

# **BUILDING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR LEADERSHIP IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

During this last decade of the century, we have witnessed an increasing amount of civil strife and ethnic conflict. The short-lived euphoria and visions of a kinder and gentler world that briefly emerged at the end of the cold war rapidly made way for a pattern of institutional disintegration in many areas of the world. As the contestants of the cold war lost interest in, and control over, their former client states, many of these dissolved into quagmires of conflict.

At the same time, donor countries began to question the traditional post-colonial model of development cooperation, delivered mainly through technical assistance programs, and started to support a new paradigm, driven by globalization and privatization. Similarly, as the demands on the international community's humanitarian solidarity increased, faith in its effectiveness was sorely tested. As a result, by now, the purchasing power of Official Development Assistance (ODA) has shrunk to nearly half of the volume it had reached at the end of the eighties. Much of what remains goes to the multi-lateral financial institutions, and a broad array of development and relief organizations, international and national, governmental and non-governmental, has to scramble for the leftovers. Additional funding for humanitarian assistance during the crises of the 1990s often had to be found by reducing the resources for development. Moreover, as donor fatigue has set in, charitable giving in many countries has suffered similar setbacks as ODA.