

9. The challenges of relief and development in dangerous places

Overview

2015 was a particularly important year for security and development. A new development agenda was enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a number of review processes took stock of what is and is not working in the field of international development. This chapter examines the prospects for delivering the SDGs and the concurrent challenges of providing humanitarian and development assistance in dangerous places.

Section I introduces the SDG agenda and shows the expanded scope of the SDGs relative to that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000–15). A brief summary of global policy initiatives in 2015 illustrates the range of review and reform initiatives that are being recalibrated to deliver the SDG agenda. The remainder of the section looks at the development challenges faced by the 2.58 billion people living in dangerous places—countries with a high incidence of violent death—and the source of large numbers of refugees and/or displaced persons. Dangerous places only account for 36 per cent of the world’s population, but they account for 61 per cent of the world’s poverty and 67 per cent of the children not expected to complete their secondary education in the next 15 years. The development challenges in dangerous places are also security challenges: 78 per cent of the world’s violent deaths occur in dangerous places; 98 per cent of the world’s refugees come from dangerous places; and dangerous places are home to 97 per cent of the world’s internal displacement.

Most of the world’s emergencies occur in dangerous places, and so the challenges of relief and development will remain interlinked over the next 15 years of the SDG agenda. Section II provides a brief synopsis of the principal humanitarian emergencies in 2015, and the scale and scope of humanitarian disaster and response. Nearly all of these emergencies occurred in dangerous places, further demonstrating how relief and security are interlinked in these fragile situations. Section III describes a case study on the Nepal earthquake in 2015 and provides an overview of the international response, including a reflection on the effectiveness of that response as seen through impact evaluation. The application of impact evaluations, a common practice in development, to humanitarian assistance could help to make responses to future disasters more efficient and effective.

Section IV looks at how the Afghan Government and international stakeholders struggled to deliver development and peace in 2015, and explores the human

security status of the Afghan population. The Nepal and Afghanistan examples illustrate the challenges that states face in delivering sustainable development when fragility, violence and emergencies coincide.

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