

Chapter 5

The International Community as a Catalyzer for Peace

**Even the longest journey begins with a first small step.
Fulani and Touareg proverb**

The first four chapters of this book have told a story of alienation and peacemaking in northern Mali. We have seen how the armed revolt was born of political and economic isolation, of poverty aggravated by one-party rule, and drought which brought us to the impact of declining natural resources in the Sahel. After the stories of violence and negotiation, we have followed the process of peacemaking. The present chapter looks at the role of the international community—mainly but not exclusively the UN agencies—and how their helpful drops of oil lubricated the Malian machinery for peace. One lesson from Mali's story is that a small contribution at the crucial moment can have a big impact on the way in which the peace machinery functions. Every meeting may help, each separate obstacle has to be overcome. In peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, as our proverb suggests, no initiative is so small that it is not worth a try.

5.1 United Nations Projects and Non-governmental Actions

Although the United Nations may have an important role to play, United Nations agencies cannot lead the development of northern Mali. It is civil society which brought an end to the conflict, and only through civil society can we win permanent peace. The government is the main supporting player. All development strategies at present aim first and foremost to restore government services: administrative services, security services, and the social services of health and education, followed by water supplies and technical development services like agro-pastoral extension and rural credit.

To give honour where it is due, the Malians' most important support for peace and development in the North has come from Algeria and France, both of whom have been generous in an area which most donors shy away from:

supporting and strengthening security.¹ With a few exceptions, donors all want to “do their own project”, giving relatively little support to joint peace-building (at least until the UN Trust Fund was created in 1995). Restoring security is part of peace-building. While most donors evade their responsibilities by blaming the government for continuing insecurity, the United Nations has recognized the importance of establishing security first, in order to get development programmes moving again. We describe the United Nations contribution as “pouring drops of oil into the machinery of peacemaking”. But there is also the cumulative contribution of the United Nations family to development and peace-building. This is far from negligible, as Table 5.1 of ongoing United Nations projects shows.

What is irritating about lists of project funding is that they give little idea of impact in the field. While ACOPAM and UNCDF seem to achieve a lot with very little, the PSARK project of IFAD in Kidal has been paralysed by bureaucratic and political wrangling: only 17 per cent of the project’s resources have actually been disbursed, and this has mostly been spent on keeping the project’s management system in place for the past ten years (one very much wants to ask what they were actually managing). But since only 41 per cent of all the promised donor funds for the North have been disbursed (see Annex 3), the same question could be asked of several banks and donors. The IFAD programmes for rice growers in Ségou region have achieved great success, to the extent of actually becoming famous, largely due to the decentralized project design. The Kidal project on the other hand is highly centralized. For some reason, executive power resides in the BOAD in Lomé, in distant Togo. Following absurdly inappropriate banking procedures, field expenses have to be approved in Lomé: this for a programme located in one of the remotest regions of Africa with no roads and no telephones. Asked in conversation about the failure of the PSARK, former Rural Development Minister Madame Maimouna Ba, who follows the project closely, explains, “If you need a vehicle, it takes 18 months because you have to go through the administration in Lomé. If you say the UNCDF has better results than IFAD, the difference is entirely due to their management systems.”

¹ Details of their contributions are given in the official ambassadorial declarations: Algeria, pp. 50-51 and France, pp. 57-62, in GRM 1993.

Table 5.1
United Nations Ongoing Projects in Northern Mali*

No.	Project name	Agencies involved	UN budget (\$US)
1	Improvement of Lake Faguibine lake system	UNSO	4,254,661
2	Rice cultivation support in Gao and Timbuktu	UNCDF	3,333,338
3	Rural development project with multiple objectives, N Mali	WFP	12,400,000
4	Development of the Zone Lacustre lakes south of Timbuktu	UNSO	3,506,398
5	Nutrition and food security	UNICEF	3,036,100
6	Health programme for northern regions (UNICEF integrated health systems)	UNICEF-EU	1,444,644
7	Poverty eradication through national volunteers	UNDP	2,388,650
8	Special Fund for Northern Mali (UN Trust Fund)	Numerous donors (see Chapter 5.6)	9,693,424
9	Special assistance for the North	FAO, UNDP	1,603,440
10	Long-term support to returning refugees and displaced persons	WFP	10,300,000
11	Support to peace in Mali and the sub-region	UNDP	125,000
12	Support to the UN Resident Coordinator for peace-support	UNDP	336,000
13	Support for governance, conflict prevention and peace-building	UNDP	1,200,000
14	Agricultural development in the lakes region of Timbuktu Phase I	IFAD, OPEC, WFP, Mali	9,673,270

15	Agricultural development in the lakes region of Timbuktu Phase II	IFAD, OPEC, WFP, Mali	19,406,620
16	Food and revenue security in Kidal Region PSARK	IFAD, BID, WFP, Mali	18,886,186
17	Programme to repatriate refugees and displaced populations 1997	UNHCR	7,270,616
18	Programme to repatriate refugees and displaced populations 1998	UNHCR	4,870,000
19	Community health centre construction	WHO**	51,116
20	Support and monitoring of a sub-regional Moratorium on small arms	UNCDA, UNDP, Mali	5,900,000
21	Disarmament research and training	UNIDIR	150,000
22	Training in human rights and democracy	UNCHR, UNIDIR, CAPSDH	140,000
23	UN Trust Fund: strengthening civil society in northern Mali	UNDP, UN/DPA	3,000,000
24	Food production support in Mopti and Timbuktu	ILO-ACOPAM-AFAR	500,000
	Total for Ongoing UN Programmes		123,469,463

Sources: GRM 1993, pp. 53-56; UNHCR 1996, p. 30; UNDP office Bamako.

Note: Acronyms are explained in Annex 6.

* All figures are indicative. They depend not only on programme planning within each agency and ministry and region, but also on resources becoming available. Naturally these figures for ongoing projects take no account of previous funding over many years.

** Other WHO programmes benefit the whole country, which is also true for other agencies.

The situation is not very different for the IFAD programme in Niger, which was actually the target of the very first raid of the Touareg rebellion, in May 1990. For at least six months before the attack, IFAD staff members knew that Touareg frustration was likely to boil over. Tensions were running so high that in 1989 the drivers petitioned for IFAD project vehicles to be repainted, so they would not be recognized. After the raid on IFAD's base in Tchén Tchabaraden, some of the attackers were caught and imprisoned across the Malian frontier in Menaka: it was to free them that Iyyad led the first attack of the Malian rebellion

in June 1990. As we shall discover in Chapter 6, peace in northern Mali depends on relaunching the economy, and the relaunch of Kidal's economy depends on the PSARK. While we do not go so far as to blame IFAD for the Touareg rebellion, it is clear that IFAD and BOAD need to undertake some serious rethinking.

IFAD is not the only agency whose impact has been criticized. Banks like the BAD and the BID figure prominently in the official funding tables, but their impacts are invisible to the majority of Mali's population. If we don't see the results, it may be a question of poor communications or it may be a problem of poor design and execution, with money going mostly to fund salaries and accommodation for highly qualified intellectuals who actually achieve little for the people of the North. Development money pours into ministries, but it is not clear where it comes out. There are important political interests at stake. All development banks and bilateral donors tend to play politics before they consider development impacts, and this criticism can be levelled at certain multilateral agencies. Under a military government or a repressive one-party regime, every assistance to any ministry (even WHO and UNICEF working with the Ministry of Health) may turn out to be helping agents of repression rather than agents of socio-economic development. In northern Mali 10 years ago, we believe that this was so. At the time of writing we believe it is no longer the case when Mali's democratic Government is making every effort to promote peace and development in the North.

Other United Nations inputs in the North have been generally at the level of strategic thinking and planning. Many of the documents and debates in Mali's peacemaking process were funded by the UNDP, which certainly had a helpful influence throughout the past three years, promoting dialogue and peacemaking, and the elements which make for good governance (including Mali's elections). It is difficult to measure the impact of something like a UNIDIR regional conference on micro-disarmament, although it is certainly a "good" event. Research on disarmament is clearly helpful, even valuable. It may be the catalyst for peace and disarmament, or later for the re-organization of the armies of the region, but such impacts are hard to quantify in the short term. We are supporters of this United Nations long-term strategic thinking, whether or not the effects can be measured. Although it is easy to count children on a school bench, we are sceptical of the belief that abstract concepts like "good" or "development" or even "education" can be measured statistically. One of the most positive impacts that the United Nations can have, in our opinion, is in promoting discussion at the national and regional level of measures in favour of joint peace-building across the frontiers. We shall return to this theme in our final chapter.

As a general rule, our experience shows that development money is best spent if it touches the beneficiaries directly, working in partnership with strong grassroots organizations. Of the United Nations agencies, the easiest to evaluate is the World Food Programme, because the food-for-work is given directly to the workers in the villages, very often on projects which are carried out in collaboration with NGOs who provide on-the-spot supervision with technical advice. Free food handouts promote the “dependency syndrome”, but WFP’s move into food-for-work often provides a very helpful stimulus for grassroots development.

All the bilateral donors and many of the United Nations Agencies use NGOs as partners in the application of their programmes. While some NGOs are too small to be effective, they are generally close to the grassroots. As we shall see in the next section, the UNHCR has given grants for well-digging, income generation and agricultural development to a dozen NGOs.² What is striking however, is the reluctance of the donors to make substantial grants to national NGOs. On the HCR list there are five French NGOs and, at most, two Malian NGOs. Gua Mina has received money for working with women in Timbuktu. The second is ACORD: originally created as an international NGO consortium in 1974, many Malian observers consider that ACORD has succeeded in making the transition to “Malian NGO”.

ACORD’s is the model programme in the North. The NGO put into practice the ideas of an FAO mission to relaunch the cooperatives in the wake of the 1974 drought, in order to create alternative development poles in areas where out-migration and loss of crops and livestock had severely disrupted the socio-economic structures of the communities. This was a time when the military regime had actually crushed the cooperatives, which were too closely associated with the previous regime of Modibo Keita. The French IRAM provided inspiration, and they provided André and Maryse Marty who worked with Adama Ouloguem and his team in the cooperative service to create seed banks and cereal banks and revolving loan systems for small ruminant herds, and community medicine within a cooperative structure of decentralized democratic governance. Transparency was achieved through democracy, and both were practised in the

² For water and health, UNHCR has given money to ACORD, Action Contre la Faim, Norwegian Church Aid (AEN), Aide Médicale Internationale, Centre Canadien d’Etude et de Coopération Internationale, Comité pour Léré, GTZ Germany, and World Vision. Islamic Relief, Atlas and Equilibre and the Red Cross-Red Crescent are helping with refugee transit, and Gua Mina is organizing income generation in Léré (as are ACORD, ACF, AEN, CECI, and WV). See UNHCR 1996b, p. 4, table 3.

general assembly of each cooperative, which took decisions and supervised distributions. The following figures are taken from Coulibaly (1995, p. 28), who describes the programme in terms of “the tenacity, the mobilization of energies, the capacity for imagination which only come from ‘developers’ who listen to the grassroots structures of the people”.

ACORD started in Gao and spread westwards.³ Within six years there were 12 livestock cooperatives functioning, six for fishermen, 39 village multi-functional *groupements*: a total of 101 villages and 40 nomad fractions were organized and 25 per cent of the population had received livestock or fishing loans. Nothing was given free. Everything was on credit. There were 90 seed banks giving out a bag of seed for sowing in June, receiving up to two bags of grain at harvest time: repayment rates varied from village to village, the main thing being that the poor no longer had to borrow seed from the money-lenders. One hundred per cent repayment rates were general for the first six years, until the crisis was over and repayments seemed less important for maintaining community solidarity. But the programme did not stop there. ACORD has continued to work with the communities, changing their activities (for example, increasing literacy and accountancy training) as the needs have evolved. Their constancy over 18 years in the North, says the current Director, provided a basis of mutual confidence which helped the NGO to act as mediator during the years of violence (Rita Ba 1995).

The success of ACORD and its NGO partners is best measured by the response of their customers. At the height of the troubles, when no vehicles could leave town without the danger of attack, the populations were in a state of shock. Many had vanished into the desert, and development programmes were grinding to a standstill. ACORD sent out the message to its partners that two General Assemblies would be held, one each for the pastoral and valley zones. To the surprise and pleasure of the NGOs, 85 groups sent representatives to the Menaka meeting, 65 to the second in Bourem. Certain delegates had travelled three days by camel, representing cooperative groups which were thought to have disappeared. Thereafter, development work began anew, using the “inverse method”. Since the NGO vehicles were grounded, the agro-pastoralists took on the travelling: they “inversed” the extension mechanism, bringing millet to

³ The backbone of programme funding came from ACORD’s founder members Oxfam, DWHH, Novib, NICOS, Inter Pares, War on Want, GARD. In the early days the World Council of Churches’ Sahel Team in Ouagadougou and Misereor provided additional financial support, with volunteers from Dutch SNV and French AFVP. There was also collaboration with the only national Malian NGO working in the 1970s: Secours catholique malienne (Secama).

exchange for improved seeds, collecting and disseminating technical details, collecting and reimbursing micro-credits.

In Timbuktu, ACORD's collaboration started in 1978 with Ile de Paix and Frères des Hommes and Terres des Hommes, and later with UNICEF. There were very few NGOs working in Mali then. The 1984 drought brought an influx of NGOs, which led to the creation of the *Comité de Coordination des Actions des ONG* (this period is described in detail in Muller 1989, and subsequent developments in Deme and Poulton 1998). There were virtually no national NGOs at all before 1982-83: which saw the creation of AMRAD, AMADE, AETA, OMAES, and Gua Mina, the first of the development NGOs to grow with Malian roots. It is easy to forget in 1997, with 550 local and 100 foreign NGOs registered in Mali, that the right of association was only won through the popular revolution of 1991. Considered a basic freedom by the democrats, this democratic right is constantly under threat from the habits of centralizing administration which were moulded by the one-party State. The concepts of "civil society" and "democratic governance" are not yet assured of victory.

It is this which worries us, when we see that United Nations and bilateral agencies are not developing the institutions of Mali's civil society. For it is the leaders of traditional and modern civil societies who have brought an end to the war and who must lead the peace. Nor are we proposing a simple repetition of past recipes. The best document yet produced on the relaunch of the North recommends specifically that "It is clear today to the authorities, to the populations concerned, to their development partners and to the NGOs, that there is an extreme need to reanalyse the question of development for these regions" (Coulibaly 1995, p. 30).

Among donors, it is the United Nations agencies who are most likely to join in this process of reflection (and indeed UNDP has already begun the process, under the creative impetus of Djédi Sylla and Ibrahim ag Youssouf). Most donors are reluctant to support long-term self-sustaining development. The "development banks" are the worst: far from the field and dominated by lines of zeros. Donor officials are praised in their headquarters for spending money. We have often heard, "Give us a BIGGER project!" Never mind the size and absorptive capacity of the village, let alone our conviction that development comes first through the mobilisation of national resources. We often hear:

“You’ve got to move the money in the current financial year!” Never mind that local communities follow the seasons, and not the accountants.⁴

What donors like is a “project”, a nice short thing, preferably with a building or some imported vehicles which can be photographed, and on which the donor can stick his logo. Some people don’t like funding water programmes because it is difficult to photograph an underground well, and how can you photograph the “health education” or “clean water management” components which make the difference between success or failure in a well-digging project? Yet that is what NGOs are good at: helping villagers to organize, to create wealth and human development. As the NGO planners emphasise, “the bilateral funders need to turn a corner in the direction of development. In place of big extrovert projects which are over-ambitious, we need to promote projects with modest targets which take account of the socio-economic realities in these regions” (Coulibaly 1995, p. 45). This is not a revolutionary approach: the OECD has long recognized that “donor projects” are a part of the problem, that we need to find alternative approaches (Lecomte 1986). It is small-scale, long-term grassroots development, and not the big flashy projects, which will help the development of the North. Yet again in 1997, even “good” donors such as the Dutch in Menaka and certain United Nations agencies look like they are going to fall into the trap of short-term “high spending projects”.

Donor agencies are famous for not learning from past mistakes. A good example is unfortunately at hand: free food handouts. There is only one natural and intelligent reaction to free gifts: “If we can get it for free, why bother to work for it?” This was precisely one of the great problems after the 1984 drought: there was so much free assistance that it was difficult to persuade villagers in northern Mali to take responsibility for their own development. The debate on linking relief with development is perennial. We thought that WFP had persuaded everyone to accept “food-for-work”. We thought the UNDP had convinced people to go for human development. We thought that the NGOs had won the debate in favour of long-term development strategies. It seems not. Even inside the United Nations, donors just go right ahead as they always did. In Chapter 7, we shall find UNHCR justifying non-cooperation with UNDP on the grounds that

⁴ We exempt from this general criticism the five-year funding policy of USAID NGO programmes, certain Dutch and Swiss projects, and the Micro-Realisation programme funded by the European Union: many of their actions have been positive in the direction of smaller grassroots interventions, despite their preference for funding overseas NGOs rather than local civil society. For the EU’s new (1997) ECHO programme in the North, it is too early for us to take a view.

their “mandates are different”: the hoary old separation of relief and development. We were present at a donor food meeting, where a NGO representative supporting food-for-work had three times been interrupted by “big” donors wanting free handouts. Finally the chairman gave her the floor and apologised. “It’s quite all right,” she smiled sweetly, “being from an NGO, I am used to not being listened to.” Meanwhile Western donors and Islamic donors, and the so-called “Development Banks” just “dish out the dosh”, increasing long-term debt and dependency without any reference to long term development goals.⁵

There is a classic Malian illustration that even the beneficiaries prefer food-for-work. When the refugees did not return in 1992, USAID found itself with 4,000 tons of inferior red sorghum which needed to be eaten, or it would rot. The sorghum was handed out free to people who had suffered seriously from banditry and theft. A gift is not the best cultural solution in northern Mali: the lack of reciprocity means that a gift restricts a recipient’s freedom and acts upon his honour. A Touareg fraction in Menaka approached GARI and World Vision to ask for help. “It is better to organize a work project, and then to pay people with grain for their work. This is preferable to giving the grain as gift to people who do not work. Therefore we wish you to come and help us organize an NGO food-for-work project.” This story travelled quickly around the North as an example of community purpose restored after the long years of post-drought depression. As we have often said in donor meetings that it takes years to build up a spirit of community independence, but you can re-establish dependency in a single day.

5.2 UNHCR and Refugees

Once again, we are not going to pretend that we have precise figures. We accept the UNHCR’s estimate that around 100,000 refugees had returned to Mali by the end of 1996. We are relying on secondary sources on refugees because we never had the opportunity to visit any of the refugee camps in Algeria or Mauritania or Burkina Faso⁶ although we have seen and talked with plenty of

⁵ For a rationale of how donors and NGOs can and should work together, see the essay “On Theories and Strategies” in *Putting People First* (Poulton and Harris 1988). Donors find it difficult to accept civil society organizations as equals. Yet at a recent UNICEF meeting with NGOs on child development, it was pointed out that NGOs (in this case) were supplying four times more money than the UN.

⁶ In particular data from and discussions with the UNHCR, and the excellent chapters on visits to Mauritania and Burkina Faso in the ACORD document of Cheibane Coulibaly, Gausso Drabo and Alassane ag Mohamed (Coulibaly 1995) pages 46-64. To these main sources

those who have returned and even more of those who never left, preferring to “disappear” into the sand dunes or into the discreet periphery of certain “safe cities” (like Sikasso and Hombory, where the leaders of traditional civil society refused to allow any expression of anger or racism). Adding together the internal and external refugees, more than a quarter of a million Malians were displaced by the troubles (maybe one third of the northern populations). Many, many more were economic victims of the troubles: the WFP (1997, p. 2) plans distributions to 300,000 people during 1997, based on figures of 150,000 returning refugees, 50,000 who are still internally displaced persons, and 100,000 economic victims.

The UNHCR 1995-96 Progress Report counted 150,000 Malians who sought refuge in neighbouring countries, of whom 76,344 had returned home between November 1995 and the end of 1996. Of these, UNHCR claims to have helped 21,545: 12,902 in convoys and using UNHCR transit centres inside Mali, and the rest with food and equipment packages to help them get re-started (tents, mosquito nets, and a 3-month food ration from WFP). Those remaining outside Mali at the end of 1996 were estimated at 87,000, and UNHCR was intending to help 82,000 to return during 1997. By the end of 1997, all the camps are expected to be closed. UNHCR assistance for resettlement will continue for another year inside Mali.

The return of the refugees is especially significant since they who fled the violence are the best judges of when it is safe to return. Without the refugees, there cannot be peace. Their return was hoped for and planned for in 1992-93. A few hundred did indeed make the journey home in May and June 1993, receiving support from the UNHCR and NGOs, but they had dispersed by September, driven out by renewed fighting, or by the lack of facilities (in particular many of the wells of Kidal had been spoiled by the army: shoot a camel and heave the corpse into a well, and who would want to drink the water?). In any case, wells in the desert need regular upkeep. The sand will take over as soon as there is neglect.

After the 1992 National Pact, and again after the 1995 *Rencontre de Tombouctou*, the UNHCR missed a chance to reduce Mali's refugee problem. At headquarters where the UNHCR is dealing with 26 million displaced persons world-wide, and responding to problems like 1.7 million refugees around the Great Lakes, it is understandable that a meagre 100,000 refugees can “get lost” when the Agency is choosing priorities. But one cannot deny that the UNHCR

we have added information from press articles and from informal discussions with many anonymous people who know the subject or who have themselves been refugees.

offices in Bamako and Nouakchott (Mauritania) failed to appreciate what actions were appropriate for peace in the Sahara. Focusing on renting new accommodation and on immediate Bamako-based friction with a few Liberian and Central African individuals, the local office “missed the forest for the trees” in the North. Tardy attempts to respond were too office-bound, using “pro-forma” solutions like contracts for lorries (inappropriate for nomadic returnees). Money was given for digging three wells, which were never dug. In 1995 UNHCR headquarters realized that priority should be given to the areas to which the refugees were already returning, and in 1996 the Agency launched a dynamic campaign to improve reception zones, notably by concentrating on water.

Table 5.2
The Refugees still in Exile

Country of exile	Refugees in November 1996
Algeria	12,397
Burkina Faso	24,979
Mauritania	25,462
Niger	24,701
Total	87,539

Source: UNHCR.

The UNHCR reports, “The repatriation of Malian refugees had a late and difficult start. The lack of UNHCR structures in the areas of return and the very limited availability of implementing partners in the areas of the former rebellion put serious constraints on the operation” (UNHCR 1996b, p. 6). The same report shows a much greater flexibility in the plans for 1997, insisting that, instead of focusing on transport, “assistance will be aimed at the communities receiving returnees [and] assistance will be delivered in a decentralized manner to the communities of origin....” This is probably the correct complementary strategy to the UNDP’s PAREM, which necessarily neglects the communities in favour of individual ex-combatants. Together UNDP and UNHCR can supply the leadership needed for development in the North. As a good start, the UNHCR has

now made contact with NGOs working right across the region (see footnote 2 above).

The refugees used a system of scouts (*éclairieurs*) who would go home and report back on local conditions, before the leaders decided whether it was safe to return. UNHCR initially missed the scouts, assuming that refugees would wait for instructions before returning. The UNHCR Regional Coordinator told us later, "No one is as well-informed as the refugees themselves!" At one level that is true, but official communications to the refugee camps were particularly weak, and rumour often took the place of fact. A 3-week-old letter arriving in Mauritania containing bad news, was frequently credited with greater authenticity than more recent good news heard on the radio. "It is easier to manage the conflict than to control rumours", an NGO worker told reporter Adam Thiam (1996), and this has to be blamed on the neglect of information systems firstly by the Malian Government, and secondly by the United Nations entities. The Malian authorities were scandalously neglectful of the refugees, many of whom never received a single visit from a government representative. Even today, this problem of information management could easily bedevil the reintegration of the refugees and the medium-term prospects for peace in the North. We shall recommend in Chapter 7 a much greater United Nations emphasis on communications, particularly in supporting local language radio.

Although the camps were relatively well managed by UNHCR, the initial handling of the refugee problem in Bamako was not a great success. In the search for permanent peace, Coulibaly et al demand:

... a less bureaucratic approach to refugee problems. Traditional administrative practice in international organizations is to treat problems in a global fashion. This means that refugees are considered to be an indistinct mass. They are then divided into contingents for repatriation to pre-arranged sites. This approach runs counter to refugees' independent decisions to return to sites which they select instinctively. UNHCR needs to adjust to this new phenomenon, instead of trying to change the refugees' perceptions to fit a pre-determined plan. In this regard NGOs seem to us better equipped than traditional administrations, better able to adapt. It would be useful to design new forms of collaboration between NGOs, the State, and the international agencies (1995, p. 21).

The refugees are the litmus paper of peace in northern Mali. In the beginning, people kept their heads down and waited for the storm to pass. The fighting of 1990 and riots in Bamako's streets forced the dictatorship to negotiate, and 1991 started positively with the January *Accords de Tamanrasset* and the March overthrow of General Moussa Traore. Banditry continued, however, and on 20 May 1991 a young army officer in Léré lost his temper. Unable to catch the

bandits, who were stealing cattle or vehicles and fleeing across the nearby Mauritanian frontier, he lined up a score of elderly Arab and Touareg merchants and their sons, and shot them in the market square. For the frustrated, poorly educated soldiery, this was an act of heroism. The Transitional Government was appalled, but paralysed: the revolution was less than two months old, after 23 years of military rule. For the “red-skinned” populations, it was an act of butchery. Before the end of May, half the Touareg and Arab tents of Timbuktu Region had crossed into Mauritania. The refugee problem had begun. By 1995 there were three camps holding an estimated 55,000 people. Around 65 per cent were Touareg, 35 per cent Arab (Coulibaly 1995, p. 47). To these we must add the 5,000-or-so refugees who dispersed into the rest of Mauritania, who stayed in the dunes with their herds, or who went to and fro across the Malian border (including traders and armed raiders).

In Algeria, there had been refugees since the repression of the 1960s, swelled by the droughts of 1974 and 1984. Whereas those in Mauritania migrated from the mixed Timbuktu region, those in Algeria were from Kidal and Menaka and Gao, therefore all *Kel Tamacheq* in origin. The older refugees had been largely absorbed into the society of southern Algeria, or had moved on to Libya; the new refugees were grouped in camps close to the Malian frontier, although many of the men drifted towards Tamanrasset in search of wages.

The camps of Burkina Faso were quite different. We find a broad cross-section of Malian society who all happened to be light-skinned. When violence flared in 1994, and the southern populations began to talk of ethnic cleansing, teachers and traders and civil servants, and even army officers were forced to move their families out of the towns and barracks. Under threat of a *pogrom*,⁷ they took to the nearest tarmac road, and headed for Burkina. The temperature in the camps of Burkina was quite different from those in the north and west. Here there were people who had served Mali, and who were bitter at their treatment. None of these people was in the least attracted to the rebel movements or the concept of Azawad: but after a year of neglect in the camps, even some of these urban refugees started wondering whether Azawad would give them kinder treatment. Cheibane Coulibaly spoke with:

⁷ This was the word used by Mali’s Prime Minister in relation to the massacre in October 1994 of the well-known *marabout* Anara and around 60 other members of the Kel Essouk, after the FIAA had bombarded Gao for three hours, attempting to draw the army into battle. The response demonstrated the lack of political control over the army. The Kel Essouk fled to Niger, while other groups left Mali to swell the refugee numbers in Burkina Faso.

... people in every sort and state of health. There were healthy people capable of productive work, some of whom were active in the sort of speculative trade that arises in refugee camps the world over. Others were men and women who had been left for dead by their attackers, carrying the scars of the sometimes hideous wounds which they had received when their camps were attacked. There were children practically traumatized by the memory of their parents' sufferings, of which they had sometimes been the unhappy witnesses (1995, p. 53).

The numbers in Burkina are as difficult to judge as those elsewhere: "official" figures always appear larger than the reality. Nomads are as hard to count as their sheep. Probably between 35,000 and 50,000 Malians sought refuge in Burkina. Since many of them were Francophone, they had more obvious affinities with the town, and some of them had relatives in Ouagadougou. It was not uncommon to find the family in town and their representative in the camp, claiming what he could from the UNHCR. No one can blame him.

From the point of view of Mali's political climate, the Burkina refugees challenged southern prejudice. These were not nomads, but neighbours and colleagues. They had not fled from Mali into "white" countries like Algeria and Mauritania: here were light-skinned Malians being offered refuge by black-skinned Burkinabé. Certain leaders of Mali's political opposition who had been preaching a message of discrimination, now saw in the Burkina refugees a disquieting mirror-image of their politics. Meanwhile the government preached tolerance and sought to bring the military under political control.

The UNHCR and WFP seem to have done an excellent job with the refugees outside Mali, once the problem was recognized. Adequate rations were delivered efficiently. In Mauritania and Burkina, the UNHCR used local NGOs as partners and their contributions are generally reckoned very positive. In Burkina, the NGO Delwendé was chosen by the authorities to be the UNHCR's partner, since the authorities wished to avoid government involvement in food distribution. We hear the usual criticisms about "mafias" and "inefficiencies" which, in West Africa, need to be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt although it does seem that Delwendé, used to working with peasant farmers, was not easily attuned the needs and social organization of their demanding Touareg customers.

In Mauritania, the authorities chose to place the refugees firmly under the supervision of the Garde Nationale, whose manipulations were the cause of much complaining. However, "relations are excellent between HCR and the refugees. Despite the obtuseness and obstructionism of certain Mauritanian (and even Malian) agents, the refugees have no doubts concerning the nobility of the objectives of the humanitarian and charitable institutions" (Coulibaly 1995, p. 50).

With UNHCR funding, the Comité International Catholique pour la Migration (CICM) made a great impact in the Mauritanian camps, on a conservative Arab and Touareg population. The majority of refugees worldwide are women and children. These were the CICM goals in Mauritania: schooling for the children and income generation for their mothers. To achieve attendance of 3,000 children in 45 classrooms is remarkable, in this Islamic and nomadic culture which rejected the colonial school system. The social impact has been striking: refugees are returning to Mali with education as their priority demand, after food and water. In Burkina, many refugees from an urban environment made education their priority. The North has been under-represented in national Malian life, partly because the Touareg and Arab and Fulani populations were unenthusiastic about modern schooling. It seems that in the future, northern parents will demand a better quality of learning for their children than the traditional Koranic lessons around a blazing fire. This change in attitudes to education is a challenge which Mali must meet.

Changes in attitude have taken place in other areas as well as education. The whole nature of social and economic organization will be altered by the experience of the camps. Local camp committees have been looking after welfare and distribution for several years, far from the traditional clan hierarchies of the Sahara. Just as the original rebellion was partly against the social hierarchy, so the refugees have become emancipated. Trading mafias aside, this has especially influenced the way in which women have been able to express their desires. We believe that Westerners generally under-estimate the power of African women, who have ways to express their point of view before decisions are taken. But those who visited the camps state unequivocally that “the women have achieved great economic results with their artisan crafts, and they are taking a growing part in activities inside the camps: resulting in a revolution of mentalities” (Coulibaly 1995, p. 48).

Where women are heads of family and where men are absent, it is unsurprising that social change will result. The success of refugee-made Malian handicrafts in the Nouakchott and Dakar craft fairs has led to new demand in Europe. Mali’s best leather work comes from the women of the Touareg *inaden* clan, whose blacksmith husbands make the world-famous Touareg swords and daggers. “What Mali needs most in this area,” says Madame Fatou Haidara, the minister responsible for the sector, “is reliable export outlets. We always do well in exhibitions, but we need long-term sales.” The NGO-sponsored refugee exhibitions may have led to new dynamism on both ends of the business: new outlets, and a new realization by the women of what the export market wants in terms of organization and style, and above all, quality. And the demand for

greater government and donor support for the development of the North in 1997 includes a new element: access to appropriate and flexible credit, especially for women.

Things are changing. As the Director of ACORD, a Malian woman, explains:

You can see what is happening: the men go off to war, and the women stay home to work. They take on both their own responsibilities, and also those of their menfolk. In our programmes we have put emphasis on developing their capacities, on helping women to face every type of new situation, to develop survival strategies which will allow them to handle every eventuality (Rita Ba 1995).

Most of all perhaps, social change can be perceived in the refugees' desire to get home to vote in the 1997 and 1998 elections. Without the refugees' participation, the elections in the North will not be fully democratic: even if the authorities repeat their extraordinary efforts of 1992, where *Chefs d'Arrondissement* took travelling voting booths across the dunes by camel and even, in the case of one area of Goundam with no transport, carried on the head of a uniformed guard. Even more than the rest of the northern population, it is the refugees outside the country who are insisting on the need to restore the services of the State. To some degree they see this as a guarantee of stability, a restoration of law and order: for they are the ones who fled from the repression of the movements first, the army and the civil population later. Many are also afraid of losing their economic space, if they stay away any longer. But more than anything, they see returning to their homes as the only way for them to regain a place in the fabric of the Malian nation.

5.3 United Nations Missions on Micro-disarmament

As the machinery of negotiation jerked forwards and backwards in Mali, President Alpha Oumar Konaré had a meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations to discuss the problem of illicit small arms in West Africa.⁸ The Malian President asked for United Nations help with the control of small arms. The huge numbers of AK47 and other automatic weapons which have poured into hot spots like Chad, Liberia and Sierra Leone, make for insecurity throughout West Africa. Frontiers are permeable. Dissident groups move from one country to another. Nomadic traders with a tradition of self-defence can easily add a *kalashnikov* to their usual supplies of tea and sugar and torch batteries.

⁸ The occasion was the 1993 *Conférence de la Francophonie* in Mauritius.

Conveniently concealed inside a sack of grain, an old AK47 can be bought for as little as \$35, and resold for three times that price. More dangerous still, a climate of insecurity encourages drivers and herders to purchase weapons for their own protection, so that ownership of weapons becomes tolerated, accepted, even admired.

The notes of the Mauritius meeting were passed from Boutros Boutros-Ghali to his political secretariat, and from there to the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs where they landed on the desk of a certain Ivor Richard Fung. The United Nations has been concentrating increasingly on preventive diplomacy (Silva 1995): the share of the UN's budget devoted to preventive diplomacy has risen significantly in the past three years. Ivor Fung happens to be especially interested in the control of small arms, and since he is himself from Cameroon, the idea of experimenting with arms control in West Africa had a double attraction. He called on Mali's Ambassador at the United Nations, the President of Mali wrote a letter to confirm his request for United Nations assistance, and the ball was rolling for a UN advisory mission.

The United Nations coined the term "micro-disarmament" to describe their interest in the control of small arms. "We had to start somewhere, so why not in West Africa?" Fung smiled happily, as the November 1996 United Nations conference ended successfully in Bamako (UNDP 1996), giving further impetus to the micro-disarmament initiative. He explained:

The UN can only become involved if a Member State invites us to take action. We never became involved in the Malian peace process; but with the letter about small arms which we received from Mali's President, we were able to set in motion a parallel process which helped to promote a general climate of peace. And it looks as if it is going to work. The Conference has concluded that we must have "security first", if we want to promote sustainable human development in Africa. The Conference has even expressed interest in Mali's suggestion that states should declare a Moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small-arms in the sub-region, and has suggested that there should be a sub-regional meeting at ministerial level to study this idea.

Four months later, at Bamako's Week of Peace (celebrating on 27 March 1997 the first anniversary of Timbuktu's Flame of Peace), participants at the sub-regional meeting at ministerial level requested the United Nations and Mali's Foreign Minister to pursue the moratorium initiative with Mali's neighbours.

Although they had nothing directly to do with the Touaregs, there is no doubt that the two United Nations advisory missions on small arms were helpful drops of oil in the machinery of negotiation and disarmament, particularly with regard to the Malian military. The United Nations looked around for suitable mission

leaders, and came up with a happy combination of diplomatic and disarmament experience. As leader of the mission, the United Nations chose William Eteki-Mboumoua of Cameroon, a former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity. Eteki brought seniority and stature to the mission. As his deputy, the UN chose Brigadier General (retired) Henny van der Graaf, who is, like Eteki, a Member of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. The General is applying his practical military experience, as Director of the Center for Arms Control and Verification Technology at the Eindhoven University of Technology (the Netherlands). General van der Graaf was accompanied by Colonel Douglas Fraser of Canada, so the military component of the mission was significantly weighty. Col Fraser acted as Secretary to the advisory mission, and Ivor Fung was the Deputy Secretary.

The first mission in August 1994, which visited only Mali, concluded that "the situation was severely affecting socio-economic development, thus contributing to a vicious cycle leading to even more illicit weapons... (but) the situation was not unique to Mali and had to be addressed in a sub-regional context". There was a need to organize a weapons collection programme in Mali, but this couldn't happen unless the overall security situation improved (Eteki 1996, Executive Summary). This led to a second advisory mission in March 1995, which visited six other countries in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal), following the same method of work used during the previous visit to Mali.

While suspicious of the idea of a United Nations mission, it was highly reassuring to the Malian military to receive "two of their own": in this case a brigadier general and a colonel. The general's rank was especially significant: it happened that the only person of equivalent rank in active service in the Malian army at that time, was the former Head of State, ATT, so General van der Graaf automatically received VIP treatment wherever he went. The Malian military appreciated Henny's cheerful disposition and West African informality. But West Africa is also a place of elegance, drama and style, and the Malians were disappointed that their distinguished visiting General always appeared in mufti. Henny realized that General van der Graaf should appear in uniform on more formal occasions, so he phoned the Netherlands to order a full dress uniform "complete with gongs and bells". But we are getting too far ahead, to a time when the UN mission had succeeded in breaking through the ice.

The first advisory mission took place at a moment of great tension and high insecurity in the North. The Malian authorities had always wanted to avoid the North becoming "internationalized", and nowhere was this feeling stronger than inside the Ministry of Defence. Eteki and his team were therefore received with

suspicion. When they started asking questions, their hosts objected that this was “an advisory mission, and not a mission of enquiry”. After thirty years of Soviet training, the Malian officer corps is secretive to a fault. This leads to the situation where no one will release even an opinion (let alone a fact) without the authority of his superiors... which he will never dare to request. One of the French military attachés we talked to, described the Malian military as “paralysed by fear of hierarchy, rather like the French army during the 1930s”.

That the mission overcame these hurdles of suspicion is evident from the fact that General van der Graaf has been back to Mali on several occasions, and was one of the weapons certifiers at the Flame of Peace in Timbuktu in March 1996. By this time the general was a good friend of many of Mali’s colonels, which was definitely helpful to the process of establishing dialogue between the civilian and military parts of the Government, and to the gradual establishment of civilian political control over a military institution which had, for 23 years prior to 1991, known only the military authority of Moussa Traore’s regime.

It is clear that the UN missions have also been helpful in catalysing contacts and coordination between States in the sub-region. Since the 1994 meetings in Banjul (April), Bamako (August) and Lomé (December), and under pressure from the Liberian crisis, various governments have agreed to improve contacts, exchange intelligence and harmonize legislation concerning small arms: loosely defined as weapons which can be carried by one or two men, and which require very little maintenance. The effect of these initiatives is not yet clear. At the request of the United Nations and in order to provide the advisory mission with a counterpart body, each country established a National Commission on Light Weapons. The United Nations November 1996 Conference on micro-disarmament provided a forum in which the National Commissions from a number of countries were able to meet in Bamako and discuss common problems. Eteki-Mboumoua, van der Graaf and Fung all made presentations at this conference (UNDP 1996), which may prove to be a catalyst both for cross-border cooperation between neighbours, and for the internal dynamics of small arms control in the host country, Mali.

We shall give the last word in this chapter on micro-disarmament to the mission leader, making the argument in favour of funding “security first” as part of the process of socio-economic development:

... there will be no opportunity for the voluntary collection of illicit light weapons until the citizenry are willing to give up their personal weapons and self-defence units, and those engaged in banditry out of a sense of survival, are relieved of that necessity. This will only happen when they are sure that the authorities can provide the necessary security environment and are making every effort to improve their economic conditions.

The sub-region is a clear case where assistance in the security field must be integrated with other forms of development aid.... democratic structures can only be cultivated and survive when there is a satisfactory level of development. Development in turn requires a stable security environment. One way to achieve that situation is to allocate a proportion of development assistance for security (Eteki 1996, p. 10).

5.4 A Political Adviser Arrives within UNDP

From the point of view of the United Nations as an institution, the most innovative development of the Malian case-study is the fact that the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Secretariat were able to collaborate in the field for the first time in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. The idea had been broached before, without success. UNDP Resident Representatives are not always inclined to take risks. Raised in a development bureaucracy, many of them are unable to grasp the political dimension of a situation as complex as Mali's. With hindsight, it was a happy thought which led the UNDP to appoint their man in Algeria as Resident Representative in Mali. Tore Rose (a Norwegian) arrived in Bamako with some familiarity concerning the political situation in the whole of the Sahara region. He quickly realized the importance for Mali's "development challenge" of establishing dialogue and peace in the North, and set about creating a good working relationship with the *Commissaire au Nord*, Mahamadou Diagouraga. The two men possess similar qualities of unflappable optimism and calm leadership. Their collaboration has been important for the success of the Malian peacemaking.

This is an area which illustrates vividly the importance of individual personalities. It is an illusion to think—except in the most general terms—of "administrative continuity" or "institutional memory". Development agencies in general are guilty of poor memory, whether at the field level, or in Headquarters. In the present case, the United Nations system was able to work successfully because a few key people wanted it to work. None of them was trying to score points off the other. Each saw an advantage in collaborating, both for Mali and for the United Nations. In Mali, the UNDP Resident Representative/UN Resident Coordinator had established a partnership with the Presidency and the Government of Mali. He received growing support from the UNDP Director of the Bureau for Africa, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, who was prepared to take a few political risks in the cause of West African peace. Across 1st Avenue in New York, the UN Centre for Disarmament Affairs led by Prvoslav Davinic (of former Yugoslavia) was keen to follow up the chance to control small arms, and

saw in Mali a pressure point which could influence peace in the whole sub-region. In particular, Ivor Richard Fung from Cameroon was prepared to go to Mali and make it happen, with the sustained support of the USG and ASG.⁹ Unusually for a large bureaucracy (any large bureaucracy), no one seems to have raised objections: everyone was prepared to take a risk for Peace.

When the micro-disarmament issue was raised from New York, Rose recognized its importance for the whole African region, and its potential as a catalyst for peace within Mali, and promoted the radical notion of receiving Fung as political adviser in his UNDP office. Around the two of them, a small group of informal advisers provided input and ideas. Fung makes friends easily. As a West African himself, he knows how to talk to Malians, even to suspicious colonels. With Rose behind him, Fung gained the trust of the key Malian officials, in particular inside the Presidency and the Defence Ministry, and also inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Whenever Ivor needed support, Tore made himself available. If a speech needed to be made, Tore Rose donned the cap of UN Resident Coordinator and made the speech.

Ivor Fung's title was entirely internal: as Political Adviser to the Resident Coordinator he was neither Deputy nor Assistant Representative of UNDP and was well down the official diplomatic hierarchy (if indeed he was within the hierarchy at all). As Fung worked to establish dialogue with the different components of the Malian state apparatus, he was variously introduced as "Political Expert", "UN political representative", and even on occasion as the "Representative of the Secretary-General". This Resident Coordinator never felt threatened if his political adviser suddenly jumped from the second story of the UNDP building in Bamako, to the twenty-eighth floor of the UN Secretariat in New York. Thus Fung's prestige moved up and down the diplomatic scale as a function of the requirements of each meeting. If an army General chose to impress his colonels with a grandiose title for Fung, the United Nations was tolerant. The agenda was peace for Mali and not personal titles nor status. Not all diplomats show this degree of maturity. The United Nations collaboration was successful because it had defined a clear hierarchy in the priorities, of which personal status was not one.

⁹ Under Secretary-General Murrack Goulding and Assistant Secretary-General Lansana Kouyaté were the people in charge of Davinic's Centre for Disarmament Affairs. Mr. Kouyaté was replaced in March 1997 by Ibrahima Fall, formerly head of the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva. Mr. Fall, who led the United Nations delegation to the Flame of Peace in 1996 and who read out the Secretary-General's personal message to Timbuktu, has continued to provide strong support for Ivor Fung and the micro-disarmament initiative.

And the same was true of the Government of Mali, which took advantage of Fung's presence at the various civilian and military and political pressure points along the peace process. All the initiatives we have described above had their origins in this partnership: the advisory missions, the Trust Fund, the Flame of Peace, the UN sub-regional conferences, the code of conduct on civilian-military relations, the moratorium initiative on small arms. The UN's drops of oil into the GRM's machinery of peace helped it to turn smoothly. If such team-work can be reproduced elsewhere, then there is no doubt that the Malian model offers not only a system for mobilising civil society in peace negotiations, but also a new approach for United Nations preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-building.

5.5 Coordinating Donor Responses: United Nations, Swiss, US and NGO Efforts

We have noted the absence of donor support in 1992, when the *Pacte National* had been signed and elections were leading to the inauguration of Dr. Alpha Oumar Konaré as Mali's first elected President. In 1996-97 the situation is very different, for the UNDP and the UN/DPA have created a Trust Fund with contributions of nearly \$10 million in early 1997. Into this Trust Fund not only several donors, but also the Malian Government (\$1 million) have paid contributions. The combining of United Nations development and political skills has been appreciated by donors. The Trust Fund stands out as a splendid and appropriate piece of United Nations leadership. But one is bound to wonder: "Where was UN leadership in 1992, when the new democratic government most needed it?"

The answer appears to be: "Nowhere." Back in 1992 the United Nations was coordinating itself between agencies, but it was not providing wider leadership to the development community. There was a small international observer corps which followed the Malian legislative and presidential elections: but it was not the UN Resident Coordinator who arranged it. It was the dynamic head of Canadian Cooperation, Denis Baudouin who proposed the idea to Abdourahmane Niang, organizer of the elections within the Malian Ministry of the Interior (no independent electoral commission had been created at that time: this had to wait until 1996-97). Niang was cautiously encouraging, and so the Canadian initiative went ahead with additional support from USAID and the Dutch.

United Nations leadership was not much more visible on the development side: although at the end of 1992 the inter-agency mission to the North brought

new momentum, and led to a valuable development conference of all parties in February 1993.¹⁰ On a day-to-day basis it was largely the Swiss Consul Jean-Claude Berberat (who was funding long-term development in Niafunké), and Robin Poulton (managing the numerous NGO projects of USAID), who kept the development agencies ticking over, even when there was little or nothing to be done in the field. By funding activities like Timbuktu food depots for returning refugees coordinated by Care Mali; initiating a joint health plan for the North coordinated by the CCA-ONG pivot-group for child survival; paying salaries for project staff even if they were not able to work in the North; and by keeping the momentum of monthly information meetings on development progress and security news from the field, the Swiss, the Americans and other NGO funders succeeded in maintaining an illusion of development, at a time when many of the international and bilateral agencies had simply closed up shop. The constant movements of Red Cross vehicles maintained the image of activity. In 1990-94, USAID Director Dennis Brennan used his funding to keep NGOs in the North when some wanted to pull out. He understood the strategic importance of supporting peace, and the psychological need to keep development activity alive in the towns at least. USAID Mali even continued to fund World Vision operating out of Niamey, in Niger, in order to maintain the development effort in Menaka. The illusion of activity was important for keeping hope alive among the northern populations, and it showed support for the beleaguered Malian administration. The Swiss monthly meetings were where the illusion found expression in Bamako. Later the CCA-ONG took over running the meetings, but over time these lost their impetus, and eventually their *raison d'être*.

One lesson we can draw from this experience, as the meetings died during 1995-96, is that a successful coordinator has to have some financial leverage or people lose interest. In other countries, the UNDP (or UNICEF or WFP) has played a coordinating role. Since NGOs are notoriously reluctant to be coordinated (or even to collaborate), it is difficult for any one NGO—or for a voluntary association such as the CCA-ONG in Mali—to exercise the influence needed for coordination. The local government and the bilateral donors are

¹⁰ Our examples show that the United Nations was not absent (indeed UNDP provided funding for the elections), but that it was shying away from a leadership role. It can be argued that the GRM and United Nations were being cautious not to antagonize the French, or leaving the field clear for Algerian mediation between the armed factions. We believe that the UN inter-agency mission and the subsequent *Journées de Concertation* took place only because certain United Nations officials pushed them individually, succeeding in overcoming their bosses' reluctance to take a lead in anything controversial.

always politically tainted, and often (though not so often in Mali today) it is the government which causes many of the problems. So the UN Resident Coordinator does occupy an advantageous position, if the incumbent has the imagination to use his prestige and neutrality.¹¹ The model of United Nations coordination was in Ethiopia. Although it has been written up by Kurt Jansson (1987) who was the UN Special Representative, it is surprising how few United Nations staff are familiar with the story (all the more surprising since it is a UN success story). Should the United Nations ever consider that a coordinating role for NGOs is appropriate (and we believe that it is), then flexible and adequate funding commitments would play a significant role in giving the UN coordination some "bite".

Since 1994 the UNDP has begun to play a coordination role among the official donors in Bamako, although not among the NGOs. In late 1994, the UNDP organized a meeting in Geneva between the GRM and the donors, at which the organizers cleverly avoided "pledging" (which donors hate) and insisted rather on bringing Mali's development partners into the Government's process of thinking about peace and development. This led to the Timbuktu Round Table in July 1995: again this was not a pledging conference, but a visible proof that peace had arrived in the North. "On this occasion," says UNDP Resident Representative Rose, "the Government formally requested the Resident Coordinator to begin playing a facilitating role in contacts with the donor community on the question of the North" (Rose 1996, p. 3).

The creation of the Trust Fund and its funding of PAREM (the programme for reinsertion of ex-combatants which we describe in Chapter 4.8) has provided some linkage in the North since 1996, which involves most of the development players including NGOs (at least the international ones). Although UNICEF closed its office in Timbuktu, to everyone's dismay, there has been additional coordination from UNHCR through its funding of the major NGOs in preparing resettlement sites during 1996-97. Again, this has concerned only the international NGOs: there is a risk that these worthy efforts will miss the opportunity to strengthen the institutions of Malian civil society through which peace must come.

¹¹ Outsiders' perception of the UN Resident Coordinator may however be affected by his nationality. The United Nations must avoid becoming a cosy club for local politicians, and it must avoid becoming associated with political, clan or family interests. As a general rule, in order to protect United Nations neutrality, we believe that it is undesirable to appoint United Nations international staff from neighbouring (or even nearby) countries, since cultures and politics often overlap "national" frontiers.

There is a constant risk indeed that the voice of civil society will never be heard in development strategy meetings. When governments claim to speak for their NGOs, they negate the very concept of a “non-governmental” voice. Often donor diplomats say it is unnecessary for them to “consult” with NGOs: yet the idea that an Ambassador could speak for “his” national NGOs appears laughable, when one compares the differing objectives and work environment of the two. The same is true for host governments, whose bureaucrats are only too happy to take the place of NGOs and other civil society spokesmen and women (especially the women), usually in the hope of maintaining their personal prerogatives at the expense of grassroots organizations. Thus, there are supposed to be sectoral commissions within the Malian *Commission paritaire pour le Nord* which include NGOs, but NGOs are not invited to the main forum. In any case, during the whole of 1994 it only met once. And if the NGOs are not heard, it is partly their own fault: if the NGO community was better organized and had better leadership, it could make itself indispensable: this has been proven at the international level by issues such as the environment, children’s rights, and the abolition of anti-personnel landmines where civil society has led international opinion.

The revival since 1995 of the *Commission paritaire* opened the possibility for improved donor coordination: it is chaired jointly by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a donor (in 1997 this is the UN Resident Coordinator: succeeding the German Ambassador, who took over from the European Union Delegate). The fact that the United Nations has been given the Chair is a tribute to its success in coordination *de facto* around Peace in the North.

United Nations coordination efforts are not without their critics, naturally. At the time of the Timbuktu Round Table in July 1995, the UNDP was the GRM’s principal adviser and funder (and the UNDP actually made the thing happen at a time when Timbuktu was in pretty bad shape). At the same time, UNDP was persuading the specialized agencies and the bilateral donors to agree to take part in the meeting. Certain donors considered that the UNDP had placed itself in “a conflict of interest”, by siding with both the donors and the government. This somewhat punctilious point of view is apparently based on a conflictual perception of development and diplomacy: it is a view which we do not share. For us the struggle should not be against the partner government, but against the problems of hunger and disease and poverty and injustice which all the United Nations and donor agencies are supposed to be fighting.

There is another point to be made here (which we shall re-address in Chapter 7 when we consider “national sovereignty”): the United Nations is not a foreign embassy, the UN Resident Coordinator and his colleagues do not work for a foreign government. The UNDP being a multilateral organization, the host

Government is actually one of its “bosses”. Indeed every Member State may send a representative to sit on the Executive Board of every UN Agency. Thus the donor governments are also “bosses”. The United Nations should be the principal and most active of the government’s development partners in every country. The United Nations should, in our view, serve as the natural coordinating mechanism for all donors and NGOs, together with national government agencies.

It is clear that the UN Resident Coordinator will be stronger, if he can unite the United Nations specialized agencies behind him (or her). We address this issue below. In the meantime, it is important for UNDP to remember that donor jealousies exist outside as well as within the United Nations family.

5.6 The United Nations Trust Fund for the North

The Round Table of July 1995 was the occasion for the Government not only to show the world that peace was returning to Timbuktu, but also to present their plans for winning the peace. They called this the *Programme de normalisation et de réhabilitation au Nord* or PNR: rehabilitating the North and getting life back to normal. The UNDP was the government’s principal partner both for the organization of the meeting, and also in the endeavour of planning for the future. To support the PNR and to fund a process of peace-building, the UNDP and the UN/DPA took the happy initiative of jointly creating a Trust Fund.

The terms of reference of the UN Trust Fund for North Mali, to support the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, situate its creation firmly in the aftermath of the July 1995 Timbuktu meeting. They state in particular that “while confidence is returning in North Mali it is extremely fragile and hence, there is a great urgency to initiate concrete actions on the ground in order to underpin the securization of the region; ... (there are) procedural difficulties experienced by certain development partners in delivering some types of security-related development assistance through their normal channels....”

To some extent, the level of contribution represents the level of understanding by the donor—or by their local representative—of the strategic significance for peace in northern Mali. Some donor representatives have a broader perspective than others, but most of them can see that, without peace in the North, there cannot be development in the South, nor in the sub-region. If northern Mali breaks down into ethnic strife, there will be ethnic and religious wars from Mauritania to Sudan, which will inevitably impact on the stability of Algeria and northern Nigeria. So well done to the Bamako heads of delegations

of USA, Norway, Netherlands and Canada, Belgium, Japan, and France who all made significant contributions by early 1997.

But perhaps the most important contribution is the \$1 million made by the Government of the Republic of Mali to the Trust Fund. We cannot say whether this gesture is a first in Africa, but it is startling. One million dollars represents a big budgetary effort for a poor country, so the Government is “putting its money where its mouth is”. The GRM gesture is also very significant in terms of the relationship which Mali is wanting to establish with its development partners: “partnership” implies that neither side is a beggar, and nor is it acceptable for one partner to sit waiting to hear what the other will graciously give. Partnership implies a joint commitment to peace and development, a genuine dialogue between recipient and donors.

The Government had asked the United Nations to coordinate the Timbuktu donor meeting of July 1995, and the Trust Fund document goes on to speak of “the Malian Government’s wish that the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Mali act as facilitator in the contacts between the Government of Mali and its development partners for the funding of civil and administrative rehabilitation and development projects in North Mali.” We shall return to this theme in the last chapter.

By late 1997, the Trust Fund had almost \$10 million pledged out of a total needed of \$12 million. That is not enough. Even an expanded Trust Fund is a tiny investment. In one sense of course, there is no limit, and the sums requested are likely to rise as new opportunities emerge or as new crises arise (for who can predict rainfall patterns in the Sahel? 1998 predictions are dire for the whole tropical belt). But with donors spending \$1 million per day on Rwandan refugees during the past three years (and this takes no account of military expenditures), the Malian peace-building operation is really very cheap. Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-building are good investments. “He that has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Table 5.3
Income to the UN Trust Fund to Support the
Peace Process in North Mali

Donor country	Amount announced	Amount received (US \$)
Mali	US \$ 1,000,000	873,596*
USAID	US \$ 2,000,000	2,000,000
Netherlands	US \$ 571,430	564,739*
Norway	US \$ 2,540,092	2,540,092
Canada	US \$ 735,294	735,294
Belgium	US \$ 1,000,000	937,500*
France	FF 10,000,000	904,272*
Japan	US \$ 1,000,000	1,000,000
Switzerland	SF 200,000	137,931**
Total	US \$ 9,984,747	9,693,424

Source: UNDP Bamako at 31.10.97.

* Exchange rates at the time of payment in national currency diminished the dollar value of these amounts.

** Swiss Francs 200,000 promised but not yet received in cash.

The Government's programme for the North (PNR) set out to address the following objectives (outlined in the GRM presentation document for PAREM dated 16 May 1996; actual 1997 figures appear in our earlier discussion of PAREM):

- demobilization of around 1,500 ex-combatants through the cantonment process;
- integration of around 1,650 ex-combatants into government civil and armed services;

- registration of all ex-combatants not in the cantonments (around 6,610);
- creation and start-up of a support structure; and
- start-up of re-insertion activities for ex-combatants (starting with those who were in the cantonments but who did not get into a government service): training, creation of salaried jobs, creation of self-employment, and of small and micro-enterprises.

PAREM is the first programme to be funded from the Trust Fund: its work is described in Chapter 4.8. But while PAREM will have finished its task of re-insertion at the end of 1997, the Trust Fund should live on. There is here the germ of a process of long-term development for civil society which is very precious, and which promises well for the disciplines of democratic governance. We return to this idea in Annex 4.

Table 5.4
Expenditures from the UN Trust Fund

Activity	\$ US
Reactivating the administration	5,880
Restoring security	38,360
Demobilization of combatants	1,175,000
Health infrastructure	4,080
Education infrastructure	28,360
Integration of ex-combatants into administration and civil society	1,471,260
Communication plan	3,500
PAREM projects:	
- agriculture	764,633
- livestock	2,275,223
- commerce	2,315,996
- training and other projects	498,797
Total	8,581,089

Source: UNDP Bamako at 31.10.97.

The Trust Fund should become a permanent foundation for peace-building. In the West, foundations fall into the category of “philanthropy”. This word has been distorted by crooks dishing out money in the Anglophone world and by paternalistic manipulation in 19th century France, but the concept of philanthropy is a noble one, and is actually one of the Five Pillars of Islam (*zaqat*). Philanthropic foundations are now recognized in Malian legal practice (Thiam and Tipper 1993). The UN Trust Fund, however, is not about philanthropy. This is a case of self-interest for all those individuals and governments who have an interest in winning the peace through long-term human development. The alternative to peace and stability is failure, and the revival of a conflict which will spread like a gangrene across the whole Sahara region.

5.7 Leading the United Nations Family

A good bureaucrat, like a careful diplomat, never takes a risk: but a too-good bureaucrat, like a too-careful diplomat, makes a lousy UNDP Resident Representative, and a worse UN Resident Coordinator. The qualities needed for leadership include political vision, willingness to take a risk, strength of character and strength of purpose, a grasp of wider issues and an engaging personality. It is not easy to find the right combination. Yet without it, the UN Resident Coordinator will not easily command the respect needed for his role.

UNDP has its hands full with the disputatious United Nations family, which has been showing more signs of *fadenya* than of *balimaya* (indeed, if we follow the reasoning of our Chapter 1.4, the United Nations would definitely benefit from appointing more senior women executives). Not every UNDP Resident Representative can be a great leader, of course, and they do not all have the political feeling needed to excel as UN Resident Coordinator. But even where all the conditions are met, it is not every UN agency which will accept coordination.

Here we are touching on the vast subject of the reform of the United Nations system, under which the specialized agencies have allowed themselves to develop jealousies and feelings of prerogative which are inappropriate for development agencies. “The iron law of organizations” has taken over, by which every institution outgrows its original mandate, ending up by serving primarily its own employees. The problem with UN agencies usually lies with their headquarters strategies.

In these days of fax and e-mail, the whole concept of “decentralized management” needs to be redefined. Perhaps it was once useful to have a nearby source of advice and support. But how could FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF,

WHO possibly need sub-regional offices, when they all now have instant communication with HQ? (WHO once had a sub-regional representative in Bamako, as well as a country representative.) A UN Resident Coordinator in Africa told us that “the theory of regional offices is supported by the concept of value-added: but ‘value-subtracted’ is what they deliver in my experience.” Specialized agencies may not agree with the views of UNDP, but they cannot long support sub-regional overheads against the realities of instant electronic mail.

If we are against sub-regional offices, we are not very enthusiastic either about “agency representatives”, whose keen sense of personal status and diplomatic prerogative often militate against good coordination within the United Nations family. Why indeed do the donor countries continue to fund “country representatives” who behave like diplomats, instead of concentrating funding on field-level technical specialists? The real answer lies, we believe, in political expediency. Where else can an African Head of State place his ex-Minister of Health, if not in a senior position in WHO? So the agencies invest in posts to accommodate ex-ministers who are no longer competent technicians,¹² instead of concentrating their resources on the needs of women and children, responding to the priorities of Africa’s farmers and their husbands.

There are few complaints, on the other hand, about the goodwill of most United Nations staff in Mali’s peacemaking story. WHO are always cooperative, though not very operational, giving the impression of being more involved with self-management than with Malian vaccination campaigns or development strategies. Some other agencies which were only marginally involved (ILO, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNCDF, UNV, have all been helpful and collaborative) or which became involved (FAO, OIM) were easily coordinated because their programmes are largely funded by UNDP. Indeed FAO staff have been constantly positive in their approach to the North. During periods when the UNDP and FAO representatives were reluctant to take a lead, it was FAO programme staff who were often prodding behind the scenes to get initiatives going (for example in the organization of the 1992 inter-agency mission).

¹² While all organizations suffer from creeping paralysis, UN agencies are more vulnerable to criticism than national bureaucracies. We are strong advocates of the 15-year rule whereby no one should be able to stay within any one organization for more than fifteen years. This keeps organizations dynamic, ensures a constant renewal of energies and experiences, removes dead wood, and saves people from professional decay: they cannot become time-servers simply for their retirement pensions.

One of the most original United Nations projects in Mali is the ILO-organized ACOPAM which has a strong presence in the northern half of Mali (mainly in Mopti and Timbuktu regions). ACOPAM started in Senegal, and it works more or less like an NGO with an ILO umbrella and Norwegian funding. Throughout the troubles, ACOPAM kept its head down and its optimism up, working as well as it could on developing village-level cereal production and storage in Timbuktu and Mopti regions, and coordinating with United Nations and NGO groups in a low-key and positive fashion. While ILO is not a major player in Mali, ACOPAM is one of the programmes which has worked most closely and coordinated most positively with other programmes in the North.

One happy irony of the Malian case is that the traditional “hard nuts” for the Resident Coordinator have not provided any difficulty. The World Bank, for example, was not really involved in the North. Jonathan Moore remarks:

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund ascribe very little relevance to rehabilitation, and consequently can inhibit it as well as fail to boost it. They have poor relationships with the UN entities generally... prefer to regard themselves as outside the UN system, and “co-ordination” with it is anathema (1996, p. 50).

Our general African experience confirms Moore’s view, yet the World Bank Representative in Mali proved the exception. Linda McGinnis provided so much energy and goodwill in favour of Malian democracy and development, and exuded such an atmosphere of optimism and enthusiasm for Mali’s progress, that she actually became a factor in favour of peace in the North. Realizing that peace was the first condition for development in Mali, Linda made the World Bank an agent of collaboration.

Some of the agencies which were slowest to appreciate the geo-political significance of the North, and the importance of United Nations solidarity to leading the peace and development efforts, were surprises in view of their previous history of good collaboration: WFP, UNICEF, IFAD, UNHCR.

The World Food Programme Representative is formally the UNDP Resident Representative: for the WFP was created in Rome as a joint UN-FAO venture. Yet coordination problems with WFP have proved to be the most difficult to solve, according to all our informants in Mali. This is apparently not a function of the field personnel, who are perceived as having done everything in their power to get WFP moving, but of Headquarters in Rome. One is minded of Moore’s conclusion: “The resistance of the UN’s operating agencies to co-ordination and even co-operation with each other comes from their headquarters.... The complex challenge of rehabilitation calls for a relinquishing

of the feudalism still being embraced by the pooh-bahs in their fiefdoms...” (1996, p. 49). We were not able to travel to Rome to identify Pooh-Bah¹³ but he (or perhaps she) does no good either to Malian refugees, nor to the United Nations system. However there is good news in 1997: WFP has approved a \$13 million programme for displaced persons in the sub-region, with a heavy emphasis on North Mali, and collaboration has improved. Inside UNHCR in Geneva, we were given to understand that WFP had been persuaded to be more collaborative through donor pressure. What a shame, if the United Nations has to use its member delegations to keep its house in order. Of course, he who pays the piper calls the tune. One would hope that professionals already know the score.

Not that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees emerges unscathed. Taking a broader view, there is admittedly some justification for seeing Mali’s 30,000 refugees in Mauritania during 1992 as a drop in a bucket, compared to the problems facing UNHCR in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, or even in Senegal and Mauritania. As the numbers began rising, however, UNHCR did not react: neither in Bamako, nor in Nouakchott. It took an angry letter in *Le Monde* newspaper written by Père Frost, a priest in Mauritania, to make UNHCR take an interest in the refugee camps. When the time came for repatriation in late 1995, as the weapons were being surrendered and the combatants were entering the cantonments, UNHCR again remained mute. Plans to repatriate 10,000 refugees in lorries proved irrelevant for a floating population of some 200,000 nomads stretched across three or four countries.

The refugee agency was not listening to some of its own staff, nor to UNDP. A senior HCR manager argues:

We have to be independent of UNDP because we have a different mandate and we must work differently with the government ministries. We have another mentality, another institutional culture. We do not refuse to collaborate, but it is not in the interests of either agency to pretend that we have the same objectives. Refugees are very different from sustainable development.

These arguments from the “iron law of institutions” sound to us more like self-serving excuses for not collaborating, than genuine strategic difficulties. All the serious NGOs in Africa are forced to straddle the bridge between relief and

¹³ Moore’s literary reference is to the very British comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan: “The Mikado” which contains two Very Important Officials: Koko, the Lord High Executioner and Pooh-Bah, the Lord High Everything Else. Headquarters staff are particularly dangerous when they behave as “Lord High Everything”, and block decisions in the field.

development (as we saw in the case of the Red Cross). Surely this is an argument in favour of greater UNHCR efforts to achieve collaboration, rather than less. We are more sympathetic to the reality that UNHCR is over-stretched in Africa since the Great Lakes crisis blew up: but this is still no reason for not behaving as a member of the family. In the case of Mali, closer cooperation might have saved UNHCR some embarrassment, and it would certainly have helped the Malian refugees, whose principal desire is to benefit from sustainable development.

It took a high-level decision to change UNHCR personnel before things improved. From April 1996, UNHCR moved into a higher gear, under the supervision of a new Regional Coordinator for Repatriation of Malians in all neighbouring countries. "Previously UNHCR was an unoccupied space" says one Malian NGO Director, "but things started to move in 1996, when the HCR gave out contracts for rehabilitation of wells. They realized that it wasn't in the camps that they needed to work, but at the potential reception points."

In 1995 the HCR had given money to a government agency to dig three wells. An anonymous UN colleague commented:

None of the wells was dug. You cannot get things moving if you sit behind your desk! In the beginning, HCR was too bureaucratic. And the best paper-plans in the world are useless if they don't take account of the field situation. The nomads have their own method of working: they send scouts ahead to see if things are better. If the situation is unstable or if the wells are unusable, the families will stay in the camps. Nomads are very well-informed. When they are sure that they can return, they simply disappear from the camps and turn up in the area from which they fled originally. The UNHCR's current operation is much more flexible, better adapted to the needs of the Malian refugees.

The situation should have been happier in Kidal, where the well-funded International Fund for Agricultural Development project, PSARK, has been installed since the late 1980s. Yet this (as we observed at the beginning of this chapter) is one of northern Mali's biggest disappointments. Bureaucratic delays paralysed the project from the beginning. Over the years we have made frequent enquiries: IFAD headquarters staff consistently blame their other partners. They are smooth and eloquent, but we find their defence unconvincing. One of the most extraordinary parts of the IFAD project design, it that the executing agency is a bank: not a bank in Kidal (where there is no bank), but the *Banque Ouest-Africain de Développement* in Lomé, Togo. Bankers know nothing of agropastoral economic and ecological systems. Staff in Kidal (and even in Bamako where there used to be an expensive project office which was closed) are disempowered, including the UNDP. This appears to be the worst sort of project design. There is not much influence that the UN Resident Coordinator can bring

to bear. Indeed when we asked about IFAD projects in the UNDP Bamako office, the immediate reaction of the person “responsible” for IFAD was “Oh! You know that we are only a letter box for IFAD. They never contact us. Their consultants only call us if they need an air-ticket or if there is a problem.”

PSARK and its sister-project in Niger are probably the least successful projects in the IFAD portfolio. What a contrast with the highly successful and decentralised *Projet de fonds de développement villageois* in Ségou from 1980-89, which became a model of its type. It gave birth to a successor *Programme de développement villageois de Ségou* which is ongoing (GRM 1989, UNOPS 1996). The figures show 168 village associations with 249 million Fcfa in the bank, and reimbursement rates for individual loans varying from 82 to 100 per cent over fifteen years. With a such a success story to tell in Segou, it is sad that IFAD could not do better in the North. IFAD had been intimately involved in Malian-Algerian politics (Idriss Jezairy of Algeria was President of IFAD before moving to become Executive Director of ACORD), and Algerian influence ensured the initial funding for the Kidal project. Given the political context under Moussa’s regime, it was up to IFAD to get the project going. To blame Moussa Traore or his administration for delaying PSARK is the equivalent, in the political context of Kidal, of accepting that IFAD shares responsibility with the military regime for inciting the rebellion of Iyyad and the MPA. 1996 saw some re-awakening of the IFAD project, and the winning of the peace in Kidal rests in large part on IFAD’s shoulders.

The final question of “family solidarity” in UN Mali concerns UNICEF. When the United Nations Children’s Fund first began to work in the North, it was in 1982 on the initiative of Annick Miské-Talbot, the very dynamic UNICEF Representative whose husband Ahmed Baba Miské we earlier met as Edgar Pisani’s co-mediator (in Chapter 4.2). Mme Miské had spent her youth bringing primary health care to Mauritanian women in remote desert camps. She was dissatisfied with UNICEF’s work in the cities, supporting health and education programmes which were mainly benefitting the Francophone children of public employees. The move to Timbuktu was a radical departure, an exciting innovation which the military government resisted as hard as it could. In those days there were no bilateral or multilateral programmes in the North, “development” meant the NGOs: ACORD and the World Council of Churches’ Sahel programme were relaunching the cooperatives, Ile de Paix and Misereor in health, and AFVP, Frères des Hommes, Terre des Hommes were active. That was all there was for a population approaching one million people whose economic and social needs were seriously neglected. UNICEF’s arrival signalled a new commitment to the North from “the most NGO of the UN agencies”. Others

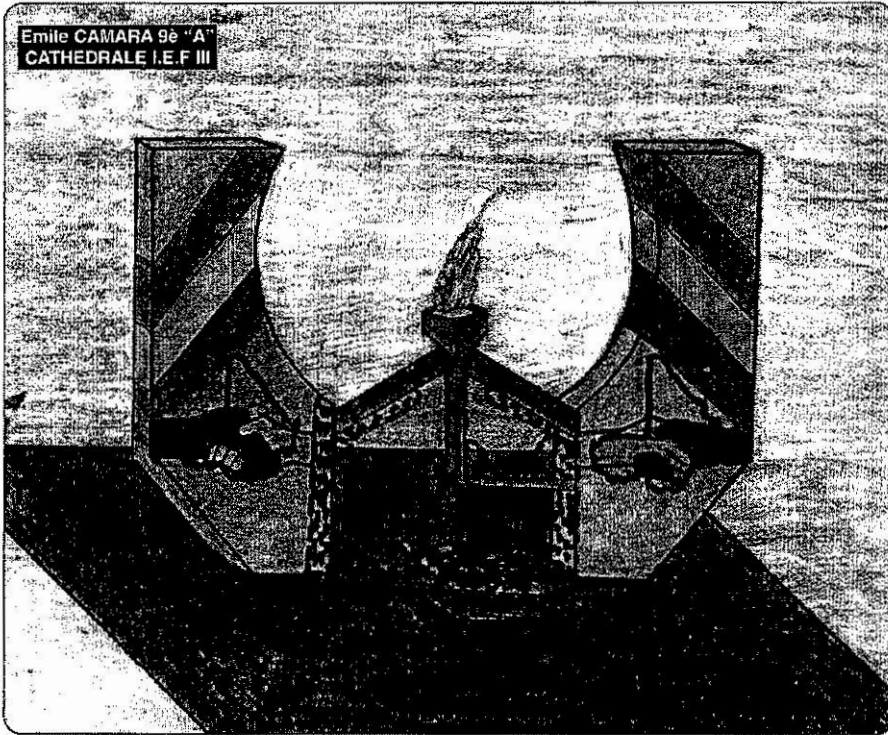
followed, especially after the 1984 drought catastrophe. But UNICEF was the pathfinder.

The pathfinder showed the way when the 1984 drought hit Mali's northern regions. The Italian health project in Diré and the Norwegian Church Aid (AEN-Gossi) programme working in the Gourma arrived under UNICEF. There were even some Swedish soldiers who came in with a relief effort for Timbuktu. Through the eighties UNICEF provided donor leadership and coordination in Timbuktu in the areas of health and education. Meanwhile administration costs rose. Come the early nineties, the UNICEF Representative in Mali, André Roberfroid found himself with several unproductive regional offices, and \$1 million of overheads which would be better invested in vaccination programmes. On rational management grounds, he decided to close down one layer of administration. Along with several others, the Timbuktu office closed in 1995. UNICEF's funding in the North increased from \$5 to \$7 million the same year. The Minister of Health understood the reasons for the closure, staff were laid off without difficulties, and the UNICEF facilities were turned over to the UNDP in order to facilitate the start-up of the PAREM programme: which proves that collaboration was very good between the Representatives of the two agencies. All very satisfactory.

But the closure of UNICEF's Timbuktu office came as a great shock to the local population and to the NGOs. As the violence of 1994 gave way to the hopes for negotiation in 1995, UNICEF was seen to be running away: apparently ignoring President Konaré's priorities to restart health and education services, precisely those areas in which UNICEF is seen as a leader. There appears to have been a problem of poor communications. United Nations agencies (even UNICEF) tend to see their role in terms of ministerial partnerships. They neglect the importance of civil society. United Nations agencies will have to change their approach with the arrival of Malian decentralisation—and a decline of centralised decision-making—and develop new NGO partnerships for greater initiative at the grassroots, along the lines suggested in Annex 4. We believe that this will also provide a new focus for collaboration between United Nations agencies (a theme to which we shall return in Chapter 7). And in the context of Mali, the most important collaboration would seem to be between UNDP and UNICEF who appear as the biggest players on the United Nations pitch. A closer relationship with civil society could have avoided the misunderstanding in Timbuktu: that the new UN Trust Fund showed UNDP committing itself to the North, just as UNICEF seemed to be pulling out. We do not wish to overstate the effect. Development can continue to muddle along without coordination. Yet it will be useful if this experience leads UNDP, UNICEF and their sister agencies to reflect

on the UN's joint leadership role for the setting and execution of development strategies.

This chapter has provided an overview of the way in which the United Nations—and to a lesser extent other donors and the NGOs—contributed to the Malian peacemaking process. Partly this concerns development strategies for relaunching the northern economy to ensure continued peace, including the UN's (especially UNDP's) role as a coordinator. By accepting an innovative partnership with the UN Secretariat in New York, the UNDP's work took on an unusual political dimension which has evolved into a leadership role among donors, at least in the North. At the same time, this political dimension has provided exciting opportunities for sub-regional initiatives in the disarmament field which may promote further cross-border peacemaking.



One runner-up in the competition was Emile Camara, from the Cathedral School in Bamako. (Source: Ministère de l'Education de Base, Mali, 1997.)

