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# **Between Hope and Insecurity: The Social Consequences of the Cambodian Peace Process**

UNRISD Monograph, Geneva 1994  
edited by Peter Utting

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## Preface

In April 1993, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) held a workshop in Geneva on **The Social Consequences of the Peace Process in Cambodia**. The discussions focused on the impact on the Cambodian economy and society of the large-scale United Nations peace-keeping operation and the dramatic influx of international agencies and personnel which occurred in 1992. They also considered alternative strategies for reconstructing a wartorn economy and civil society, key social problems that require urgent attention, and future research priorities. This volume brings together the papers that were presented at the meeting.

The workshop was a first step towards establishing a new research programme on social development in post-conflict situations. For several years, UNRISD has been co-ordinating research programmes in many parts of the world on a variety of related themes, in particular, the causes of ethnic conflict, the dynamics of political violence, and the return of refugees to their homelands. The idea of launching a new area of research, concerned with generating a better understanding of what happens when wars end, emerged in part out of the findings of these three programmes.

The meeting brought together a diverse range of people involved in peace-keeping and rehabilitation activities. The 40 participants included aid workers, national planners, grassroots and human rights activists, as well as representatives of academic institutions, multilateral organizations and national and international NGOs.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the participants to talk openly about their experiences, hopes and frustrations. Some of the discussions were very disturbing, both because they involved accounts of awful events and because they revealed the ineffectiveness of many initiatives of international agencies to end suffering and assist those who have survived.

Inevitably there were some fundamental disagreements about interpretations of particular events and of appropriate ways forward, but it became clear that there was knowledge available about what might be done to improve the effectiveness of international interventions to secure peace. However, the discussions also revealed the pressing need for further research in this field on a range of key issues, such as post-conflict economic strategy, the social consequences of troop demobilization, the socio-psychological effects of war, appropriate forms of foreign aid and delivery mechanisms, and the roles and responsibilities of different types of local, national and international institutions involved in processes of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

I hope that this report will be read by a wide international audience, for it exposes a number of serious problems which require urgent attention.

December 1993

Dharam Ghai  
Director

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The authors would also like to thank all the participants in the workshop for their comments and to express their appreciation to Jenifer Freedman, Rhonda Gibbes and Usha Tankha for editorial assistance, and to Anita Tombez for secretarial support.

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