

*Africa's Recovery From Conflict: Making Peace Work for the Poor – A Policy Brief*

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“The end of war saves *lives*—including those of the poor who are often its main victims—but it may not deliver much if any improvement in *livelihoods*.” The destruction of the social and family fabric brought by war indeed afflicts the poor disproportionately and can prevent them from sharing the benefits of the recovery from conflict. Furthermore authorities at the head of the state can be “unable (or unwilling) to ensure that reconstruction benefits the majority”. It is therefore vital for Africa that recovery from conflict be broad based and inclusive.

For broad based recovery to be possible and sustainable, efforts must be focused on core priorities such as building capacities inside communities for them to sustain and strengthen their livelihoods. Conflicts however can have damaged these very communities and have spread strife within them, while hardships can disproportionately afflict certain members of the community, especially women, who often also suffer from various forms of discrimination (in the job market, in access to land ownership...). These issues therefore need to be specifically acknowledged and addressed.

There is also a need for strong private investment. In post-war Mozambique for instance “investment from large private wholesalers in recreating grain markets was crucial to improving food security”. For such private investments to take place there is a need for macroeconomic stability, while legal frameworks need to be reformed to ensure property rights, including those of the poor. Private investment can also be fostered by well-designed “crowd-in” public investment such as expanding telecommunications and road networks. A strong commitment to good governance and the rule of law is also required to avoid favoritism taking priority over the public interest.

Transitioning countries in Africa are thus faced with a “daunting range of tasks – including conflict resolution, peace enforcement, demobilization and refugee resettlement (to cite just four priorities)”. But for recovery to be truly broad based simple rebuilding of infrastructures on previous blueprints can be insufficient or ill advised. “*Policies* must change as well”. Oftentimes the “pre-war economy may have contributed to conflict”, for instance through unequal and discriminatory repartition of public expenditures. Far-ranging reform is thus critical for an effective and broad based recovery.

In sum, “transformation, rather than reconstruction, is the watch-word for broad based recovery”, and it must be combined with “resolute efforts to tackle those who profit from war and those who finance them”.