

Forum: Economic and Social Council

Issue: Promoting coherence between socio-economic policies and humanitarian action

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Introduction

In the status quo, there seems to be a direct clash between the demand for effective socio-economic policies and humanitarian action. For example, health care reflects a clash between the government's social responsibility and its economic burden. Pollution is another agenda; when drafting environmental policies, states need to take into consideration both the social and economic consequences. However, there are few incentives or existing systems that encourage collaboration between the two fields. In fact, there is a strict division between the humanitarian and development teams in many organisations that hinders a unified outcome. This is also the case with UN agencies since they are stopped from acting harmoniously due to their different priorities, bureaucratic relationships and understandings of the situation at hand. By promoting social integration across different nations, cultural acceptance and equitable development will be promoted.

A balance between humanitarian actions and advantageous socio-economic policies is necessary at times of conflict. It is crucial that sustainable long-term solutions are provided that will offer flexible assistance. As the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals includes the principle of "leaving no one behind", it is seminal that the humanitarian efforts merge to serve a single purpose rather than playing different roles of their own.

Definition of Key Terms

Socioeconomic policies

Policies promoted by governments that encapsulate both the social concerns and economic policies of the nation. This deals with how economic policies affect the lives of people in the society.

Humanitarian actors

Humanitarian actors can refer to any organisations or entities that are concerned with non-political issues and gear their efforts towards improving the lives of civilians. In other words, humanitarian actors work for social needs, especially in terms of saving or bettering the lives of citizens.

Vertical and Horizontal Coherence

Vertical coherence refers to a relationship in which two different policies deal with a related aspect of the market. On the other hand, horizontal coherence refers to policies being dealt with in different administrative branches, otherwise known as intragovernmental. For example, business sectors that deal with steel, oil, or telecommunications utilize vertical integration to advance their companies. Horizontal coherence can occur in areas such as educational, welfare or food industries.

Post conflict peacebuilding

As defined by the UN Secretary General, the term refers to the various concurrent and integrated actions undertaken at the end of a conflict to consolidate peace and prevent a recurrence of armed confrontation. This can be considered a coordinated humanitarian effort implemented in regions of conflict.

Background Information

Linking relief, rehabilitation, and development

One of the initial efforts to merge humanitarian and socio economic policies emerged in the 1990s. This emphasized the notion of linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, otherwise known as LRRD in developing nations or regions that have undergone conflict. The key to LRRD approaches was that they tried to focus on small improvements such as adjusting the length of relief project cycles, creating trust funds, and redressing the coordination mechanisms at a national level. Moreover, at the time of the initiative, there was a general increase in the number of NGOs forming since it was after the Cold War when the need for humanitarian actions became widely addressed. LRRD seemed essential after casualties occurring in places like Yugoslavia and Rwanda, pinpointing the need for collective action.

Need for cohesion

According to the 2015 Development Initiatives, more than two thirds of international humanitarian funding is spent each year in long-term protracted and recurrent crises as problems continue without a constructive resolution. Moreover, poverty issues in less developed countries suffer from the lack of humanitarian actions since many countries are focused on furthering their economies instead of responding to civilian needs. Since most governments' budget is limited, in the process of prioritising their spending, they tend to focus less on providing services such as welfare as those costs will offset the available investment into the economic sectors. Organisations in action are also appealing for the need of financial budget; between 2005 and 2014, the funding requirements of inter-agency appeals have increased by 373% from US \$3.8 billion to US \$18 billion.

Cohesion in terms of economic policies is generally not taken into consideration when drafting regional policies. In the status quo, economic cohesion stands for the co-financing of the EU cohesion policy within Europe. To better promote these policies in every nation, however, social reform has to follow as well.

Key Issues

Government Initiatives

In Pakistan, after the 2005 earthquake, international cooperation between the government and international organizations boomed. Collectively, specific plans were drafted according to the humanitarian needs and the disaster was resolved by forming partnerships with multilateral development banks. Denmark also implemented a new policy to enhance the coordination among different activities. According to the centre for global development's commitment to development index, Denmark is also ranked first in respect to overall commitment to development and third in its effort to reduce poverty, established as a key player. Indeed, Denmark is one of the only five countries that have contributed more than 0.7% growth to the Growth National Income.

Besides taking global action, nations must also promote coherence within their countries. A key to enforce coherence whilst sharing information among administrative branches is by utilizing transparency. This is a political tool that puts pressure on policymakers as they will be forced to share their reasons behind advancing a particular measure or action. Moreover, active interaction among different government partners will foster a more competitive environment where policymakers are constantly placed in the position of having to justify their policy proposals. For example, in Kenya, there is a department of civil service to which all established offices have to report to. As the unit coordinates and overlooks the nation's policies in different areas, not only is transparency ensured, but government policies become more interconnected, thereby ensuring a positive influence upon the nation.

Dialogue System

Liberalisation and privatisation are quite recently introduced concepts into the field of economics. As nations gradually progressed from strictly state controlled markets to competitive private sector oriented markets in the 1980s to 90s, the transition period requires social adjustments as well. Specifically, some governments implemented regulatory policies to prevent the formation of private monopolies whilst others failed to establish mechanisms for the dialogue between different administrative sectors from taking place. In fact, by enabling dialogue between policymakers from different divisions, effective measurements can be drafted.

Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT)

In Myanmar, financial aid is given to conflict occurring regions through LIFT. The program's objective is to address problems of poverty in areas such as Takhine where government aid is insufficient. LIFT was first established by the donors of United Nations Project for Project Services (UNOPS) to deal with issues such as malnutrition and poverty, and is active in regions such as Myanmar by focusing on the enhancing the availability of food. LIFT not only works with conflict involved areas, but also aims to deal with rural areas that require financial assistance. Nevertheless, there is a limitation to this program: in cases of conflict or warfare, tensions escalate due to the belief that this initiative only supports one side of the conflict.

“State avoiding” Humanitarian Action

One of the major ways of distributing humanitarian support is by avoiding direct assistance or cooperation with states. This means that organisations will act independently to engage in humanitarian issues; nevertheless, there may be a lack of development assistance since the government does not act in cohesion with the organisations' efforts.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees has similarly spearheaded a change in the structural unit of UNHCR's operation by combining workers from different headquarters and set a clear, unifying goal. Although his new initiative did not involve work with respective states, it nevertheless enabled a more efficient system of collaborating for a singular purpose. His leadership also indicates how essential it is to be guided under senior leadership to channel efficient outcomes.

In a similar vein, other forms of humanitarian action take place by integrating the social and economic policies. For example, the Pro Mujer International is a non-profit organisation that assists disadvantaged families across Latin America. By providing the vulnerable population with microfinance loans, the system particularly encourages self-sustainability as people learn how to invest and continue earning a consistent amount of income by receiving the loan. Such act enables those from marginal backgrounds to be able to create livelihood for themselves.

World Humanitarian Summit

The summit was first proposed in 2012 by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon for the purpose of bringing a collective response to humanitarian crises such as the refugee crisis in Syria or issues regarding Internally Displaced People. Humanitarian networks and agencies are able to get support from this summit by requesting specific financial assistance or creating connections with other organisations to further their initiatives. Moreover, the summit works on forming a framework that will well implement and support the sustainable development goals. The summit was first hosted in Istanbul in 2016.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United Nations Integrated Mission

In response to conflicts, the United Nations Integrated Mission tries to improve upon its peacekeeping efforts. Integration is a means through which UN agencies and related organisations will channel their efforts to attain the same objective, preventing efforts from diverging into different directions. Compromises are made through the mission by adjusting the necessary military or political actions as well.

The mission also recognises the need for singularity in planning initiatives. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in particular, increase efficiency of their projects by linking their approaches with government priorities and accepting government led destinations, supporting government led returns of displaced persons in the case of UNHCR.

Transitional and developmental perspectives

Long term solutions are often not considered with enough time and deliberation. For example, the humanitarian response to the Haiti earthquake was not accomplished with security. Aid wasn't delivered with immediacy and developmental action did not follow due to the lack of quick relief. Thus, for cases that require emergency response, it is critical to implement planning for integrated missions or organisational efforts for a long period of time. Moreover, the issue highlights how conflicts require post-relief aid and sustainable development initiatives with the help of national governments and the civil society to fully commit to the plan.

The European Union

According to the European Union, to fully promote cohesion, there needs to be a balanced emphasis on both regional and national competitiveness. The former refers to a need to reduce disparities among different regions as the German Basic Law asserts or what the Italian constitution holds truth of. Specifically, countries such as France and Italy are implementing new unitary regional policies in order to effectively analyse the key producers in a market and employ a better environment for them to thrive in. Similarly, national competitiveness should be encouraged in nations that have minor internal disparities. Such nations should highlight the importance of government protection in order to ensure social security for all sectors of businesses. These nations will also focus on redressing social policies so that their citizens will live with guaranteed social equity.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

| Date | Description of event |
|------|----------------------|
|------|----------------------|

Creation of Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA)

1984

This organisation was formed in response to the 21 African countries' that were suffering from heavy drought. This initiative was launched in order to support drought relief and mobilised human resources in Africa. Since the office was staffed by both UN agencies and related NGOs, OEOA did not have to comply with the standard UN administrative practices. When the crisis was over, OEOA disappeared; nevertheless, this office enabled the practice of integrated mission to be pursued within the UN.

Resolution A/RES/46/182

19 December 1991

This resolution marked the beginning of the need for a collaborative effort to address emergency situations. Specifically, it detailed the ways through which international actors can cooperate to offer post-conflict aid and continuously rehabilitate regions of conflict under a single aim. The resolution was crucial since it recognized the United Nations as the overall coordinator of the peacekeeping efforts for the first time.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- 17 August 2000, A/55/305-S/2000/809
- 14 July 1997, A/51/950
- 19 December 1991, A/RES/46/182

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

With the emergence of new problems that demand the coordination between seemingly separate fields, the need for a collaborative effort has grown. Since the late 1990s, the UN, in particular, has been distributing its resources and setting up different divisions in order to merge different UN agencies under a single goal. This has especially been the case with the introduction of the integrated mission. In fact, it does not seem to be an exaggeration to state that the UN no longer has exclusive power in terms of addressing global concerns, but is rather encouraged to form links with relevant organisations and agencies to collectively provide humanitarian aid. This collective effort indicates how the UN is progressing towards taking a more integrated approach, unifying its administrative branches to play a harmonious role.

The interdisciplinary system is also effective in the sense that it enables the UN to be an overall coordinator that takes into consideration both the socio economic policies and humanitarian efforts to

best assess what is fit for each situation. At the same time, it is crucial that this attempt always stays impartial in order to confidently analyse the situation and avoid the issue from becoming polarised by not showing predilections towards any specific organisation.

Besides the international effort to ensure a balance between social and economic policies, however, national efforts require more work and alterations. Specifically, each state must consolidate specific laws or measures such as the Basic German Law that will foster an environment that enables both the horizontal and vertical integration among businesses to take place more fluently.

Possible Solutions

One of the main ways to resolve the issue is by devising an immediate response system. In case of humanitarian crises, it is essential that socio economic actions take into consideration the humanitarian values to collaboratively establish a program that ensures the most successful outcome. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration across organizations can be encouraged by establishing complementary works. In other words, national and international partners can share a common goal or plan to deal with an impending issue.

Additionally, intragovernmental support can be promoted; for example, the finance ministry can work in collaboration with the welfare ministry to reassess the structure of taxation and distribution of income in order to prevent marginalized populations from facing perpetual poverty as well as to ensure greater social equity.

Other possible solutions include the creation of a strict system through which NGOs and related organisations will be able to request entities such as the UN integrated mission for specific financial or social aid in order to expand or support their programs. It is crucial to initiate such programs with impartiality, preventing discrimination or predilection towards a specific initiative from occurring. In sum, actors should aim to devise a long term plan that improves upon the status quo where most socio economic developmental programs are set to a timeframe of five years. The duration should be extended in order to launch large initiatives with meticulousness and deliberation.

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