

Highlights:

- ❖ Goals and desired Outcomes for the conflict prevention agenda
- ❖ Initial recommendations for improved CSO-UN-State interaction
- ❖ Outlook on the 2005 conference

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A Seminar organized by *The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict*

A Seminar on Civil Society-UN Interaction for the Prevention of Armed Conflict



On February 10-12, 2004 the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) invited a cross-section of representatives from civil society, the United Nations and Member States to engage in an interactive dialogue on experiences, challenges and opportunities to prevent armed conflict. There were approximately twenty participants from UN agencies, (DPA, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM), ten from country missions and thirty participants from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including regional GPPAC representatives from Latin America, Central and West -Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. The diversity of participants greatly enhanced our discussions.

This unique seminar is the first in a series of interactions between the UN and civil society organizations (CSOs) on "The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict" and explored questions of how to structure interaction between the UN and civil society organizations in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This seminar is just one step in the larger programme leading up to a UN-hosted event planned for July 2005. Simultaneously fifteen regional processes are well underway and will both benefit from and contribute to future content focused seminars. The process leading to the 2005 conference and beyond remains a collective learning experience dedicated to engaging the entire spectrum of actors throughout the process: The UN system, Governments, and CSOs.

The following report aims to highlight the rich presentations and discussion, as well as to extract the issues, ideas, and opportunities that surfaced during the two and a half day seminar.



Seminar on Civil Society-UN Interaction for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

Seaman's Church Institute, 241 Water Street, New York, NY

10-12 February 2004

GPPAC gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the National Commission for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation (NDCO) in the Netherlands.

Seminar Synopsis

The seminar began by exploring what a “culture of prevention” means within the UN context for Member States and representatives of a diverse civil society. The group explored definitions and examples of “structural” and “operational” prevention, as well as the intersection with development and the relationship between prevention and human security (*i.e.* preventing conflict and assuring the security of individuals).

Areas of engagement were prioritized to include existing partnerships, regional perspectives, and lessons learned as well as critical thematic focal points for preventing conflict including: development, gender, youth, peace education and the role of religion. The intentionally small seminar shared effective models, past failures and defined some concrete goals we aim to achieve. It laid the foundation for further exploration and better cooperation between CSOs and the UN system.

Set in the framework of challenges and opportunities within the conflict prevention agenda, the seminar focused on:

- Gathering, understanding and applying lessons learned;
- Identifying and recognizing legitimate CSO partners;
- Creating effective, ongoing partnership mechanisms;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities within partnership arrangements;
- Addressing partnership tensions and challenges associated with building trust and inclusion.

Outcomes from this seminar included a broad and diverse collection of recommendations for improved interaction between CSOs, UN actors, and Member States. Participants agreed that building a common platform with different actors is crucial since civil society has many complementary roles it can fulfill within conflict prevention. Because of this, participants welcomed an inclusive approach aimed at creating a space for civil society in peace processes.

The seminar also identified a need to understand the comparative advantages of the UN and civil society in conflict prevention, and the necessity for mapping out entry points for civil society into the UN and, conversely, for the UN into civil society, both at headquarters and in the field missions.

The seminar employed a dynamic blend of approaches through panel discussions, presentations, facilitated group dialogue and interactive exercises, providing an initial model for the global conference planned for July 2005 in which the action plans and recommendations of fifteen regional processes will be synthesized.

“Civil Society occupies a unique space where ideas are born, where mindsets are changed, and where the work of sustainable development doesn’t just get talked about, but gets done.”

-Kofi Annan,

United Nations

Secretary General

As quoted by UNDP Partners in Human Development

A full seminar agenda, schedule of events and background materials, including original concept papers, can be requested by contacting Eliza Kretzmann at qunony@afsc.org

I. Session Overviews

Context: Setting the Stage

Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk of DPA, Joanne Sandler of UNIFEM, Ed Tsui of OCHA and Paul Van Tongeren of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) opened the seminar by setting the context for discussions on improving UN-civil society partnerships for more effective prevention of armed conflict. Opening presentations highlighted the challenges of conflict prevention, the critical role of civil society organizations, and the need for more effective mechanisms for cooperation and interaction between CSOs and the UN.

Conflict prevention, fundamentally, is the transformation of culture—from a culture of violence and oppression to a culture of prevention and peace. Yet, even while working for this cultural shift we must acknowledge that not all conflicts are either preventable or destructive. Similarly, though there was consistent affirmation that holistic approaches are critical to producing this cultural shift, civil society can be mobilized for both peace and war. Efforts must be directed towards developing a common platform for conflict prevention and a set of norms to enhance the interaction between civil society, the UN and governments.

Participants, especially UN colleagues, acknowledged that CSOs can and should play a role in all phases of a conflict cycle. This includes addressing root causes (“structural” prevention), when violent conflict breaks out during early crisis phases (“operational prevention”), as well as in the midst of violent conflict (i.e. protection of civilians), in post-conflict peace building and in preventing the re-emergence of violence. CSOs can contribute invaluable information for early warning, especially by emphasizing non-traditional indicators such as the level of domestic violence or exploitation of women in a society. CSOs can act swiftly and flexibly to respond to conditions as needed, often using innovative and non-coercive strategies to address problems. Additionally, CSOs can act when official actors are immobilized (lack of political will or the implications conveyed by their official status). Also by mobilizing ‘people power’, CSOs can put pressure on decision-makers to reach a peaceful settlement, as did the Mano River Basin women in the Liberian negotiations that ended the reign of Charles Taylor.

However, better mechanisms are required for the effective integration of CSOs into governmental and inter-governmental prevention efforts. The more than 150 world conferences that have been held over the last three decades have provided numerous lessons for developing effective strategies for the prevention agenda. These conferences have resulted not only in declarations and programmes of action, they led to the creation of new international agreements and institutions, and stimulated CSOs engagement in follow-up processes. Similarly, the increased activism of civil society in gender, development assistance, women, environment, and human rights provides many lessons for coalition-building and creating linkages between issues. Building on these past experiences still requires us to “think outside of the box” to look for creative ways to establish country and region specific cooperative mechanisms among civil society organizations and between CSOs and the UN.



Danilo Türk delivers the keynote address.

Towards exploring effective entry points for interaction between the UN and CSOs, Assistant Secretary-General Türk welcomed input into the next UN report on prevention. He remarked, “We want your critical views and analysis.”

Recommendations:

- Improving the accumulation, sharing and application of knowledge, including previous success and failures;
- Bridging the gap between “studied knowledge” and operational understanding; including knowledge concerning marginalized groups and indigenous peoples;
- Recognizing and highlighting non-traditional and gender-based roles and indicators, such as school enrollment and women’s participation in governance;
- Increasing regional capacity for early warning and conflict prevention;
- Overcoming institutional barriers, specifically in reference to Security Council reform and General Assembly recognition of these initiatives;
- Providing concrete feedback to policymakers on both UN reform and issues related to States’ “responsibility to protect” civilians in conflict;
- Aligning the focus of the peace and security agenda to parallel and accompany the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- Officially recognizing the role of civil society organizations in peace and security issues.

Regional Lessons, Global Applicability

The participation of *Regional Initiators* (key civil society organizations who lead the programme and who ensure a process to broaden participation in their own region) provided an opportunity to explore the diversity and contrasts found in conflict prevention experiences. It challenged participants to recognize divergent and contrasting trends in prevention initiatives, draw common threads, and apply the lessons learned. This section synthesizes a variety of reflections on relevant lessons within the Latin American and West African models.

Latin America

In contrast to peacemaking experiences in other parts of the world, Latin American peace processes have focused on human rights issues and civilian-military relations. Social and economic issues often have been top priorities while political issues were secondary. Extensive knowledge and experience does exist in Latin America regarding peace processes, but we are still challenged to understand fully and integrate the information in order to apply it to other cases.

In Latin America, governments have often viewed grass roots CSOs as a nuisance, and there have also been problems with charges of “clientelism”. Additionally, many regional organizations still do not have particularly effective relationships with CSOs. However, groups such as the Organization of American States are now actively engaging civil society organizations—a sign of changing times.

*“We want your critical views
and analysis.”*

*- Danilo Turk, Assistant
Secretary-General,
Department of Political Affairs*

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West Africa

The West African case study provided a multi-layered look at peacebuilding and prevention in a regional context from the perspective of a sub-regional peacebuilding civil society network (WANEP) and an inter-governmental regional organization (ECOWAS). In many ways West Africa typifies the complex processes and structures involved in both conflict creation and conflict prevention. Often transcending geographical boundaries, managing conflict in West Africa is necessarily a local, national, and regional challenge. While there are insufficient success stories from West Africa, the partnership between the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are noteworthy examples of effective partnership and the mobilization of political will. WANEP is a sub-regional network working as an intermediary between people and governments. ECOWAS is a regional organization that promotes integration among members to support economic union and is now shifting focus towards peace and security issues.

With the establishment of the Early Warning and Response Network (WARN), WANEP has created a mechanism to utilize non-traditional early warning indicators. For example, the market women of Sierra Leone provided vital information about the impending violence when they noticed that rebel soldiers began to stockpile more cigarettes than normal. Through WARN, WANEP seeks to institutionalize a culture of prevention and early response mechanisms by:

- Developing community-based, national and sub-regional capacities/structures for early detection, early warning and early response through training, database development and technical assistance;
- Identifying and monitoring specific conflict and peace indicators and analyzing them to help prevent conflict;
- Fostering collaborative relationships with civil society and national, sub-regional/regional and international early warning, conflict prevention and peace-building organizations;
- Sharing information and promoting proactive/pre-emptive and integrated approaches to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

However, early warning is counter-productive if it is not backed by rapid response. WANEP's partnership with ECOWAS provides a basis to operationalize early warning into conflict prevention.

Building local capacity to discuss local issues and collaborate with regional organizations is fundamental to WARN and WANEP's work. WANEP is creating national civil society forums on preventing armed conflict and building peace in West Africa. Such initiatives are critical to creating a sustainable social infrastructure and building on local cultures and traditional practices.

The activities of WARN has gained WANEP considerable media attention across West Africa and beyond. This has led to WANEP's formal partnerships with ECOWAS and OCHA through the signing of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs). The close and



Richard Konteh (ECOWAS) and Emmanuel Bombande (WANEP) discuss early warning in West Africa.

WANEP's partnership with ECOWAS provides a basis to operationalize early warning into conflict prevention in west Africa.

"CSOs have recently moved past 'negotiating the creation of space,' and are actually able to influence agendas [in Latin America]."

productive relationship that ECOWAS has built with WANEP and other CSOs harmonizes civil society interaction by creating a Civil Society Focal Point in the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria as a point of reference for CSOs. Furthermore, with the help of the UK Department for International Development, consultations in May/June 2003 resulted in a joint task force coordinating committee that drafted a Charter outlining a framework for the relationship between ECOWAS and West African civil society and a programme to build CSO capacity in human security, peacebuilding, democracy and good governance in West Africa.

In conclusion, in situations in which there is a significant lack of local political will, national CSOs have sometimes collaborated effectively with international and regional CSOs to put pressure on governments towards change. Examples of positive government-CSO interaction can be seen in the case of Canada and Norway's engagement with CSOs on the Financial Transactions Tax. In Africa, there is reluctance for this sort of engagement on financial and debt issues, but on trade issues, CSOs have helped governments with information and analysis.

CSOs have recently moved past "negotiating the creation of a space", and are actually able to influence agendas. Governments are more open on economic and social issues and continue to be less open on security issues. It is important that practical steps are taken to build trust with governments to sustain CSO engagement.

Recommendations to Member States and the UN:

- Include CSOs in secretariats and collective bodies;
- Sponsor meetings for civil society engagement and networking;
- Consider CSOs in the policy making process;
- Use CSO input to help define issues and improve government awareness of key issues;
- Work towards more clearly defined CSO-UN relationships.

Civil society, in turn, must:

- Clearly define the growing and complex web of CSOs;
- Define preventive capabilities and value-added in the conflict cycle;
- Be aware of state responsibilities and priorities;
- Help influence and educate the government, UN and public regarding the role of CSOs in prevention;
- Accept that it should conform to a certain extent and not push the envelope too far if it wishes to influence governments.

"Instead of creating 'peace' we are creating 'change'"

The excellent background papers which provide more detailed information on the WANEP /ECOWAS experience include Emmanuel Bombande's '**Civil Society Based Early Warning System: WANEP's Experience with ECOWAS**' and **UNDP and OCHA: Global Partnerships for the Prevention of Armed Conflict** and Dr. Richard Konteh's '**The Relationship between ECOWAS and Civil Society**'. Copies can be emailed upon request by contacting the International Secretariat.

Development Cooperation: Supporting Structural Conflict Prevention

World Bank statistics cite that “the average country reaching the end of a civil war faces a nearly 50/50 risk of returning to conflict within five years, depending largely on whether the root causes of violent conflict have been addressed.” This statistic highlights the critical necessity of long term “structural” prevention that is comprehensive--“short-term and long-term political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, developmental, institutional and other measures.” It calls for development that is conflict prevention sensitive and that engages a wide array of international, regional, national, and local actors. A panelist noted that “structural” conflict prevention means leveraging non-traditional groups to break cycles of violent conflict. Women, youth, religious groups, and teachers remain among the most untapped resources for sustainable peace and conflict prevention. Cultural sensitivity and great patience are critical to successfully building trust in these conflict communities. Additionally, citing the example of Sudan, a panelist emphasized that a precursor to development and successful structural prevention is “prejudice reduction” and trauma-healing—areas that the UN or governmental institutions do not normally engage.

Within the United Nation’s Development Programme (UNDP), the Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) is the key practice area for conflict prevention. To enhance conflict prevention work, UNDP considers civil society to be a vital resource and a critical constituency in maximizing their development impact to respond better to people in conflict and post conflict situations. In order to define the operational framework and practical mechanisms for developing sustainable partnerships between UNDP and CSOs, UNDP’s policy of engagement (recently revised) is founded on a rights-based framework underpinned by principles of equality, trust, inclusion and mutual capability. This allows for UNDP to incorporate CSOs not only in the implementation of projects, but also in agenda-setting and policy-making.

Three specific examples of CSO engagement with UNDP were discussed at the seminar. The UNDP-CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator, established in 2000, allows for 14 civil society persons (12 from the south) to advise the UNDP Administrator on priority themes and policies of engagement with CSOs. Second, the Small Grants Programme (SGP) seeks to build the capacity of local CSOs through training, advisory roles and the development of strategic alliances so that they may engage UNDP in agenda setting and stimulating local activities for peace building and conflict prevention measures. Finally, over the last few years UNDP actively engaged civil society in war-torn societies in their needs assessments for post-conflict transition recovery and reconstruction. Despite the need to further refine the process, this approach seeks to build local capacity while embedding UNDP programs in the local communities.

UNDP’s policy also notes that it can enhance local CSO capacity by:

- **Leveraging relatively trusted relations** of UNDP with governments to create political space for CSO influence on policy & decision-making;
- **Initiating multi-stakeholder partnership** among governments, CSOs and donors;
- **Supporting the capacity of CSOs** to articulate demands and defend the rights of people living in poverty and crisis;

“Structural” conflict prevention means leveraging non-traditional groups to break cycles of violent conflict.

- **Recognizing differentiated impact of development** on vulnerable populations and ensuring their voice in policy processes (particularly indigenous people).

In-turn, CSOs should articulate actual needs, clarify guiding principles, propose solutions, guarantee accountability, and work towards quality control, legitimacy, and efficacy. Furthermore, CSOs should consider developing a code of conduct and mission statements for preventing conflict in the field. Given the diversity and changing nature of CSOs, this would enhance efficiency for UNDP to map and collaborate with civil society.

Recommendations:

- Establish regional and national UNDP CSO advisory committees;
- Establish CSO advisory committees that can interface with UN Country Teams
- Tap the DDR Trust Fund of which 25% is reserved for NGOs;
- Recognize the difficulty for UNDP in working with civil society when there are few “nascent” local NGOs;
- Consider the example of the use of the Peace and Development Trust Fund in Nepal in partnership with CSOs;
- Map entry points into local civil society;
- Inform local communities of entry points and mechanisms for engaging UNDP;
- Enhance access to the UN Regional Coordinator/Representative as a principal entry point.

“Gender is not an option and cannot be seen as separate from the framework of conflict prevention”



Florence Mpaayei represented the Nairobi Peace Initiative.

Women and Women’s organizations: Key Resources in Preventing Deadly Conflict

The session explored the principles, roles, benefits and lessons learned from women and women’s organizations involved in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Panelists stressed the three “Ps”, Protection, Participation and Prevention. The protection of women affords the opportunity for them to participate in peace processes that contribute to the prevention of deadly conflict.

There are concrete lessons to be learned from the successes of the working group on Women Peace and Security, including UNSC Resolution 1325, their seminal achievement, and the activities since then. Today women’s groups provide timely information and analysis to DPKO, DPA, Security Council and other units of the UN system.

In short, gender is not an option and cannot be seen as separate from the framework of conflict prevention. It is integral to conflict prevention and throughout the UN system. Likewise, prevention of armed conflict must be integrated into all UN programs. Two of the guiding principles for the conflict prevention agenda should be: (1) the protection of women’s rights and (2) legitimate participation by women in the definition, ownership and implementation of conflict prevention processes. Panelists and discussants suggested incorporation of a number of lessons learned from efforts to mainstream gender issues into the UN.

Recommendations and Examples:

- Using the web to post gender specific information and systematically disseminate it, especially through 'www.peacewomen.org' and 'www.womenwarpeace.org';
- Feeding information to the Security Council through the Security Council Watch, or similar model, since they are in an "open space" and can deliver new ideas;
- Improving the analysis of information regarding gender-based conflict indicators;
- Engaging with the First, Third, Fourth, and Fifth committees of the General Assembly;
- Using the Arria formula, in which NGOs brief UNSC members on country specific issues;
- Briefing UN missions going out to the field, including UNSC missions;
- Briefing Special Representatives to the Secretary General (SRSGs) and Humanitarian Coordinators;
- Developing more specific mechanisms for accountability;

Peace Education

Peace education "is fundamental to effective, long-term violence prevention". If prevention does in fact require shifting consciousness to not resort to violence, then peace education is a fundamental mechanism serving effective, long-term violence prevention. Peace education fosters dialogue, encourages participation in understanding diverse worldviews, offers the space to air fears and build trust, and develops lasting relationships among people through careful modeling.

Peace is not innate; it must be learned and reinforced. Peace education focuses on this learning process. It is based on values and life-skills that nurture attitudes and behaviors that contribute to peaceful co-existence. It uses inquiry, critical thinking, reflection and active participation in the learning process to look within ourselves and make connections to the world around us. These skills can be infused or integrated into all disciplines. They apply to everyday life and are not bound to the classroom. Peace education goes beyond teaching and learning reading, writing and arithmetic. It explores the root causes of violence to build understanding and transform conflict. This interactive group session affirmed that a comprehensive approach is required. "We can't just take the guns away and give them money." Holistic, integrated approaches are supported through the peace education paradigm.

Youth

Young people are essential to preventing conflict at every stage because, simply put, they possess the energy and creativity to initiate change and shape the future. In countless ways, the youth movement reveals the most culturally sensitive and community oriented entry points for effective action, including knowing the appropriate timing, methods, social sub-groups involved, and the nature of the local culture and environment. A proper entry point will encourage full-fledged participation of youths and will ensure that they are not exploited. These entry points can be as simple as creating a playground in the community—giving children a place to play. Success stories and guidelines can be drawn from UNICEF's well-documented work in Sierra Leone, Palestine and Colombia/Panama.

Sadly, youth are also most vulnerable to armed conflict and frequently serve as prime actors in armed conflict. As such, there is a critical need to revisit Disarmament, Demobilization

Religion remains one of the most contentious contributors to conflict and a resilient vehicle of hope and reconciliation during times of despair.

and Rehabilitation (DDR) programs to ensure focus is not only on disarmament, but also on rehabilitation that addresses the social stigma facing former child soldiers. Rehabilitation programs that allow former child soldiers to reenter school and learn job skills are essential in engaging and rebuilding societies. The key is to involve youth at every level, including in policy-making and development of peace education programs.

The Role of Faith-based Organizations in Conflict Prevention

This session explored three narrative experiences from within faith-based approaches to conflict prevention. Andrea Bartoli, from Community of St. Egidio, Mansour Abu Rashid, the Chairman of the Amman Center for Peace and Development and Jack Patterson, the UN Representative of the Quaker UN Office, explored the divergent roles that religion has played in history, and even today. Religion remains one of the most contentious contributors to conflict and resilient vehicles of hope and reconciliation during times of despair. Recognizing that religion is very 'old' and states are very 'new,' it is arguable that religion may have something to teach political actors. Faith-based groups continue to bring people together through their shared beliefs in transcending conflict and violence. However, there are also significant issues to be addressed within and between faith-traditions, including extremism and the promotion of violence through religious leaders. All religions must start by acknowledge both their positive and negative impact on conflicts. As Dr. Bartoli noted, "The mention of religion is marginal largely because the question still stands: Is religion a force for prevention or a negative element that contributes to the violence?"

The panelists shared a number of ongoing examples of successes. St. Egidio, an Italian religious order, served a critical role in bringing all parties together to negotiate peace in Mozambique after years of bloodshed. The Amman Center for Peace and Development (ACPD) promotes understanding and tolerance through education, publication, dialogue, and workshops by bringing together critical civil society actors such as Imams and Rabbis or women in Arabic societies. The Quakers continue to utilize "dialogue" and similar mediation efforts and are especially effective in situations where official government channels are closed or blocked. Many of these efforts successfully draw excluded groups into peace processes, as exemplified in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the Middle East and elsewhere. As illustrated, religious and other civil society roles can be quite valuable, but to be more effective they must work with the principles of other governments and inter-governmental organizations. One panelist remarked that as a first steps, "before preventive plans are implemented, faith-based actors must contemplate the disconnect between *those actively fighting and non-combatants*."

"Before preventive plans are implemented the disconnect between those actively fighting and non-combatants must be contemplated."

In summary, this session focused on principles of hope, humility, the importance of listening and the positive attitudes in pursuing conflict prevention through faith-based channels. Above all, the panelists embodied the emotion and humanity in dealing with deadly conflict, as well as the personal transformation at the core of a shift towards seeking prevention and peace.

*Dr. Andrea Bartoli authored a concept paper for this session titled **Religion and Conflict Prevention**. Copies may be obtained by contacting either the International Secretariat or the Conflict Prevention Working Group.*

II. Opportunities and Ideas

Recommendations for CSOs:

The diversity of civil society organizations represents an opportunity and a challenge for governments and the UN. The lack of a formal structure for CSOs allows for creativity and freedom of action that can assist in the effort of states and inter-governmental organizations to prevent armed conflict. However, lack of a definable structure also leaves institutional actors at a loss of how best, where, and when to engage potentially useful CSO partners. Participants at the seminar noted a number of challenges in this regard. A comprehensive listing of their recommendations is found in **Annex 1**.

However, in sum, participants called for CSOs to become more professional by developing a common language and standards, creating multi-sectoral networks and cooperation, and clearly mapping these networks and entry points for consumption by governments and inter-governmental organizations. In terms of their activities, CSOs must decide on a clear strategy, whether as an 'outsider' or an 'insider', and understand the consequences of their strategy (funding, access, etc.). Finally, some participants advised that CSOs must strive to better understand the potentials and constraints of their counterparts in governments and at the UN.

Recommendations for the UN:

Participants urged the UN to improve its cooperation and coordination with CSOs. A detailed list of these views is provided in **Annex 2**.

They agreed that partnerships between the UN and CSOs must be based on equality (and not as if CSOs are just resources). This involves integrating, or at the least making space for, CSOs in policy-making arenas and in the programming cycle of specific projects. Developing mechanisms for CSO involvement in UN structures would assist in overcoming the confusion and inefficiency caused by ad hoc relationships that often must be re-invented over and over again. Such institutionalized channels are important at UN Headquarters as well as in the field. At UN Headquarters (including Geneva, Vienna, Paris, etc.), new mechanisms for improved access to the Security Council (building on the Arria Formula) and the secretariat and agencies (such as involving CSOs in the Executive Committee on Peace and Security) will aid CSOs in providing essential information and important perspectives on a timely and efficient basis. Similarly, implementing UNDP's mechanisms for engagement with CSOs and building similar models that provide local CSOs access to SRSGs, the Resident Coordinators, and the UN Country Teams, can help the UN engage grassroots communities. This will increase and enhance the impact of UN programs. Finally, the UN must view conflict prevention as integral to all its work—whether as underpinning the Millennium Development Goals or in early warning and early action to avert deadly violence.

Partnerships between the UN and civil society organisations must be based on equality.

While the conference is seen as a "galvanizing" event, the regional organizing process leading up to 2005 remains the central purpose of the Global Partnership.

III. The 2005 Conference and Beyond

The two-year programme called 'The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict' launched in 2003 is well underway. Everyday lessons-learned are being collected, new relationships created, existing networks strengthened, and coherent agendas developed. This programme is intensely focused on the regional processes and will culminate in an International Conference hosted at the United Nations headquarters in July of 2005. The GPPAC intends for this UN-hosted conference to function as a 'galvanising event,' a second launching point, from which an established international partnership may be positioned to mobilize political will, prioritize issues and inaugurate a functioning global network on conflict prevention.

The founding vision of the GPPAC has been to build a functioning international network of connected conflict prevention professionals and organizations. Since then, the programme has been intensified to encompass the identification of mechanisms for interaction between civil society, the UN, regional organizations and government. This seminar, involving UN leaders, CSOs and states, was another step towards revealing improved CSO-UN interaction.

The Global Partnership has already united several dozen local, regional and international organizations, and can therefore be seen as the start of a global network on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The potential of a fully functioning network is vast. This network could make the best use of assets (broad based support, policy activity within multilateral organizations, an established body of research) and directly address the limitations faced (lack of public awareness and political will, meager financial resources, lack of focus).

A strategy document for the Global Partnership beyond 2005 is being developed. Simultaneously each region is in the process of developing their specific action agendas. The strategy document will be discussed within all fifteen regional processes throughout 2004 to ensure each region's view is clearly represented by the 2005 conference.

The regional agendas and strategy document are only pieces of the long-term strategy and possible tasks and functions of the Global Partnership after 2005. In the process, the partnership has relied on its ability to steadily strengthen and adjust to rising needs without losing its central focus on the conflict prevention agenda. GPPAC continues to facilitate information dissemination, dialogue and exchange of experience. It will continue to commission research, advocacy and lobbying for the conflict prevention agenda. There is also a keen recognition of a greater need for improved awareness raising campaigns, funding and outreach. As the partnership grows, so does the potential for achieving the richness and ideals of the rising vision.

The "Living Document" authored by Catherine Barnes provides more detailed background on the vision and potential of the Global Partnership. The Western European Action Agenda is also an excellent sample of a regional action agenda and is planned for completion by the regional conference in Dublin, Ireland in March 2004. For more information on either document, please contact the International Secretariat.

IV. Conclusion

This seminar, which brought together diverse participants, from the UN, civil society and governments, was an intense two and half days of panel presentations, dialogue and small working-groups. We achieved a unique openness of discussion and generous exchange of knowledge. The diversity of views and obvious thirst for a candid exchange of experiences fostered an atmosphere in which participants were eager to listen intently to others. The careful preparation of presentation and the valuable background papers sent to everyone in advance of the seminar were impressive.

The Seminar was only a step in the overall process -- a process that we believe could lead to an international network and a movement. However, its value should be appreciated; it moved beyond an abstract debate and developed concrete recommendations and direction of what may be achieved by civil society collaborating with the UN and governments and what the future path might look like. We celebrate the results and congratulate all participants on covering new ground over the two and a half days.

V. About The Global Partnership...

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), spearheaded by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), is a large and inclusive coalition of civil society organizations that are organizing regional processes which will lead to an international conference on "The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict" at UN Headquarters in New York in July 2005. This initiative responds to Recommendation #27 of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report on the "Prevention of Armed Conflict" (June 2001). The conference has the potential to be a significant strategic event, capable of transforming the way global conflict is addressed.

The NGO-UN Conflict Prevention Working Group, based in New York, provides a central point of linkage between the components of the international initiative, the regional process and the UN. Facilitated by the Center for International Conflict Resolution at Columbia University (CICR), and Chaired by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), its membership also includes representatives from World Vision International, Initiatives of Change, the Community of St. Egidio and Saferworld. The World Federalist Movement and Global Action to Prevent War joined in March 2004. A broader membership is currently being established in New York among NGOs with representatives at the United Nations.

"The seminar moved beyond an abstract debate and development concrete recommendations and direction"

Membership with broader NGO-UN Conflict Prevention Working Group is open to all New York based, conflict prevention oriented CSOs. For more information, please contact Eliza Kretzmann at ekretzmann@afsc.org



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ANNEX 1.

Civil Society Organizations should:

Defining and Mapping

- Clearly define the growing and complex web of CSOs.
- Define preventive capabilities in the conflict cycle, as well as actions towards the creation of predictable peaceful progress.
- Develop a common language and strong reporting standards.
- Articulate and prove the legitimacy of CSOs. For example, religious groups must first reconcile the disconnect between the extremists and the moderates, between those actively fighting and non-combatants.
- Encourage more interaction among CSOs across sectoral divides, e.g. human rights, education, gender, youth, religion.
- Create a useful matrix to extract best practices or evaluate impact when there are various organizations doing varied work.

Strategy for Action

- Accept that CSOs should conform to a certain extent and not push the envelope too far, if it wishes to influence the government.
- Be smart, sharp and professional.▯ Get your facts straight.
- Be clear in what kind of role they want to play, as an outsider, or as an insider. There are consequences and capacity to both, in terms of media, funding, and diplomacy.
- Help influence and educate the government, UN and public.
- Create a web portal for learning about conflict prevention which is accessible to all segments.

Know your counterpart

- Get to know the champions of the process.▯ Relationships are with individuals within organizations.
- Be aware of national responsibilities and priorities.

ANNEX 2.

The United Nations international and local staff should:

Principles and Elements of Partnerships

- View local CSOs as instrumental partners, not just as resources. Some CSOs that provide sensitive information need to be protected as involvement has the potential to damage partner's reputation within the local community.
- Differentiate between instrumental knowledge, relational thinking and reflexive knowledge
- Use CSO input to help define issues and improve government awareness of policy areas, etc.
- Improved information sharing - Put profiles of initiatives with country specifics and issue analysis on the web and systematically disseminate the information like 'peacewomen.org' or 'womenwarpeace.org'.
- Encourage private sector actors, specifically members Global Compact, to engage with CSOs in conflict prevention initiatives.
- Look closely at the activity of the development banks in the context of national circumstances, particularly in relation to the power of the state.▯ The role of the World Bank and regional development banks are important because they are significant players in conflict prevention initiatives, but also because many of their official policies in the past have created dangerous economic uncertainty and instability.▯ There needs to be more dialogue between the banks, the UN and civil society organizations.
- Develop best practices for dealing with sensitive UN information gathering, especially when dealing with issues of national security, sovereignty or prestige.
- Map and synergize the range of conflict and determine what roles CSOs can fill.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the frequent underestimating of women as armed combatants, prisoners, and hostages as well as their utility in the post-conflict re-induction process, especially in regards to existing DDR initiatives.

Mechanisms

UN Headquarters

- Identify and clearly articulate entry points into both the local and international UN bodies.
- Strive for a more defined stance on CSO-UN relationship.
- Create a "point person" or SRSG for conflict prevention
- Consider feeding information to the Security Council through the Security Council Watch since they are in an open space and can take in ideas.
- Encourage UN prevention focal points, such as DPA, to engage in more informal discussions to bring the conversation to a more accessible level.
- Incorporate CSOs into the Executive Committee on Peace & Security.
- Leverage SRSGs as the connection between CSOs and the UN, as demonstrated by De Mello's initiative in East Timor.
- Create an interactive space and mechanisms for early warning that are complementary instead of competitive
- Consider the Arria Formulas and Framework Team models in which NGOs brief UN members on country specific issues
- Consider institutionalizing conflict prevention into the General Assembly's Fourth Committee.

Field

- Create a country level CSO advisor within the UN liaison office or with the UN Country Team.
- Develop dialogue methods, such as national dialogues or the UNDP example in Guatemala.
- Include CSO's in secretariats and collective bodies
- Develop mechanism for CSO input into strategic country reports. Local knowledge is lost largely because there are no institutionalized channels.
- Develop integrated early warning systems involving (1) a range of actors (2) a framework for receiving/filtering/standardizing information based on urgency and (3) a defined mechanism for generating the necessary political will.
- Encourage both local and international CSO to use United Nations Association network and expertise to facilitate local civil society and UN interaction.

Specific Roles for UN to empower CSOs

- Support UNDP small grant funding for CSOs in post-conflict areas to strengthen their CSO interaction (currently in pilot in 4 countries).
- Support and highlight benefits of "pilot projects" around peace building (currently in 6 countries), despite political sensitivity.
- Encourage UNDP to broker relationships between the state and indigenous peoples' organizations, such as in Ecuador.
- Create accountability for governments to include CSOs in a way which maintains the objectivity of independence, while establishing appropriate interdependence (?) in the decision making process.
- Sponsor meetings for civil society.

Other suggestions:

- Define more specific mechanisms for accountability for CSOs.
- Link conflict prevention to Millennium Development Goals, as a tool of accountability.

ANNEX 3. List of Attendees

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