



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

31 May 2002

Dear Mr. van Tongeren,

Thank you for your letter of 22 March 2002 expressing the willingness of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention to take on an important role in following up recommendation 27 of my report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

I support wholeheartedly your initiative to organize regional preparatory meetings leading to an international conference of local, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area of conflict prevention. I understand that the purpose of these meetings will be to help NGOs further define their roles and future interaction with the United Nations. This is directly in line with my report, which emphasizes that national actors bear the primary responsibility for conflict prevention, while noting that NGOs and civil society also have a major role in this regard.

The report focuses on the positive potential of a wide spectrum of NGOs engaged in conflict prevention. It is therefore important that the meetings you propose be as broadly inclusive and diverse as possible. I welcome your suggestion that the conference should be a real participatory process and trust that you will actively encourage broad geographical representation and a sense of ownership among the conflict prevention NGO community. I would also urge you to consider the contributions that regional organizations and various United Nations agencies can make to the process.

Your initiative is a timely and important contribution to engaging civil society in the task of developing a culture of prevention in the international community. As you embark on this important project, I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', written in a cursive style.

Kofi A. Annan

Mr. Paul van Tongeren  
Executive Director  
European Centre for Conflict Prevention  
Utrecht