

UNO 515

DPA
IMF
World Bank
Africa Econ Dev.
Note to the Secretary-General

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

LETTERS TO MR CAMDESSUS AND MR WOLFENSOHN

1. Ms Lindenmayer has kindly shared with me the letters you sent on 30 July to the Managing Director of the IMF and the President of the World Bank (copies attached for ease of reference) concerning post-conflict peace-building, particularly in certain African countries. I note that you have suggested the creation of "a group comprising the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the UN Development Group to study how best we can be more supportive of countries, such as Sierra Leone, which are emerging from conflict", and the convening of a meeting between those entities, and further discussion of cooperation "between the BWIs and the UN system in specific programme areas, such as demobilization, disarmament and reintegration."

2. I note that there is no reference to DPA in these letters, an oversight which might create the impression of a departure from your decision to designate the Department as the focal point for post-conflict peace-building, which has been communicated to, and agreed by, the General Assembly, as part of your reform package of July 1997. Post-conflict peace-building has since become one of the core responsibilities of DPA as specifically spelled out in its mission statement. Since DPA is devoting considerable energy, albeit with sparse resources, to establish its place in the universe in this field, through its work in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, to mention a few cases in Africa, confusion on the subject might have unwanted effects including, *inter alia*, in the Security Council.

3. I would see it as flowing naturally from the responsibilities of DPA as described above that it should be the convener of the group whose creation you have proposed. May I suggest that, at the first opportunity, perhaps when Mr Camdessus and Mr Wolfensohn respond to your letters, this point might be clarified?

Alvaro de Soto
6 August 1999

- cc: DSG
- Mr Malloch Brown
- Mr Riza
- Mr Prendergast
- Ms Lindenmayer

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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

30 July 1999

Dear Jim,

I am writing to you with some thoughts and proposals arising from the experience of my recent visit to West Africa.

I need not remind you how complex the task of post-conflict peacebuilding can be, and how daunting it can seem to those who must carry it out. The challenges involved -- including the disarmament, demobilization, and the reintegration of combatants; the rehabilitation of infrastructure; the creation of democratic institutions; and reconciliation among former antagonists, often following terrible communal violence -- all require substantial resources and intricate synchronisation. Each element affects the other, for good and bad, and the process is extremely fragile, much more difficult than waging war.

I believe that it is the responsibility of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, to strongly support the good-faith efforts of peoples and nations to resolve conflicts and restore stability to their societies. Such efforts are now being undertaken in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which are among the countries I have just visited. Their poverty is evident on nearly every street. But even more apparent, the faces of the people who looked to me for help revealed their dignity and hopes for lasting peace. We must respond, in the time-honoured tradition of the World Bank and the United Nations, in a spirit of solidarity, recognizing that such countries cannot make their way out of dire straits on their own.

Mr. James D. Wolfensohn
President
The World Bank
Washington, D.C.

I consider that it would be valuable to set up a group comprising the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the UN Development Group to study how best we can be more supportive of countries, such as Sierra Leone, which are emerging from conflict. We should, at the same time, assist countries like Guinea, which become flooded with refugees as a result of instability in the region.

I am concerned that without the kind of financial and organizational support which organizations like ours can bring to bear on such situations, fragile peace may be threatened, and attempts to achieve stability might falter. I believe that it should be possible to develop a way of assisting such countries in a flexible and creative manner. Specifically, we might want to consider organizing a meeting of the UN Development Group, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to explore how we can bring into our plans and programmes greater flexibility for countries in such situations in Africa and elsewhere. The lack of international funding can slow the pace of post-conflict peace-building, and yet the slow pace of post-conflict peace-building is often cited as a reason to withhold or delay international funding.

Finally, we might also discuss cooperation between the BWIs and the UN system in specific programme areas, such as demobilization, disarmament and reintegration. Macroeconomic questions are closely linked to such specific programme issues and it is crucial that we not permit a gap to develop between them.

It would be tragic indeed if we did not take advantage of the current momentum, when some very important steps are being made towards peace and stability in West Africa. The return to civilian rule in Nigeria, the peace agreement for Sierra Leone, the consolidation of peace in Liberia -- each of these cases shows that African leaders and their peoples are taking responsibility for the well-being of their societies, as we have often called on them to do. As they fulfil their obligations, I look forward to exploring with you how we can fulfil ours.

With warmest
personal regards

Yours sincerely,



Kofi A. Annan



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

DPA / AD II

10 AUG 1999

ACTION:

SKB/YM
all staff

YM

30 July 1999

Dear Michel,

I am writing to you with some thoughts and proposals arising from the experience of my recent visit to West Africa.

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Mr. Michel Camdessus
Managing Director
The International Monetary Fund
Washington, D.C.

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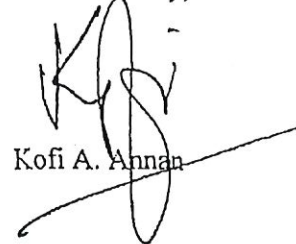
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Kofi A. Annan