

**SPEECH BY THE RT. HON. HILARY BENN MP  
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## **THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE IN CRISIS STATES**

**I want to start by thanking the LSE for inviting me tonight. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the work of your Crisis States Research Centre. And to address the challenge that crisis states pose for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

**Now the first Millennium Development Goal comes due next year. In 2000, the international community promised that by 2005 we would ensure that girls and boys would have equal access to school. We will miss that target. 2005 will also remind us that there's only a decade to go to 2015, when the remaining 17 targets set out in the MDGs are due. And if we do not work faster, better, and harder, with more money and greater impact - we will miss the 2015 targets. On**

**child mortality. On primary education. And on maternal health.**

**This poor rate of progress is unacceptable. It should shame the world. And we have to do something about it.**

**On current forecasts sub Saharan Africa will not achieve our target for reducing child mortality until 2165. Why? It is not that the knowledge to avoid these infant deaths does not exist; it is not that the drugs do not exist; it is not that the expertise does not exist. What is missing is political will and the capacity to make it happen.**

**Why are we not doing better?**

**Well, the first thing to say is that progress is possible, and has been made. Life expectancy in developing countries has increased by 19 years to 64 years in the last four decades. The percentage of**

**people with access to clean water has doubled since 1975.**

**In Bangladesh, more than 1,300 people are lifted out of extreme poverty every day. In just the last five years, Mozambique has reduced poverty from 70% to 55% and has doubled the number of children in school. China is on track to become a middle-income country. Progress in India is promising to do the same.**

**It is right to say that developing countries have achieved as much in 30 years as the industrial world managed in over more than a century.**

**But many millions of people are being left behind. 1.2 billion still lack access to clean water. 113 million children have no classroom, no desk, no textbook, and no teacher because they don't go to school. Millions of children die each year from diseases we know we can prevent. HIV/AIDS is in some countries**

wiping out all the gains in life expectancy of the last 40 years.

All of these things are experienced particularly by people living in weak or failing states. Poor people are frontline victims where the state is unable or unwilling to carry out its basic functions. At their worst, crisis states kill people as well as killing development.

The chances of improving health and education in a state that is at war are pretty remote. And the last decade has witnessed appalling conflicts around the world, including throughout Africa. According to the International Rescue Committee, some 3.3 million people died in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 1998 and 2002, directly as a result of state crisis. No wonder that people have described it as Africa's hidden first world war.

Crisis states also harm their neighbours. People flee their homes. Illegal migration rises. Trade and

**investment flows are disrupted. Violence spreads and becomes harder to contain.**

**There are many different kinds of weak and failing states. DRC and Somalia are at one end of the spectrum. At the other end are states plagued by poor governance or the use of political office for personal or criminal ends. In between are states that have fragile institutions. States that struggle to manage social tensions or fundamental challenges to central authority.**

**Other countries are highly effective in the narrow sense, but suffer from repressive or isolationist regimes that actually inhibit development, and contain the seeds of more fundamental failure.**

**Finally, as Haiti has recently demonstrated, countries can move in and out of crisis quite quickly. A year ago Haiti was not really on the world's radar screen. Today we can see all too clearly its weakness. Conversely, Rwanda and Mozambique show how**

**countries can move out of crisis to provide basic security and begin to raise the living standards of the poorest people.**

**Weak and failing states have one thing in common. They are unable or unwilling to secure broad and sustainable development for their citizens. They represent the single biggest challenge we have in fulfilling our promise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.**

**One measure of the effectiveness of states can be drawn from the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment indicators. These measure economic management, the strength of public institutions, and the policy commitment to poverty reduction.**

**There are 46 countries that have had the worst performance on these indicators over the last four years. They contain a small part of the world's population, but a huge share of the people living in**

**absolute poverty. These countries account for only 14% of the global population, yet they contain 41% of all child mortality in the world.**

**These same states contain 343 million people living on less than \$1 per day. This is *59% of all absolute poverty* outside India and China. That's almost as many people as those living in the European Union. Imagine the entire European Union living in absolute poverty. Imagine the wasted human potential.**

**Imagine trying to lift the EU out of poverty without effective states to maintain law and order, promote growth and deliver services.**

**Again if we leave aside India and China, the same 46 states account for *half of maternal deaths, half of people without access to safe drinking water, and almost half of children out of primary school.***

**Suddenly we can see one of the main reasons why it is proving so hard to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is the concentration of the poorest in crisis states.**

**And this is not about statistics. The Goals are a means to an end: a better life for people.**

**And let us be clear: people will not have a better life as long as the crisis continues. Thomas Hobbes was exactly right when he said that without an effective state there can be no learning, no society, that people are racked by continual fear, and the life of the individual is often 'nasty, brutish, and short'.**

**This leads me to the main message I would like to get across this evening. If we do not do something to promote more effective states, we will have no hope of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. No hope of relieving absolute poverty. No hope of reducing child mortality. No hope of stopping the scourge of HIV/AIDS.**

**So what should we do?**



**We are responding to the problem on many fronts.**

**But tonight I want to highlight just four issues.**

**First, we need to understand the causes of state crisis and this is precisely what the LSE Crisis States research programme is doing. Your focus on explaining why some states experience conflict, instability, or stagnation is exactly on target. We need your answers as to what has helped states emerge from crisis. You are addressing difficult questions. Why has economic liberalisation been accompanied by stability and improvement in Uganda, while Zimbabwe has experienced increasing instability and poverty? So much so that the country that was once known as the breadbasket of Africa is now unable to feed even its own people. What can be learned about the processes of consolidating peace from the experiences of Guatemala and Sierra Leone? What accounts for the relative progress in confronting the AIDS crisis in countries like Senegal and the much slower progress in other countries?**

**Each country of course has its own story, and has to be understood in its own terms. In Nepal, a longstanding failure to address poverty has combined with problems of governance to fuel discontent and conflict. The humanitarian crisis in Kosovo was triggered by ethnic tensions manipulated for political purposes. Afghanistan became vulnerable to war and international neglect when it fell victim to a regime driven by a narrow and zealous religious group, following a generation in which its conflicts were fuelled and armed by the politics of the cold war. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was ruled by a kleptocracy for decades before regional warfare and competition for valuable resources drove it beyond the point of collapse.**

**The impact of all this can often afflict entire regions not just individual states. We have seen the contagion of conflict and criminality spread in West Africa from Liberia through to Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. The Balkans and the South Caucasus are other examples.**

**But there are also wider lessons that we need to understand. Some people actually do rather well out of state crisis. Powerful people and groups can perpetuate ineffectiveness to advance their own personal and business interests. Idi Amin and Mobutu Sese Seko were two examples. International money laundering networks enable corrupt leaders to conceal revenues. Warlords can rely on the international markets to supply weapons and mercenaries at an affordable price.**

**Now the LSE Crisis States programme is looking at the ability of institutions to respond to social and economic challenges. This is absolutely central. Crisis states have often had a long history of institutional weakness and poor governance.**

**Second, we need to act earlier to prevent state crisis. This means getting better at predicting when states are heading for crisis so we decide whether and how to act. DFID is working closely with the Prime**

**Minister's Strategy Unit and other Government departments to improve our ability to identify when states are at risk of instability or collapse. This doesn't mean that we will always be able to intervene. Sometimes others will need to take the lead.**

**DFID is sponsoring research that is starting to show that development aid to prevent crisis is much less expensive than the cost of reacting afterwards. Prevention makes good economic sense. More importantly, it can save lives and promote development.**

**Better prevention also means staying involved with states that are either in trouble or heading for trouble. For long donors have been too quick to pull out when things go wrong. But as Afghanistan and the DRC have shown, walking away can carry a high price.**

**One way to stay involved is to develop long-term development partnerships. At DFID, we have made real progress on this front in the form of Partnership**

**Framework Arrangements. These are long-term agreements with developing countries such as Rwanda and Sierra Leone that ensure predictability of aid over a ten-year period. They enshrine mutual rights and responsibilities. We look to our partners to be serious about poverty reduction and good governance. In turn, we commit to predictable aid flows, and to be held accountable for our assistance.**

**Along with the international community, we need to shed the culture of short-term response and build long-term relationships.**

**Third, we need to do more to ensure that the safety and security of citizens is the foundation of development. There will be times when military force is the only way to protect human life. Think of our operations in Sierra Leone and Kosovo. Or the French in the Ivory Coast. But we need also to be better at protecting human security in other ways too. Support to effective and accountable policing for example is an important part of development. Good**

**policing that protects human rights is as important as primary education, clean water and healthcare.**

**Perhaps even more so.**

**Development and security also intertwine at the global level. Crisis states that house criminal networks, harbour terrorists, or engage in the trafficking of drugs or people undermine the world's collective security. Global prosperity – our prosperity, other people's prosperity – depends on global security. Development without security is impossible; security without development is only temporary.**

**Fourth, we must recognize that no agency can act alone. DFID is working closely with the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit to create a common framework for supporting effective states. We are aiming to devise an integrated approach that combines development programmes with diplomatic**

**engagement and security interventions. The common goal is reducing the risk of state crises.**

**We have to work in partnership both internationally and regionally. The United Nations, the World Bank, and the OECD are important partners. We have seen that NATO and regional bodies such as Economic Community of West African States can be critical. It was ECOWAS that sent the troops into Liberia with US support. The proposals for a common EU Security Strategy show real promise for a more integrated response as well. So does Poul Nielson's plan to fund peace support operation in Africa through the African Union. In Burundi, the African Union has a force in place to provide peace and stability. DFID is supporting this force along with other EU partners.**

**Finally, 2005 will be a year of challenges, but also great expectations.**

**It will be a decisive year for multilateralism, with the UN's conference to review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.**

**It will be the year that the UN will respond to Kofi Annan's High Level Panel. When Kofi Annan spoke last September to launch the High Level Panel, he said, look, if you don't want states to act unilaterally, then the UN must respond the tasks set out under the Charter.**

**We stand at the threshold of opportunity. Now is the chance for the UN to identify state crisis in advance; to work more effectively in co-operation with the World Bank and others to prevent crisis; and to act decisively when human security is at risk.**

**And, of course, 2005 will be the year in which the UK will hold both the chair of the G8 and the presidency of an expanded European Union. A great opportunity to show leadership but also a great responsibility at a**



**time when the whole world will be watching to see what we do.**

**It is time to recognise our moral, political and social obligations to do something about global poverty. By the end of 2005 the world will not just have watched, it will have judged. It will ask what we have achieved. I look forward to working with you to meet this responsibility.**