

on March 12, for example, it might have produced different outcomes.

- Debate about the first OCHA-era report to ECOSOC would have had less difficulty generating a consensus in support of something other than a business-as-usual approach.
- Discussion of the strategic framework initiative in Afghanistan, itself a ground-breaking attempt at changing the way the UN functions in complex emergencies, would have been less threatened by the significant momentum being generated by the agencies in the field.
- Contingency plans for the worsening situation in the Sudan would have been challenged for not having given serious consideration to terminating or suspending OLS, its principles already badly tarnished, rather than to limping further into a darkening future.
- Discussion of the IASC Great Lakes Study would have spent less time on whether to distance the agencies and the IASC from the report and more time on how to review and address its criticisms.

It is clear that donors have an indispensable role to play in supporting the processes of lessons-learning and institutional change within the agencies. The impression currently abounds that many governments are not interested in serious reforms in aid policies and activities since these would require greater political coherence in their own relations with individual UN agencies and with the UN system as a whole. They are viewed, as is the 46/182 resolution, to be mandating greater coordination while frustrating efforts to achieve it.

Yet government initiative is reflected in some of the creative initiatives in recent years such as the multidonor evaluation of Rwanda and follow-up JEFF initiative. While some governments have resisted the recommended humanitarian safeguards in economic sanctions, others have rallied behind them. Is it not high time for governments to put most of their funding into common funds for programs in a given country and, as some are already doing, fund only those agencies that subscribe to the NGO Code of Conduct?

The present moment is opportune for taking stock of the lessons already identified and for vetting a strategy for fundamental institutional change. A widespread sense of disillusion with the humanitarian enterprise prevails among insiders and outsiders alike. There is new leadership in the offices of the Secretary-General, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and elsewhere. Various proposals are on the table, including the creation of an independent watchdog entity to promote greater accountability. The Stockholm Seminar is opportunely situated to develop consensus on a strategy for tackling these critical issues.

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Footnote

ⁱSue Lautze, Bruce Jones, Mark Duffield, *Strategic Coordination in the Great Lakes Region 1996-1997, An Independent Study for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee*, OCHA, United Nations, March 1998. The study is also available on the Internet at: [Http://www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).

ⁱⁱ Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes.

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12. Donini and Niland, *op. cit.*, page 38.

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26. Weiss-Minear, *Dynamics*, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
27. It was not possible within the limited time and scope of the current paper to review the impact of evaluations by individual governments on their respective humanitarian and political processes. However, it is understood that recommendations made in individual studies have accelerated the process of institutional change.
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30. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Comprehensive Report," *op. cit.*, para. 4, page 2.
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