



Final Draft

## **SOUTHERN AFRICAN ACTION AGENDA** **GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) was established in response to the challenge of the UN Secretary-General in his report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict to strengthen the role of civil society in preventing violent conflict through active participation and to enhance partnerships between civil society, governments, regional organisations and the UN. In preparation for a GPPAC Global Conference in 2005, a number of regional conferences have taken place around the world to discuss conflict prevention issues and challenges in their specific regions and make recommendations to formulate a Regional Action Agenda that addresses the role of civil society in preventing armed conflict in their region. A Southern African Regional Conference was held in South Africa from 16 to 18 February 2005, resulting in the action agenda which will feed into the all-Africa Agenda and the Global Action Agenda.

### **PREAMBLE**

**Considering** the unique circumstances in Southern Africa, the majority of countries in the region are faced with the challenges of peace building, demilitarisation, post-conflict reconstruction and consolidation of democracy and good governance;

**Cognisant** of the social, political and economic situation in Southern Africa, the following Action Agenda reflects a number of issues, challenges, recommendations and conclusions reached through consultation and dialogue between a variety of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the region.

**Noting** that there is a need to effect a paradigm shift from states and military security to human security and from reacting to violent conflict to the prevention of violent conflict;

**Recognising** that there are differing perspectives regarding the African political condition; however there is general consensus in the Southern African Region that this political condition is a result of the failure to transform the historically inherited structures of governance, and the unequal international political economy.

**Concerned** by the limited and the under-utilised capacities for the prevention of violent conflict within intergovernmental institutions, civil society organisations, and other actors;

**Guided** by the knowledge that conflict prevention encompasses the prevention, transformation, management and resolution of conflicts through non-violent means, and that civil society includes non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, women, youth and faith-based organisations, trade unions and the media;

**Pursuing** partnerships between CSOs, government, regional organisations specifically the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the UN;

**Recognising** the need to create solidarity and enhance dialogue between peace-building and conflict prevention actors;

**Further noting** that the dominant economic relations in the sub-region are informed by extra-regional trade relations with very little meaningful intra-regional economic interaction. The nexus between politics and development finds better expression in the international relations of the sub-region as the economic nature of relations renders the progressive elements of the political agenda impotent.

**We hereby commit** and recommend various actions targeted towards CSOs, the private sector, governments, inter-governmental organisations and the UN, with the following regional context and challenges in mind.

## **REGIONAL CONTEXT**

Understanding Southern Africa requires an in-depth study of the region's location in the world of history, politics and economics. Although there are differing perspectives regarding the African political condition, there is general consensus in the Southern African region that this political condition is a result of the failure to transform the historically inherited structures of governance, and the unequal international political economy. The historical perspective is steeped in the uncomfortable slope of colonial relations that bind political, economic and social developments to forces beyond the region's geographic presence.

Contemporary conflicts in the region pose limited yet unacceptable threats of violence. These conflicts are largely characterised by: internal political, social and economic disputes, regional conflict systems, the role of civilians as both perpetrators and principal targets, humanitarian disasters and human rights abuses.

It is in this context that civil society and non-governmental organisations already exist and are co-operating within the region on issues related to peace and security. These valuable CSOs are important to the region as they represent a coalition meaningfully engaging governments in the region and building mutual trust for effective peace building and prevention of violent conflict.

## **CHALLENGES**

Within the Southern African region there are six broad areas of challenges which have contributed to regional instability and conflict. These areas are:

### Governance and Constitutionalism

Protection of and respect for human rights are key elements that should be entrenched in all constitutions and inform the basis of good governance. The challenge to good governance and constitutionalism finds expression in the lack of moral and material conditions to ensure equitable distribution of resources, curbing abuses and corruption, encouraging rule of law, consolidating citizens' participation in decision-making processes and general acceptance of equality, freedom and dignity of peoples.

### Socio-economic Instability

The current socio-economic situation in Southern African does not support the necessary responses or mitigate conflict and bring about sustainable peace. This socio-economic situation has been exacerbated by trade barriers that are beyond the control of the member states in the region and are often dictated by international financial institutions. The situation is further compounded by globalisation and by the exploitation of human and natural resources by the most economically and politically powerful states and business corporations in both the sub-region and the world. Principal to the socio-economic challenge is the question of resource distribution with specific emphasis on land and processes of policy reform.

### Vulnerable Groups

Despite efforts by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to address issues related to the eradication of all forms of inequality in the region, the reality remains challenging. Vulnerable groups refer to women, elderly persons, youth and the disabled, amongst others, all of whom experience political, economic and social marginalisation. Important elements of this challenge reside in the continued need to broaden participation and representation of these groups in the political, economic and social institutions of governance.

### Proliferation of Small Arms

The proliferation of small arms may result in the material realisation of armed conflict on the basis of unresolved grievances. Small arms are recorded as a leading factor in the perpetration of criminal activities that compromise stability, and by extension, peace. A related challenge in the sub-region is how to institutionalise an effective response to the cross-border nature of this proliferation.

### HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a serious concern with broader socio-economic ramifications at both country and sub-regional levels. What compounds the challenge is the narrow state security focus

of interventions that concentrate on responses looking into how the pandemic affects the integrity of government business rather than the ability of individuals to deal with its ramifications.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In working towards preventing violent conflict we seek partnerships with and between all relevant stakeholders, recognising the primary role of Southern African civil society in conflict prevention and peace building in the region.

Each of these stakeholders has specific roles to play in this partnership and **we therefore recommend that:**

### CSOs

- ⇒ Strengthen existing networks of youth organisations in order to address issues affecting the youth in the region as well as to co-ordinate efforts aimed at building the capacity of youth structures to contribute to the prevention of violent conflict.
- ⇒ Undertake initiatives that challenge the patriarchal cultures and practices that underpin gender discrimination, especially those that relate to aspects of domestic violence and the victimisation of women in violent conflict.
- ⇒ Work together to ensure the recognition of the role of NGOs and civil society in peace support operations.
- ⇒ Work for the collective implementation of the Southern Africa agenda and seek partnership with CSOs globally in order to ensure that their role in policy-making processes is considered necessary.

### Private Sector

- ⇒ Enhance and strengthen platforms and partnerships where the private sector interacts with civil society and other structures in order to facilitate conflict prevention and peace building.

### Governments

- ⇒ Accelerate the implementation of the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development which set a target of 30% representation of women in political and decision-making structures by the year 2005 to enhance conflict prevention and peace-building processes.
- ⇒ Involve civil society organisations in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (adopted during the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Ethiopia in 2004) especially on aspects related to peace and security.

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- ⇒ Involve and provide opportunities to CSOs to scrutinise defence budget allocations in order to safeguard the ideals of human security.
- ⇒ Make available programmes of economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants to help prevent the recurrence of violent conflict.

### NEPAD Secretariat:

- ⇒ Institutionalise interactions with CSOs at national and regional levels in its activities, especially those relating to the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and peace missions in the region.

### SADC:

- ⇒ Monitor and evaluate, through its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), the implementation of the existing protocols dealing with human security to make a shift from a militaristic approach to a people-centred approach to security. While doing this, the SADC organ should institutionalise a mechanism to involve CSOs in this monitoring and evaluation.
- ⇒ Develop a protocol on guiding principles for member states with regard to the constitution-making processes in the region.
- ⇒ Move towards full implementation of the Protocol on Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other related material, and in doing so, involve CSOs as stipulated in Article 13 of the protocol.

### The African Union (AU)

- ⇒ Make use of existing international legal frameworks to formulate and implement an African protocol to deal with private security companies that perpetuate a culture of violence on the continent.
- ⇒ Strengthen formal interactions with CSOs working in the field of conflict prevention in the region for information sharing in order to better manage and prevent conflict situations.

### United Nations System:

- ⇒ Facilitate the creation of an international legal framework that prevents the exploitation of resources in ways that promote war and violence.
- ⇒ Institutionalise systems, approaches and processes to encourage its regional offices to work with CSOs to establish a holistic approach to the prevention of violent conflict.