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COLOMBIA: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND THE CONDITIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

Donny Meertens

Independent Analyst (The Netherlands and Colombia)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Patterns of Conflict

The internal armed conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Colombia have been continuously escalating and geographically expanding over the last 15 years. Several specific elements and features of the conflict have to be taken into account in order to understand its present dynamics. First of all, Colombia has a long history of violence as a way of political and social conflict resolution. In particular the period of extremely cruel war between Liberals and Conservatives during the 1950s and 1960s, known as *La Violencia*, had a profound effect on the lives of thousands of peasant families. It created memories of hate, spirals of vengeance and generalized mistrust among the new generations of rural populations. Secondly, the multiplicity of actors, the de-ideologization of war strategies (i.e. the use of terror instead of search for social support), and the fuelling of the conflict by drugs trafficking have led to its utter degradation in terms of international humanitarian law and to its complete territorial fragmentation. Therefore, even the smallest regions and communities (with the exception of some indigenous communities who try to resist the armed actors) are becoming internally divided and subjected to the arbitrary rule of guns employed by frequently shifting local power holders.

This territorial and communal fragmentation in the midst of conflict constitutes one of the major obstacles to a comprehensive strategy towards social reconstruction.

1.2 Patterns of Displacement

During the last 15 years, forced displacement - as a consequence of massacres, selective killings, threats or forced recruitment by one or all of the armed groups - has followed the irregular and highly unpredictable territorial pattern of the conflict. The dominant form of displacement in Colombia is dispersal, based on the movement of individual households. Collective, organized displacement occurred during the 1980s in the Magdalena Medio region. However, on-going persecution and repetition of the displacement-return cycle finally led to the weakening of social and organizational ties, and displacement lost its collective character. During recent years there seems again to have been an increase in the incidence of massive displacements, mostly to a town or small city near the expulsion zone. Sometimes a collective return may be negotiated within a relatively short period. The much more common individual movements are mostly rural-urban, though during the last few years they may have become repetitive or circular, and increasingly there have been reports of displacements between or within towns or cities. Displaced people may cover an enormous distance between the conflict zone and the city of arrival, like the small family that travelled from the southern Pacific Coast to Bogotá,[1] or, by contrast, move only a short stretch, like the collective displacement from one rural neighbourhood to another in the municipality of Landazuri.[2] The simultaneous presence of very different forms of displacement and the magnitude of dispersals and individual household movements constitute particularly important features, to be taken into account in all protection, assistance and reintegration strategies.

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[1] Personal interviews, Bogotá

[2] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, *Estado de situación del desplazamiento: enero-diciembre de 2001*, Bogotá: UNHCR; OCHA, May 2002, p. 14

The four years of the Pastrana government (1998-2002), during which a demilitarized zone was established and - ultimately fruitless - peace talks were started, have left Colombian society with a profound sense of frustration. During that period both insurgents and paramilitaries strengthened their forces and increased their level of activity. The conflict deteriorated even more because of lack of respect for human rights and international humanitarian law by all the armed actors. The humanitarian crisis, therefore, has intensified, particularly during the first half of 2002, when the collapse of peace talks (February 2002) generated an increase in military activity and attacks on infrastructure and in rural population centres. Generally speaking the current situation has been shaped by a difficult and changeable political context: the collapse of the peace dialogue with the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) guerrilla and the dismantling of the demilitarized zone in February; the election by absolute majority of Alvaro Uribe as new president in May; the suspension of the peace dialogue with the other guerrilla force, ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional); and the internal division and re-alignment of the paramilitaries, the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia), in July. Finally, after the new president took office on 8 August, a series of new and highly contested measures were taken by the new government: the declaration of a state of emergency (*estado de conmoción interior*),[3] provision for a million civilian informants or "collaborators" paid by the government, and the creation of "zones of rehabilitation and consolidation" (*zonas de rehabilitación y consolidación)* covering more than half the country, in which a series of restrictions on civilian rights are implemented,[4] including restrictions on the free movement and residence of all inhabitants and provision for military control of foreigners, including journalists and members of international NGOs.[5]

Not only the political situation, but also the economic conditions have deteriorated during the last few years, with Colombia in a period of deep recession since 1998. The percentage of the total population below the poverty line increased from 56.3% in 1999 to 60% in 2000, and 82% in rural areas.[6] The fall in production in the war-torn countryside and the impact of incoming IDPs on urban resources and social services have combined to reduce the living standards of the poor even further. Indeed, according to UNDP's latest report on human development Colombia descended to number 68 in the ranking of 173 countries.[7] A survey of IDPs in six regions of the country showed that their income is just above the misery line (defined as half the poverty line average income).[8]

The question of the exact magnitude of the phenomenon of displacement has always generated - and probably will continue to generate - strong discrepancies between

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[3] Colombia, *Decreto 1837 de 2002*, Bogotá, 11 August 2002

[4] Colombia, *Decreto 2002 de 2002*, Bogotá, 14 September 2002

[5] See Decretan la Conmoción Interior, *El Tiempo* [Bogotá], 12 August 2002; Restricción en medio país, *El Tiempo* [Bogotá], 15 September 2002

[6] Colombia, Departamento Nacional de Planeación, *Coyuntura económica e indicadores sociales*, Bogotá, December 2001

[7] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, 2002, http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2002/en/ [accessed September 2002]

[8] International Organization for Migration,Diagnóstico sobre la población desplazada en seis departamentos de Colombia, Bogotá, 2001 (unpublished document)

governmental and non-governmental sources. In 2002 the Red de Solidaridad Social (RSS - Social Security Network), the official entity that coordinates the National System for Assistance to IDPs (Sistema Nacional de Atención Integral a la Población Desplazada), estimates the total number of internally displaced over the last 17 years at 720,000. The government has taken 1995 as their starting point for counting IDPs, because this was the year when public policy first officially recognized the existence of a "displacement problem". At the same time, CODHES (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento), the best known of the NGOs that provide monitoring and information on internal displacement, presents a figure of two million IDPs. This numerical disparity is not only due to different methodologies in data collection, problems of reliability or political bias in data interpretation. It also reflects different visions of the phenomenon in terms of its starting point in time. Whereas official figures use 1995 as a baseline, CODHES takes 1985, ten years earlier, as its starting point. Most probably, given the enormous complexity of population movements and the tendency to under-register them, the real number of IDPs will be closer to the non-official figures. Fortunately, a new system for calculating estimates is being set up by the RSS, now in close coordination with CODHES and the Catholic Church.[9] For the purpose of this report, we will present both high and low estimates and concentrate on the extremely large growth of the problem during the last two years, a tendency confirmed by all sources.

For the year 2001, statistics show that internal displacement increased by 48% compared to the previous year. CODHES reports 341,925 new IDPs (68,385 households), that is 936 a day, while RSS estimates only 190,454 (42,743 households). Although individual and family displacement continues to be the dominant form, the occurrence of mass exodus has substantially increased, from 254 to 403 events according to official RSS figures, that is 58% more than in the previous year. However, estimates of group displacement vary between 22% (CODHES), 60% (ICRC) and 86% (government) of the total number of displaced people.[10] This discrepancy may be due to the greater presence of governmental and international organizations on the occasions of mass exodus and subsequent concentration of IDPs in improvised collective shelters, which facilitates their counting and registration. It is very likely, on the other hand, that the scattered, individual or family displacement is severely under-registered as many IDPs do not trust the authorities, stay away from official registration and limit their contacts to NGOs or church organizations - sources used by CODHES for their estimates.

Displacement affects all 32 departments of Colombia, both in terms of expulsion and reception. In this double sense, the top five departments are Antioquia, Magdalena, Cauca, Bolívar and Cesar, while the department of Chocó, which is predominantly populated by Afrocolombians and indigenous groups, is one of the major expelling, but not receiving, regions. The complex pattern of migration flows between micro-regions is illustrated by statistics at the local level: out of 819 municipalities affected by displacement, the vast majority, 519, are both expelling and receiving IDPs.[11] Significantly, between 30% and 50% of the IDPs arrive in the big cities (Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena, Barranquilla,

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[9] The Bishops' Conference in Colombia has designed its own information system, "Sistema RUT sobre Desplazamiento Forzado en Colombia"(named after the biblical figureRuth).

[10] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, *Estado de situación del desplazamiento...2001*; *CODHES Informa*, No. 40, February 2002, http://www.codhes.org.co [accessed September 2002]; Global IDP Project, *IDPs in Colombia: Patterns of Displacement*, Geneva, 2002, http://www.idpproject.org [accessed September 2002]

[11] Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, *Guía de atención a la población desplazada por la violencia*, Bogotá, 2001, http://www.red.gov.co/Guia/msms/default.asp [accessed September 2002]

Bucaramanga). Bogotá as the national capital receives the largest numbers, with 11.29% of all IDPs. Displacement to these big urban centres is characterized by a continuous trickling into the city by individual household groups, who try to build a new life on their own, despite the difficulties they experience in adapting to urban conditions. On the other hand, a mass exodus usually targets small urban centres within the same region and rarely crosses departmental borders.[12]

For most displaced people, return is not a realistic option, given the continuously escalating conflict and the involvement of the civilian population as the most significant victim of armed actions. Not even the IDPs themselves see it as a viable life project after displacement, as only 13% indicate a preference for return. There have been some examples of return movements, however, generally with international monitoring, in the Urabá, Atlantic Coast and Magdalena Medio regions. Nevertheless, official figures show the incidence of return reducing from 37% in 2000 to a mere 11% (21,172 persons) in 2001. Rural resettlement schemes seem to be even less an option, as only 2,039 IDPs made use of this possibility.[13]

1.3 Current Tendencies

During the first half of 2002 displacement has again grown dramatically. According to official sources 138,970 persons were displaced, an increase of 63% over the first half of 2001.[14] The increase in the number of displaced households has also been significant, at 56%. CODHES, however, showed a lower percentage increase, at 26%. Nevertheless, this NGO counted 203,726 IDPs by July, much more than the official estimates. Displacements took place in more than 20 micro-regions. There were also increases in inter-urban and intra-urban displacement.

The break-off of the peace talks in February 2002, and the election to president of Alvaro Uribe, a supporter of authoritarian measures against the insurgent forces, intensified the armed conflict. The FARC stepped up their attacks on infrastructure and their attempts to recapture territories and populations most recently occupied by paramilitaries. One of the most tragic manifestations of the war tactics of this rebel group was the attack - with explosives-filled gas cylinders - on the church of Bellavista (Bojayá, Department of Chocó). This act of terror against the civilian population killed more than 110 Afrocolombians, women, men and children, who happened to have sought refuge in the church. It also led to the displacement of more than 5,000 people to the departmental capital Quibdó. Some of these, about 1,000 persons, recently returned (1 September 2002), accompanied by UNHCR.[15]

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[12] Meertens, D., Encrucijadas Urbanas: Población desplazada en Bogotá y Soacha: una mirada diferenciada por género, edad y etnia. Bogotá, May 2002 (Consultancy report for UNHCR, publication forthcoming)

[13] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, *Estado de situación del desplazamiento...2001*

[14] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, Estado de situación del desplazamiento enero-julio 2002, Bogotá, 2002 (draft, publication forthcoming). Information based on estimates made by the Red de Solidaridad Social, Sistema de Estimación por Fuentes Contrastadas (SEFC) in July. In September, the new General Director of the RSS, Luis Alfonso Hoyos, mentioned the number of 170,000 IDPs during the first six months of 2002. See Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, Balance de las políticas de atención a la población desplazada 1998-2002, paper presented at the Second International Seminar organized by CODHES, Desplazamiento: Implicaciones y Retos para la Gobernabilidad, la Democracia y la Paz, Bogotá, 4-6 September 2002

[15] See further below, Section 4.3, Return and Rural Resettlement

Finally, the recent dynamics of the armed conflict have been such as to demonstrate that displacement is not the only expression of the humanitarian crisis. Increasingly, communities are surrounded by armed actors and not even allowed to flee - these are the so-called "communities under siege". In these cases of extreme vulnerability, all forms of access to their villages and townships are blocked and the transport of food, medicines, fuel and agricultural necessities prohibited. In other cases, particularly in the indigenous communities in the departments of Cauca and Valle, new common fronts have been formed in order to keep out all armed actors from their territories. These new initiatives are known as "communities in resistance".[16]

1.4 The "Differential" Approach

Displacement has a gender-differentiated impact on the population and also affects particularly the Afrocolombian and indigenous populations, which are over-represented amongst IDPs.

Overall women and girls constitute half of the displaced population. However, they are slightly over-represented in the reproductive age categories between 18 and 45 years. Three categories of women in particular have to be taken into account, because their situations are specific to, or aggravated by, the armed conflict and displacement, namely widows, female heads of household and women and girls who are victims of sexual violence. Female heads of household represent between 34.6% and 49.7% of all displaced households, a much higher percentage than the national average that oscillates around 24%. It is also the case that young girls in a situation of displacement are particularly vulnerable to adolescent pregnancies.[17] The social and political experiences of women and men before displacement gave them both different weaknesses and different abilities to rebuild their lives in the aftermath, particularly with respect to their ability to find a place in the labour market. Displaced women tend to be responsible for family survival in the cities and more easily than men take up all kinds of survival activities (street vending, domestic services), which, although the incomes they generate are precarious, give them an advantage over men, who suffer badly from unemployment and consequently from a loss of status as household providers.[18]

The indigenous populations represent 8% of the displaced, compared to only 2% of the total population of Colombia. Displacement of indigenous people is to some extent invisible, partly because it tends to take place within their own territories or between communities that belong to the same ethnic group. Indigenous displacement also happens on an individual basis, as removal to the urban centres. In these cases, displacement means not only loss of territory, but also, and even more, loss of autonomy, the disturbance of traditional life rhythms and the deterioration of (material and non-material) culture.

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[16] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, *Estado de situación del desplazamiento...2001*

[17] Profamilia [G. Ojeda and R. Murad], *Salud sexual y reproductiva en zonas marginadas: situación de las mujeres desplazadas*, Bogotá, 2001

[18] Meertens, D. The Nostalgic Future: Terror, Displacement and Gender in Colombia, in, Moser, C. and Clark, F. (eds), *Victims, Actors or Perpetrators? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, London: Zed Books, 2001, pp 133-48; Meertens, D., Victims and Survivors of War in Colombia: Three Views of Gender Relations, in, Bergquist, C., Peñaranda, R. and Sánchez, G. (eds), *Violence in Colombia 1900-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*, Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001, pp.151-69

According to RUT, the Bishops Conference's Information System, Afrocolombians constitute 25% of IDPs, compared to 11% of the total Colombian population.[19] They are concentrated along the Pacific Coast (in, from north to south, the departments of Chocó, Valle and Nariño), where they live in a very specific habitat of rainforest, river, and human settlements. During recent decades, the Afrocolombian population has started an important process of organization and in 2001 received communal land titles, in accordance with its rights as stipulated in Colombia's new constitution of 1991.[20] Several communities have returned, after displacement, and formed "peace communities" and "communities for life and dignity" (Cacarica region). In spite of the cohesive force of their new communal land titles, many of these communities are under serious threat of new displacement, due to the intensification of territorial disputes between guerrilla and paramilitary forces in the region.

2   Surviving after Displacement: Self-reliance Mechanisms

As already stated, and in spite of the increase in mass exodus during the last year, the most common form of displacement remains that of individual household groups. Displacement is basically a rural-urban phenomenon in Colombia, including migration to small regional cities, departmental capitals and big metropolis like Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena, Barranquilla and Bucaramanga. Recently urban-urban displacement has increased. The city of Barrancabermeja is one of the examples of exacerbated urban violence, and therefore receiving as well as expelling IDPs. As such, it is a transition point between the rural Magdalena Medio region and Bucaramanga or Bogotá.

Upon arrival in the cities, the first step for displaced families is to contact kin or *paisanos* (people with the same geographical origin). Usually they live with them for a couple of days, a week or sometimes several weeks. Then they have to leave, because the receiving family also lives in poverty and can not sustain the feeding of so many mouths for an extended period. Sometimes the newly arrived have no contacts at all. In those cases, they might seek help from a priest, and will then be received by one of the Church organizations, like the Casa Migrante in Bogotá, where they can stay for six weeks. The second step is, for many but not for all, to register as a displaced family (the *declaración*) and visit the government organizations in order to get help. While waiting for the decision that enables them to be included in the national register, they start to look for work, or they start street vending or whatever survival strategy (*rebusque)* that belongs to informal economic activities. This is step three.

Most of the displaced previously worked in agriculture or related activities: this group amounts to 70%, according to various studies.[21] The remaining 30%, however, worked in urban environments or urban related activities, as shopkeepers, teachers, chauffeurs, hairdressers etc. These people usually find work more easily than those with an exclusively rural background. For the latter, arrival in the city means a big change in occupational and gender roles.

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[19] Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral Social, Proyecto RUT sobre Desplazamiento Forzado en Colombia, Bogotá, December 2001 [Database]

[20] Regulated by law in 1993, Colombia, *Ley 70 de 1993*, Bogotá, 1993

[21] Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento, *Un País que huye: desplazamiento y violencia en una nación fragmentada*, Bogotá, 1999; Meertens, The Nostalgic future...

When they arrive in the cities, the displaced not only need material conditions (work, income, housing) in order to survive and rebuild their lives, they also must give meaning to their past experiences and their present situation, in order to connect these in a realistic way to their hopes for the future, to their life projects. The unpredictable character of terror and the senseless violence of which they have become victims, make these processes extremely difficult.

While there are some similarities in the way men and women deal with their situation, it is more noticeable that there are substantial differences in the processes of reconstruction they undertake. The strongest contrast between women and men comes from their differential opportunities to join the urban labour market and assure their survival in one way or another. Women get "work" easier than men, that is, they initiate all kinds of survival activities like street vending, washing clothes or providing any other kind of domestic services. These activities give them a certain guarantee of survival, no matter how precarious, which men lack. Men face much more unemployment after displacement than women - at least this is how they feel. Most of them previously worked in agriculture and livestock breeding, which are not very useful occupations in their new urban environment. It usually takes them some time to get trained as construction workers or guards, and for them the displacement therefore is felt as a disruption of their occupational experience. Men's attitudes towards work are different from those of women: in their former agricultural jobs they were accustomed to well-defined tasks demanding physical strength and therefore would hardly apply the term "work" to the hazardous and irregular day-to-day activities of cleaning, vending or begging.[22] This change of economic provider roles - and therefore of gender roles - is a widespread phenomenon amongst the displaced.

The situation for IDPs arriving in small townships in rural environments is very similar, with the exception that they - especially the men - have more opportunities for work in agriculture. Frequently they travel out to work as agricultural day-labourers, whilst the women stay in town. An interesting phenomenon is found in the sub-urban (or half urban/half rural) collective projects started by IDP organizations in several big cities, providing opportunities for IDPs who prefer to work in agriculture but live in the city and commute to their farm. In Cartagena such a project is run by a women's organization (Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas de Bolívar).

Finally, displaced Afrocolombians and indigenous groups usually mobilize their own traditional networks after displacement, in the city as well in the countryside. In Bogotá, each ethnic group has set up its own organization. These migrant and ethnic organizations (respectively *AFRODES (Asociación de Afrocolombianos Desplazados)* for the Afrocolombians and *AIRBO (Asociación de Indígenas Residentes en Bogotá)* for the indigenous migrants) have created an interesting vision of survival and reconstruction of ethnic identity: they have formulated strategies that are productive in the urban context, but which at the same time give them the possibility of maintaining commercial and cultural relationships with their communities of origin. Living close together is a prime requirement for such plans, and both organizations have therefore presented proposals for collective housing projects to the RSS.[23]

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[22] Meertens, The Nostalgic future...

[23] Meertens, Encrucijadas...

3 Legal and Policy Instruments for Reintegration

The framework for current government policy towards IDPs is Law 387 of 1997. This law establishes the overall parameters for the National System for Integrated Assistance to IDPs and outlines which entities will participate in it and the ways the system has to be coordinated. The RSS has been appointed as coordinator of the national system. The Law also makes reference to separate components like prevention and humanitarian assistance. The sections that are relevant to this paper are those dealing with return and socio-economic stabilization, which refer to "productive projects, participation in the land reform system, promotion of micro enterprise, training and social organization, health, education and housing and special attention to children, women and the elderly; participation in rural and urban employment programmes."[24]

In 1999, an Action Plan for Prevention and Assistance Concerning Internal Forced Displacement was formulated and its coordinating entity, the *Red de Solidaridad Social,* adopted a Strategic Plan for the Management of Internal Forced Displacement.[25] In this Plan, reintegration (or "re-establishment") of IDPs consists of five interrelated strategies:

- Promotion of voluntary return of communities, for which public order must have been restored and social organization strengthened
- Resettlement of communities and families
- Socio-economic stabilization
- Access to land and security of tenancy
- Housing and environmental management
- Special attention to the needs of women and children

The Strategic Plan was followed, a year and a half later, by a new policy agreement,[26] in which the National Council recognizes that the Action Plan from 1999 had not reached its targets and that one of its bottlenecks is the lack of a stock of projects in order to get funds assigned, and simultaneously the lack of funding for the formulation of these projects.[27] During the same year (2001), several decrees were issued concerning the financial contributions of the participating entities, the financing of health care and education for IDPs, and the subsidies for housing. Finally, by Decree 2007 of 2001, protection measures for abandoned rural properties were established and the concept of "temporary farms" created.

At the end of 2001, after two years of implementation of the re-establishment policy, the RSS compiled a Re-establishment Manual *(Protocolo de Restablecimiento)*, in order to standardize methods of assistance. In this manual, the different routes towards reintegration are set out: return, rural (and urban) resettlement, income generation and infrastructure (housing) provision. Emphasis is placed on the integrated character of the approach and on

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[24] Colombia, *Ley 387 de 1997*, Bogotá, 1997; Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, *Atención a la población desplazada por el conflicto armado: compendio de políticas y normas*, Bogotá, 1999

[25] See Colombia, Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES), Document No 3057, Bogotá, 10 November 1999 and Colombia, *Decreto 489 de 1999*, Bogotá, November 1999

[26] See Colombia, Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social, Document No 3115, Bogotá , 25 May 2001

[27] *Idem* and Forero, E., *Balance de la política de atención al desplazamiento interno forzado en Colombia 1999-2002*, Bogotá: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2002, pp. 6-7

the need to formulate and negotiate a comprehensive plan with IDP organizations in each territorial unit of the RSS.[28]

Finally, in order to safeguard the integrated character of the re-establishment programme the RSS in 2001 launched a new quota system for subcontracting NGOs to provide the full range of assistance to IDPs, from emergency aid to re-establishment, including psychosocial support.

The differential approach (taking into account gender, age and ethnic differences) is very poorly provided for in the Law: the only specific mention of women and children is made in Article 17, on re-establishment measures, referred to above. Specific attention to displacement among ethnic minorities has only lately become an important issue. In 2001 the Colombian Parliament issued a questionnaire on displacement in the Afrocolombian populations,[29] and during 2002 UNHCR and the national indigenous organization ONIC put together some reflections and recommendations about the specific needs of indigenous people.[30] On the violation of rights and the specific needs of displaced women and girls, the UNHCR and the Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento organised a sub-regional consultation with displaced women and girls, as well as NGO and UN system representatives in Bogotá in May 2001. In addition, the Mesa Mujer y Conflicto (Working Group on Women and Armed Conflict), organized the visit of the UN special Rapporteur on Violence against women in November 2001. In her report, the Special Rapporteur makes some recommendations for the integration of the human rights of women.[31]

4 Agents and Interventions for Economic Reintegration of IDPs

4.1 Government: Actions and Projects

In the course of the Pastrana government (1998-2002) legislation, policy formulation, inter-institutional coordination at the central level and financial allocations all substantially improved. Nevertheless, the gap between the demand for protection and assistance by IDPs and the effective institutional response steadily increased during the same period. Although this statement is valid for the whole National System for Integrated Assistance to IDPs, it is

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[28] Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, Balance de las políticas de atención...

[29] Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, *Respuesta del Ministro del Interior, Armando Estrada, y del Gerente General de la RSS, Fernando Medellín, al cuestionario de la Proposición 29 de 2001, del Senado de la República, sobre la situación de la población Afrocolombiana*, Bogotá, 2001; see also on this issue: Asociación de Afrocolombianos Desplazados, *Primer Encuentro Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados,* Bogotá: Editorial Unibiblios, 2001; Colombia, Observatorio de los Derechos Humanos en Colombia, *The Situation of the Afrocolombian Population*, Newsletter No. 22, Bogotá: Vicepresidencia de la República de Colombia, May 2002

[30] Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Recomendaciones frente al problema indígena, Bogotá 2002 (unpublished document); Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, Ministerio del Interior, Defensoría del Pueblo, Directriz para la atención a población indígena en riesgo o en situación de desplazamiento, Bogotá, 2002(unpublished document)

[31] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, *Consulta con mujeres desplazadas sobre principios rectores del desplazamiento,* Bogotá: UNHCR; OCHA, May 2001. See also United Nations, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective: Violence against Women, E/CN.4/2002/83/Add. 3, 11 March 2002; Mesa de Trabajo Mujer y Conflicto Armado, *Informe sobre violencia sociopolítica contra mujeres y niñas en Colombia*, Bogotá: ILSA, 2001 (available in English as: Working Group on Women and Armed Conflict, *Report on Sociopolitical Violence Against Women and Girls in Colombia*, Bogotá: ILSA, November 2001)

particularly true for the prevention and reintegration (*restablecimiento)* components. Factors that contribute to this gap are to be found in the political and economic context, as well as in the conceptual weakness of the formulation of policies and strategies, but above all in the wide range of obstacles related to implementation.

The political context of continuation, intensification and brutalization of the armed conflict, its geographical expansion and the spread of feelings of mistrust and fear amongst the civilian, particularly the rural, population, sets serious limits to the effectiveness of prevention programmes and to the viability of the return or rural resettlement options in the re-establishment program. The economic context, of recession since 1999, has in turn had a negative impact on the availability of government funds, the generation of employment opportunities and the success of income creating projects for IDPs, both in rural and urban environments.

The financial response from the state, within the framework of the National System for Integrated Assistance to IDPs, has risen to 126,582 million pesos (approximately US$47 million). Of this, 52% has been spent on re-establishment, 37% on humanitarian emergency assistance, 6% on institution building and only 4% on prevention. However, these funds were insufficient to cover the target population (registered IDPs). In the economic stabilization component, for instance, target population coverage has only been 19.5%, and in housing even less, 3.7%, while the most successful component, humanitarian emergency assistance, still did not reach more than 43% of the registered IDPs.[32] In addition to this deficit in the allocation of resources, which reflects a lack of political prioritization, there is the additional technical problem of delayed availability of funds. The provisions for cash flow programming of the national budget are completely inadequate for emergency situations. There is also a tense relationship between the RSS, which co-ordinates de National System for Integrated Assistance to IDPs, and the national and local entities that form part of the system, the latter being very reluctant to allocate funds from their own programmes to a specific population like IDPs (positive action), and the RSS lacking the necessary political weight and power to persuade them to do this.

At the conceptual level of policy design, there are four major points to be made.

First, the definition of the national policy as directed at "the displaced population" and not at "the problem of displacement", a formulation that hampers the inclusion of receiving populations in the policy design, as has been pointed out by the author of a recent policy assessment document.[33]

Second, the definition of IDPs as a vulnerable group, and particularly a transitory one. This focus emphasizes assistance and in practice excludes actions to re-establish the rights of IDPs (to truth, justice, moral and material repair, and, above all, to life and dignity).[34] One of

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[32] Forero, *Balance de la política de atención…*, p. 9

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] See reflections on this theme in Forero; also in Lima, L. and Reed, D., Reflexiones sobre la reubicación y el restablecimiento: una respuesta al desplazamiento forzado por la violencia en Colombia, in Partridge, W. (ed.), *Reasentamiento en Colombia*, Bogotá: World Bank [et.al], 2000, pp. 289-315, and in Naranjo, G. and Hurtado, D., El desplazamiento forzado y reconfiguraciones urbanos: algunas preguntas para los programas de restablecimiento, paper presented at the Second International Seminar organized by CODHES, Desplazamiento: Implicaciones y Retos para la Gobernabilidad, la Democracia y la Paz*,* Bogotá, 5 September 2002

its manifestations has been the difficulty to get recognized psycho-social support and counselling (a form of moral repair) as a necessary and integral part of the assistance process, from emergency to re-establishment. Moreover, the displaced are submitted to severe timing requirements in order to qualify for assistance: up to three months after displacement for emergency aid and up to one year after displacement for participation in re-establishment programmes. It is not realistic to expect a displaced person to rebuild his or her life within such short time periods; nor are the official institutions capable of complying with them, because of operational difficulties.[35]

Third, all through legislation and policy formulation on re-establishment,[36] priority has been given to the return option, in spite of this being both the less viable one in the Colombian context and the option least wanted by the IDPs themselves (less then 20% in all studies). This strong emphasis on return could endanger its voluntary character - one of the internationally agreed principles of protection of IDPs. It appears likely that the new Uribe government will continue this focus and even strengthen the option of return for IDPs in the framework of the president's pacification model (called "democratic security") through the creation of "zones of rehabilitation and consolidation". On the other hand, the spontaneous re-establishment strategies undertaken by the majority of the displaced themselves in the urban centres of arrival are not taken into account by policy makers. Therefore, institutional strategies for urban integration are weak and incoherent.

Fourth, the ideas of re-establishment and economic stabilization have not been clearly conceptualized in relation to prior (emergency) and posterior (development and reconstruction) phases. There is no clear design of a post-emergency phase with flexible programmes for short-term employment, income generation, food security and capacity building; nor are strategies envisioned that would link the post-emergency phase with a more definitive establishment phase in the context of regional and local development plans. This lack of a more comprehensive vision of the requirements of a post-emergency phase, means that administrative procedures appropriate for normal situations have not been revised or adapted and thus remain slow and too complex for a situation that requires flexibility and agility.

Finally, the greatest difficulties for government assistance are to be found at the operational level. Three clusters of problems have to be mentioned: those related to excessive centralization of the administration, lack of inter-institutional co-ordination, and lack of funding and technical capacity at the local level; those related to administrative procedures for "normal" situations, which have not been adapted to the specific requirements of a post-emergency situation; and those related to the lack of experience in project-management of some NGOs that had been contracted under the system of "delegated administration", adopted by the RSS.[37] Although these problems have been recognized by the RSS, there has been a complete failure to establish a permanent monitoring and evaluation system that incorporates lessons learned.

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[35] As shown in the present author's recent study on displaced men, women and ethnic minorities in Bogotá. See Meertens, Encrucijadas...

[36] Colombia, *Ley 387 de 1997*; Colombia, Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social, Document No 3057 and Document No 3115; see also: Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social, *Guía de atención...*, pp. 3-6

[37] See also Forero on this point

4.2 Economic Stabilization

During the period 1999-2002 the Colombian government invested 68,000 million pesos (US$25 million) in the re-establishment programme, for the implementation of 300 production or income generation projects for 13,500 beneficiaries. Additionally, 49 projects have been implemented and US$3 million invested within the prevention programme.[38] In one sense, many of the re-establishment projects have a prevention aspect: they intend to contribute to the strengthening of community organization and the basis for their survival, which will in turn help them to withstand the threat of repetition of displacement, especially in the case of returned communities. No data are available on what percentage has been dedicated to each of the two modalities of return or urban integration.

With respect to the policy elements announced in the Strategic Plan, the RSS did not succeed in implementing the idea of "emergency employment", nor in securing integration (or simultaneity) with other components of re-establishment like housing (indeed, the weakest link in the whole package), nor in getting sufficient commitment from private enterprise to promote chains of production. No fiscal advantages have been provided for enterprises that employ displaced people. Involvement of private enterprise is limited to two training programmes for adults and youngsters.

The RSS is the only official institution to provide subsidies for starting capital (*capital semilla*) for production, training and technical assistance. However, these subsidies lack adequate standards designed to guarantee sustainability; they usually encourage activities in the informal economy and are very individually oriented. The idea of complementing *capital semilla* with micro credit has only partially been accomplished. There are no flexible credit conditions specifically for IDPs, and the corresponding programmes at, for instance, the Banco Agrario are not accessible to them. It was not possible to establish a specialized micro credit programme with the WFP (World Food Programme). Therefore, the only existing micro credit programmes available to supplement the subsidies are those established by IOM (International Organization for Migration) in six departments, and by FUPAD (Fundación Panamericana de Desarrollo – an implementing agency for USAID) in the Atlantic Coast region, in Antioquia and parts of the centre of the country. These individual or family based micro credit systems constitute only a limited intervention compared to the needs of the whole country.[39]

4.3 Return and Rural Resettlement

One of the most serious bottlenecks for re-establishment programmes related to return or resettlement of rural communities is access to land and security of tenancy. There have been several proposals, like the creation of "peasant reserves" or the Bank for Land Exchange,[40] but it has not been possible to put these into practice. Legal action by the State in order to confiscate landed properties acquired with drugs money and allocate these to IDP

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[38] Colombia, Red de Solidaridad Social - Data Base on Re-establishment 2002(internal, unpublished document)

[39] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, Estado de situación del desplazamiento... 2002; Myriam Hernández, Unidad Técnica Conjunta/Red de Solidaridad Social. Personal interview, September 2002

[40] Colombia, Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, *Decreto 2007 de 2001*, Bogotá, 2001. The Post-conflict Reconstruction Fund of the World Bank Mission in Colombia has started a project for the development of methodologies and actions in the context of this decree.

resettlement schemes is seriously hampered by judicial counter-action and has consequently turned completely inoperative.[41]

With respect to the third modality, that of rural resettlement, its implementation by the land reform institute INCORA (Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria) has been totally insignificant (with only 2,000 beneficiaries). Persistent violence, economic non-viability and poor selection of beneficiaries have frequently led to the dissolution of communal enterprises set up by INCORA and to a repetition of displacement - a very bitter experience for the people, who in these cases are left with no possibility of renewed governmental assistance.

An interesting, if somewhat questionable, initiative, the acquisition by INCORA of land for temporary settlement, called *predios de paso,* does not have access to adequate funding, neither for the purchase of land, nor for the implementation of production plans. RSS subsidies (*capital semilla*) are insufficient. On the other hand, there has been progress in the allocation of collective land titles to the Afrocolombian population in Chocó and in the Urabá region.[42] Such title may give some protection to the populations that have returned, but needs to be complemented by economic and technical support for agricultural production and marketing.

Economic incentives usually constitute a very important motive for collective return, in spite of adverse conditions of security in the regions. This can be illustrated by the cases of return to El Salado (a municipality near Carmen de Bolívar) on the Atlantic Coast and Bojayá in Chocó. In the first case 500 families returned to their land in July 2002, attracted by the prospect of special support for the production and marketing of tobacco, a traditional crop in the region, notwithstanding the fear of new acts of violence, mainly expressed by the women of the community. In the second case, 500 families - displaced because of the massacre committed by the FARC on 2 May 2002 - returned between July and 1 September to Bojayá, half of them individually, the other half collectively and accompanied by UNHCR. Their hope is to harvest the rice that had ripened in their fields. In this case, a process of project formulation had been completed with the aim of improving traditional agricultural production and fishing, for both returnees and those who had stayed. The national office of the RSS took part in the process, as well as the Afrocolombian organization of local councils that administers their collective lands. However, serious bottlenecks continue to be experienced in the financing of these projects (covered only to a small part by IOM), and through the lack of technical expertise at the local level, the bankruptcy of local agrarian institutions, the non-existence of coherent regional development plans[43] and the continued insecurity in the region. People are afraid to go out and work on their land, and in addition there are serious obstacles to the marketing of agricultural products, due to the control and confiscation exercised by the armed actors (guerrilla and paramilitaries) in the region.

Both examples contain important elements to be taken into account for the design of a post-emergency programme. The new Uribe government has outlined four areas in which it will develop its re-establishment programmes: micro-credits, reforestation (in support of

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[41] See for instance the recent evaluative article by Guerrero Díaz, C.A., El fracaso de la extinción de dominio, *UNPeriódico*, No 38, 15 September 2002

[42] Colombia, *Ley 70 de 1993*, Bogotá, 1993

[43] Political-admnistrative divisions create additional problems in respect of political competency and funding. In this case, the target population of IDP-returnees and receiving population live on both sides of the Atrato river: in Bojayá (Department of Chocó) and Vigía (Department of Antioquia)

production and income generation), food security and education. Local UMATAs (Unidades Municipales de Asistencia Técnica Agropecuaria - centres for agricultural technical assistance) will be strengthened. However, in view of the present dynamics of the conflict, protection and psycho-social support should also be integral elements of the reintegration strategies.

Very little is known about displacement, return and resettlement of indigenous communities. This is due to the fact that these populations are very reluctant to register with national authorities, that they often move within the borders of their own territories (Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta) or have suffered massacres and dispersal in an early period when displacement was still not recognized on the national agenda (San Andrés de Sotovento, Department of Córdoba). An interesting experience is the case of the community of Polines in the Urabá region, which integrated indigenous IDPs from an other region into their land and agricultural activities. In order to do this in a sustainable way, they received subsidies for seed. However, scarcity of land may become a problem in the future.[44] Recently, attention is being paid to indigenous "communities of resistance", particularly in the departments of Cauca and Valle (e.g. the Naya communities, to the south of Cali).

In the particular case of ethnic groups, but also in the case of IDP reintegration in general, economic support activities have to take into account the capacity of the social fabric to carry these projects and use them to aid in its reconstruction. Support for organizations built around ethnicity or *paisanaje* - that is, sharing the same place of origin - will be a key factor for successful economic stabilization. The Uribe government has made clear that its new plans will pay special attention to those regions, like Cauca and the eastern part of Antioquia, where processes of interaction with civil society are being started.

In the return and resettlement activities analyzed so far there has not been an explicit gender perspective. There is a view generally held by officials and NGO employees that women "are traditionally participating in agricultural activities" and that, therefore, their presence in productive projects has been warranted. However, the need for women's empowerment and active participation in the decision making processes, or the protection of specific rights, for instance sexual and reproductive rights, is often not recognized. Moreover, when the returnees are ethnic groups, like in the cases analyzed above, traditional cultural arrangements of gender relations may be used as an excuse for continuing discrimination. However, the ways in which empowerment can be enhanced in these cases should be carefully and respectfully discussed with the women themselves. Another aspect is access to land for peasant women in general. Ensuring land property rights for returnees is an important goal in cases where land titles previous to displacement did not formally exist. This may be an opportunity, not only to restore, but to enhance gender equity, making use of the legal provision for "joint property rights for spouses or partners" (*titulación conjunta)*, already established in the 1988 land reform legislation.[45]

4.4 Reintegration in the Urban Context.

Integration into the urban centres of arrival has been the option most neglected by both governmental and intergovernmental institutions dealing with displacement issues.

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[44] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, Plan de Acción Humanitaria, Bogotá, 2002 (unpublished draft)

[45] Colombia, *Ley 30 de 1988*, Bogotá, 1988; Deere, C. D. and León, M., *Género, propiedad y empoderamiento: tierra, estado y mercado en América Latina,* Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores; Universidad Nacional, 2000

Nevertheless, this is the option that concerns the majority of IDPs, those who arrived individually in the cities and who overwhelmingly have preferred to stay in their new environment in view of the reduced possibilities of return or rural resettlement. Moreover, assistance to IDPs in the urban centres is faced with special difficulties, and strategies for urban integration deserve special attention in order to cope with these difficulties. The problems come from both sides: IDPs tend to arrive one by one in the cities, without any cohesion, as they come from all regions of the country; they often feel fearful and are hesitant to lay open their case to official authorities; without access to reception facilities and always in search for new survival opportunities, their patterns of urban settlement tend to be unstable, mobile and invisible; they are very heterogeneous in the cultural and ethnic sense, but have in common low levels of formal education and work experience that is mostly limited to rural environments.

On the response side, the start of re-establishment activities by RSS came late, in 1999, and passed through some negative experiences with money being disbursed for individual income generating projects without analysis of sustainability or financial monitoring. Subcontracting with NGOs and IDP grass roots organizations has been a step forward, but lack of experience and technical expertise in these organizations still remains an obstacle. Administrative procedures for approval and start of implementation of the projects have usually taken more than a year. This enormous time-gap between emergency assistance and re-establishment has had very detrimental effects on the organized activities of IDPs in urban areas. Many households left their organizations in a desperate search for individual survival possibilities. The introduction of "rapid appraisal" methods, the introduction of more flexible legal requirements that make compliance by IDPs possible, and the creation of a serious and well-funded monitoring system will be essential in order to overcome these problems.

Programmes such as "Food for Work" and "Food for Training", implemented through an agreement between RSS and the WFP, fulfil an important role in the early post-emergency phase. They alleviate pressure on family expenditure during the start of income-generating projects, they usually have a flexible character and they put an emphasis on local organizational processes. However, they are available for a limited time only (three to six months) and must therefore be integrated into a comprehensive post-emergency strategy that links them to a more enduring re-establishment phase.

The urban income generation projects approved by the RSS usually belong to the informal economy and are concentrated in the services and food-processing sectors - the only areas outside agriculture in which the IDPs believe themselves able to perform. Their sustainability is rather weak and their informal character often does not fit into official urban policies and minimum requirements for employment generation. In order to increase the scope and sustainability of the projects it will be necessary to strengthen vocational and adaptive training programmes.[46] On the other hand, in many urban centres, even in Bogotá, IDP organizations are looking for semi-urban or sub-urban survival strategies. These are based on the more familiar (i.e. close to what has already been experienced) activities of agricultural and animal production on nearby farms in rural or sub-urban areas to which they plan to commute. These initiatives deserve close monitoring and technical assistance in order to become viable strategies in a more definitive way. An important condition for this is the complementary activation of INCORA's *predios de paso* programme.

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[46] The *Trabajo a su Alcance* and other programmes, financed by the Japanese Development Cooperation Agency

Finally, it is clear from the foregoing analysis that an urban reintegration programme requires a range of differentiated strategies that include both the urban and the semi-urban, the individual and the collective, the IDPs and the receiving communities, and takes account of the special needs and capabilities of women, young people and ethnic minorities. In this context, evidence has been collected in cities like Medellín, Cartagena, Bucaramanga and Bogotá, that suggests that displaced women play a much more prominent role than men in interacting with local communities. Support for women's networks around housing, social services, health and sexual/reproductive rights, as well as income generative projects in the *barrios*, could be an important strategy for re-establishment and reconstruction of the social fabric in the cities.

The design of strategies that include the receiving communities takes on special significance in the light of the recent statements by the new Uribe government, in which programmes specifically for IDPs in the cities are categorized as "positive discrimination", which must be replaced by "normal" local development and anti-poverty plans. Formulated in this way (that is, as the end of positive discrimination), the statements might not sufficiently take into account the right of repair for the IDPs. To remain inclusive, the idea requires a two-way approach. On the one hand, the inclusion of IDPs in "normal" anti-poverty programmes must bring with it an increase in social investment and an adaptation of requirements for access to the programmes in the light of the IDPs' special conditions. On the other hand, extending post-emergency programmes for IDPs to include receiving populations, requires careful formulation of the bases for inclusion. For this purpose, restrictions on funding criteria and definitions of target populations limited to officially registered IDPs have to be abandoned.

Generally speaking, the gender and ethnic sensitive approach that is present at the policy-formulation level of re-establishment programmes has not been translated into practical guidelines for implementation. Some priority has been given to projects for households headed by women, but their special needs and rights (time, educational and health constraints, proper processes of empowerment, participation in decision making etc.) are not systematically taken into account in programmes and projects.

Improvement of these conceptual and operational shortcomings in the government response to reintegration of IDPs requires not only more reflection, efficiency and coordination, but also more funding. However, the Colombian government has recently decided to reduce its budget for assistance to IDPs as one of its austerity measures. On 27 September 2002 the Minister of Finance announced a reduction in the budget for the RSS from 100,000 million pesos (US$37 million) to 40,000 million pesos (US$14.8 million), and at the same time a reduction in the budget for the national vocational training institute SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje) by nearly 50%.[47] In this situation, the presence and monitoring role of the international community will be of even greater importance.

4.5 The International Community

The different agencies of the UN System run 27 field offices in Colombia, which are implementing projects in 223 of the 1,099 municipalities. The principal agency active in the field of assistance to IDPs is UNHCR, with its own "operational plan for the response to forced displacement in Colombia". The most important areas of the plan are prevention, protection and the strengthening of institutions, at all the stages of assistance, including the

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[47] *El Tiempo* [Bogotá], 27 September 2002

search for solutions. In this last area, the Joint Technical Unit (Unidad Técnica Conjunta – UTC) with the RSS has an important role to play at the national level. Apart from the national office in Bogotá, UNHCR runs three field offices and is about to open a fourth on the Atlantic Coast. Increasingly, UNHCR's Colombia Bureau is aware of the importance of its role in post-emergency programmes as part of an integral approach to displacement and taking into account its institutional presence in the field [48]. In this context, the Colombian government has asked UNHCR to help consolidate interaction and negotiation channels between the RSS and civil society at national and local levels. UNHCR pays special attention to the different needs and rights of women, children and ethnic groups and promotes this approach among governmental and non-governmental organizations that work with IDPs. Finally, UNHCR, together with OCHA (the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) coordinates the inter-agency Working Group on Internal Displacement (Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento - GTD) and as such is the lead agency for the promotion of the joint humanitarian action plan.

Other agencies in the field are the already mentioned World Food Programme (Food for Work) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM – responsible for micro-credit), United Nations Fund for Population Affairs (UNFPA - sexual and reproductive health for IDP women and adolescents) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP - economic reconstruction through production chains, local alliances between civil society sectors and support for public policy design). The World Health Organization and UNICEF implement programmes in the areas of health, environmental management and education in emergency situations, and the Food and Agriculture Organization works in the area of prevention (reforestation and community organization). Up till now the UN system has concentrated on institutional capacity building, while its activities in the field are geographically separate and often lack close coordination.[49]

The most important challenge for the agencies is to build a coherent and coordinated strategy vis-à-vis the problem of displacement, and more generally, the humanitarian crisis. This challenge was accepted when, in 2002, the GTD was asked to prepare a humanitarian action plan in which all agencies will work together, and which must constitute a common framework for strategic planning. Integration and social and economic reconstruction is one of the focuses of the plan. It is in this perspective that recommendations will be made at the end of this paper.

4.6 Other International Actors

Other actors in the field of re-establishment of IDPs are the international NGOs. In 1997, several of them (Diakonia, Save the Children Fund, Oxfam GB, Christian Aid, Project Counselling Service and, as observers, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Peace Brigades) formed the inter-agency dialogue DIAL (Diálogo Inter-Agencial en Colombia), as a forum for coordination and lobbying. Most of them work through national NGOs for the benefit of displaced communities, particularly in the Urabá, Medio Atrato (Chocó) and Magdalena Medio regions. Most of their work is of a humanitarian kind and in defence of human rights. One of their main areas is support for grass roots organizations of ethnic groups (indigenous and Afrocolombians) in displacement or in resistance. Few projects are

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[48] See Meertens, D., UNHCR and its Operational Plan for Response to Forced Displacement in Colombia 1999-2001: Mid-term Assessment Executive Summary, Bogotá: UNHCR, 2000; United Nations High Commissione for Refugees, Colombia Operational Plan 2002, Bogotá, 2002

[49] Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, Estado de situación del desplazamiento... 2002

implemented in the productive sphere - in Colombia this apparently continues to be a separate area of "development" in which other international actors are active, like USAID (through FUPAD), or the Spanish government's international cooperation agency, which supports the IFI (Instituto de Fomento Industrial) micro-credit programme, part of which is reserved for IDPs.

The European Union will become an increasingly important actor in the field of reintegration and re-establishment of IDPs, as part of its commitments established in the three "donor meetings" held in Madrid, Bogotá and Brussels (2000-2001). Complementary to the work of ECHO (European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office) in the emergency phase, the EU has defined its working areas as uprooted populations, post-emergency reconstruction and a peace laboratory, with a budget of 25.5 million Euro, channelled through European development agencies, Colombian NGOs and UNHCR and the UN system. An important aspect of the conceptualization of the post emergency phase is the emphasis on "start-up projects" for small enterprises, in which subsidies (donations) are combined with rotating funds and micro-credit. Food security, basic services and organization are seen as important complementary areas. However, this strategy brings two problem areas into focus, the sustainability of IDP projects and illicit crop substitution. For the latter, several plans are being developed (like reforestation), whereas the former will be addressed through promotion of their inclusion in local and regional development plans.[50]

5   Conclusions: Summary of Observations and Recommendations

The present conflict situation in Colombia gives little room for optimism. The breakdown of the peace talks, the continuing intensification and brutalization of the armed conflict and the military measures taken by the newly elected president set a very restrictive context for what has been the main theme for this paper: the social and economic reintegration of people internally displaced by violence. In this context, the internationally applied "post-conflict reconstruction" terminology is of only limited use. In its place, new and creative concepts and strategies have to be adopted in order to visualize ways of reconstruction in time of war, and through them, create possibilities for future peace. In practical terms, this means that all IDP reintegration activities must be embedded in a strong framework of protection.

The Colombian government has made noticeable advances in policy formulation and assignment of funds for the assistance of IDPs. However, the integrated and process-emphasizing character of the national plan for assistance to IDPs has not always been safeguarded. Particularly, the conceptualization of the so-called "re-establishment" component and its links to prior (emergency) and posterior (development) phases is not satisfactory. The introduction of the more fluid term of "post-emergency scenarios" may be a more appropriate option. In addition target populations must be defined in such a way that receiving communities in the cities of arrival, "communities under siege" and "communities of resistance" could be included. Their interactions with IDPs are crucial for social reconstruction in the post-emergency phase. Appropriate funding for the different post-emergency scenarios is necessary and requires attention and monitoring by the international community.

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[50] Coordinator ofAECI - Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, Embassy of Spain, Bogotá. Personal interview, 19 September2002

With regard to the Sistema Nacional, the national plan for integrated assistance to IDPs, the greatest difficulties lie in its limited capacity for implementation. Inter-institutional coordination is deficient, particularly at the local level. The requests for commitments made by the RSS, the coordinating entity for the Sistema Nacional, are not binding. Local governments are lacking in funds, know-how and room for political manoeuvre for the implementation of programmes and the adequate design of projects. Strengthening of local institutions and technical know-how, both governmental and non-governmental, is therefore a key issue in the post-emergency phase. Given the tradition of antagonism and mistrust between government and civil organizations in a polarized society, forums and channels for dialogue and cooperation, particularly at the local level, must be reinforced.

The differential approach - taking into account gender, age and ethnicity - must be taken down from its level of good intentions for policy design, to practical and at the same time thoughtful guidelines for implementation on the ground. The special needs and rights of these groups must be taken into account and participation in decision making, organization and leadership promoted. Three situations related to IDPs demand special attention: the switch in economic provider roles between displaced women and men upon arrival in the cities; the until now unexplored possibility of joint property rights for peasant spouses, applicable to rural return or resettlement scenarios, and the role of women's organizations for the defence of their rights in situations of displacement and war.

In a polarized country divided by mistrust, organizing IDPs is a difficult process. IDP associations tend to have a high degree of volatility but nevertheless play an important role in the reconstruction process, both as subcontractors and as interlocutors with the government. Networks based on ethnic elements or common geographical origin (*paisanaje)* may constitute building blocks for reconstruction.

The vast majority of IDPs arrive individually, or with their family, in the cities. More than 80% of them do not want to go back to their areas of origin and rely on their own survival mechanisms in the city. Nevertheless, the government insists in prioritizing the return option in its policy design. This tendency has been reinforced since the installation of the new government. For a more balanced post-emergency policy, however, both scenarios need to be taken into account, with differentiated strategies.

- For urban integration, administrative procedures for project approval have to be accelerated and made more flexible; monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have to be developed; vocational training programmes reinforced; rural/urban project experiences seriously evaluated, and the integration of projects into urban development plans must be considered. Receiving communities must be involved in the post-emergency phase and women's networks that promote integration must be strengthened.

- For rural integration, basically through return movements, the strengthening of local institutions and technical assistance for the formulation of both post-emergency and development plans is an absolute priority. Access to land and security of tenancy is an important issue that can not be left aside. Economic incentives for return must always be accompanied by protection of individual and collective rights. Post-emergency projects need more extensive funding for micro credit schemes and they must be integrated into local development plans. Community sectors that stayed behind, "communities of resistance" and - as far as possible – "communities under siege" must be incorporated into the efforts of reintegration.

A realistic model for integration of assistance to IDPs into "normal" public policy requires the formulation and implementation of a double track. On the one hand, some parts of the receiving communities may be given access to the IDP-focused projects in the post-emergency phase; access criteria have to be revised and funds increased. On the other hand, IDPs may be incorporated as a special target population within regular public policies and programmes. However, this is only viable when social investments have correspondingly increased and access criteria been adapted to IDP conditions.

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