

PACIFIC REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE GPPAC PROGRAMME
17-22 APRIL 2005
PACIFIC HARBOUR, FIJI ISLANDS

From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace

Our experiences of violent armed conflicts in the Pacific Region have given us important lessons that such conflicts result in deaths, serious injuries and emotional traumas to combatants and innocent victims that require healing. Furthermore, violent and armed conflicts cause the destruction of the modern physical infrastructures, the economy and the institutional, spiritual and civilizing human values that constitute the achievements of the people concerned, over decades of development.

Rebuilding damaged relations of communities and the nations at the end of traumatic violent conflict is a difficult long term process of healing, reconciliation and revival. It makes us ask about the causes of armed conflict and how we can avoid repeating them in the future.

The meeting of representatives of civil society organisations from Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Samoa, Cook Islands and Australia at the Lagoon Resort, Deuba Fiji from 17-22 April shared experiences around the theme "***From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to prevent Violent Conflicts and Build Peace***".

We agreed that we should assist our Pacific governments and international partners to shift our national and regional development strategies from reacting to violent conflict after they have broken out, to preventing them from happening. We need deeper understanding of the root causes of destructive violent conflicts. In the spirit of solidarity and co-operation the participants at the Pacific Regional Consultation in the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) recommend the following be carried forward to the Officials Regional Workshop on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution organised by the Forum Secretariat and supported by UNDP (April 25-27 2005), and GPPAC international conference, taking place at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters, New York, from 19-21 July, 2005.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL LEVEL

Land, Resources and Peace Building

1. That CSOs and relevant stakeholders develop appropriate national policies using available land information systems for resolving conflict;
2. That awareness of cultural heritage and geneology be documented and recorded;
3. That a system of land tenure for non-landowners be established integrating gender, women and children's needs;
4. That landowners and tenants be provided with, and have access to, accurate information on land issues;
5. That local and small businesses have access to an equitable distribution of local resources and equal opportunities;
6. That information be widely shared on land rights and the recognition of traditional, customary land rights within the legal system;
7. That resource management and utilisation practices adhere to international Codes of Sustainable Development;
8. That national governments and Pacific inter-governmental organisations include effective land dispute resolution mechanisms in land policies.

Ethnicity and Peace-Building

- 1 That training and education on cultural awareness and sensitivity protocols be implemented;
- 2 That CSOs and government collaborate using existng networks for religious and cultural programmes;
- 3 That dialogues on the appreciation of diversity be facilitated and implemented;
- 4 That proactive, positvie, non-discriminatory terminology be adopted and used, particulary by government leaders and the media
- 5 That appreciation and respect be fostered amongst all communities via the implementation of appropriate programmes by CSOs, government and religious organisations.

Religion and Peace-Building

1. That training programmes be implemented for religious leaders and their followers to allow them to play a more proactive role in peace-building, peace-making and conflict prevention;
2. That CSOs and NGOs actively engage religious leaders and their followers in awareness programmes on peace-making and conflict prevention and other development issues affecting Pacific communities.

Gender and Peace-Building

1. That gender sensitivity training using a human rights framework, be conducted for leaders, security forces and the judiciary;
2. That governments ratify Optional Protocols for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).
3. That gender sensitive awareness programmes be implemented at all levels for the empowerment and advancement of women, and as a means of working toward policy change;
4. That dialogue take place around diversity and difference in terms of gender roles and societal values and attitudes;
5. That Pacific Island Countries, in partnership with CSOs and NGOs collaborate to abolish legislation and the abuse of custom practices that disempower women and “at risk” groups; (see footnotes)
6. That CSOs take an active role to promote women’s rights to land in a cultural context in the Pacific;
7. That Pacific women adopt a unified Pacific Women’s Statement on Peace-Building and Conflict Prevention to be tabled at GPPAC International Conference.

Politics and Peace-Building

1. That peace-building, peace-making and conflict prevention be the central foundation of national development planning and implementation;
2. That Codes of Ethics be developed for various key public institutions and the private sector;
3. That criminal justice systems be reviewed to include a restorative justice approach;

Collaboration and Peace-Building

1. That CSOs work more collaboratively to develop clearer peace-building, peace-making conflict prevention responses, policy and plans and consider the needs and involvement of “at risk” groups, including people with disabilities, via the formation of community committees responsible for conflict resolution;
2. That CSOs seek representation on key peace-building, peace-making and conflict prevention national bodies and platforms such as the National Peace Council in the Solomon Islands, the Gun Summit in PNG and the Fiji Government Reconciliation Council;
3. That CSOs call on governments and the private sector for greater recognition of the role of CSOs by their inclusion in national peace-building peace-making and conflict prevention policy and administration;
4. That governments develop effective legislation that recognises the role of CSOs in public policy discourse;
5. That CSOs be included in the formulation of development and implementation strategies;
6. That key governance institutions such as the Ombudsman’s Office, Human Rights institutions and media be independent, strengthened and resourced;
7. That, in collaboration with CSOs, human rights education programmes be implemented for government leaders, officials and traditional leaders at all levels;
8. That CSOs establish human rights coalitions with assistance from existing NGO networks, where necessary, to facilitate effective co-ordination and collaboration;

9. That CSOs and governments collaborate in the development of effective and just reconciliation processes, including reparation, reconciliation peace-building, peace-making and conflict prevention ;
10. That CSOs and governments collaborate to develop education and skills building programmes for “at risk” groups;
11. That the national and regional summits for CSOs be re-introduced to allow CSOs to adopt a combined approach to conflict prevention, peace-making and peace-building activities;
12. That CSOs collaborate with academic institutions in the area of research, dialogue and training in conflict prevention, peace-making and peace-building;
13. That CSOs collaborate with each other to devise a home-grown Pacific concept of conflict prevention, peace-making and peace-building based on the region’s experiences;
14. That CSOs collaborate with each other to determine the relationship between conflict prevention and the absence of conflict;
15. That CSO networks collaborate with governments and other partners to provide education and skills development to the “lost generation” of unemployed and “at risk” young people in conflict zones, who have missed out on educational opportunities.

Capacity Building

1. That donors make available adequate financial and human resources to facilitate national and regional CSO efforts in peace-building and conflict prevention;
2. That additional training programmes be developed for women and men in the areas of peace-building facilitation and third-party intervention;
3. That CSOs have access to more training on effective lobbying and advocacy;
4. That CSOs develop a Peace curriculum for use in formal and non-formal education systems and that it be modified for use with focus groups such as community leaders, women’s groups and people with disabilities;
5. That information on court processes and laws be simplified and distributed to CSO networks;

6. That CSOs in the Asia-Pacific region seek support for leadership development and capacity building, development of research skills and materials, networking and exchange opportunities and policy advocacy in peace-building and conflict prevention, human rights and good governance.

REGIONAL LEVEL

Regional Efforts, Institutions and Peace-building

1. That national and regional CSOs work to promote and encourage valuing traditional cultures that empower communities in peace-building and conflict prevention;
2. That Pacific CSOs work together for the protection, preservation and management of the region's physical environment and call upon developed government such as Australia and the US to sign environmental treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol;
3. That all Pacific Island Countries sign the 1997 Land Mine Treaty in the context of the Ottawa Agreement vis-à-vis people with disabilities;
4. That the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), in partnership with CSOs and NGOs adopt a proactive approach in devising guidelines for recruitment of Pacific people for overseas employment opportunities, particularly in post-conflict times, vis-à-vis security and domestic workers;
5. That PIGs and PIFS, in consultation with CSOs and NGOs, devise appropriate anti-terrorist legislation that respect human rights protection in their constitution and abide by international human rights standards'
6. That in the context of the Millenium Development Goal 6, CSOs and Pacific Island governments work in partnership with relevant agencies to devise programmes to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases in the region;
7. That CSOs, governments, policy departments and the PIFS collaborate to prohibit the local manufacture and supply of firearms in the Pacific;
8. That the "Noise Act" currently in place in the Cook Islands, also be adopted and implemented by other Pacific Island Countries;
9. That the "Leadership Code" adopted by the South Pacific Forum Leaders be legislated and implemented;

10. That the current regional GPPAC Coordinating body continue as the lead agency in the network and make appropriate changes through on going consultation with national GPPAC facilitators, and that other human rights and peace organisations join the network and thereby facilitate information sharing and collaboration;
11. That opportunities be provided for CSOs from French-speaking territories, and other Pacific Island countries to facilitate their involvement in GPPAC follow-up consultations;
12. That mechanisms be developed to ensure greater involvement of CSOs in regional governmental decision-making processes, and that they be effectively resourced;
13. That Pacific regional CSOs present at the GPPAC regional consultation endorse the Vision of the *Pacific Plan*.
14. That the Pacific Plan account for recent findings (Global dimming and global warming) in relation to the climate change and its impact on Pacific countries.
15. The Pacific Plan incorporate preventative security measures on nuclear shipments and contamination, effective recognition, support and compensation for victims and survivors of previous nuclear tests.
16. That victims and survivors of nuclear tests and disasters be provided with appropriate recognition, compensation and support (eg Tahiti and Bikini Atoll)
17. That greater efforts be made by Pacific Island Forum Countries and PIFS to consult with CSOs and raise awareness about PIF processes and mechanisms for engagement with civil society;
18. That model legislation introduced by Pacific Island Countries be consistent with international human rights standards and local Constitutions;
19. That CSOs in collaboration with PIGs, develop healing processes and strengthen early warning signs of conflict and responses;
20. That clear protocols, enforcement measures and information be developed on the movement of illicit small arms in the region;
21. That PIGs in collaboration with Civil Society Organisations and traditional leaders seek initial internal solutions to conflict situations to mitigate the need for external intervention;

22. That CSOs, in collaboration with PIFS, facilitate the development of a Pacific NGO website for more effective networking and information-sharing amongst Pacific CSOs.
23. That PIFS urgently implement measures to combat corruption, money laundering and trans-national crime and collaborate with NGOs in educating the public about these issues

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

United Nations and International Linkages and Peace-building

1. That the GPPAC process be more inclusive and consolidated at national and grassroots levels;
2. That GPPAC sponsors and the UN commit adequate resources to assist in ensuring ongoing follow-up action after the international GPPAC meeting to achieve the policy shift from reaction to prevention and strengthen the capacity of CSOs.
3. That national and regional policies reflect international human rights standards and trends, with strong adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Millenium Development Goal MDG #3 on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women;
4. That the international community urgently provide resources for gender awareness, poverty alleviation and education programmes as highlighted in the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and CEDAW as a major means of reducing conflict in the Pacific and the world;
5. That the international community urgently address the issue of environmental degradation, particularly as regards climate change;
6. That the UN adopt a stronger role in facilitating decolonisation processes in the Pacific region;
7. That the international community focus on women and children in post-conflict situations in terms of MDGs 4 and 5 (“reduce child mortality and improve maternal health”), and the effects of conflict and conflict situations (MDG6) vis-à-vis combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;

8. that the UN consider the establishment of a UN Civil Society Permanent Forum on Conflict Prevention and Peace Building

Done at Pacific Harbour, Fiji Islands