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Governments & Civil Society Organisations: Issues in Working Together Towards Peace

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About this Discussion Paper

In recent years, there has been increased recognition of the role that civil society organizations can play as partners with governments and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) in conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. This potential role has been acknowledged by various UN reports and declarations, including reports published by the Security Council¹, and regional organizations and articulated in government policy documents. Translating these statements and principles into systemized working modalities and effective practice remains erratic however. Still, there are, however, a number of promising examples of good practice and opportunities to learn from existing experience. For example, number of governments have begun to develop policies on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, often with the active involvement of national and international CSOs who have been consulted on the contents and on how best to implement the new objectives.

This paper² concentrates on examining some of the issues in forging appropriate and effective partnerships between governments and CSOs to work with conflicts at home and internationally. It is intended to stimulate discussion at the strategy meeting of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) on strengthening cooperation between governments, foundations and civil society working together on conflict and peace issues. GPPAC is an international network of civil society organizations working for conflict prevention and peacebuilding worldwide, stressing a shift from “reaction” to “prevention”. In seeking to stimulate discussion, this paper can serve as a starting point for mapping out the

field of possible modes of engagement – especially between governments and CSOs – and identifying some of the challenges encountered in the process.

Participants are encouraged to contribute new points and examples, as well as to more generally critique the issues addressed in the paper, and to identify opportunities for the future and strategies for overcoming some of the challenges.

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- 1 Statement by the President of the Security Council, 20 September 2005: “The Security Council stressed that the essential responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments, and that the United Nations and the international community can play an important role in support of national efforts for conflict prevention and can assist in building national capacity in this field and recognized the important supporting role of civil society. The Security Council reaffirmed the need for this strategy to be based on engagement with governments, regional and subregional organizations as well as civil society organizations, as appropriate, reflecting the widest possible range of opinions. The Security Council underlined the potential contributions of a vibrant and diverse civil society in conflict prevention, as well as in the peaceful settlement of disputes. They noted that a well-functioning civil society has the advantage of specialized knowledge, capabilities, experience, links with key constituencies, influence and resources, which can assist parties in conflict to achieve peaceful solution to disputes. The Security Council noted that a vigorous and inclusive civil society could provide community leadership, help shape public opinion, and facilitate as well as contribute to reconciliation between conflicting communities. The Security Council also underscored the role that these actors could play in providing a bridge to dialogue and other confidence-building measures between parties in conflict.” Statement from 5264th meeting of the Security Council, ‘The role of civil society in conflict prevention and the pacific settlement of disputes’ S/PRST/2005/42
 - 2 This paper was prepared by Dr. Catherine Barnes, an independent consultant working in support of peacebuilding initiatives through facilitation, training and research. The paper has been further modified by free lance journalist Jim Wake, and also includes additional comments by staff members at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention.

1 Introduction: CSOs, peacebuilding and the power of partnerships

1.1 Civil society: more than NGOs

'Civil society' resists easy definition, especially when discussing it as a global development. Every society has its own distinct forms of social organization, cultural and political traditions, as well as contemporary state and economic structures - all of which are central to the development of civil society and shape its specific features. Most broadly understood, however, civil society refers to the web of social relations that exist in the space between the state, the market (activities with the aim of extracting profit), and the private life of families and individuals. Interlinked with the concept of 'civil society' is the idea of social capital: the values, traditions and networks that enable coordination and cooperation between people. Civil society therefore involves qualities associated with relationships, with values, and with organizational forms.

Civil society takes form through various types of association. Ranging from officially constituted institutions to small, informal community groups, these associations give expression and direction to the social,

political, spiritual and cultural needs of members. By reflecting diverse interests and values, they enable the articulation, mobilization and pursuit of the aspirations of the different constituent elements within a society. As such, civil society groups can be a factor in war as well as a force for peace.

The figure below illustrates many - though not all - of the types of groupings that can potentially comprise civil society, broadly understood. Some would contest the inclusion of some of these groupings as a part of civil society, more narrowly defined. Yet all have played important roles in responding to conflict. What becomes clear is that civil society is far more than public benefit non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Yet NGOs with technical-professional skills play an important role in providing services, promoting change and working with conflict. A comprehensive exploration of the roles played by civil society in conflict and peacebuilding is presented in *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War and Building Peace*, another report distributed for this set of meetings.



Some stress the political role of civil society, viewing it as the space for cultivating 'civic' values and processes for citizens to engage in public life by channeling their interests and aspirations through peaceful deliberative processes. Civil society interfaces with the state through parliamentary institutions (with parliamentarians often seen as serving a bridging role as the elected representatives of civil society), through other forms of policy dialogue, and even through direct displays of power through protest movements and activism. Furthermore, civil society groups can help to monitor and constrain the arbitrary exercise of state power and, increasingly, the behavior of private businesses and even multinational corporations. Therefore civil society enables different groupings in society to debate differences, reach compromise, form priorities, and - sometimes - develop consensus on a higher common purpose.

Civil society does not replace the state. At its worst, an authoritarian government can constrict - or even crush - the functioning of civil society through methods that violate human rights. Yet it is difficult for civil society to thrive amidst lawlessness and widespread violence. A flourishing civil society typically depends upon the security and predictability provided by an effective state run by democratic governments that ensures the rule of law. If these conditions are not present, people - through civil society organizing - strive to create the elements of self-governance and security. In so doing, they are recreating the basis for democratic government, which rests on the consent of the governed. Thus civil society and democratic states are highly complementary and even interdependent.

Protracted conflict affects the ways CSOs operate, often fragmenting and undermining an already weak civil society. It furthermore tends to polarize groups along conflict divides - sometimes to the point where seemingly independent CSOs become highly partisan organizations in support of the war effort of one of the parties. Furthermore, armed conflict tends to constrain the ability of civil society to act autonomously, as governments and armed groups exert pressure on those under their control to conform. One of the goals of

applied initiatives can be the long-term objective of strengthening an independent civil society structures that help to bridge conflict divides.

1.2 CSO roles at different stages of the conflict cycle

Civil society roles in structural prevention to address the causes of conflict

1. Addressing structural violence & promoting human security - through development, human rights monitoring & promotion, preventing environmental degradation...
2. Making governments & state structures more responsive - through participation in political processes, policy dialogue, monitoring, advocacy campaigns, protests...
3. Alleviating social tensions and conflict - through challenging xenophobia and discrimination, facilitating dialogue, promoting tolerance and a culture of peace...
4. Strengthening capacities to mediate conflict and manage differences - through conflict resolution training, mediation services, education, promoting rule of law

Civil society roles in early operational crisis response and during violent conflict

5. Early warning of emerging crises - monitoring, analysis, and communication strategies to raise awareness and generate attention
6. Developing options and strategies for response - formulating recommendations, engaging in policy dialogue, problem-solving workshops
7. Mobilizing political will for response - lobbying and campaigning, sensitizing domestic audiences
8. Developing & strengthening 'constituencies for peace' and public awareness work, facilitating social dialogue, public protests...
9. Violence reduction and monitoring; creating 'zones of peace'
10. Humanitarian relief & support to war-affected communities

1 Introduction: CSOs, peacebuilding and the power of partnerships

Civil society roles in peacemaking

11. Facilitating communication and generating alternatives - Track II dialogue processes
12. Creating a 'pragmatic peace' at the local level, strengthening local CSO capacities for conflict transformation & peacebuilding through public dialogue
13. Developing a negotiation agenda and vision for the future that addresses the causes and consequences of conflict
14. Participating in the political negotiations
15. Facilitating / mediating political negotiations process

Preventing reoccurrence and post-settlement peacebuilding

16. Public education & awareness-raising on the peace agreement and consolidating support.
17. Facilitating the rehabilitation of war-affected relationships & communities; laying the groundwork for reconciliation.
18. Contributing to transitional justice processes
19. Resumption of initiatives contributing to structural prevention - encouraging good governance, reconstruction and development, mediating social conflict, promoting human rights...

1.3 Partnerships for peace

While it is rare for grassroots efforts to transform wider systems of conflict and war; it is also not possible for these wider systems to be transformed without stimulating changes at the community level. Therefore many analysts and practitioners are agreed with John Paul Lederach's observation that there is a need to build peace from the bottom-up, the top-down and the middle-out.³ Yet the methodologies for crossing the scale barrier, simultaneously and in a coordinated manner, are not well developed. Therefore the key seems to be in negotiating dynamic and strategic partnerships between different actors concerned about the conflict - including governments, IGOs and CSOs. This can then be operationalized through stronger mechanisms and resources for interaction between IGOs, CSOs and governments in order to institutionalize the capacity for prevention.

Partnerships for peace may be the antidote to systems and networks sustaining war. To achieve this potential, there should be increased acknowledgement of the legitimate role of CSOs in peace and security matters. However CSOs should not be considered instruments to carry out agendas set by others. Rather they should be seen as complementing partners with valuable contributions to make in providing information and analysis, policy development, strategy design and program implementation. As noted, the potential of such partnerships has been increasingly acknowledged in the past few years.

As concluded by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict that "the prevention of deadly conflict is, over the long term, too hard - intellectually, technically, and politically- to be the responsibility of any single institution or government, no matter how powerful. Strengths must be pooled, burdens shared, and labor divided among actors."⁴ This necessity to work together in partnership, and to complement each other is also stated in the recent UN Progress Report on the prevention of Armed Conflict, in the Secretary-General urges "Member States to consider innovative means to intensify the dialogue with civil society."⁵ Also discussions within the EU are taking place in the framework of the 'Action Plan for Civilian Aspects of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)', acknowledging the importance to include views of civil society in civilian crisis management policy orientations. Experience on the ground shows that the necessity of multiple actors urgently requires rethinking in how to intensify inter-agency cooperation in planning and implementation, also in order to avoid duplicating efforts by others. Several recommendations to improve cooperation include the establishment of an EU-NGO peacebuilding advisory group, and the

3 John Paul Lederach. 1997. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press.

4 Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Preventing Deadly Conflict. Final Report, with Executive Summary, 1997: Carnegie Cooperation of New York, p.xiv

5 Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, A/60/891, 2006, p. 29

Summary of CSO Strengths, Weaknesses and Challenges

Strengths

Better information on “reality on the ground”
 CSOs can work where government can not (areas)
 CSOs can speak to parties government can not reach
 CSOs can work on social change issues government often can not
 CSOs are better grounded; particularly CBOs enjoy trust and legitimacy
 CSOs can inform and monitor policies (the view from below)
 CSOs operate more flexibly and adapted to the context

Limitations/Weaknesses

Limited organizational capacity, internal governance, funding.
 Often a local focus (particularly CBOs).
 Weak networking and coordination mechanisms among CSOs
 Questionable constituency base and legitimacy of NGOs
 Often tense relations with, disregard & mistrust from government
 Capacity to act in situations of violent conflict equally hampered
 NGOs may weaken the state, by substituting service delivery for too long

Challenges

Sheer diversity of CSOs: different motivations, capacities, contributions
 Effectiveness of CSOs peacebuilding initiatives difficult to measure
 Tension between having constituency ties (leading partisanship) and impartiality/ neutrality considered crucial for effective civil society
 peacebuilding
 Key conditions for peace are often out of reach for CSOs

Source: Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, Report No. 36445-GLB, Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors (draft), June 19, 2006. World Bank, Social Development Department, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network, p. 34.

establishment of civilian officers within the Council Secretariat.⁶

A useful overview of the strengths and weaknesses of civil society organizations and the challenges they face in peacebuilding work was included in a recent World Bank report on civil society and peacebuilding.

⁶ Catriona Gourlay, Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the Framework of ESDP, Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network. Crisis Management Initiative, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, September 2006, p.5, 14

2 Governments & CSOs: complexity of engagement

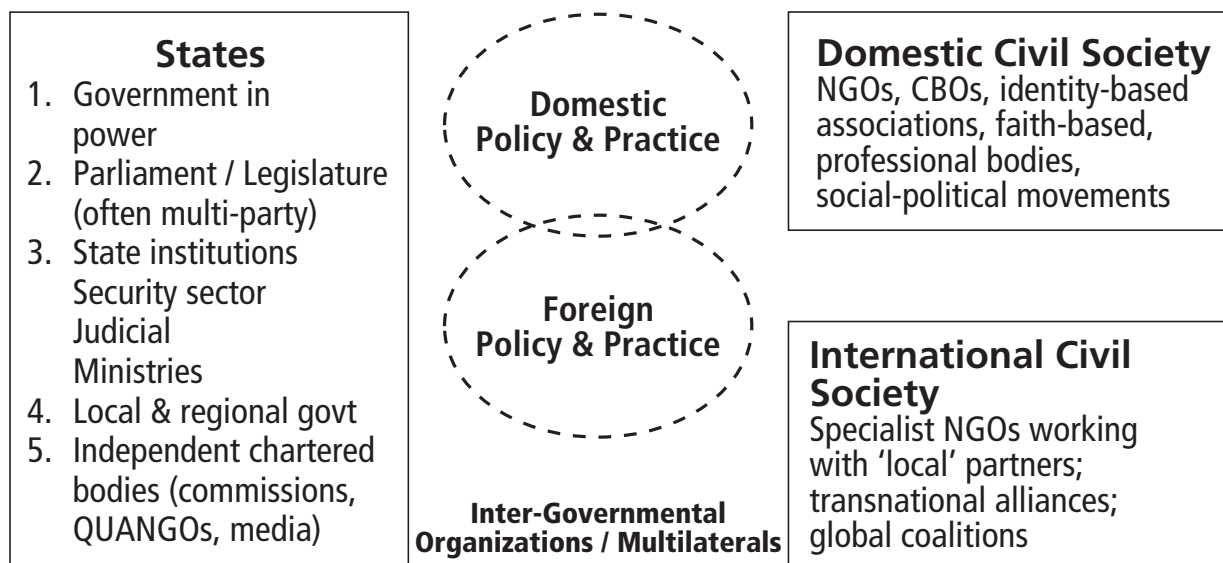
2.1 Foreign and domestic: complex relationships & levels of analysis

There is widespread international agreement that primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments and other local actors. Local ownership of peacebuilding is likely to result in more legitimate processes and sustainable outcomes. The primary role of outsiders is to create spaces and support inclusive processes that enable those directly involved to make decisions about the specific arrangements for addressing the causes of conflict. In general, outsiders should help to build on the capacities that exist and avoid actions that displace and undermine homegrown initiatives or that promote short-term objectives at the expense of long-term prevention. While they can facilitate resolution of conflicts, it is often problematic when they begin to direct the outcomes. Based on a collaborative understanding of the sources of conflict and the factors that continue to generate it, people based elsewhere can seek to address some of the causes that 'located' elsewhere in the conflict system (such as arms suppliers in third countries or policies promoted by foreign governments that further escalate war).

When discussing cooperation between governments and CSOs working on peacebuilding, it is important to clarify whether this is principally in the domestic sphere of addressing conflict(s) within the country / sub-region versus principally in the international sphere of addressing conflicts abroad.

- **Domestic:** The relationship between national civil society formations with the government in responding to conflict in their midst is dynamically complex. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between 'government' *per se* and the wider array of state structures. As the government of the day is likely to be a party to conflict to a greater or lesser extent, it may be questionable whether other state institutions (such as the parliament, the judiciary, or local authorities) are perceived as a credible and capable actor in responding to conflict. Nevertheless, all the domestic actors are 'stakeholders' to the conflict. They therefore share a degree in responsibility for fostering the basis of their future (with governments having a primary obligation). Their cooperation may focus on resolving a specific conflict, on addressing underlying contradictions that

Key actors and arenas for Government-CSO engagement in conflict issues



give rise to ongoing tensions, or on transforming relationships marred by persistent conflict and building a culture of peace. Their efforts to address conflict are likely to have structural, legal, institutional, social and resource implications. As such, the potential field of cooperation is multi-dimensional across a broad spectrum of issues and range from close strategic partnerships to adversarial pressure to simple competition for control and influence.

- **International:** The relationship between CSOs and governments concerning policies and practices in response principally to conflicts ‘elsewhere’ can be slightly more abstract - as the actors are less likely to be personally affected - and is likely to be more formal, conducted through existing communication channels and procedures. As domestic considerations are, however, always a factor in formulating foreign policy, the prevalent public opinion can be influential on a government’s actions. Therefore public campaigning is as important as the technical-professional contributions made by more specialist CSOs. Additionally, a government’s approach to foreign policy and international action is typically subject to competing interests and priorities. Policies on trade and the economy may take priority over policies on prevention and peacebuilding - even to the point where, for example, the arms trade directly contributes to the escalation of armed conflict. Furthermore, the government may not always act on its principles. While it may be concerned about the situation in country *x* and wish to be helpful, it may refrain from getting actively involved because it would upset an important ally.

These distinctions between ‘foreign’ and ‘domestic’ are made more complicated by the fact that domestic CSOs often have links with international CSOs, who in turn have links with a range of governments with an interest in a conflict-affected country. Furthermore, IGOs often play a significant role in responding to armed conflict. Their mandate and operations are influenced both by the response of the government of the Member State(s) in which the conflict takes place, as well as by the interests

of other Member States and the rules and principles of the IGO’s charter. All of these actors may, in turn, be influenced by civil society activists and others, such as the private sector. Thus government-CSO engagement is situated in a highly complex and fluid system of institutional structures, legal norms, policy and practice arrangements, and resource considerations - all of which are shaped by a diverse set of actors attempting to drive forward their own interests, perspectives and values utilizing all the tools of influence and / or coercion that are at their disposal.⁷ This complexity creates both opportunities and constraints for responding to conflict. Those in government or civil society who are committed to sustainable peacebuilding have to undertake a careful analysis of the multiple factors at stake and map the available channels for effective influence.

Challenge *Given the complexity of actors, interests and issues operating in the global system, how can peacebuilders best champion and implement coherent policies? How can governmental and civil society actors cooperate to move prevention and peacebuilding up the agenda of political concern?*

Challenge *Both government officials and CSOs working on public policy issues tend to be specialized - e.g., focused on education or on economic and development issues or on foreign affairs and security concerns or on environmental issues, and so on. This can create obstacles to analyzing and implementing holistic and comprehensive peacebuilding. What are the mechanisms and processes to facilitate multi-sectoral cooperation capable of addressing the complexity of conflict?*

What is clear is that cooperation among well-meaning parties at all levels - within civil society, at the governmental and regional level, and at the global level - is required. That position was underlined in the UN Secretary-General’s Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict of September 7, 2006: in which the Secretary General “urge[d] Member States to consider innovative means to intensify the dialogue with civil society, for example, by inviting civil society representatives to provide regular briefings to pertinent bodies.”⁸

2 Governments & CSOs: complexity of engagement

As it is, governments and the European Union tend to respond to conflict situations at the point when they are already reaching the crisis point. As articulated by GPPAC, the goal should be to move “from reaction to prevention.”

2.2 CSOs and Governments: Cooperation, co-optation, and confrontation

In general, there are a number of barriers to cooperation. Partnership between government and CSOs is often characterized by mistrust.⁹ In many conflict situations, large parts of the population mistrusts government, and civil society peace activists avoid making direct connections to governmental actors.¹⁰ Mutual misperceptions and lack of understanding of the other’s institutional imperatives may create obstacles to effective cooperation. Government officials may question the quality, legitimacy and accountability of specific NGOs - or of civil society organizations more generally. They may not see their relevance or believe that they can create more trouble than they resolve. They may also resent the often hostile tone that some civil society actors may adopt in their critique of the government and perceive them as having essentially political motives in seeking to undermine the government’s authority.

Civil society actors may, in turn, be deeply suspicious of the motives and commitment of ‘officials’. They may have considerable ideological or political differences and believe the contradictions are insurmountable without becoming too compromised. In some cases, all these concerns are well-founded. Furthermore there are situations when it may be inappropriate or worse to engage, perhaps especially when the state is controlled by an oppressive regime and will only engage with CSOs if they are fully co-opted and subject to government control. Alternately, CSOs may object to a government’s foreign policy as a whole. Disagreement with a government’s stance in one country or conflict (such as the ‘war against terrorism’) may make them cautious of cooperating too closely with the same government on a different situation, for fear of becoming / being perceived as a tool of the government.

Conversely, in some countries the boundaries between the state and civil society is extremely blurred, as when many parts of civil society have institutional access to

7 Some have also critiqued the ways in which Northern / Western CSOs have tended to impose demands on Southern / Eastern governments (e.g., through advocating conditionality and sanctions) in ways that might compromise sovereignty and paradoxically undermine democratic processes and local civil society in those countries. They worry that externally imposed prescriptions on national policy undermine local capacities to address central challenges in their society by both weakening sovereignty and making the government more accountable to external forces (especially international financial institutions and powerful foreign governments) than to the domestic population. For example, some are concerned that the tendency of Northern-based INGOs to shift debates on structural issues away from national parliaments (which can help to strengthen the accountability of governments) to international forums organized around multilateral agencies and inter-governmental meetings. International forums tend to be inaccessible to less wealthy CSOs, especially those in the global South and for those with less experience or language skills for effective participation. Some feel that focusing on multilaterals is a ‘soft target’ when the real decision-making power lies with governments. Furthermore ‘internationalizing’ concern on specific issues / projects can lead to a distortion of the complexities and needs of those directly affected as the situation is filtered through the lens and linked with the concerns of those in far-away places. In addition to divergence and critiques from within CSO circles, there have been negative reactions from some governments to the growth in CSOs’ influence in international affairs. Some have resisted efforts by intergovernmental organizations to more actively involve CSOs in deliberative processes and through consultation on policy formation and planning. Some see engaging ‘unaccountable’ CSOs in policy deliberation as undermining the authority of parliamentary democracy - particularly in countries where parliaments are not as institutionally strong or well-rooted. Some associate greater civil society influence with efforts to undermine their sovereignty. (Although this criticism does not appear to have been as sharp with regard to consulting private sector actors such as business leaders.) There is also concern about the potential to widen the power imbalances in the global system, given the unequal resources and opportunities amongst CSO actors. This further strengthens the perception of well-established Northern CSOs facilitating the institutional spread of their own values and goals without reference to the values and perceptions of their counterparts elsewhere in the world. These dynamics appear to slowly be shifting as CSOs based in the global South / East increasingly create their own networks and articulate strong social change agendas, winning support for their causes. Yet some observe a parallel dynamic of center-periphery relations at the domestic level, with elites (often urban and upper middle class) speaking ‘on behalf’ of marginalized sections of the population in their own country. These dynamics are not only stemming from centre-periphery relations globally, they are also manifest along other social divides, such as faith, gender, culture, generation...

8 Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly, 7 September 2006, p. 29, paragraph 107.

9 “Report of the GPPAC National Civil Society Consultation in Sierra Leone”, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2006, p. 5

10 Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, World Bank, p. 38

2 Governments & CSOs: complexity of engagement

the state, routinely play a role in policy development, and receive the bulk of their funding from their government. This may lead some to lose their 'critical edge' and become more like outsourcing agencies to deliver government services. The potentials and possibilities for engagement between governments and CSOs are embedded in the wider political, social and legal context of the country. Constructive engagement between CSOs and governments are far more likely in well-established democracy with a strong rule-of-law establishment than in authoritarian dictatorships, where truly independent civic groups may be seen as more of a threat than an asset. Yet in any context there are likely to be diverse ways of relating ranging from extremely close to extremely confrontational.

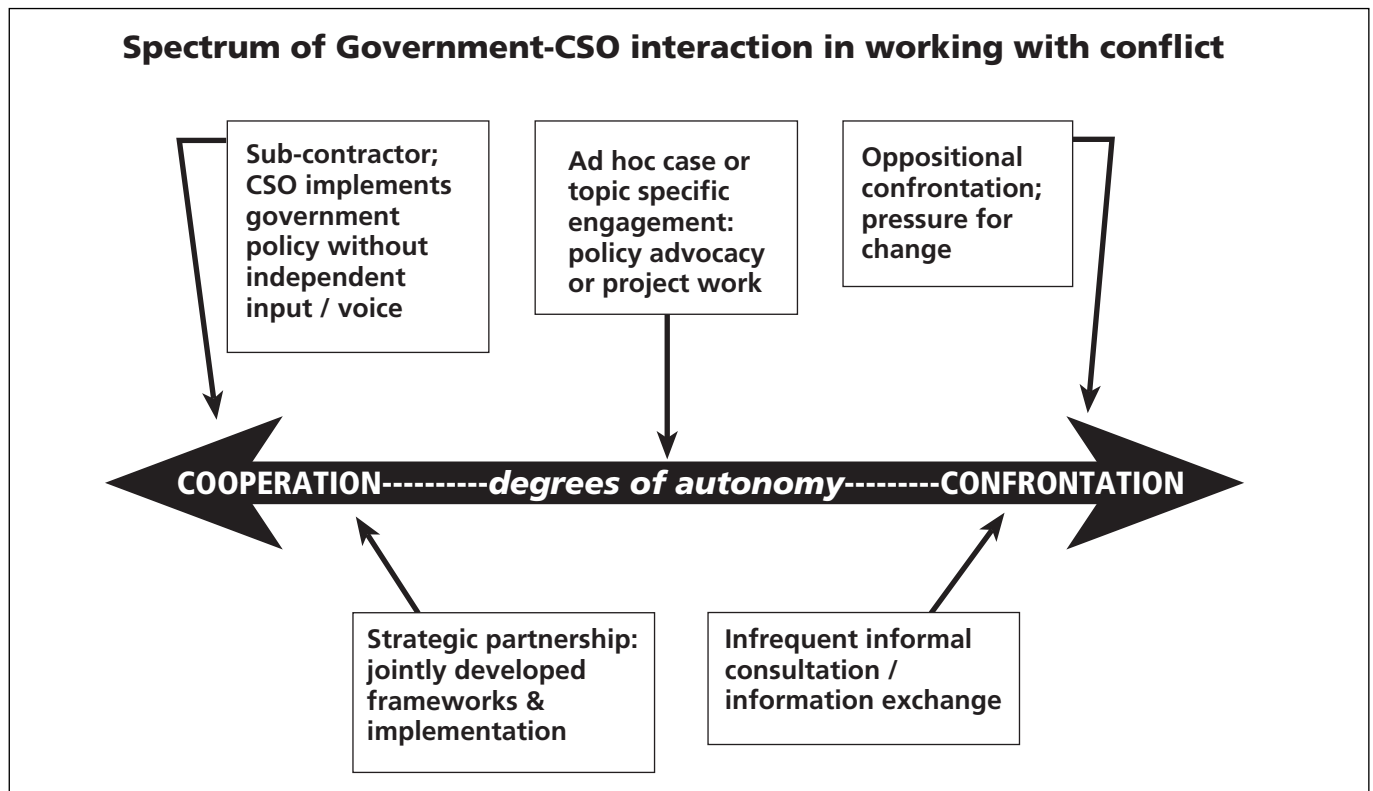
The engagement of government with CSOs differs between governments from the North and the South. Northern governments tend to be more open towards input from civil society organisations. The type of interaction varies, ranging from informal meetings with CSOs to structured mechanisms for a regular dialogue. Southern governments seem to be less open for

cooperation with CSOs, of course there are developing countries in which this is not the case. But in discussing the different mechanisms for cooperation the various level of interaction with CSOs undertaken by Northern and Southern governments should be taken into account.

The distinctive identities and roles played by CSOs and governments can make engagement complex. Some of this complexity is inherent in the distinctive identities and roles of NGOs as independent actors. This can generate a creative tension between strategies based on cooperative engagement with governmental decision-makers versus strategies that deploy confrontation to generate political pressure for change.

CSOs need to deliberate and analyze the values and political positioning that characterizes their relationships with governments, so as to engage more effectively, ethically and strategically in responding to conflict. There are a range of potential approaches.¹¹

- **Complicit** - as citizens and as organizational groups embedded in a country's civil society, we are party to the decisions that our governments make in our name.



2 Governments & CSOs: complexity of engagement

- **Contractual** - when CSOs implement government policies and programs through their work, often by receiving funding from governments.
- **Contributing** - through participation in policy dialogue and recommendations for appropriate responses to specific situations or issues.
- **Complementarity** - working in parallel as separate / autonomous entities within the same system of issues and relationships.
- **Contesting / Confronting** - when CSOs challenge government actions, priorities, and behaviors.

Yet in times when it is an advantage for governments and CSOs to work together, their engagement can be assisted by developing both formal-institutional mechanisms and personal-relationship experience to facilitate effective cooperation - as will be discussed in Section 5. Strong collaborative working relationships

are more likely when all parties have developed a shared frame of reference and a common set of desired objectives, as well as mutual perceptions of reliability and trust. There is a spectrum of modalities for engagement, as illustrated in the following figure. They can be understood as ranging along an axis of degrees of autonomy and separation.

Challenge *How can governments and CSOs cooperate without undermining the distinctive strengths of each (e.g. independence and flexibility of CSOs; formal legal-political accountability and representativeness of governments).*

11 This '5-Cs' framework was developed by the participants in the GPPAC London 'Brainstorming' Meeting in December 2003, with key inputs from Andy Carl and Simon Fisher.

3 Possible arenas for cooperation in working toward peace

This section explores some of the potential areas for cooperation between governments and CSOs in the arena of prevention and peacebuilding so as to provide a starting point for discussion. It does not attempt to be an exhaustive catalogue of all the potential arenas for cooperation or issues that arise in developing partnerships in these areas.

3.1 Policy development and legislative processes

One of the aims of many peacebuilders is to mobilize political support for constructive action to address conflicts and their causes. NGOs have a crucial and ever increasing role in contributing information, arguments and energy to influencing decision-making processes. They can directly address policy makers and address those who, in turn, influence them.

Civil society actors can make an important contribution by identifying overlooked problems and policy gaps, analyzing issues and recommending solutions. In short, they can identify the central agenda of issues that need to be addressed in responding to a conflict situation and dealing with peace and security issues more widely. Civil society groups can analyze the situation, formulate recommendations, develop policy options and engage in policy dialogue to address conflicts. They can also mobilize advocacy campaigns to generate political will amongst decision-makers and implement strategies to achieve the desired results.

These capacities can be directed towards influencing both government policy and national legislation. While CSOs can lobby government and parliamentarians to introduce new laws that either address the causes of conflict or create mechanisms for managing conflict more peacefully and effectively, it is more common for them to engage in policy processes with relevant government ministries.

Government officials and CSOs can engage in a number of collaborative processes for developing policy frameworks and developing action plans to implement them.¹² :

1. Conceptual exchange, learning and analysis of problematic issues and possible solutions

2. Formulating the overall direction of policy and specific policy objectives
3. Strategising and planning specific measures to implement policy
4. Awareness raising, advocacy and lobbying to generate the political conditions necessary for a new policy agenda to be adopted and implemented.

Policy development in the UK

In the United Kingdom, specialist NGOs are often at the forefront of identifying policy challenges. They undertake public awareness raising to generate pressure for a government response and engage in policy dialogue with relevant government officials, parliamentarians and civil servants to promote awareness of the issues and recommend steps to address them. In its policymaking processes, many government departments will in turn consult with relevant NGOs in advance of preparing policy papers and then hold public consultations when those papers are in their draft stage before they are revised and adopted by the government as official policy.

DFID (Department for International Development)

DFID is in the process of developing a new policy paper on its conflict work. They hold a meeting with a selected group of NGOs in July 2006 for input in their new policy. Furthermore, they have disseminated a paper to set out how DFID addresses conflict, to communicate DFID's vision for its conflict work into the future, and to make the necessary commitments in order to realise this vision. Comments are asked about how DFID should best achieve the following policy goals: An increased focus on preventing violent conflict; Improving the effectiveness of our conflict work; and Considering conflict fully in all our development work. The final paper is expected to be launched at the end of the year.¹³

¹² Policy frameworks may consist of a set of principles, a list of priorities, and a menu of possible actions to address the issues concerned. A policy may be accompanied by a set of operational guidelines that indicate how the action plan is to be implemented.

¹³ www.dfid.gov.uk

3 Possible arenas for cooperation in working toward peace

3.2 Civilian crisis response, violence prevention and peacebuilding

People based in a society are often best placed to understand what is going on and to identify specific actions that can be taken to address conflict issues and dynamics. Their insights can support the development of subtle and highly targeted strategies that do not necessarily require extensive resources or coercive measures, especially when addressed at an early point in a conflict cycle. Civil society players - including women's groups, those working with minorities, indigenous peoples and youth, and religious

organizations and leaders - are often particularly well-suited to provide information and analysis and to suggest appropriate responses. Their insight should be maximized when exploring response options, which may require collaboration from key partners elsewhere in the global system.

Yet it can be difficult for local actors to mobilize support from outsiders unless there are trustworthy channels to convey this information and analysis to those who can effectively act upon it. This indicates the advantage of an integrated system - or at least a well-developed structure of networks, interfaces and entry

Recommendations from the GPPAC Global Action Agenda

1. Further develop an integrated global CSO network that can cooperate to analyze early warning signs, formulate appropriate responses and cooperate to mobilize the political will necessary for timely and effective action.
2. Strengthen the capacity of local, national and regional CSOs-as well as the capacities of relevant media agencies-to identify and analyze the causes and dynamics of emerging conflicts through training and ongoing support. This should include knowledge of gender-based indicators and gender-sensitive response strategies.
3. Facilitate public discussion of conflict issues and dynamics in conflict-affected areas to generate ideas for how to address the situation and to mobilize creative and constructive responses.
4. The UN should establish regular and transparent interfaces ('contact points') between UN Resident Coordinators / Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and relevant local, regional and international actors to exchange information and develop complementary strategies, including through regular consultative fora with CSOs. Where appropriate, develop formal arrangements for multi-actor data collection, analysis and strategy development.
5. Fully utilize the potential of civilian peacebuilding missions and the potential of community-based peace monitors and mediators. Designate specific field-level personnel to engage with community peacebuilding programs and liaise and cooperate with local and international civil peace
6. Create interlocking systems of peacekeeping capacities so the UN can partner with relevant regional organizations and civil peace services to increase rapid response capacity and protective accompaniment for vulnerable groups. The UN should work with existing civil peace services in order to develop shared rosters of specialists, taking into account the importance of cultural and gender diversity as a key resource of such teams. Governments should provide political and financial support for CSOs that place multinational, trained unarmed civilian peacekeepers.
7. Enhance the overall international system for deploying effective multifunctional peace operations through ongoing joint training, scenario planning and evaluation with relevant CSOs.

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points - between local, national and international CSOs concerned with conflict and for their engagement with concerned governments and IGOs.

Civil society can serve as an alternative entry point in states and regions in crisis. The donor community and IGOs can support the mobilization of these social resources at all levels, including through political accompaniment and financial support at the local and national level and through working constructively with diaspora communities at the international level. Community and national CSOs can also take a range of actions to address conflicts in their midst and mitigate against outbreaks of violence, actions that are done sometimes with the implicit or explicit support of the government and under their censure.

Information and analysis about conflict is sometimes a highly sensitive issue. As it can effect national security, governments may consider it to be a matter exclusively in their realm. Perceptions of unscrupulous intelligence gathering and security service activities may further make it sensitive amongst the wider population, as allegations of 'spying' and interference may abound. Yet it is possible for CSOs and relevant officials to cooperate on early warning and early response systems. The system can involve key stakeholders and others with special expertise into a process to share information, strengthen joint analysis, identify options and opportunities, and provide necessary forms of support for implementation.

Inter-governmental and international actors can play a key role in facilitating and creating space for constructive dialogue and productive engagement between governments and civil society representatives. For this to work, however, their mandates and operational practices need to give priority to enabling this dialogue (and, consequently, mission staff will need to develop the necessary skills and capacities to do so effectively).

The following mini-case studies illustrate some of the possible ways in which CSOs and governments can cooperate in developing a system for responding to conflict, one principally for addressing conflicts in the

domestic arena and one principally for addressing conflicts abroad.

Kenya: Early warning, early response and peacebuilding¹⁴

Collaboration between the national umbrella organization of Kenya's Protestant churches, local communities and the national government has led to the creation of an early warning and early response network throughout Kenya. While it has been a challenging and difficult process, marked with intimidation, threats and frustration with the political establishment, NCKK worked systematically and persistently to build a process that would eventually bring in even the politicians and government officials that were initially opposed to it

Pastoralist communities in Kenya have suffered frequent violent cattle raids by well-trained and heavily armed young warriors. These raids sometimes fused with other political and communal interests, leading to an escalation of tension and wider insecurity. The National Council of Churches Kenya (NCKK), initially motivated to provide humanitarian relief for the victims of the violence, realized the need to work proactively to cease the raids and resolve wider conflicts. With support from NPI-Africa, they worked with local staff and community members to form village peace committees and a community-based early warning system.

Well in advance of any raid, numerous signs of mobilization can be identified as indicators to provide advanced warning of an attack. Many of these signs are found in traditional practices (special rituals and ornaments) or practical arrangements, such as the presence of firearms and sale of ammunition, undertaken in preparation for a raid. As it is customary to give advance warning, the intended targets of a raid often display signs of apprehension: rumors, deserted marketplaces, and movement of family members to safer places all signaled an imminent attack. Program participants analyzed these

¹⁴ Based on Peter Juma Gunja and Selline Otieno Korir "Working with the Local Wisdom: The National Council of Churches of Kenya Peace Program" in van Tongeren, et al., *People Building Peace II*, op.cit.

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factors to form a set of indicators that could be used to systematically detect impending raids. Using this information, they encouraged the village peace committees and other community peace structures to develop appropriate strategies and methodologies for community-based prevention efforts.

This initiative became an important part of NCKK's comprehensive program to promote peace and reconciliation at the community level and to link community based-structures with national decision-making processes by lobbying government entities on conflict resolution issues. Initially working with local communities to create Village Peace Committees and Area Peace and Development Committees, the project provided an opportunity for participant to discuss the causes and effects of local or regional conflicts and to devise strategies to address them. They realized, however, that not all the causes of conflict were local or within their control. The NCKK then worked with community activists to develop the National Agenda for Peace, specifically aiming to link community initiatives to national decision-making through lobbying government entities to become active in conflict resolution activities.

At the regional and national levels, the decision to integrate peace work into the NCKK structures of member churches throughout the country has extended the reach of the work much further than would have been possible working only in communities experiencing direct violence. It mobilized many new actors to address conflict related issues, including to campaign on small arms issues, and prompted the government to draft a policy paper with the aim of better coordinating nation-wide peacebuilding activities. The NCKK is now a representative on the government's National Steering Committee responsible for peacebuilding.

As the German example described below demonstrates, there are a number of ways that governments and specialist NGOs can structure formal strategic partnerships for peacebuilding, in which the NGO(s) participate actively in conceptualising policy frameworks, train government staff, and / or implement strategies in line with government policies.

Germany: institutionalizing strategic partnerships for implementing civilian crisis prevention & peacebuilding policy

Germany has created an integrated policy and institutional structure for civilian crisis prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding as part of a forward-looking peace policy. In May 2004, at least partly on the initiative of civil society and with the support of the German parliament, the Federal Government adopted an "Action Plan on Civilian Crisis Management, Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding"¹⁵ that is intended as a means to implement its earlier policy "Comprehensive Concept" on these issues.

It set up an Inter-Ministerial structure with a focal point for conflict prevention in every relevant ministry, coordinated by the newly created post of the Federal Commissioner for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding. In addition, it institutionalized civil society participation by inviting CSO representatives to the new Advisory Council on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding.

Working Group on Development and Peace

In order to facilitate closer coordination and exchange on peacebuilding issues, a new Working Group on Development and Peace, "Netzwerk Frieden und Entwicklung" ('FriEnt'), was created in 2001. German Ministry of Development Cooperation, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Protestant Church Development Service (EED), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), the Catholic Central Agency for Development Aid (Misereor), the Civilian Peace Service (ZFD) and the NGO Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation. Each of the members sends one staff member to the FriEnt team, which is guided by a steering committee of all the member organizations, which jointly determines the tasks and projects of the team. FriEnt thus is a unique blend of government and NGO, development institutions and peace organizations.

FriEnt's main objective to promote peace building in all

¹⁵ http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/aussenpolitik/friedenspolitik/ziv_km/aktionsplan_html

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areas of development cooperation. To this end, FriEnt's core activities include fostering joint learning, capacity building, advice and supporting networking and cooperation of its members. In order to meet these goals FriEnt acts as: (a) an information and knowledge gateway, (b) a platform for networking and (c) a resource for advisory services and capacity building. The FriEnt network also assists its member organizations in developing options for conflict prevention strategies in cooperation with relevant international, national and local actors in specific crises in order to avoid unnecessary delays in preventive action.

Partly inspired by the US Peace Corps experience, Germany has also established a 'civil peace service' (ZFD) as a joint initiative of the government, churches, and development and peace NGOs. The main objective is supporting local peace workers in conflict situations. In another joint government-NGO endeavor, the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) was established in 2002 for systematic training and recruitment of 'peace personnel' to serve in international missions both for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

3.3 International peace and security institutions and policy frameworks

The ability of non-state actors to set a compelling agenda - particularly on environmental, social and, to a lesser extent, economic and security issues - has been a significant force in shaping global responses to key structural problems.¹⁶ Although CSOs have not been able to draw on the legal, political or military power of states, they have been able to draw on the power of what some theorists refer to as 'discursive legitimacy' rooted in their analysis of the problems, the moral 'voice' that they bring to identifying solutions, and the perception that they have the support of large numbers of people who want change. CSOs have been crucial in mobilizing campaigns for specific policy changes in the conduct of war (such as banning landmines), policies for addressing the consequences of war and the ways the international community responds to it (such as Women Building Peace Campaign & Security Council

Resolution 1325), as well as to address structural factors in the global system that can generate conflict (such as unfair trade policies and practices) and in protesting the pursuit of war itself (such as the global protests in response to the war in Iraq).

One of the factors that has been important in most of these global campaigns has been the capacity of civil society and governments to work together to drive forward new agendas. As Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams has commented in reference to the international campaign to ban landmines: "*the new superpower [is] partnership - not just civil society, but the partnership of civil society and small and mid-sized countries coming together to set a new agenda. ... It requires us to find individuals in each institution - whether it is a civil society institution, a UN body, or a government bureaucracy - who are willing to step outside their little box...and work with them effectively to cause a shift.*"¹⁷

Just as CSOs and governments can productively engage with each other in developing national policy frameworks, they can similarly cooperate in the development of international policy frameworks that are mediated through international institutions.

The Group of Like-minded States for Prevention and Peacebuilding¹⁸

In the period leading up to GPPAC conference in July 2005 and the UN High Level Summit in September 2005, a number of UN Member States, instigated by Germany and Switzerland, joined together to emphasize conflict prevention as a central priority of UN reform. One catalyst for the group forming was GPPAC's lobbying of a wide range of UN Missions to encourage them to address prevention and

16 See, for example, Clark, John D. 2003. *Worlds Apart: Civil Society and the Battle for Ethical Globalisation*. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, Inc.

17 Conference Report 'From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace' Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. November 2005 p.27; available on www.gppac.net

18 Detlev Wolter. 2006 (forthcoming). *A United Nations for the 21st Century: From Reaction to Prevention*. Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlag.

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peacebuilding issues in the period leading up to the Summit and beyond. The group served to engage Member States in a dialogue with civil society and GPPAC prior to the September Summit and to advance the conflict prevention and human security agenda in a systematic follow-up of the reforms, in particular regarding the Peace-building Commission. The group held several meetings on expert and on Ambassadorial level with GPPAC. During these sessions, Member States and the UN Secretariat (DPA) made extensive comments on the GPPAC documents, thus contributing to a genuine multi-stakeholder contribution on conflict prevention in the Summit preparations.

During the spring of 2005, in light of the High-level Panel Report and the Secretary-General's Report "In Larger Freedom" as well as the input of GPPAC, the Group of Friends prepared a specific Input paper in preparation of the Summit focusing on the priority reform measures for underpinning the aspired shift to a culture of prevention. The Input Paper was finalized in June 2005 and signed by 32 Ambassadors from all regions, presenting a strong lobby group for ambitious reforms at the Summit both regarding the substantial and the institutional measures necessary for an effective multilateral prevention regime.

The paper was the first explicit endorsement of the concepts of the Responsibility to Protect as an emerging norm and of the concept of Human Security by such a wide group of State representatives from all regions. The like-minded States emphasized in their Summit input paper that effective prevention must become the centerpiece of effective multilateralism

and the reformed United Nations. They called on the UN to advance security, development and human rights together and engrain the shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention in the institutional and operational capacities of the organization. The paper furthermore stressed that effectively tackling the interconnected threats and challenges faced by peoples throughout the world would also allow addressing the new security and development challenges of failed and failing states. The paper put particular emphasis on the achievement of the MDGs as the best long-term prevention strategy by tackling the root causes of conflict, such as mass poverty, extreme economic and social imbalances, environmental degradation, war economies and the illegal diversion of natural resources. Furthermore, the paper, following closely the proposals of the Secretary General in his report "In Larger Freedom", supports its recommendations related to the strengthening of UN capacities for both structural and operational prevention.

As an important operational follow-up, the Paper of the like-minded States requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its 61st session on their implementation, as well as to suggest further concrete steps. The Group of Like-minded States adopted the Input Paper on Ambassadorial level in June 2005. It was transmitted to the Facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly before they drew up the first draft of the Outcome Document presented to the General Assembly on 3 June, 2005.

4 National infrastructure for responding to conflict

Sustainable prevention requires effective systems, processes and institutions for managing disputes, addressing grievances and responding to conflict. This need was recognized by the Un Secretary-General in the July 2006 Progress Report, when urged Member States “to consider creating elements of a national infrastructure for peace ... and to make use of available external support, including from the United Nations, in that regard”¹⁹. Democratic governance and participatory decision-making processes strengthen the foundations for these capacities.

A country’s capacity to prevent and resolve violent conflict at home and abroad may be strengthened by creating national conflict prevention mechanisms and joint platforms that enable dialogue among all stakeholders. Although the exact modalities require further discussion amongst the relevant actors in specific countries, they should be based on the principle of strong CSO participation and influence.

4.1 Government structures

Institutionalising prevention at a national level may require a thorough review of government policies and practices, its institutional arrangements and capacities, and the allocation of budgetary resources to ensure that they are consistent with a prevention ethos.

1. In many cases, a ministry or department for peace may be appropriate. Governments can organise inter-ministerial councils and units for conflict prevention and peacebuilding within or across relevant government agencies. To facilitate engagement with the public, these units could include civil society liaison officers.
2. Develop formal institutional arrangements for cooperation between governments and CSOs in the field of prevention, peace and security through policy dialogue, research, and the development and implementation of specific programmes. Governments and CSOs can examine innovative mechanisms that already exist in some countries and seek to build on good practice.
3. Strengthen other channels for policy dialogue on a range of topics that interconnect with the structural causes of conflict at home and abroad.
4. Develop conflict prevention policies that oblige governments to commit to civil society partnerships. Ensure that monitoring mechanisms are incorporated into these policies, as well as arrangements for funding the partnership and for planning exercises.
5. If the country is active in international peace operations, develop civilian rosters / pools of available personnel or develop civilian peace services.

Recommendations from the GPPAC Global Action Agenda:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>a Develop dispute management capacities, based on democratic values, within all state institutions. These can be complemented by procedures to address specific cases and grievances through greater access to justice and systems for culturally-sensitive alternative dispute resolution, including adjudication, mediation services and ombudspersons and elders’ councils.</p> | <p>b Utilize such instruments as commissions of inquiry, national reconciliation commissions and platforms for national dialogue to develop recommendations for ways of responding to major conflicts and other serious incidents.</p> <p>c Provide technical assistance and funding for these systems and draw upon the knowledge, skills and comparative experience of CSOs to make these systems as effective as possible.</p> | <p>d Learn from indigenous knowledge systems how to strengthen community organization and peacebuilding. Develop local and national systems for conflict management that draw upon or complement these systems, in ways that are consistent with the highest standards of human rights and human dignity.</p> |
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4 National infrastructure for responding to conflict

4.2 Dispute management structures

There are a range of structures that can be strengthened to help address conflicts internal to the country - whether essentially 'private' between people or entities residing in the country or those involving a public entity or even conflicts that threaten national security. In general, increased attention, technical assistance and funding should be directed toward national capacity building. These can include commissions of inquiry, national reconciliation commissions, and platforms for national dialogue-including through legislative systems-

to address larger systemic issues; as well as systems to address specific cases through alternative dispute resolution (mediation, ombudsman and adjudication services) and mainstream state institutions, such as the legal system. CSOs can contribute to the development of these capacities by contributing comparative learning, knowledge and skills to make these systems as effective as possible.

¹⁹ Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly, p. 29, paragraph 103.

5 Mechanisms for engagement

Effective cooperation between governments and CSOs on peacebuilding is likely to require a set of dedicated mechanisms for interaction and methods for working together.

Mechanisms for inter-CSO cooperation: Given the plural and structurally diverse nature of civil society, it can be difficult to organize systematic cooperation between governments and CSOs unless there is an existing structure for engaging the range of CSOs concerned with peacebuilding issues. As was identified in the Global Action Agenda, this suggests the need to create more effective mechanisms and possibly institutions to improve communication, coordination and mutual assistance. These should enable transversal links between local, national, regional and global levels. GPPAC aims to strengthen capacities to develop shared and complementary strategies amongst groups working in the same geographic area and amongst groups working on similar thematic areas in prevention and peacebuilding. There is also special potential and significance of networks linking key civil society actors—such as women, youth, and faith-based organizations, among others—who can further develop their specific capacities and concerns by working together. GPPAC aims to foster interfaces between these types of networks and the networks and coalitions formed to address specific conflict situations and / or specific thematic issues.

Government and CSOs: Exploratory dialogue, consultation and cooperation. In many countries, there is little experience of government-CSO cooperation on peace and security issues. In some cases, there may be a need for exploratory dialogue and consultation to become sufficiently familiar with the different (and similar!) assumptions, approaches, institutional arrangements and ‘working culture’ to be able to develop modalities for cooperation. Out of such encounters can come ideas for joint initiatives and / or institutional mechanisms to strengthen cooperation.

US Government-Civil Society dialogue on prevention²⁰

In November 2005, a group of representatives from US think tanks, NGOs and universities met with representatives from the US government, from the State Department and the Interagency Sub-Policy Coordinating Committee on Conflict Prevention and Mitigation. They aimed to initiate dialogue on the best means for closing the gap between early warning and early action to prevent armed conflict. After sharing the main approaches used by the different organizations in analyzing potential conflict situations, participants observed many similarities in their methods. However use and access to resources was a key difference. US government departments are generally constrained by congressional priorities and inflexibility in the allocation of funds, whereas CSOs have greater flexibility in what they do but less access to funds and other resources. This event led to a follow-on seminar in April 2006, when a larger group of government and CSO representative engaged in a scenario-based exercise to learn how each organization approached planning and programming challenges. These encounters illustrated to all the participants the value of continued dialogue to identify and better understand their roles and capacities and to find ways of better coordinating various activities aimed at prevention. As a next step, they plan to develop and test an ‘interagency methodology to assess instability and conflict-IMIC’.²¹

Institutional structures and mechanisms to facilitate cooperation.

Mechanisms for government-CSO cooperation:

- Working groups
- Entry points and liaison officers
- Secondments

20 U.S. Government- Civil Society Dialogue Series, TCP (Transition, Conflict and Peace) working group, http://www.interaction.org/disaster/TCP/USAID_PVO.html

21 U.S. Government- Civil Society Dialogue Series, TCP (Transition, Conflict and Peace) working group, http://www.interaction.org/disaster/TCP/USAID_PVO.html

5 Mechanisms for engagement

KOFF - Swiss Centre for Peacebuilding²²

The Swiss Peace Foundation 'swisspeace' is an independent action-oriented peace research institute. In 2001, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and various Swiss non-governmental organizations (NGOs) formed a Center for Peacebuilding, KOFF, located at swisspeace. The current number of member NGOs is 45. The majority of funding comes from the DFA but member NGOs also contribute through a membership fee. KOFF's objective is to support the constructive role of Switzerland in settling international conflicts, which pre-supposes a coherent Swiss peace policy. KOFF plays an active part in ensuring that Swiss peace policy remains consistent in theory and practice by providing analyses, advice and training to all relevant Swiss actors, governmental and non-governmental, and through the promotion of networking. The Center develops synergies between non-governmental and governmental actors involved in peace-building, within Switzerland and internationally.

The Centre has a unique 'in-between' role: it is expected to promote and exploit synergies between the various actors involved in peacebuilding - governmental and

non-governmental, national and international. The Centre also aspires to develop cooperation among Swiss NGOs, to promote their cooperation with international NGOs, and cultivate their links to official Swiss policy.

One concrete proposal offered in the World Bank report on Civil Society and peacebuilding is for interested donor organizations establish a joint platform for ongoing discussion and sharing of experience on the issue of civil society and peacebuilding in order to enhance donor coordination and harmonization of frameworks. Such a platform could take the form of an informal working group of the OECD DAC Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation network and could become an appropriate forum for discussion of harmonization issues, learning about effectiveness, clarifying linkages with official peacebuilding processes and interacting with practitioners, regional networks, the UN and the GPPAC.²³

²² www.swisspeace.org

²³ Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, World Bank, p. 42.

6 Funding relationships

Many civil society-based peacebuilding initiatives emerge as a spontaneous response of people affected by the conflict to address the turmoil around them. They may also spring from the urge of concerned people elsewhere to provide solidarity to those suffering from armed conflict. Such initiatives are generally characterized by a quality of urgency combined with the ability to mobilize whatever limited resources are available to do whatever can be done to make a difference in the situation.

These spontaneous efforts can be complemented and sustained by more professional, planned and funded NGO-organized projects and programs. Over the past fifteen years, a professional NGO sector working on peace and conflict issues has grown with the support of donors willing to provide funds for peacebuilding. These resources have greatly strengthened the breadth and depth of peacebuilding and the development of the field. A set of issues around financial resources is explored in this section, as it has been a major form of cooperation between donor governments and peacebuilding CSOs.

6.1 Risks of 'project-itis'

One of the paradoxical outcomes of more funding has been a shift in some of the working modalities of peacebuilding NGOs. In particular, the funding application process has created an incentive for NGOs to frame their initiatives as 'projects' that can be codified in advance (often a considerable amount of time in advance, to meet the requirements of donor funding cycles) with the aim of producing measurable outputs from the resources granted. The donor's need for such frameworks is understandable procedurally and the requirements can assist in the planning and monitoring process. Yet the formalization of 'projects' can inadvertently create a shift in the *modus operandi* of peacebuilding work. A focus on developing fundable projects can sometimes result in a disconnect between the peacebuilding initiative and conflict context; consideration of 'what is fundable?' take precedence over 'what is most necessary?'

Furthermore, some CSOs sometimes have opportunistic motives for setting up peacebuilding initiatives when they are seen as a way to secure funding. Particularly when there is a sudden influx of funds allocated for peacebuilding in a specific conflict, numerous organizations may develop projects to obtain those funds - regardless of the need for the activity or the capacity of the organization to conduct it meaningfully. Sometimes cynically referred to as 'grant eaters', such organizations may be motivated more to secure their own livelihood than to use their skill and courage to promote peace and greater justice.

NGOs sometimes slip into the de-energizing dynamics of what can be called a 'project mentality'. Implementing the set of activities takes on its own rationale that is sometimes fulfilled regardless of the changing circumstances and opportunities. More worryingly, people can lose focus on 'big picture' strategic thinking as they start to routinely plan for the next round of project activities or even the next project after the funding for the current one is completed. Routine project implementation tasks may absorb all the energy of those involved and divert resources and momentum away from potentially more strategic processes. The initiative may begin to lose dynamism and relevance, as those involved become accustomed to doing things for doing things' sake so as to fulfill pre-formulated project plans.

6.2 Funding relationships: enabling partnerships to sub-contracting arrangements

Many initiatives are supported by financing from either domestic sources or foreign donors. Yet there are numerous examples of times when local people voluntarily contribute their own funds or initiatives are designed in such a way that financial requirements are minimal and voluntary effort everything. However most peacebuilding NGOs are dependent on funding from donor agencies or government ministries, with some receiving support from independent foundations and private sources.

6 Funding relationships

Relationships between donors and grantees tend to vary along a continuum from true enabling partnerships through to fee-for-service contractor relationships. In the first, the donor and NGO forge a relationship built on trust and awareness of mutual interdependence in working toward shared social change goals. This can sometimes involve developing strategies together and each contributing their knowledge, skills and resources to achieve desired outcomes. It generally involves a high degree of flexibility in the implementation of strategies and a regular and honest dialogue about how projects are unfolding. The bonds of accountability that bind them can be complemented by a constructively critical approach to assessing the work and revising strategies, plans and projects. Such relationships may be more common when the donor is a foundation or a large charity, with greater flexibility to set its own overarching priorities and policies. It is less common - but still possible - to have such an enabling partnership when the donor is a government or an IGO because the policies they need to implement are formulated through political processes often outside the individual grant-making official's authority.

On the other end of the continuum, the relationship between donor and grantee is based on an arrangement where the NGO is merely a contractor offers 'value-for-money' to implement the donor's agenda. In these situations, the donor typically gives very detailed specifications about how the project must be implemented, within what timetable and with what results. In many cases, the implementer could as easily be a for-profit company as a civil society group, because the relationships, values and ethos cultivated by the NGO are not considered particularly relevant for implementing the contract. These relationships tend to be more common with large institutional donor agencies, where subcontracting is seen as a more cost-effective and feasible arrangement than maintaining service delivery capacities in-house. These arrangements have been pioneered for the provision of classic humanitarian aid and economic development projects but seem to be increasingly applied to peacebuilding budget lines - with potentially problematic results.

Most conflict situations are extremely fluid and subject to rapid changes in the context. Sometimes the timeframe is so long between initially developing a project for a funding proposal and implementing it when the funds finally arrive that the project's relevance has diminished or conditions have changed so much that it is no longer possible to undertake it as designed. To increase the likelihood of sustainability, there may be a need to shift their focus from 'short-term project thinking' to longer-term 'process thinking'.

Funding prevention: insights from the GPPAC conference

It was noted that donors have indeed been supportive of a great variety of prevention initiatives since the early 1990s. Nonetheless, financial support for conflict prevention is frequently inadequate or too late because responses are not driven by context-specific analyses of what is needed at a particular place at a particular time, but rather by the mandates of the donor agencies. It was argued that among donors, there is 'analytical confusion' about how and when to support conflict prevention, so that funding is too often misdirected towards, for example, long-term projects, when urgent situations demand quick responses (often at much lower levels of funding). A remedy for these weaknesses in the funding system was proposed: supporting country-specific, on-the-ground, multi-actor, collaborative, contextualised conflict analysis, and the development of appropriate response strategies in countries where early warnings suggest a risk of near-term violence.

6.3 Funding and the power to set priorities

There is a trend amongst some institutional donors towards contracting external conflict analysis to shape the strategic priorities and the programs and projects they then sub-contract. Externally conducted analysis may be undertaken in such a way that both the process and the outcomes of the analysis are disconnected from the perceptions of those involved and smooth over the contradictions and dilemmas inherent in conflict situations. For example, the analyst may argue that the conflict "is really all about [x]", while one set of

protagonists considers it to be about [a] and another set to perceive it as really about [b]. While the analyst's conclusions may have a degree of truth, if the resulting recommendations do not take into account the issues held most important by the primary parties to the conflict, they are not likely to be very effective. Programs funded on the basis of this analysis may be misdirected and the assumptions from the analysis may then be carried forward through the frame of evaluation practices that tend to use the starting assumptions of the project as the basis of their analysis. Importantly, it leaves little room for peacebuilding NGOs to pursue an independent agenda - particularly if there is dissonance between the political and strategic assumptions of the donor and those of the peacebuilding group.

Another paradox of funding is when NGOs become diverted away from the work they feel is most necessary, as echoed in the frequently heard comment 'We'd really think it is important to work on [x] but our donors do not agree'. This may be especially difficult for local peacebuilding NGOs in conflict-affected communities, who often have less leverage than their international counterparts in influencing the agendas of donor agencies.

Furthermore, as Reimann and Ropers point out: "Many CSOs are interested in facilitating long-term processes of social change. Yet most donors are thinking in terms of concrete and representable results in order to satisfy their respective constituencies, to serve their strategic national interests, and to be visible and influential among the donor community."²⁴ Riemann and Ropers consider the overarching challenge is for the field to retain its 'critical edge' even while becoming a 'professional peace industry' and, in particular to continue to work toward long-term change without being co-opted by short-term donor work priorities.²⁵

One particular issue of concern in contexts where the state is too weak to effectively provide public services is the diversion of local civil society away from more advocacy-oriented initiatives and into service delivery. As is pointed out by Foster and Mattner in their World Bank report, which observes that in situations of armed

conflict, "CSOs are often driven into social service delivery and away from advocacy and governance work. In part, this was attributed to government's attitude that regards advocacy less positively than social service. In part, it may also reflect donor approaches conceiving civil society support as a merely technical task, avoiding the more critical political or the softer social civil society functions."²⁶

Challenge *How can international partners (governments, IGOs and INGOs) prevent distortions in the roles of state institutions and CSOs in war-torn contexts where state structures are weak and NGOs have more credibility with donors and beneficiaries?*

6.4 'Managerialism' and key accountability challenges

One of the challenges is the growing tendency for donors to take a more managerial approach in their funding relationship, requiring detailed mechanisms for planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting from their grant holders. Such measures can help to improve the professionalism of those working on projects and, in the best cases, enhance the rigor and effectiveness of the work. Furthermore, donors are themselves accountable for how funds are allocated and need to be able to justify that the money they are allocating is working to make a positive difference.

Yet common management tools and frameworks do not readily accommodate the dynamism of transformative change. Over-commitment to the precise forms of these mechanisms and a disconnected and inflexible approach can leave an organization 'so tied up in red tape, we

24 Cordula Reimann and Norbert Ropers, op.cit. p35.

25 Ibid. p42.

26 They further observe that: "Using CSOs mainly as public service providers may weaken their peacebuilding contributions. ... Given the tenuous nature of enabling environments in conflict affected and fragile states, CSOs engaging in large scale service delivery experience difficulties with engendering the kind of civic engagement processes they are assumed to trigger or support by virtue of being non-state actors. In addition ... [it] may detain talented and motivated citizens from joining political parties, government institutions and contributing to political peace processes." Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, World Bank, p.30

6 Funding relationships

cannot see the forest for the trees...’ Over-emphasis on accountability to the donor may also undermine the grantee’s accountability to beneficiaries and other stakeholders. At the GPPAC conference, it was observed the lack of mechanisms for ensuring ‘horizontal accountability’ - i.e., monitoring mechanisms to gauge if undertakings of civil society organisations in fact meet the needs of the constituencies they are trying to serve. There was a suggestion for greater use of peer review processes and the creation of appropriate benchmarks to promote such accountability. Furthermore, as Bridget Walker observes:

“We have seen how difficult it can be to establish meaningful connections between the body making the grant and the recipient. There is also a dissonance in the language used. The vocabulary of management is different from the language of social change. It may appear to be neutral, objective, depoliticized, but it is a foreign tongue to many practitioners, articulating alien thought processes and masking uncomfortable and inequitable power relations. Many peace practitioners use story and anecdote to describe impacts. Their assessment is subjective and personal. ...[They can encounter a] moral dilemma of telling it how it is, when there is pressure from funders to demonstrate rapid and positive results. It is hard to maintain commitment in the long term when there are no immediate results, and often unrealistic to expect immediate results. These unrealistic expectations can undermine the hope that sustains so many peace practitioners in the face of ongoing and intractable conflict.”²⁷

It seems that modalities for efficient service delivery are not always conducive for catalyzing social change and long-term transformation. As the previous chapters illustrated, much of peacebuilding work is heavily reliant on highly creative, flexible and relationship-based initiatives, generally built-up painstakingly over years so as to be in the right position at the right time to make the right response and often demanding considerable courage and exquisite judgement to navigate through complex and rapidly moving conflict dynamics.

6.5 Scarce resources, uneven distribution

Civil society actors engaged in conflict prevention work are forced to rely on a relatively small number of donors for support. While donor nations, foundations, and UN agencies make significant amounts of funding available for classical “development” work, which is frequently tied to tangible projects, there is considerably less enthusiasm to fund peacebuilding, where the project objectives are far less tangible and the outcomes difficult to measure. CSOs are largely depended on the few governments that are willing to fund the peacebuilding work, as financial support from foundations and UN agencies in this respect is very little and it is nearly impossible to fundraise for peace, which makes the dependency from some governments even harder.

Furthermore, Forster and Mattner note that “donor engagement with CSOs is often fragmented and short-sighted” and that “external funding and support is often limited to a small sub-set of CSOs (in particular development-oriented NGOs), while many important local-level and membership-based organizations are bypassed.” In the final recommendations in their report, they state that “in general terms, donors should therefore continue providing direct support for peacebuilding activities of civil society.”²⁸ Elaborating on this point, they add:

Donor support has to go beyond simple funding and standardized trainings. In most instances, it should be offered with at least a medium term perspective. Donors should invest in systematic capacity building (e.g. on internal governance, networking, sharing of experience) and joint learning with their partners to find the most appropriate way for improving current practice. Donors should also make use of the broad set of roles as dialogue partner, lobbyist for space for civil society initiatives and facilitator for linking local

²⁷ Bridget Walker. “Funding Conflict Transformation: Money, Power and Accountability - A Grant-Seeker’s Perspective” *CCTS Review*, No 25, November 2004. Available online: http://www.c-r.org/ccts/ccts25/grant_seeker.htm

²⁸ Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, World Bank, pp.14, 30, 40

*experience into formal peace processes. Working in “partnerships” requires a high level of engagement also from external actors and can not be relegated to a hands-off funding relationship.*²⁹

Along these lines, in the Secretary-General’s progress report, he urges Member States to consider committing themselves to contribute a fixed percentage of their contributions to peacekeeping to conflict prevention,

suggesting that “even an amount equivalent to 2 per cent of what we spend annually on peacekeeping would represent an enormous step forward in investment in prevention that would surely yield real dividends in terms of peace preserved.”³⁰

²⁹ Ibid, p. 41

³⁰ Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly, p. 28, paragraph 96

7 Conclusion

The logic of cooperation between governments and civil society organizations is quite clear, and the good will from both sides - at least in some circles - is also well-established. But moving from good ideas and good intentions to effective action will require hard work and firm commitments. GPPAC has an important role to play in advancing that process, as do governments, international organizations, and the many thousands of

civil society organizations not formally affiliated with GPPAC. Patience, tolerance, and mutual understanding of the issues and forces that all actors at all levels confront will certainly be required. But that does not mean that the status quo can be allowed to prevail indefinitely. Moving ahead, the focus needs to begin to shift from the articulation of principles to the elicitation of firm commitments, and beyond, to effective action.

