

**Address by Ms. Julia Taft**  
**UN DPI/NGO 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict:**  
**A Shared Responsibility**  
**Tues. 10 Sept 2002, 3:00-5:30 pm, UN Secretariat**

I want to welcome all of you this afternoon for our discussion on economic revitalization in post-conflict situations. I am Julia Taft, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of UNDP and a former NGO, so it is a particular honor to be the moderator of this important panel.

This 55<sup>th</sup> Annual DPI/NGO Conference on “Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict: A Shared Responsibility” captures the important theme of broad involvement by all people in healing the wounds of conflict. It underscores that collectively the people in the affected country, their public and private institutions, and the broader international community can join together in rebuilding and revitalizing the social, economic and political dimensions of a country emerging from crisis.

The tasks are daunting, but as the diverse conference programme illustrates, a rich tapestry of issues weaves together the opportunities for collective action. Other panels address governance, reconciliation, human rights and social services. Our focus in this afternoon’s panel is on the economy. “From Less than Zero: The Challenge of Rebuilding Economies” will address not only individual and community-based livelihoods, but also the need for more sustainable economic frameworks which can ensure a peace dividend and provide a climate for longer term recovery and investment.

The United Nations is an important partner in mobilizing resources and generating some of the urgently needed building blocks from micro-credit, to community-based housing and infrastructure, to broad based employment creation projects, to sustainable reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, IDPs and refugees.

**My agency, UNDP, an active partner in these programmes, so often states that it has a presence in a country before, during and after a crisis and is, thus, well-placed to initiate and support economic revitalization. Our contribution to their economic recovery spans from removing landmines to make land safe for cultivation and living, creating political space for civil society to express alternate views and influence policy dialogue and decision making at all levels – local, national, global, and rebuilding the capacities of individuals and NGOs to guide their own economic recovery.**

**However, it is important to underscore that, in fact, the citizens of the country are there before, during and after a conflict. They are the true engines of recovery.**

**The World Bank, the donors, UN agencies, international NGOs, and the private sector all bear shared responsibilities. But at the core is the people of the country who bear the burden, and ultimately must shape the local and national framework for sustainable recovery.**

**Today, we will hear about some of the most successful strategies for rebuilding economics from several dynamic visionaries who have extensive experience and fresh perspectives on this issue.**

**I am pleased to introduce them in the order of their presentations. After their remarks, the audience is invited to write questions which will be the basis for our “shared responsibility” for responding to them.**

**The panelists include:**

**Kazuhide Kuroda, Knowledge Management Officer in the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, World Bank Group. Mr. Kuroda advises the World Bank country teams on conflict related issues such as demobilization in Cambodia and Guinea-Bissau. Before he worked 16 years at the UN on humanitarian and disaster relief projects.**

**Vincent Lelei, Oxfam UK, Regional Director for the Horn, East and Central Africa, has served as Director of Oxfam’s operations, advocacy and campaigns since 2000. Formerly of the World Bank, Mr. Lelei developed innovative programmes on rebuilding livelihoods of families devastated from drought and conflict.**

**Viloyat Mirzoeva, Director, Gender and Development (G&D) Organization which works to promote a more favorable environment for private businesses in Tajikistan, especially those run by women. A former government official in the Ministry of Education and Director of WID Bureau her vision has always been to ensure the participation of women in shaping equal policies to advocate for gender planning at all levels.**

**Evgenii Vassilev, Chief Coordinator, Trails of Peace Project. Prior to his involvement with the Balkan Youth Reconciliation Seminar series, Mr. Vassilev was a liaison for Bulgaria with the European Commission.**

**Their full bios are in the programme document and their websites. Welcome to each of you, and let us begin by giving Kaz the opportunity to launch our discussion.**