations tend to see their missions in different terms, the former tending to the spirit as well as the body; civilian organizations tend to focus on health, sanitation, and development issues, while military organizations focus on security; non-profit organizations tend to coordinate with international organizations such as the UN—if at all—while for-profit organizations tend to contract with state organizations such as USAID; and non-profits might not be willing to collaborate, as they are competing with one another for donor funds. Ethos can pose barriers to cooperation that are difficult to overcome. Organizations that conceive of themselves as one in solidarity with the people they seek to help cannot but involve themselves in the political (and other) disputes causing the conditions they hope to ameliorate. They tend to assess what the people need and then provide it. Organizations that conceive of themselves as apolitical or above the local fray will take substantial steps to ensure their neutrality, perhaps to the detriment of fulfilling their humanitarian mission. These organizations tend to assess what the people need and then provide what the local authorities want and permit.

The Effective Organization of Supply

Third, Dr. LeRiche argued that many of these barriers to cooperation have been surmounted, particularly in what he characterized as one of the most iconic complex emergencies with one of the longest running sets of international interventions, running from the UN humanitarian-focused Operation Lifeline Sudan to intervention in Rwanda by the UN to direct military interventions in Somalia by the US, Canada, and other governments. Over two decades of working together on the ground have brought the era of poor cooperation, coordination, and deconfliction amongst these entities to an end—for the most part. At a minimum, most organizations have increased awareness of one another and what they are doing within the shared humanitarian space. This can be seen in Figure 3, a UNOCHA map of “Central Africa: Humanitarian Presence in the LRA-Affected Region”⁴⁰ and Figure 4, “Mogadishu—IDP Settlements and intervening agencies.”⁴¹ As one participant noted, such knowledge of who was doing what and where was not available even 5 years ago. This level of situational awareness is something that should not be taken for granted but rather appreciated as the advance that it is.

Figure 3: Central Africa: Humanitarian Presence in the LRA-Affected Region

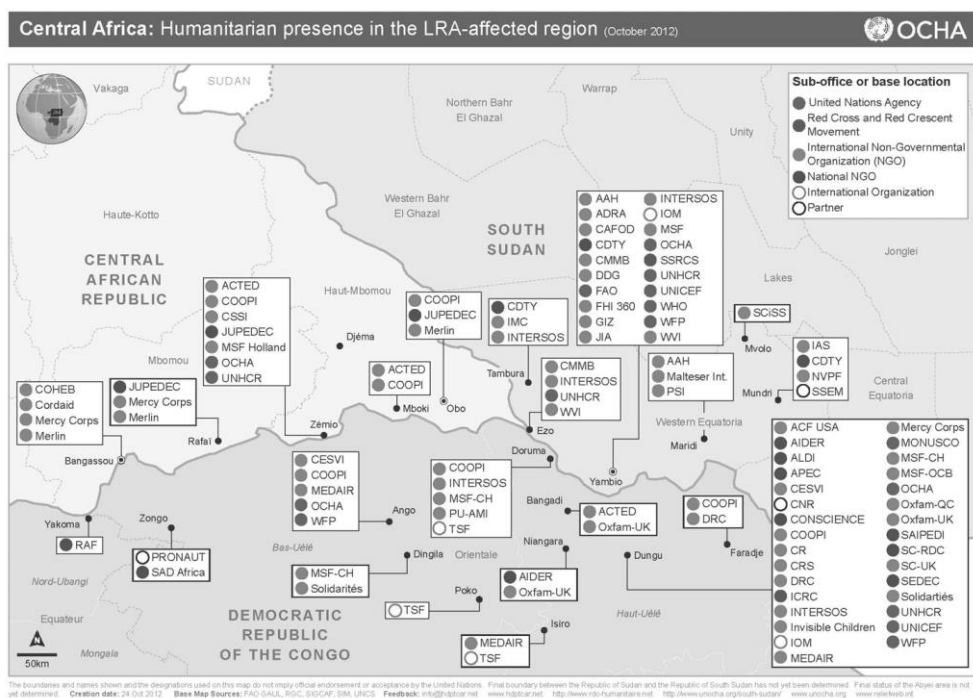
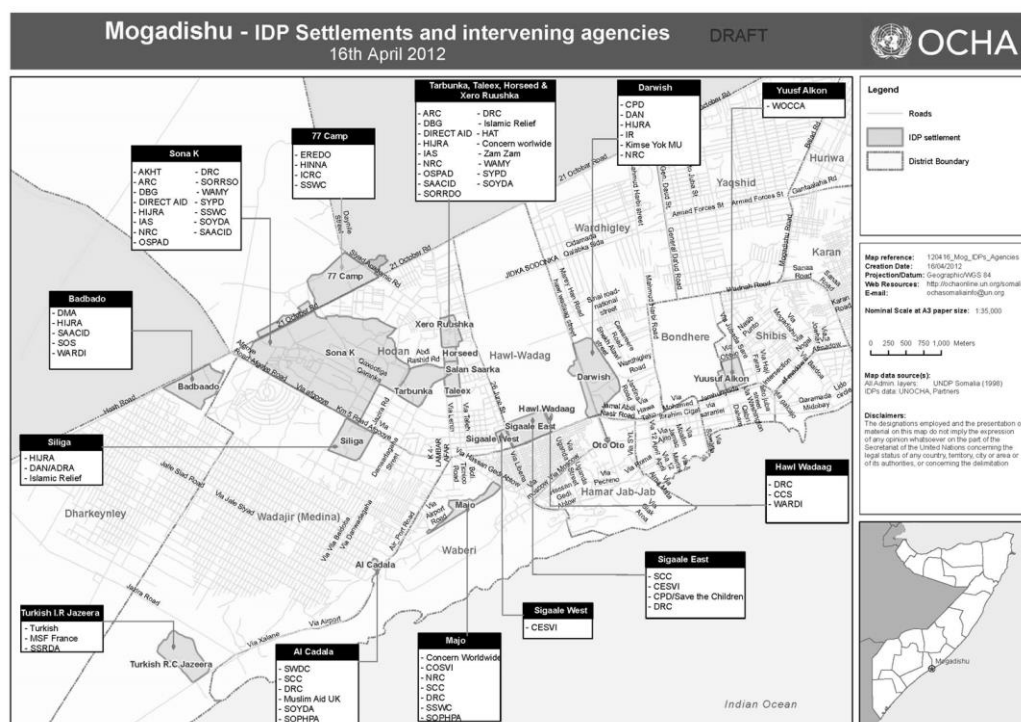


Figure 4: Mogadishu—IDP Settlements and Intervening Agencies



These advances in cooperation have been driven by two trends. The first is that the entities that intervene in complex emergencies have expanded their missions from narrow issues, such as sanitation or women's education, toward the multifunctional concept of "governance." This has been driven by a conceptual evolution within the humanitarian community, wherein the provision of systematic assistance with the goal of enabling local authorities to take over the functions performed by external service providers has displaced a generic desire to simply "do good." This shift has been enabled in part by donor preferences and requirements to explain how each organization contributes to the whole. It has also been facilitated by the response of recipient organizations that have, quite naturally, responded to these incentives by expanding their mission statements to consider governance issues and enabling, rather than simply assisting, locals. Thus a loose paradigm of governance has begun harmonizing the conceptions of purpose that these organizations bring to their activities in country.

The second trend has been the development of a UN organizational approach to coordinate and de-conflict the efforts of entities on the ground. Dr. LeRiche argued that the cluster and sector approach devised by the UN in 2005 has blossomed over the past 8 years and provides a fairly effective means of tracking the sectors of action and geographic areas being addressed by different organizations. Each of the main sectors have a "lead" organization responsible for "managing" those in the cluster. This approach has increased everyone's awareness of who is operating within the space, improved coordination through regular meetings and reports, enabled cooperation between entities, and enhanced financial accountability. These processes reside within the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and this organization has provided the institutional basis for settling basic issues that had hampered coordination and cooperation in the past. As with the concept of governance, the clusters and sectors approach to conceiving of the humanitarian space dominates funding mechanisms, and humanitarian organizations have been encouraged to participate. Therefore, increasing numbers of organizations have been willing to cooperate with others through the UN.

4.2 More Effective than Before, But Room for Improvement

The participants in the seminar shared various opinions regarding the effectiveness of coordination and cooperation between and among the organizations within the UNOCHA framework. Many actors, particularly large ones and those with a solidarity-based approach,

have not participated fully with UNOCHA. The former have sufficient resources and gravitas to resist the financial blandishments of donors who otherwise see the UNOCHA processes as an effective means of monitoring and policing humanitarian efforts and the UN as an imprimatur of legitimacy. The latter see the apolitical stance of the UN as either ineffective, constraining, or as a fiction as it means siding with local authorities that may be considered as having precipitated, perpetuated, and profited from the suffering that these organizations aim to alleviate. Furthermore, bilateral efforts on the part of some major states, such as the United States or Japan, often remain untethered to the UN, leading to disjointed efforts. One participant noted that this was the case with police training as part of security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Even among those choosing to cooperate within the UNOCHA structure, it was argued, coordination is by no means easy. Ponderous administrative processes requiring approval from higher (and distant) authorities for even the simplest tactical decisions reduce the effectiveness that cooperation is supposed to deliver. Procedure can assume a life of its own, and coordination “within the walls” may not equate to coordination outside of them.

Weber in Africa: Barriers to Cooperating With Locals

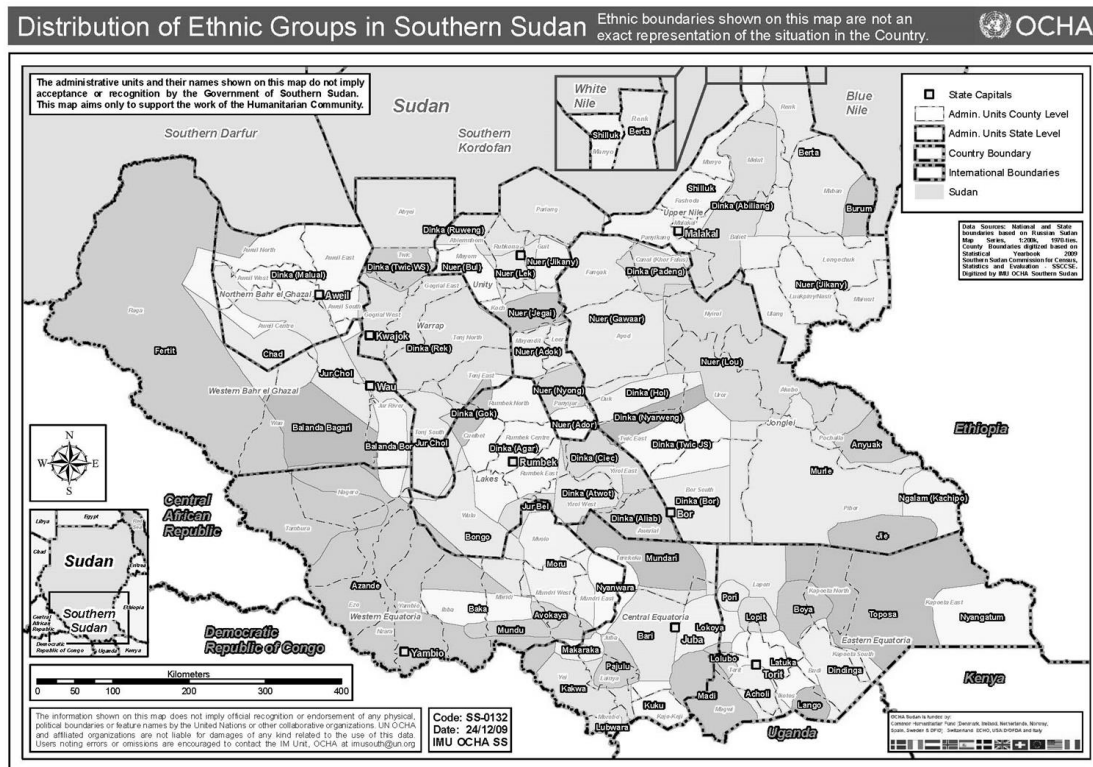
Indeed, it was argued that the effective organization of supply does not necessarily equate to the effective delivery of services (outputs) or the effective amelioration of conditions on the ground (outcomes). This requires effective coordination and cooperation with local actors, between the suppliers of humanitarian assistance and the demanders of it. Dr. LeRiche and seminar participants identified many barriers to effective relations between supply and demand.

First and foremost, the organizational culture of the United Nations constitutes an effective barrier to coordinating with local actors. UN personnel have expended much energy and effort toward constructing institutional processes to channel their efforts and those of cooperating entities. They expect local actors to understand these processes and be able to interact with the UN and other actors in those terms. Yet local actors often cannot do so. After all, the enabling condition of a complex emergency is the lack of effective governance structures. The lack of effective local partners leads to mutual frustration. As one participant explained, the locals fail to appreciate the amount of paperwork necessary to coordinate the efforts of supplying them with the services they need to survive.

Secondly, for many reasons, the services delivered often fail to meet the needs of the people. First, the nature and procedures of the UN require coordination with host nation authorities. These authorities may not understand the needs of the people suffering in areas outside of their effective control. Or they may not desire to see these needs met. Regardless of the reason, the UN delivers the assistance that host nation authorities request and approve rather than assistance tailored to meet the needs of the people in any given locality. Furthermore, this bias in favour of host nation “authorities” discourages systematic analysis of the local situation. This situation is almost always complicated, as graphic examples such as that indicated in Figure 5, “Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Southern Sudan,” illustrates.⁴²

What is often necessary to understand the situation on the ground is deep knowledge of the local population, leaders, and their relationships. Yet the trends favoring cooperation between organizations also disfavour the maintenance of area expertise. The professionalization of humanitarianism accompanying the bureaucratization of humanitarian organizations as they alter their forms and processes so as to better meet the requirements of donors and the UN tends to crowd out personnel with deep and particularized knowledge of local persons, practices, cultures, and languages. Seminar participants noted that the traditional “do-gooders” of humanitarian organizations have been replaced by professionals that rotate in and out of the area, bringing generic management knowledge with them when they arrive to make their mark and taking whatever specific knowledge of the situation that they gained during their experience with them upon departure. Such personnel prefer to stay “inside the wire” and interact with their fellow administrators, managers, and functionaries rather than interacting with local actors to determine how best to meet their needs.

Figure 5: Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Southern Sudan



Even when a person with deep knowledge is put in charge, Dr. LeRiche argued with agreement from seminar participants, the organization tends to preclude their ability to incorporate their knowledge into the behaviour of their organizations. Seminar participants speculated that the lack of knowledge of subordinates combines with the bureaucratic nature of the coordinated supply effort to produce standard responses that may not effectively meet variation in general needs or any special circumstances. What is offered is what is available—rather than what is needed—be it plastic tent material or gender advisors.

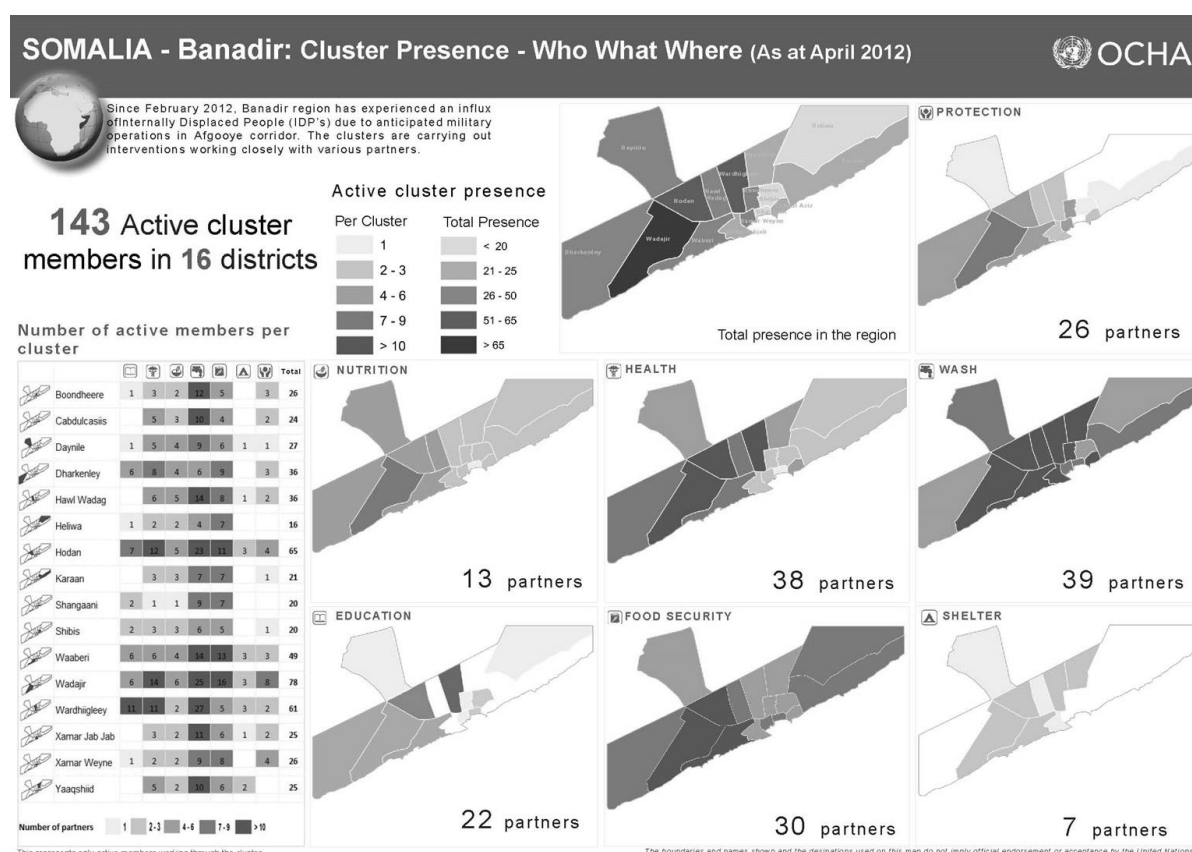
Furthermore, the lack of situational awareness, preference to coordinate inside the walls rather than with those outside, and rotational policies that accompany professional career paths preclude developing long-term relationships with trusted locals. In many of these communal cultures, it was argued, relationships are personal rather than institutional. The impersonal performance of bureaucratic duties is a foreign concept to those who have not been socialized into a bureaucratic state apparatus or have never dealt with one on a regular basis. In those increasingly rare instances when a representative from a humanitarian organization does develop a trusting relationship with a local figure, it was argued, the rotational policies in place destroy them when that particular person rotates out of the area. This not only hampers cooperation in the short term, as cultures such as those in Sudan

regard any arrangements to be tied to the person who agreed to them rather than to their home institution, it also undermines future cooperation, as it demonstrates that humanitarians cannot be trusted to keep their word. This is but one example among many of how the increased organization of suppliers may reduce their ability to interface effectively with local demanders of their humanitarian services.

4.3 The Next Agenda: Improving Coordination between Supply and Demand

The seminar concluded with a discussion of the problems to be faced when the corporate structure of coordinated humanitarian suppliers must interface with the uncoordinated, conflictual, and confused mass of demanders of humanitarian services. Of course, humanitarian institutions have always interacted with the people to whom they were supplying assistance. But there have been problems with these interactions. Despite the fundamental principles of impartiality in service delivery and neutrality in local affairs that have guided Western humanitarian organizations, they have often been co-opted into local conflicts and struggles—sometimes inadvertently, sometimes not. Dr. LeRiche offered the example of local authorities distributing different maps of their territory with the names of villages altered to different aid organizations so that assistance efforts would be duplicated. Indeed, the larger point is that humanitarian intervention changes the material situation on the ground by introducing new players and resources into the equation. This, in turn, affects the incentive structures facing local actors who will quite rationally respond to these changes. The more entrepreneurial actors will engage in profit maximization and perhaps rent-seeking behaviour, be they warlords, governors, or local liaisons to humanitarian organizations. The systematic recalibration of the environment and actor incentives leads to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and perhaps to the perpetuation of the conflicts underlying the complex emergency itself.

Figure 6: SOMALIA - Banadir: Cluster Presence – Who, What, Where (as of April 2012)



Some seminar participants argued that this inevitable situation can be ameliorated if not solved through the coordination of suppliers discussed earlier. Situational awareness of who is doing what, where, and with whom, as illustrated in Figure 6,⁴³ “SOMALIA – Banadir: Cluster Presence – Who What Where (as of April 2012),” can reduce the ability of local actors to manipulate individual suppliers, as has happened in the past.

Furthermore, the evolution of the interventionist agenda from pure humanitarianism—i.e., delivering help to people in need—toward governance—the development of sustainable local institutions and personnel that can eventually accept the responsibility to deliver these services themselves—may eventually force the overt engagement of the suppliers with the demanders. Indeed, its implicit objective is coordination and consolidation of demand. Developing the capacity of such local partners will necessarily entail deeper understanding of the local economic and political authority structures of the area, vetting and accepting local leaders even if imperfect—i.e., corrupt or associated with previous misdeeds. Such hard lessons have been noted, if not necessarily learned, in the military interventions and stabilization operations that have occurred in the post-Cold War era and may be transferrable to humanitarian interventions in complex emergencies.

5. Conclusions

Clearly, the Danish government is inclined to undertake action abroad. An active Danish foreign policy is oriented toward cooperating with others through international organizations, such as the UN. Indeed, former Defence Minister Nick Hækkerup has argued that “the threat against Denmark is that a largely weak world society cannot intervene when the strong or the brutal are trying to get their way... Therefore, we support the United Nations. Therefore this government wants to strengthen the United Nations.”⁴⁴

As Danish policy makers turn their attention to the complex emergencies that have engulfed eastern Africa over the past two decades, they will find that the UN has developed a substantial set of processes and procedures to coordinate the efforts of a large number of variously sized, organized, resourced, and motivated humanitarian actors. The UNOCHA cluster and sector approach has increased the situational awareness of most external actors, informing them of who is doing what, where, and with whom within the humanitarian space. This baseline level of cooperation represents a major advance that should be appreciated. Beyond this minimum, however, more effective coordination and cooperation has occurred among these organizations as they inform one another of their activities and plan future ones. The experience and knowledge of the gathered community of practice that participated in the CMS seminar on 4 March indicated that the coordinated supply of humanitarian assistance has been noticeably improved, but more remains to be done. Many of the informal trends driving this cooperation—the acceptance of the governance paradigm and the various reporting requirements imposed upon humanitarian organizations by large donors—should facilitate further cooperation “behind the wall.”

The next level of challenge exists in coordinating supply with demand. Complex emergencies occur because there are no local authorities that are able, or perhaps willing, to perform the functions of a state, such as providing a stable and secure environment wherein economic development, public health, and, indeed, even bare subsistence can take place. The primary challenge to be overcome is to increase the situational awareness of the local political and economic scene, understanding the motivations and relationships amongst local actors, so that the underlying context of the complex emergency can be properly understood. Only such knowledge can allow humanitarian organizations of any stripe to avoid being taken advantage of, being co-opted into local rivalries and conflicts, and failing to achieve their objectives of ameliorating human suffering today and into tomorrow.

Increased organization, bureaucratization, and professionalization on the part of the suppliers of humanitarian assistance have helped overcome the difficulties that they had cooperating with one another but have raised substantial barriers to cooperation with local actors that lack even the basic knowledge of how modern organizations function. It would appear as though moving beyond the humanitarian agenda of merely helping people toward the governance agenda of enabling local peoples to tend to their own needs more effectively in the first instance means helping local leaders understand bureaucratic organization and how to interact with it. Only once this basic cultural artefact is dealt with, and local leaders begin to grasp the impersonal nature of organizations and accept their legitimacy, will demand assume a that can be developed into an effective local partner. Luckily, Danish inheritors of Max Weber's inclinations and lessons are themselves more inclined to involve themselves more in complex emergencies in eastern Africa. No doubt their involvement will advance this agenda further than has heretofore been possible.

The New Deal should continue to be the strategic basis for Danish aid. The New Deal should be strengthened and used as the coordination and cooperation forum in the future for international aid at all levels, not just in complex emergencies.

Denmark should seek a leading role in programs directed toward the development of complex emergencies and fragile states, thus being in a position to impact the coordination and cooperation in a direction where the most effective aid will be provided. Partner countries sharing the same values, such as the United Kingdom and its Danida equivalent, the Department for International Development, can allow Denmark to leverage its ideals and achieve its objectives more efficiently and effectively, as in Somalia and its sub-region, Somaliland,⁴⁵ where the New Deal is being implemented.

To do so, it is important for Denmark to emphasize its four principles of Danish engagement: alignment, whole of government, willingness to take risks, and division of labour. To do so, it is important to understand the situations wherein Denmark wants to engage and address problems with a comprehensive solution. These solutions must be planned across different sectors and with a mutual understanding and agreement between the actors, both international and local. Denmark must therefore continue to emphasize these principles in its planning together with other countries as well as organizations when developing assistance strategies. In this process, it is important that lessons learned and evaluations from former or on-going

efforts are being utilized and that there is an understanding of the problems and a willingness to take risks.

6. Notes

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