

10. REFLECTIONS

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This Issue Paper and particularly the case-studies it contains have given rise to the following reflections.

1. Growing acknowledgement that all stakeholders should cooperate

In tandem with the conclusions from the Report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, (see page 9), there is a growing acknowledgement that there should be greater cooperation between all stakeholders in peacebuilding processes. However much analysts and practitioners may agree on this, developing good practices is, and remains, a work in progress.

2. Growing recognition of the role of civil society in peacebuilding

The report of the former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Anan, *The Prevention of Armed Conflict* (2001), recommended that the role of NGOs in conflict prevention should be examined. Today we are witnessing a growing recognition of the role of CSOs in peacebuilding. We see a general trend in this respect. As GPPAC we have also contributed to this recognition by drafting a *Global Action Agenda for the Prevention of Violent Conflict*; the GPPAC Conference at the Head Quarter of the UN on the Role of Civil Society in peacebuilding in July 2005; and the publication *People Building Peace II: Successful stories of civil society*. The Security Council meeting of 20 September 2005 on this issue, gave additional weight to the role of CSOs as did the World Bank Report of December 2006 on *Civil Society and Peacebuilding*. In the *Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict* from 2006, the former Secretary-General Kofi Anan “*urge[d] Member States to consider innovative means to intensify the dialogue with civil society.*”

3. The Peace Building Commission as example

The UN Peace Building Commission (PBC) is an excellent example of growing CSO inclusion. The very first draft of the UN resolution on the PBC did not envisage a role for CSOs. Later versions included paragraphs on consultations with CSOs. This happened in parallel with several meetings of the Group of Friends on Conflict Prevention and the GPPAC conference in

New York. Both events helped raise this issue. The final GA resolution recognizes the important contribution of civil society and encourages official structures and institutions to consult with civil society. However, implementing this resolution was not easy. The issue was discussed several times in the PBC, and at the end of the first year of the PBC, the provisional agreement was that the commission would invite representatives of CSOs that are actively engaged in peacebuilding activities to make statements and provide information. At the country level, CSOs have been represented on each of the countries’ joint steering committees. These have been ad hoc arrangements, however, and no provisions for future CSO engagement at country level with current or future countries have been arranged. Nothing has as yet been agreed about consultations in selected countries such as Burundi and Sierra Leone, which is crucial. This example shows how progress is made and that there is still a long way to go.

4. Learning to cooperate

The absence of cooperation between governments and CSOs can have many causes. These may include the fact that governments insufficiently recognize the role of CSOs or even mistrust them. Other reasons are mutual misperceptions and a lack of practical experience. Many cases illustrate how different stakeholders came together to overcome violence, to build a structure for peacebuilding or to see what they could learn from each other.

None of this diminishes the fact that different actors can contribute to a more complete picture of the problem, as the case studies from the US and Kyrgyzstan illustrate. If governments perceive NGOs not as non-governmental organizations, but as *anti-governmental* organizations (as in the Japanese case) or even as *evil societies* (as in the Nepalese case), it will take time to change these perceptions. One of the things that will be needed is confidence building. It is only after several meetings that participants can be expected to begin to trust each other and value input ‘from the other side’.

* Paul van Tongeren, GPPAC (see note 99).

The cases used in this issue paper – and indeed many others – demonstrate that if individual governments, or indeed the EU and the UN, recognize the value of cooperation and initiate a process of cooperation on a specific activity or programme, they discover how complementary roles give more weight to the effort and the cooperation will be valued differently.

5. Complementary roles

Catherine Barnes' article and the case studies identify many complementary roles CSOs can play. These can include conflict analysis, Early Warning and Early Response, awareness raising, lobbying and political mobilization, implementing concrete programmes (e.g. collecting hidden small arms), and many more. A World Bank study compared CSO Strengths and Weaknesses and found that CSOs can have the following advantages over governments:

- CSOs can work where governments can not;
- CSOs can speak to parties governments cannot reach;
- CSOs can work on social change issues;
- CSO operations are more flexible and can be adapted to the context.

6. Institutional structures and mechanisms

There are several institutional structures and mechanisms to implement a relationship between governments and CSOs. These include:

- a common working group or Forum;
- a liaison officer for CSOs;
- secondment of staff;
- consultation on draft policy papers;
- training by CSOs to create an infrastructure for peacebuilding.

7. An infrastructure for Peace

The German, Kenyan and Ghanaian models show a particularly interesting peacebuilding infrastructure. These are exceptional cases that put into practice the call in the *Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict* (2006) for a national infrastructure for peace. While the policy itself, the design of the peacebuilding infrastructure and the structure are all important steps forward, implementation, overcoming bureaucratic hurdles and funding are among the challenges for the

next phase. In all three cases, CSOs played a significant role in creating such an infrastructure.

8. Belonging to a global network

It is the experience of GPPAC and many participating organizations that they receive more weight and credit, if they belong to a global network, or participate in a United Nations conference. This increases their legitimacy.

9. Peacebuilding and the UN

The Security Council is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security but focuses more on the management of conflicts than on prevention of conflicts. In the Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations, *In Larger Freedom*, it was recognized that peacebuilding is a major omission within the UN system. Since then, progress has been made with the establishment of the Peace Building Commission. But there is still a gap between the ambitious mandate of the PBC and what it is able to deliver. It focuses on only a few countries and has limited funds and capacity.

On conflict prevention, the Interagency Framework Team works on building national conflict management capacity. UNDP-BCPR and DPA are expanding their efforts in this respect. Some progress has been made over recent years but a better international infrastructure on conflict prevention and peacebuilding is needed. This must incorporate better cooperation between the UN, regional organizations, governments, CSOs and other actors, better early warning and response mechanisms, more adequate civilian conflict prevention and more peacebuilding instruments and funding mechanisms.

10. Need for a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership on Peacebuilding

Many global issues are addressed at the global level by UN agencies, but there is no overall agency on Peacebuilding. This makes the need for cooperation between the different stakeholders even more compelling. As is pointed out in chapter 8 of this paper, UN agencies, governments, civil society actors and universities already cooperate on many global issues within the framework of a Multi-Stakeholder

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Partnership. A multi-stakeholder partnership on peacebuilding (comprising UN agencies, some governments, CSOs, universities and research institutes and practitioners) could facilitate common agenda setting; prioritize issues; strategize, and implement programmes.

11. Lessons from humanitarian advocacy campaigns

The contributions of civil society organizations to the advancement of international peace and security have been growing in prominence, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Systematic collaboration between governments and civil society organizations has been the hallmark of a series of campaigns designed to aid in the prevention and resolution of violence conflict, and to reduce their human costs. As Don Hubert writes in his contribution, there are four main areas for potential cooperation between government and civil society: formulating the campaign message, mobilizing political will, negotiating international agreements and monitoring implementation. Civil society organizations commonly play a more prominent role in framing the issue and identifying core campaign objectives, while governments obviously have a central role in formal negotiations. Both sets of actors play important roles in mobilizing political will and in monitoring implementation, with the best outcomes emerging where collaboration between the two is close.

Although ‘partnership’ is a term frequently invoked when discussing cooperation between governments and civil society, ‘strategic collaboration’ is a more accurate characterization of the relationship. There can be no doubt that civil society organizations have become key participants in the development of global public policies to prevent and mitigate the effects of violent conflict.

Where they can encourage the formation of effective governmental counterparts, the results can be truly impressive.

12. Costs of conflict, cost effectiveness of prevention and an increasing volume for conflict prevention

The costs of conflicts are immense, and the cost effectiveness of conflict prevention is large. Expenditure on conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be increased substantively. A better balance is needed between the huge amounts going to humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping and the little currently spent on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

13. Supporting CSOs on peacebuilding

It is broadly acknowledged in the literature on fragile states that the international community should strengthen weak governments. It is also frequently said that the international community should work through CSOs because governments are considered unreliable or too corrupt. Northern donors hardly support local (peacebuilding) NGOs. If we really want to build capacity for peace and peacebuilding, we have to develop mechanisms so that *local peacebuilding capacities* are also enhanced. This relates to an overall broadening of the possibilities for southern NGOs to apply for support, but also to issues in support for peacebuilding modalities. Far greater flexibility, speed in disbursements and long term commitments are needed in providing resources for peacebuilding. A global fund or small secretariat, dealing with funding CSOs in the South is urgently needed. The German government established the *zivik* project that has supported hundreds of CSOs in peacebuilding, in the north and the south. Effectively we need a *global zivik*.