

**GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE
PREVENTION
OF ARMED
CONFLICT**



**TOWARDS A GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE
ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PREVENTION OF
ARMED CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING AT
UN HEADQUARTERS, 19-21 JULY 2005**

CONTEXT DEFINITIONS

What is conflict?

“Conflict occurs when two or more ‘parties’ (individuals or groups) have – or believe they have – incompatible goals and this perception of incompatibility shapes their attitudes and behaviours toward each other.”

What is conflict prevention?

“Conflict prevention aims both to prevent or impede violence and destructive conflict *and* to build a just and sustainable peace by transforming underlying ‘latent’ causes of conflict.”

What is civil society?

“Civil society is essentially the *political* side of society, creating the social organisation to engage citizens with public life that is necessary for democracy. ... [This idea refers] to non-state and non-profit making sections of society, which includes, but is not limited to, those groups explicitly concerned about public matters.”

The terms defined here are only a few of the many definitions of these subjects, and have been presented in the ‘Living Document’ on Civil Society & Conflict Prevention’ by Dr. Catherine Barnes, (September 2003). The Global Partnership does not support one particular set of definitions.

WHO ARE WE?

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict is an international network of organisations working in conflict prevention and peacebuilding worldwide.

The Global Partnership has developed a programme entitled ‘The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict’ that will explore and strengthen networks of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the prevention of armed conflict. The programme aims to identify and implement mechanisms for interaction between the United Nations, governments and civil society in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.



THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP'S TIMELY RESPONSE

In Recommendation 27 of his Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict (2001), UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan “urge[s] NGOs with an interest in conflict prevention to organise an international conference of local, national and international NGOs on their role in conflict prevention and future interaction with the United Nations in this field.”

In response to this, the worldwide conflict prevention community joined together to form the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict and to hold a Global Conference on the Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding at UN Headquarters in New York, 19-21 July 2005. Many sectors and disciplines working in conflict prevention and peacebuilding are involved, from the community level to the international level.



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

31 May 2002

Dear Mr. van Tongeren,

Thank you for your letter of 22 March 2002 expressing the willingness of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention to take on an important role in following up recommendation 27 of my report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

I support wholeheartedly your initiative to organize regional preparatory meetings leading to an international conference of local, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area of conflict prevention. I understand that the purpose of these meetings will be to help NGOs further define their roles and future interaction with the United Nations. This is directly in line with my report, which emphasizes that national actors bear the primary responsibility for conflict prevention, while noting that NGOs and civil society also have a major role in this regard.

The report focuses on the positive potential of a wide spectrum of NGOs engaged in conflict prevention. It is therefore important that the meetings you propose be as broadly inclusive and diverse as possible. I welcome your suggestion that the conference should be a real participatory process and trust that you will actively encourage broad geographical representation and a sense of ownership among the conflict prevention NGO community. I would also urge you to consider the contributions that regional organizations and various United Nations agencies can make to the process.

Your initiative is a timely and important contribution to engaging civil society in the task of developing a culture of prevention in the international community. As you embark on this important project, I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

Kofi A. Annan

Mr. Paul van Tongeren
Executive Director
European Centre for Conflict Prevention
Utrecht

CONTEXT THE CHANGING NATURE OF CONFLICTS

Every day, the media brings us images of violence with a focus on the ‘war on terrorism’, while at the same time, away from the cameras, thousands of people are being killed or displaced by long-lasting, intractable conflicts. Responses to these conflicts are usually too little and too late. The scars of these conflicts will take generations to heal.

In spite of this, there are millions of people worldwide who are working for peace. These people are achieving results that give hope, and help to ensure a more peaceful future for us all.

As the nature of conflict has changed, in a shift from conflicts *between* states to conflicts *within* states, the governmental and civilian interest in civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding has grown enormously. The importance of civil society organisations in that process is beginning to be recognised.

CONTEXT CIVIL SOCIETY'S GROWTH

The past decade has seen a huge increase in NGO involvement and influence in major international conferences held on global themes. The development of cautious relationships between NGOs and international governmental organisations, governments and businesses has contributed to this phenomenon.

The establishment of the UN-NGO Working Group of the UN Security Council in 1995, and the development of the Arria Formula in 1993 (whereby informal consultations are used to break down the barrier between governments and NGOs) are solid examples of how these relationships have developed.

“NGOs can contribute to the maintenance of peace and security by offering non-violent avenues for addressing the root causes of conflict at an early stage.” (Kofi Annan, Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, 2001.) However, the UN Secretary-General acknowledges the fact that the roles that civil society can play in the prevention of conflict is an area that needs to be explored more broadly.

THE NEED FOR THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

There is no better time than this to build a multi-stakeholder network and create the desperately needed ‘Shift to Prevention’ that UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has spoken of. The Global Partnership’s emphasis is on liaising with like-minded governments, regional organisations and UN agencies at national, regional and global levels to make conflict prevention and peacebuilding a sustainable and achievable objective.

The release of the Secretary-General’s Report in 2001 fuelled momentum for investigating the roles that civil society plays in preventing armed conflicts and, especially, how it can cooperate more closely with governments and the UN in achieving conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals.

In 2003, the UN Secretary-General appointed the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations (chaired by former Brazilian President Cardoso) to formulate recommendations for enhancing relationships between the UN and civil society. On 7 June 2004, the Panel released a report entitled ‘We the Peoples: civil society, the United Nations and Global Governance’, whose key message was the fostering of multi-stakeholder relationships to create ‘global policy networks’.

These recommendations are a clear statement on the need for greater cooperation between the UN and civil society. As the UN Secretary-General stated in an address to the Security Council at the Open Debate of 22 June 2004, “The partnership between the United Nations and civil society is ... not an option; it is a necessity.”

Ms. Brigitta Dahl,
member of Panel of Eminent Persons



THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP'S PROGRAMME

The Global Partnership aims to explore the role of civil society in the prevention of armed conflict throughout the world. Consequently, its programme is structured by a series of fifteen parallel regional processes worldwide that are flexible enough to encompass regional differences but sufficiently aligned to give coherence to the whole.

Each region has established, or is in the process of establishing, a Regional Steering Group, consisting of local and regional civil society organisations, practitioners, and NGOs, with one organisation as the Regional Initiator. Regional Initiators are key CSOs who lead the regional programme, and who ensure a process to broaden participation in their own region.

These regional processes lead up to Regional Conferences and give each region the opportunity to enhance their capacity by sharing knowledge, and to consolidate their networks by establishing partnerships.

Each region will collect lessons learned and best practices that, combined with results of their Regional Conferences, will provide input for a Regional Action Agenda. Elements from the Regional Action Agendas will contribute to a Global Action Agenda that will be presented and discussed at the Global Conference in 2005.

CONTEXT THE INFLUENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

In recent years, civil society actors such as women's groups, religious groups and youth have demonstrated that their influence can often extend beyond that of soldiers and diplomats.

More importantly, perhaps, is the fact that political leaders across the world are increasingly aware of civil society's potential to anticipate and resolve its own tensions.

At the same time, the role of civil society in this field remains abstract, and questions about the accountability, legitimacy and transparency of CSOs are yet to be researched.



TOWARDS A GLOBAL ACTION AGENDA



Dublin Conference



Dublin Conference



Minister Brian Cowen, T.D. and
Paul van Tongeren shaking hands on
the Dublin Action Agenda

One of the issues that came to light at the Dublin Conference was that there is an urgent need for developing systematic research into the UN system. This addresses the UN Secretary-General's second request in relation to research: "to further define and propose modalities for future interaction with the UN."

The Global Partnership's greatest resources and unique advantages lie in the experiences and knowledge of partner CSOs in every region of the world. Their experience in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, but especially their experience of interaction with the UN, regional organisations and governments, contains a wealth of knowledge that can contribute to future cooperation between these organisations.

Quite a few 'expert meetings' will be held to bring together the experiences and knowledge of participants who will contribute to the overall research being done for exploring civil society's interaction with the UN.

Furthermore, the Global Partnership aims to identify and promote options for reform and more effective cooperation between CSOs and the UN in conflict prevention, both in the field and at UN Headquarters. In this framework, the Partnership is producing a paper entitled *The United Nations, Civil Society and Preventing Armed Conflict* that is deemed a necessity because it will contribute to the effectiveness of sustainable, multi-stakeholder relations between the UN and CSOs. This paper will be published simultaneously with the recommendations from the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Security Threats, Challenges and Change, due in December 2004.

As a result of these regional and international meetings and research, case studies, and working papers, and Regional Action Agendas will be formulated. Issues for the Global Action Agenda will be extracted from the Regional Action Agendas and international research in an attempt to meet the Secretary-General's requests.

A GLOBAL CONFERENCE



UN Trusteeship Council

The Global Conference on Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding is to be held in New York at UN Headquarters on 19-21 July 2005. The main aim of the conference is to articulate a policy change agenda in how governments and the international community view and address conflict and is aimed at promoting a 'Shift to Prevention'. In order to promote improved interaction between civil society and the UN, the conference will provide an exchange and networking opportunity between CSOs, the UN and governments.

Participants of the conference will gather to discuss the explored roles of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and will eventually establish a functioning international network of CSOs around conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The number of participants (around 1000) has partly determined the conference's format. Working groups of around 20-25 persons per group will be organised for an exchange of experiences, together with a few plenary sessions, and a mixture of larger panel debates with parallel working groups.

BEYOND THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE IN 2005

World events in recent years have brought the Global Partnership to this moment. The misery caused by the too many conflicts in the world make this a time where conflict prevention and peacebuilding is of utmost importance. Developments in the role of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, coupled with the recognition of governments and the United Nations that they can achieve more through better cooperation with civil society, have further energised this initiative.

After the Global Conference in 2005, the Global Partnership will continue executing several of its core tasks, such as strengthening regional networks, building coalitions with governments, carrying out advocacy work for conflict prevention and monitoring the implementation of the Global Action Agenda.

Building capacity for peace is not done at a single conference, however important and beneficial it may be; it is done by rooting conflict prevention activities at the very core of policy-making tasks on a global level, and between individuals on a personal level. The Global Partnership is one of many essential steps on a long road to peace.

THE REGIONAL PROCESS

The regional process is an important factor contributing to the success of the Global Partnership's programme. At this time, the first two Regional Conferences have taken place. Many more Regional Conferences will follow and information about them will be available on the Global Partnership's website (www.gppac.net).

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The regional process in Latin America and the Caribbean includes two regional conferences with another round of sub-regional workshops to ensure ownership from the diverse areas included in this large region.

The first of two regional conferences took place in June 2004 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and was declared to be of national interest by the Argentine Senate. Participants included CSO delegates from the four sub-regions, representatives from the North American process (Mexico and Canada) as well as representatives from the Organisation of American States and the UNDP.

The Regional Conference programme included: the presentation and discussion of recommendations from the preparatory workshops, and a proposal for electronic mapping of conflicts and peacebuilding in the region. There were also workshop discussions on the draft Regional Action Agenda, which included draft recommendations on the role of civil society in the prevention of armed conflict. At the end of the meeting, consensus was reached in plenary on the changes and additions to the Action Agenda. There was also a call for a task force to come together to work on Bolivia as an urgent case for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The second Regional Conference to finalise the recommendations from the region for the Global Action Agenda will be held in Caracas, Venezuela, February 2005.



Regional Conference, Buenos Aires, June 2004

WESTERN EUROPE (enlarged EU, Norway and Switzerland)



Paul van Tongeren at Dublin Conference, April 2004

The Western European Regional Conference in Dublin (March 2004) was organised by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, in cooperation with the Irish

government, who held the EU Presidency at the time. At this Conference, the Dublin Action Agenda on the Prevention of Armed Conflict was adopted by the 230 participants of the conference and endorsed by 130 organisations afterwards.

Some of the 'Guiding Principles' that were formulated in the Dublin Action Agenda will be expanded on in the Global Action Agenda. The ten Guiding Principles advocate, amongst others, a shift to prevention, the human security paradigm, the responsibility to prevent and protect, a new partnership between civil society, governments and inter-governmental organisations for effective conflict prevention.

The Irish EU Presidency submitted a review report in which they highlight the examination of how the EU and CSOs can cooperate more effectively in preventing conflict. The Dublin Action Agenda was forwarded to eight governments with the request to present the recommendations at the Council Meeting in June 2004. Following these events, the European Council endorsed the Irish Presidency's report. Furthermore, the Spanish delegate to the Security Council, Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo, addressed the Dublin Action Agenda at a Security Council meeting on *Complex Crisis and UN response* (28 May 2004).

WEST AFRICA

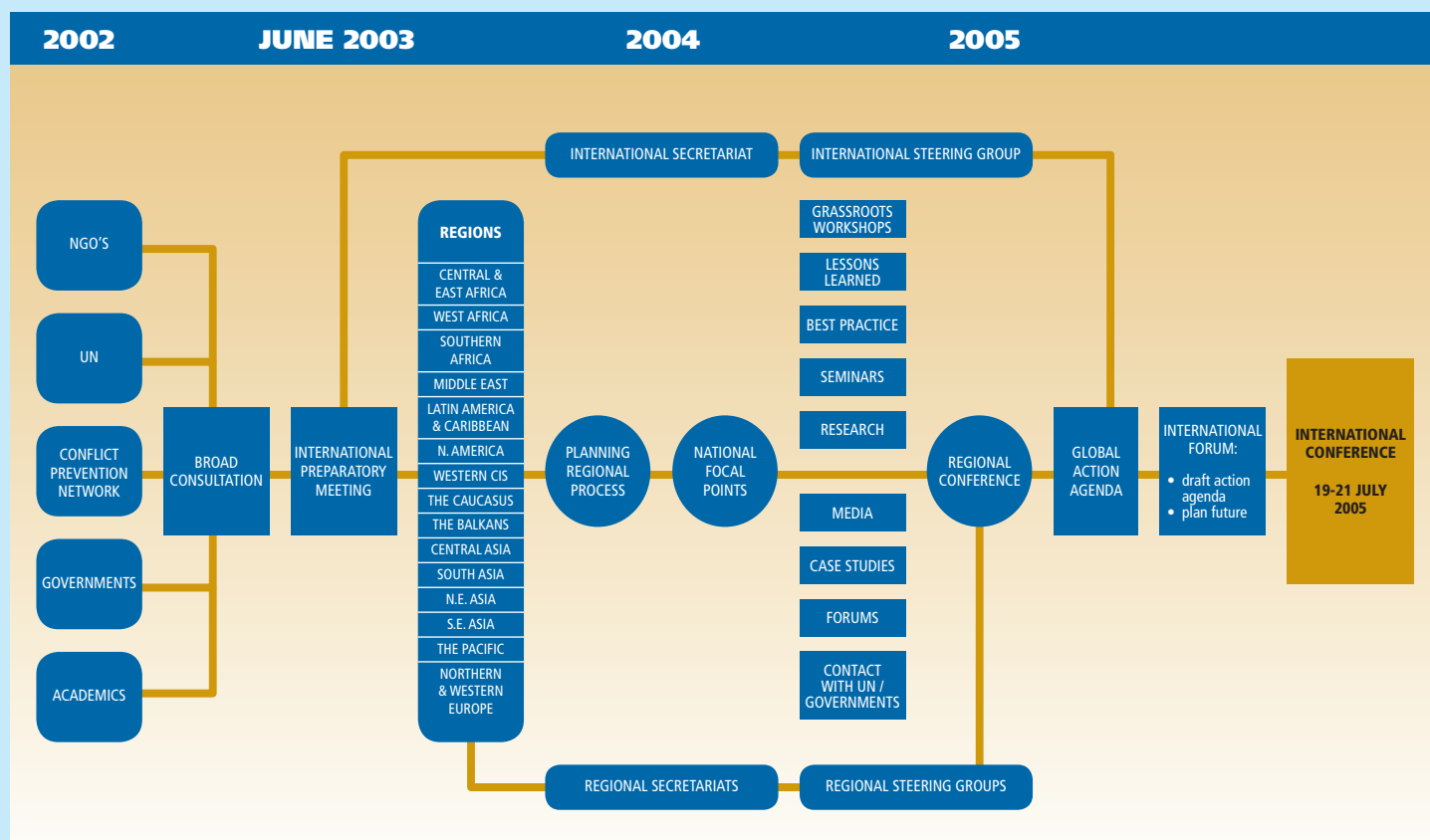
At this time, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is putting the final touches on preparations for its *Regional Conference for Conflict Prevention and Good Governance Organisations and Practitioners in West Africa*, which will take place in Accra, Ghana on 30 August - 2 September 2004.

Around sixty participants from across West Africa will present and discuss subjects such as the possibilities for using election as a tool for stability in West Africa and the role of CSOs in ensuring individual and collective security. These, and other, discussions will contribute to producing a Regional Action Agenda for conflict prevention in West Africa.



Emanuel Bombande (WANEP), Regional Initiator

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP'S STRUCTURE



The primary objective of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict is to create a fundamental shift in how the world responds to conflict by developing a common platform for effective action in conflict prevention from the community to the global level.

The **International Steering Group** is made up of representatives from:

- Regional Initiators
- The international secretariat (ECCP)
- NGO-UN Conflict Prevention Working Group
- INGOs
- UN
- Supportive governments

Aims

1. To explore the roles of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding
2. To identify mechanisms for interaction between civil society, the UN, regional organisations and governments and promote improved interaction between CSOs and the UN
3. To establish regional and international conflict prevention and peacebuilding networks and to strengthen existing ones
4. To produce Regional Action Agendas and a Global Action Agenda for conflict prevention and peacebuilding
5. To articulate a policy change agenda aimed at achieving a shift to prevention in how governments and the international community view and address conflict
6. To implement awareness raising activities on conflict prevention and peacebuilding

RESEARCH AND CONTENT

The Global Partnership intends to respond thoroughly and systematically to the UN Secretary-General's requests in his Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict where he invites CSOs, "to articulate the roles and capacities of CSOs in the prevention of armed conflict – and to propose what they think they could or should become."

On a regional level, each region intends to research the specific topical or thematic priorities, such as constitutional reform or conflicts over land or other scarce resources. All research done regionally will be incorporated into the region's own programme and will take place during the process towards the Regional Conference. On another level, regional essays exploring the roles that civil society plays within a region in working with conflict prevention will also provide basic background input for Regional Conferences.

PEOPLE BUILDING PEACE

People Building Peace II: 65 inspiring stories, published by Lynne Rienner Publishers and initiated by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, is a book that will include sixty-five inspiring stories of civil society actors' successes all around the world in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The cases presented reflect the broad variety of activities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding being initiated and sustained by such diverse groups as women, youth and faith-based organisations in such diverse countries as Liberia, Macedonia, Argentina, Nigeria, and Cambodia.

The book gives an overview of the current state of affairs, and latest trends and developments in peacebuilding in relation to civil society. Each chapter includes inspiring case studies of how people can, and have, made a difference in this field. Two examples of such cases are highlighted below. The book will be one of the Global Partnership's main products, and will be presented to Kofi Annan and the participants of the Global Conference in July 2005.

Liberian women in a Mass Action for Peace

In May 2003, rebel forces captured fourteen of the fifteen counties that constitute the Liberian state, and began to progress to the capital, Monrovia. Under the auspices of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), women mobilised themselves in large numbers and decided that they would not sit on the sidelines to be once again consumed by violence. They peacefully marched the streets and held sit-ins to pressure politicians into an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. The women sustained the action despite numerous challenges faced during the period. Mainly due to their efforts, a comprehensive peace agreement was reached 78 days later.

Mobile phones and conflict management in Northern Ireland

During the chaos of the violence in North Belfast in 1996, lines of communication collapsed within and between communities. Rumours circulated and escalated freely, and facilitated further violence and counter-violence.

Staff at the Community Development Centre (CDC) in North Belfast proposed and developed a scheme to provide mobile telephones to community activists in each of the main interface communities. The phones allowed people on either side to ask questions of the opposing side and pass information back to their community, in this way rumours could be defused and tensions reduced. A recent evaluation indicated that the project is highly regarded as an effective and efficient form of communication that facilitates localised conflict management.

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EVENTS

August

- 25-27, West Africa: Regional Conference, Accra, Ghana
- 28-29, Balkans: Regional Steering Group meeting, Igalo, Montenegro

September

- 11-12 South Asia: Regional Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal

November

- 4-6, Balkans: Regional Conference, Igalo, Montenegro
- 19-20, Caucasus: Regional Conference Tbilisi, Georgia

February 2005

- Latin America and the Caribbean: 2nd Regional Conference, Caracas, Venezuela
- Africa: Inter-Regional Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya
- N.E. Asia: Regional Conference, Seoul, Korea

July 2005

- 19-21: Global Partnership Conference UN Headquarters, New York, U.S.A.

SUPPORT

Eight governments have thusfar decided to support the international programme: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. A number of NGOs and institutions also support the programme: NCDO, World Vision, Cordaid and Novib/Oxfam the Netherlands. Many other organisations are supporting the regional processes.

The Global Partnership also received support in the form of letters from UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan; EU Commissioner for External Relations, Christopher Patten; Executive Director of UNIFEM, Noeleen Heyzer; and Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the U.N., Minister Aldo Mantovani, on behalf of the European Union.



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT



The European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) is a non-governmental organisation that promotes effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies, and actively supports and connects people working for peace worldwide. The ECCP is an independent organisation, based in the Netherlands.

The ECCP's mission is to be a service and facilitating organisation for the broad field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The ECCP fulfils this function as the international secretariat for the Global Partnership.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.GPPAC.NET

Photograph credits

Peace Links members in Sierra Leone, many of whom have been child soldiers themselves, sing and dance for peace. Peace Links uses music, dance and culture as a means towards healing, rehabilitating and reintegrating child soldiers back to their communities, as well as an effective tool for raising awareness for a culture of peace.

The 'Messenger of Peace' photograph is of a City Montessori School student in the 'World Citizen's Dress'. The dress is a symbolic synthesis of the cultural diversity of human beings. This special design is aimed at promoting awareness about the oneness of humankind and our common cultural roots. www.cmseducation.org

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