

Address to the Golden Spear 2005 Symposium
on Civil-Military Cooperation in Disaster Management

By
Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka,
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Executive Director



UN-HABITAT
The United Nations Human Settlements Programme
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Colonel Shem Amadi, National Focal Point for Disaster Response for Kenya

Admiral Jackson, U.S. Central Command,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Mrs. Tibaijuka has asked me to apologise on her behalf for not being able to attend in person today because of another international commitment in her schedule. She has therefore asked me, as her representative, to deliver her message to this distinguished gathering on behalf of the United Nations. She wants me to share with you some of our views and insights on **Civil-Military Cooperation in Disaster Management**, the theme of this year's Golden Spear symposium.*

Given the urgent need to strengthen cooperation, mutual support and understanding among Governments, and between the civilian and military actors involved in humanitarian work in Africa, this forum is of the utmost importance.

First and foremost, therefore, I wish to personally thank our hosts, the Government of Kenya, and distinguished participants from Kenya, the United States and the region for joining us here today. I wish, also, to acknowledge and thank those who have arranged this important regional gathering.

It is now five years since world leaders committed themselves in the Millennium Declaration to a set of eight ambitious goals aimed at eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, empowering women, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, fighting AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability. The eighth goal is aimed at forging a new global partnership between rich and poor countries – and it is in this spirit that we meet here this week with our American friends.

Distinguished Participants,

I want to start by reflecting briefly on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report 2005. It states that of the 13 million deaths in large-scale conflicts worldwide between 1994 and 2003, over 9 million were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the same period, 669,000 people died as a consequence of natural disasters. Nearly three-quarters of these deaths were in Eastern and Southern Asia, and for Africa the figure was nearly 40,000.

Then, in a matter of hours on the 26th of December 2004, from the coast of Indonesia to Somalia, the Indian Ocean tsunami struck in many countries killing hundreds of thousands more. Many of the deaths resulting from natural disasters could have been prevented through early warning

systems and other measures. But, because of competing priorities, the poorest countries and people tend to lose out.

It is self evident that efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger are frequently set back by conflict and natural disasters. Hunger and poverty, in turn, can provide fertile ground for conflict, and erode our ability to cope with disasters, be they natural or of our own making.

Distinguished Participants,

In nearly every conflict and disaster around the world, international and local civilian humanitarian workers find themselves working to a greater or lesser degree with local military forces, United Nations peacekeeping forces from many countries, or military forces providing bilateral assistance.

General John M. Shalikashvili, the former Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, recognized the need for good civil-military cooperation in a message to his soldiers in 1997, and I quote: “What's the relationship between a just arrived military force and the NGO a private voluntary organization that might have been working in a crisis-torn area all along? What we have is a partnership. If you are successful, they are successful; and, if they are successful, you are successful. We need each other.”

At UN-HABITAT, we have found this sort of cooperation to work well, for example, in Liberia, where for just over a year with UNDP and the National Transitional Government of Liberia, we are providing skills training to help reintegrate hundreds of ex-combatants into the local community. We have found similar exemplary cooperation in our agency's post-conflict programmes in Angola, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Rwanda.

Under the Habitat Agenda, our agency is mandated to promote and encourage all parts of society to participate in disaster preparedness planning and in disaster prevention through activities that build a culture of prevention. And it is thus that the agency has been working in Indonesia, Maldives, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand to help the tsunami survivors rebuild their lives. Here again, cooperation with regional and local military authorities has been exemplary, in helping bring people and cultures together like never before in such a calamity.

It is also exemplified by our collaboration with the Government of Kenya in the successful National Disaster Management Programme that seeks to plan ahead with neighbouring countries to avert crises emanating from drought and other causes.

It is important that disaster mitigation and vulnerability reduction policies are integrated into poverty reduction and development planning. As the 1994 *Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief* recommends, there should be a clear link between relief, rehabilitation and development. Emergency measures should be seen not only as a humanitarian end in themselves, but also as providing an opportunity towards long-term development. Or as President Clinton recently put it in the tsunami context, we have to “build back better”.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our collective experience has taught us that humanitarian assistance must consider broader geographic areas than where immediate needs exist. For example, displaced people should not be required to return to their places of origin unless protection and livelihoods are secured back home, which often means military involvement.

Furthermore the movement of the displaced persons within and across borders always has security implications for neighboring countries and regions as the military commanders among you are only too aware. Therefore, a regional approach as advocated by this distinguished gathering, as well as civil-military cooperation, is critical to better disaster management in Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by asking you, as the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, the UN agency for human settlements, to reflect too on the scale of the slow-motion tsunami of urban poverty in Africa, the world's fastest urbanizing continent. Our latest research shows 72 percent of urban dwellers in Sub-Saharan Africa live in slums. That percentage represents a total of 187 million people. By the year 2030 half of its population will be living and working in towns and cities. Yet only 19 per cent of the urban population in Africa has access to running water, and only 7.5 per cent are connected to the sewerage system.

Earlier this year, as a member of the Commission for Africa constituted by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, I submitted a detailed report on these latest findings for the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland.

The scale of this urban crisis constitutes a latent crucible of future conflict and disaster on this continent. Sound civil-military cooperation in humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict situations can help create a proper foundation for longer-term development.

It is by considering this during the course of your deliberations here this week, that we can also help keep the promise of the Millennium Declaration.

Thank you for your attention.