

CANADIAN ACTION AGENDA ON CONFLICT PREVENTION

The Canadian Action Agenda on Conflict Prevention was developed by the Canadian Conflict Prevention Initiative (CCPI), under the umbrella of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC) and its Working Group on Conflict Prevention. It incorporates the ideas and recommendations of Canadian civil society experts on conflict prevention, including academics, non-governmental organizations and conflict prevention practitioners. Its purpose is to serve as both a guide and a toolkit for Canadian groups and individuals working on or interested in conflict prevention activities. It has also been developed with a view to shaping a unique Canadian contribution to regional and hemispheric meetings on conflict prevention to be held in Ottawa in December 2004. These meetings are part of a global initiative, which is currently developing a Global Action Agenda for the Prevention of Armed Conflict for review at an international conference on conflict prevention in July 2005 at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York.

Through a broad consultation process (described in Annex B), the CCPI identified four main areas of interest to serve as the framework for this document. These include:

- *the “Responsibility to Protect”*
- *human security*
- *national governance*
- *international law and global governance*

These areas are overlapping and mutually reinforcing. The Responsibility to Protect is in many ways the overarching concept, incorporating the responsibilities to prevent, to react and to rebuild and thus touching on all aspects of the prevention of and response to violent conflicts. Efforts to create a culture of prevention would be served by the use of a human security framework in both domestic and foreign policy worldwide, and in regional and multilateral institutions. National and international governance are two of the key areas that should be emphasized in an attempt to achieve human security.

There are of course other important topics, ideas and recommendations not addressed in this Action Agenda that are of relevance to the Canadian conflict prevention community. We strongly encourage involvement in the CCPI to bring additional expertise to the table as we engage in this and other activities and processes.

I. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

A. THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

The Government of Canada initiated the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) that produced the report entitled “The Responsibility to Protect.” This report has been generally well received by civil society organizations in Canada and around the world, in particular its general principles and framework.

These include national sovereignty involving responsibilities and not just rights; the moral imperative for the international community to act where the responsibility to protect citizens from serious harm is not being met; the continuum of responsibilities from prevention to reaction to rebuilding; and the emphasis on prevention as the priority responsibility. While the Government of Canada is now devoting human and financial resources to promoting the Responsibility to Protect, civil society organizations (CSOs) are concerned that Canada is focusing predominantly on the development of norms for global reaction once conflict prevention has failed and not placing enough emphasis on conflict prevention.

Canada has an established record upon which to build in encouraging the international community to respond to both the causes and consequences of violent conflict. Nevertheless, a shift in orientation towards conflict prevention in Canadian foreign policy is needed, as well as a comprehensive program to promote this agenda through bilateral and multilateral engagements. Recognizing that the potential exists both to mitigate or exacerbate violent conflict through international programming, Canada must also integrate conflict assessment procedures into its policy and program development and implementation.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Society Organizations

Emphasizing prevention. CSOs must work to ensure that the concept of the “Responsibility to Protect” is understood to involve the three-fold responsibilities of preventing, reacting and rebuilding, with an emphasis on conflict prevention. Efforts to put the report’s recommendations into action should be supportive of the “norm development” activities of relevant governments, including attempts to pass one or more resolutions in the General Assembly, but should also use the report as a basis for promoting preventive action and conflict prevention capacity-building at all levels.

CSO coordination. In working with governments and inter-governmental bodies on conflict prevention, CSOs must enhance efforts to coordinate their activities. This requires the expenditure of human resources to contact and consult with organizations working in similar geographic or substantive areas, and attempts to widen the network of local partners with whom international organizations consult. True partnership would result in increased efficiency and effectiveness for all CSOs, and allow greater integration of Southern perspectives in regional and international fora to which they often have less access than northern CSOs.

Canada and Other National Governments

Commitment to conflict prevention. Canada and other governments interested in this agenda must adopt an integrated approach to the Responsibility to Protect, including the responsibilities to prevent, react and rebuild. While pursuing initiatives to address the question of what to do when prevention fails, it is imperative that the

concept of the Responsibility to Protect be understood as emphasizing the prevention of violent conflict, and that its translation into concrete initiatives demonstrate a commitment to this interpretation. A renewal of Canada's commitment to peacebuilding would be a critical step, including a long-term approach to conflict prevention. Canada and other interested governments must be prepared to use preventive diplomacy, mediation and negotiation, and to sponsor dialogue processes which aim to prevent the outbreak or renewal of violent conflict, when they are in a position to serve as intervenors. They must champion the cause of conflict prevention at all levels, including not only the development of norms (in particular the norm of early acceptance of UN 'good offices')¹ but also creating political will and capacity for early, effective and structural responses to emerging violent conflicts.

Policy coordination. The coherence of national government policy in all areas that touch on conflict prevention must be improved, in part through better coordination among all government departments and between levels of government, as well as with CSOs. The creation of a position or mechanism for the purpose of coordinating peacebuilding policy and practice should be considered.

CSO participation. National governments must also take responsibility for the inclusion of CSOs in the development, design and implementation of conflict prevention policies and programs. This includes those working at the local and national levels. Meaningful participation from relevant local, national and international civil society actors critically requires more adequate, sustained and predictable funding. National governments should also undertake to determine domestic conflict prevention capacities; in Canada a preliminary effort has been undertaken by CSOs, but must be expanded for greater participation across the country and to include government activities. National governments open to the meaningful participation of CSOs must also work with more closed governments to promote participatory approaches to conflict prevention policy-making and implementation.

Civilian mechanisms. The Government of Canada and other national governments should consider how to involve civilians in conflict management mechanisms, including creating a Civilian Peace Service. This should build on the experience of European countries and be developed both nationally and internationally. This service would respond to requests to provide a civilian international presence to help reduce violence and allow local people striving to achieve peace and justice to continue their work. CSOs must be involved in both design and implementation. In the UK, the Civilian Peace Service being organized by Peaceworkers UK has as its goals to "support the peace efforts of local people and to assist them with the reintegration of refugees and ex-combatants, the resolving of disputes, the opening of communication channels, the building of democratic structures, the establishment of free and fair elections and the protection of human rights". In Germany, the Ziviler Friedensdienst (Civilian Peace Service), a partnership between the German government and CSOs, has sent experts

¹ As proposed by then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in *Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, UN Document A/47/277 - S/24111.

trained in peacebuilding and reconciliation to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Niger, Nicaragua, Chad and other countries. For Canada, such a service could work both domestically and overseas to do similar tasks.

Regional Organizations

Primacy of prevention. Regional organizations should develop policies and guidelines that reflect the acceptance of responsibilities to prevent, react and rebuild, with an emphasis on conflict prevention. Accepting the primacy of prevention entails generating political will for early and effective action in response to potential violent conflicts. For example, the creation of an African Standby Force in the African Union (AU) context is an important complement to the development of sub-regional and UN reaction mechanisms. Yet it is equally important to follow up on the commitments of the AU to strengthen its capacities for early warning, preventive diplomacy, as well as structural conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention capacity. The institutional capacity of regional organizations such as the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union and others for conflict prevention must also be analyzed and enhanced. One approach is to establish a function similar to the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities. This would involve focusing on root causes of violent conflict, using a human rights lens and adopting a problem-solving approach, combining preventive diplomacy, policy advice and technical assistance. Built into this function must be mechanisms for close cooperation with local, national and international CSOs in developing and implementing preventive responses.

Memoranda of understanding. The UN Charter provides for the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the UN and regional organizations with respect to their role in maintaining international peace and security. These must be consistent across organizations and be in accordance with the Charter. Regional organizations must take responsibility to ensure that MOUs are in place, and that they are implemented in a way that guards against abuse of the Responsibility to Protect principles, for example to justify military intervention on humanitarian grounds that is primarily for the purpose of protecting economic or geopolitical interests.

United Nations

CSO participation. The UN must strengthen civil society observer and participation rights. One possible opportunity for doing so would be in the context of the follow-up process to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations (also referred to as the “Cardoso Panel”), although not all of the Cardoso recommendations are feasible or desirable. The Cardoso Panel's recommendations on

improving observer and participation rights in the UN General Assembly² and Security Council³ would enhance civil society's contribution to conflict prevention.

Communication. The UN should invest in more training to ensure that field-based personnel and civilians working on conflict prevention activities and those at UN headquarters (HQ) have a mutual understanding of the conflict prevention mechanisms and tools available. Vertical information-sharing within the organization must also be increased. Both of these efforts would improve information flows from CSOs, who now have access at the field level or at UNHQ, but whose inputs are not benefiting the organization as a whole.

Coordination. A single body with overall responsibility for early warning should be designated and provided with a clear mandate and resources, and include mechanisms for CSO involvement. This body would provide for better coordination and processes of managing and disseminating existing information within and outside the UN system, including the direct input of CSOs engaged in early warning. It would issue regular reports on early warning to the UN Secretary General and UN membership, and contribute to the identification of options in response, without having primary responsibility for this role. There would need to be a built-in evaluation and review process to ensure that experience is learned from and built on.

Preventive deployment. The UN must become better prepared for the responsible use of rapid deployment with primacy to the prevention of armed conflict through preventive deployment and the protection of civilians. The UN must quickly develop a militarily credible rapid reaction capability focused on the prevention of armed conflict and the protection of civilians as a standing deterrent, for preventive deployment and as a last resort in reacting to violence in the event that prevention fails.

II. HUMAN SECURITY

A. THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

In the mid-1990's, the Government of Canada embraced the idea of focusing on human security as a deepening of the traditional notion of state security, as proposed in the groundbreaking *Agenda for Peace* and other UN documents. The core elements of the concept include placing the security of people ahead of state interests, and conceptualizing security as involving not just freedom from the threat of physical harm but the fulfillment of basic needs and rights. The Canadian foreign affairs department was said to be 'mainstreaming' the human security approach. Yet despite the importance of this conceptual shift to encompass indispensable components of building a sustainable peace, and the desirability of foreign policy orientation in this direction, the

² See Proposal 6 in "We the Peoples: Civil society, the United Nations and Global Governance: Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations," UN Document A/58/817, presented to the 58th session of the UN General Assembly as Agenda item 59.

³ *Ibid*, Proposal 12.

practical result was a fairly narrow agenda. The global campaigns in which Canada played a lead role, such as landmines, the International Criminal Court, conflict diamonds, and women, peace and security were extremely important (these are discussed further in the following section). They point the way to what is now required: an enlarged and integrated approach to human security as the guiding principle for domestic and foreign policy and practice.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Society Organizations

An enlarged and integrated approach. CSOs must work harder to promote an enlarged and integrated approach to human security as a framework for conflict prevention activity. A commitment to human security should be the basis for decisions about substantive areas upon which to focus conflict prevention activity, including: good governance; the rule of law; economic equity and self-sufficiency; disarmament and demilitarization; peace and conflict resolution education; means of constructive conflict resolution including through dialogue; corporate responsibility; the environment; and human rights, including an emphasis on gender issues and children's rights. At the same time, human security must be about more than identifying issues; CSOs should advocate for human security considerations to inform virtually all policy and practice of governments and inter-governmental bodies.

Educating for Peace. A human security framework for decision-making must be rooted in individual and community values that emphasize the rights, dignity and equality of all persons. Peace and conflict resolution education is one important method of entrenching human security values and contributing to the prevention of violent conflict. Community-based organizations must promote such education in school systems, and CSOs should pursue mandates by ministries of education for appropriate peace and global education at all school levels. Faculties of education should initiate teaching training in peace and global education, using the increasing number of curricula and classroom resources being developed in this field.

Early warning and human security. CSOs can link human security and conflict prevention in the area of early warning. Monitoring indicators of human security, including the provision of basic needs, human rights, physical security and environmental factors and advocating for government responses to observed slippage in these areas, would go a long way towards the entrenchment of a human security approach to conflict prevention. This would also allow for early response in a global environment where reaction, rather than pro-action, remains the norm. This is an area in which a Civilian Peace Service might be the best implementing agency.

Disarmament and demilitarization. The pre-condition for building human security is freedom from fear and an indispensable element of this process is concerted action to combat both the menace of nuclear weapons and the proliferation and misuse of the weapons of violent conflict, particularly small arms and light weapons. With regard to

the former, priority must be given to the urgent need to de-alert the 2,000 warheads currently on 'launch-on-warning' by both the US and Russia. With the regard to the latter, the demonstrated centrality of effective programs for the disarmament, demobilization and social and economic reintegration (DD&R) of former fighters in building a sustainable peace must be translated into programs that are well planned, adequately funded and sufficiently integrated into the broader post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation process. Equally important are community-based programs aimed at reducing the number of weapons among the civilian population in conflict prone societies. Giving priority to the development and implementation of comprehensive "DD&R" programs including, in particular, sufficient resources over time, would provide a key benchmark by which a new Canadian diplomacy of "Three-D plus Civil Society" can be measured/demonstrated.

Canada and Other National Governments

Human security-informed policy and practice. Human security must be a guiding principle for both domestic and international policy. While some level of national resources must be expended on traditional security, and the threat of global terrorism must not be dismissed, law and policy must reflect an understanding that state security and human security are complementary and mutually reinforcing. This approach should inform policy and practice in all areas of governance. As outlined above, an emphasis on certain substantive issues such as structural prevention should result. Moreover, it is essential to forge better synergies between the human security and broader sustainable human development agendas. In Canada this means enhancing coordination between the human security initiatives of Foreign Affairs, the Overseas Development Assistance programming of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the international debt management and macro-economic reform policies led by the Department of Finance, and the international trade policies managed by International Trade Canada.

Regional Organizations and the United Nations

Human security monitoring. Clearer understanding of mandates, responsibilities and capacities needs to be arrived at between regional organizations and the UN, with the UN maintaining a degree of authority to monitor the actions of regional organizations and ensure that effectiveness will not come at the cost of injustice and non-compliance with international law and human security concerns.

Institutionalizing human security. The UN should institute a new high-level and action-oriented specialized mechanism to serve as the principal catalyst for early-stage operational prevention, located in the Secretary-General's office or led by a new Under Secretary-General. This mechanism should interact with an advisory body of civil society leaders distinguished in this field, as well as liaising with CSOs more broadly. Complementary to this would be the transformation of the UN Department of Political Affairs into a Department of Political, Security and Peace Affairs to support the Secretary-General in his/her role as chief peace-maker, negotiator and political

representative of the UN. It would be extremely important for this body to develop mechanisms to coordinate policy and programming with the UN's humanitarian and development agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to ensure that operational and structural prevention initiatives are integrated.

III. NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

A. THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Canadian history has been shaped by the political creed of “peace, order and good government”, which remains anchored in the Constitution. Canada is a parliamentary federation in which sovereignty is divided between central and regional governments, with watertight compartments for the division of powers, independent taxing authority for both orders of government and an equalization program to redistribute revenues among provinces. It has both a free market and a social welfare system. The latter translates into public provision of health care, unemployment insurance, social security and progressive taxation at the national level, as well as provincial programs such as language training for new immigrant and refugee communities, and subsidized housing, education, daycare and public transit. Municipal government reflects a democratic structure and is responsible for the delivery of services such as transportation, drinking water, land use etc. Despite all of this, statistics indicate that about 8% of Canadians are living in poverty.

The Canadian federal experience has been shaped by several forces. One of these is the resurgence in the 1960s of nationalism in the predominantly French-speaking province of Quebec. While tensions between majority English and minority French-speaking citizens remain, Canada has managed the relationship in part through the recognition of French language rights in the Constitution and other national legislation. Quebec has also been recognized as a “distinct society”, and the possibility of a negotiated secession of the province has been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada. A darker aspect of Canada's history lies in its treatment of aboriginal peoples, with its efforts at cultural assimilation resulting in serious abuses whose effects still reverberate strongly today. Recent attempts at federal compensation are important if still problematic, while the negotiation of some land claims settlements and self-government are attempting to correct historical abuses of power by the federal government. Canada is also shaped by increasing ethno-cultural diversity, to which it has historically responded with a ‘vertical mosaic’ philosophy, encouraging the maintenance of identities, and rights protections under both federal and provincial law.

Citizen participation is a central tenet at all levels of government, including citizens from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and the Federal government is experimenting with innovative approaches to strengthen citizen participation in policy processes through the Voluntary Sector Initiative. The use of the Annual Peacebuilding and Human Security Consultations, as well as government-NGO dialogues on specific

country and thematic issues, offer important opportunities for public engagement in international conflict prevention policy processes.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Society Organizations

Good governance. CSOs must work with governments to strengthen institutions and practices for good governance as a key facet of conflict prevention and long-term peacebuilding activities. Appropriate governance models will be region and nation-specific, but should include the entrenchment of free and fair elections, accountability, transparency, citizen participation, respect for diversity, the impartial application of law, management of tensions through constructive dialogue, and the provision of basic services in an equitable manner. This must include all levels of government and incorporate a strategy to build awareness that institution-building and developing processes for citizen participation require long-term commitments. CSOs can contribute to citizenship education through building awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills in participatory governance.

Canadian CSOs should make a greater effort to utilize the Annual Peacebuilding and Human Security Consultations, and other channels of dialogue, to engage in the definition, assessment and improvement of Canadian conflict prevention policies and practice.

Economic and social policy. Recognizing that many violent conflicts occur in the context of unequal access to economic and social power and resources, CSOs must promote concrete measures to overcome the economic and social disenfranchisement of particular communities or groups. Given the role of natural resource revenues in conflict, they must also look for ways to increase the transparency of natural resource revenue management to prevent market capture by rebel organizations, and undemocratic use on military expenditures by governments. It is important for CSOs to enhance the connections between this policy advocacy and their work in the field. This requires greater effort in two areas: first, linking local-level conflict prevention projects to national-level policy initiatives in conflict-affected societies; second, sharing lessons-learned from community-based conflict prevention efforts with other agencies that are grappling with the challenge of fostering stronger macro-linkages.

Modeling behaviour. CSOs have an obligation to lead by example by examining critically how their own policies, practices or programs could contribute to violent conflict. International CSOs must work closely with national and local groups in this regard, engaging in participatory, inclusive and just processes for planning, decision making and evaluating programs with their local counterparts.

Canada and Other National Governments

Local participation and capacity-building. Recognition of the critical role of local civil society actors and municipal governments in conflict prevention and peacebuilding must be manifest in national policy and practice. This could include utilizing institutions such as village councils and municipal governments as focal points for input; ensuring that local stakeholders, including traditionally marginalized actors such as women's formal and informal networks, are brought into consultation processes; and strengthening local capacities to allow greater citizen participation and engagement in oversight of budget management and the delivery of services.

Respect for diversity. All governments must commit to non-discrimination and the effective participation of all citizens and domestic civil society groups in government decision-making and economic activity. Respect for diversity must be entrenched in national constitutions, including devolution that empowers traditionally disenfranchised groups and regions, and provides guarantees to end discrimination and injustice. Governments must work with CSOs to strengthen economic and social policy that helps compensate for the impact of disenfranchisement as a central component of conflict prevention. Governments with recent experience in passing and enforcing legislation for the accommodation of diversity should share this experience with other orders of government domestically and with governments in other countries.

National governance and dialogue. Many governments have recognized that the consolidation of effective public institutions is critical to the prevention of armed conflict. Canada can support emerging commitments to good governance through diplomatic channels, and through enhanced technical assistance programs covering the political, judicial, economic and social dimensions of governance where we have valuable experience. The Canadian government should also promote good governance through continued innovation at home, for example by providing more predictable funding to government-NGO dialogues, and by engaging in those dialogues at a more senior level and in a more continuous manner.

Regional Organizations and the United Nations

Impact of programming on conflicts. Inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities can promote or inflame violent conflict. Regional organizations, the United Nations, and indeed all international actors, must ensure that development programs adequately address the concerns of marginalized communities and groups. Development assistance must also be made more effective and efficient by identifying areas where resources can have the largest structural impact, through distributive justice, encouraging the rule of law, protecting fundamental human rights, and fostering the growth of democratic institutions. Seeking the input of a diversity of local actors and involving them at all levels of development programming will help ensure that development contributes to the prevention of violent conflict.

Local and national capacities. Regional and multilateral organizations should work to build local and national conflict management capacities through training, funding, and assistance with institutional reform. This should focus on institutions such as elected and traditional authorities, the judiciary, the police, and correctional services (prisons and community corrections). Local and national civil society actors must be included both as contributors to and beneficiaries of such programs.

Promotion of national dialogues capacities. Several international organizations, including the UN and the Organization of American States, are developing technical assistance programs to help national governments strengthen their public dialogue and engagement capacities. These are important initiatives but they must all be carefully monitored to ensure they strengthen rather than displace national mechanisms such as legislatures.

IV. INTERNATIONAL LAW AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

A. THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Canada has been a strong advocate and supporter of multilateral institutions, in particular the United Nations, insisting on the primacy of international law embodied in the UN Charter. With regard to regional bodies, Canada's reputation as 'peacekeeper/peacemaker' and its middle power status have allowed for an important role. For example, in the Organization of American States, Canada can claim some credit for defusing some of the traditional tensions between the United States and Latin American countries, as well as serving as a bridge with Caribbean countries due to its historical relationship with the English-speaking Caribbean and Haiti.

Canada has also played a lead role in the advancement of international law through a number of global initiatives rooted in the human security approach. These have included the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines, the creation of the International Criminal Court, the child soldiers campaign, the movement to ban 'conflict diamonds' and the passage of a Security Council resolution on women, peace and security. Canada has also worked to promote the ratification and implementation of international conventions, particularly in the area of international criminal law, and has assisted with the establishment of the ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Society Organizations

Meaningful and coordinated input. In the bid to increase CSO access to inter-governmental bodies and improve the quality of input, civil society must develop a good understanding of the processes and structures of each organization and clearly define its policy input. Exchange of information about activities and plans with other CSOs is

essential to increase transparency within the community and prepare the ground for joint action. Consultation with governments must begin at an early stage, including ensuring that CSOs have a hand in developing agenda items before they are circulated to government officials.

Learning from experience. In considering when and how to partner with governments and inter-governmental bodies, CSOs should consider the lessons learned from previous successful partnerships. These lessons include, among others: the need to define the issue clearly and develop a message that resonates as part of the humanitarian discourse; the desirability of creating a network of 'like-minded' governments; the importance of focusing efforts on the regional and national levels; the effectiveness of non-coercive tactics such as persuasion, communication, negotiation and organization; and the desirability of working within a coalition framework despite disagreement on particular issues.

Modeling behaviour. CSOs must lead by example in their respect for international human rights and humanitarian law, and the incorporation of a human security approach that places the rights and needs of people at the core.

Canada and Other National Governments

Adherence to international law. National governments, including the Government of Canada, must insist on adherence to international law in a variety of ways. These include through its positions on matters before the UN Security Council and General Assembly and through its bilateral relations. A human security approach to promoting international law must ensure that violations that put the basic needs and rights of individuals in jeopardy are not overlooked in the interest of catering to national economic and political interests or appeasing transnational corporations. Local and international civil society actors have important information and perspectives to contribute on the record of countries and companies in adhering to international law, and the nexus between violations of law and violent conflict.

Interpretation of international law. The effectiveness of international law in contributing to conflict prevention depends in large measure on the use of expansive rather than restrictive interpretations of the law, for example with regard to the jurisdiction and the definitions of crimes by international tribunals and the International Criminal Court. A continued emphasis on the development of a variety of national and international legal mechanisms is important, such as the efforts to incorporate universal jurisdiction provisions into domestic law. The equitable application of international law is equally important. Governments must work closely with CSOs on such initiatives.

Regional Organizations and the United Nations

Regulation of transnational corporations. Inter-governmental bodies should work with CSOs to develop and strengthen principles to regulate transnational corporations, in particular in terms of their impact on conflict. A dramatically improved Global

Compact and more structured self-policing mechanisms such as the “Kimberley process” (aimed at regulating the diamond trade to reduce the potential for the use of diamond proceeds to fuel conflict) are important steps, but are not sufficiently comprehensive or backed by enforceable international law to prevent transnational corporations from contributing to the causes of violent conflict.

Submitting to international jurisdictions. All nations should remove any reservations to the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and non-compliance should be grounds for suspension of UN membership. All governments should also implement the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) into domestic law. These laws should then be used to cooperate with the ICC, extradite suspects to an appropriate jurisdiction and initiate prosecutions at the national level as required to ensure that justice is served.

Economic and social global governance reform. The fragmentation and lack of coordination and coherence of international institutions and programs to regulate international trade, finance and promote economic development is a longstanding problem that needs to be addressed. The reform of economic and social global governance institutions and processes must involve closer integration within the UN system.

CSO involvement. Regional organizations must develop single, cross-organization strategies for public and CSO involvement, including accreditation, participation in meetings, and involvement in the regular activities of the organization. Mechanisms must allow CSO input to be fed directly into decision-making processes, and information must be readily available as to how CSOs can access and contribute to the work of the organization.

ANNEX A

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Canadian Action Agenda endorses the “Guiding Principles” adopted at the European Conference on “The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict” which took place from March 31 – April 2, 2004 in Dublin⁴. These are reproduced in italics below. The text which follows the Dublin principles is the Canadian perspective.

1. Shift to Prevention. *Promoting peace and security in the 21st century requires a fundamental shift in how we respond to the challenge of violent conflict. Our priority is to prevent it from occurring and, thereby, to avoid the massive human and economic cost of war. We believe that CSOs can have a major impact in bringing about this shift away from ‘reaction’ to ‘prevention’ and overall transformation.*

While Chapter VI of the UN Charter provides a strong mandate for preventing violent conflict, collective security has been pursued largely by reacting to crises rather than by preventing them. Instead of only reacting to crises, when it is often too late to act effectively without the use of force, we should focus on addressing the root causes of conflict and the factors that enable them to become deadly. Non-military prevention activity will obviate the need for the deployment of force. Whilst there is no single reason why violent conflicts erupt, experience demonstrates that most wars are fought in countries that have a poor development record and a weak system of governance.

Efforts to prevent violent conflict necessitate strengthening systems for peacefully managing competing interests, challenging the abuse of state power, upholding human rights, promoting humanitarian values and directing resources to fulfil basic human needs. We see some of the strategies deployed in the ‘War on Terror’ as counter-productive because, by further entrenching cycles of violence, they risk being ultimately self-defeating. The ‘War on Terror’ can also be used as a cloak under which CSO actors, including those who promote human rights, are targeted.

It is important to be very cautious about how prevention is cast. Non-military and non-violent prevention options must be prioritized, as even the ‘War on Terror’ and Ballistic Missile Defence programs are described in prevention terms in some circles.

2. Building a ‘Culture of Prevention’ and ‘Culture of Peace’. *The key to fostering sustainable peace and security over the longer term is to generate a ‘culture of prevention’ and ‘culture of peace’ from the bottom-up as well as from the top-down. This will require governments and IGOs to mainstream conflict prevention and constructive conflict management as fundamental goals of their security institutions and instruments, as well as of their other policies and programmes. To do so successfully they will need to look beyond short-term considerations, ensure a re-orientation towards preparedness for prevention and address basic human needs and human rights. Historically, the emphasis*

⁴ The Dublin action agenda is available at www.conflict-prevention.net

has been on strengthening the institutional capacity for military response. The emphasis now needs to be on strengthening the institutional capacity for non-violent civilian response.

Efforts to generate a sustainable culture of peace should be rooted deeply in the population. A holistic and pluralistic approach is required. Education for peace is a fundamental element of this transformation. Special attention should be paid to providing everyone - and the young in particular - with conflict resolution life skills. Context is critical, and education in divided communities should be culturally sensitive. People of all ages have to be empowered to become agents of change to address conflicts from the grassroots. As their knowledge about prevention of violence and of conflict transformation grows, it should become entrenched in the mainstream consciousness.

In addition to an emphasis on life skills training, peace education involves teaching human values, such as the equality of all people in dignity and rights. The role of peace journalism, opinion leaders and the media must receive special attention, with local political support in creating a culture of peace one of the primary goals. The securing of the human right to peace is a long-term endeavour, requiring investment over time. Our ultimate goal is a world in which all human beings are motivated by a humanistic spirit and take responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour towards others. This requires personal and cultural transformation as a central strategy for creating a peaceful world, starting with ourselves and our organizations.

3. Security for People, as well as for States: Human Security. *As CSOs committed to conflict prevention, we affirm the essential value of the human security paradigm. We are committed to promoting the security of people: their physical safety, their socio-economic well-being, respect for their dignity and identity as individuals and as members of communities, and the protection and promotion of their rights and fundamental freedoms. We acknowledge the particular role played by women in promoting this concept. We are especially concerned to protect vulnerable and disadvantaged groups as well as those experiencing discrimination. We affirm that the security of people is as important as the security of states. We believe that each has the potential to be mutually reinforcing.*

Human security must be understood as a broad and inclusive framework for understanding world affairs. Its potential as an analytical paradigm has not been developed, by governments, civil society or international organizations. Human security reinforces our sense of common humanity and “common security,” recognizing that no one is secure unless we are all secure. Children and their rights are a priority area in the implementation of human security principles.

4. Responsibility to Prevent and Protect. *We share the view of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which concluded that the international community has a responsibility to act decisively when states are unwilling or unable to fulfil their basic responsibilities to their citizens. We welcome the*

Commission's call to "all members of the community of nations, together with non-governmental actors and citizens of states, to embrace the idea of the responsibility to protect as a basic element in the code of global citizenship, for states and peoples, in the 21st century".⁵ This responsibility must be fulfilled with extreme care and only pursued in accordance with clearly defined criteria, as articulated by the Commission. It does not mean a free license for military intervention. CSOs can play a vitally important role in non-military protection, as well as in prevention and peacebuilding. We welcome the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict, including the EU's commitment to consider appointing a Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict.

The Responsibility to Protect includes the responsibilities to prevent, react and rebuild. Prevention is the most important element, and must be truly prioritized by those seeking to promote this agenda. At the same time, methods and mechanisms for peacebuilding must be considered at an early stage of any response to an emerging crisis. The duty to prosecute and to condemn those undermining human security is a critical aspect of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

5. Multilateralism. *Fulfilling an expanded vision of human security can only be achieved on the basis of a truly co-operative endeavour. Major global problems can only be addressed effectively through the co-ordinated efforts and policies developed collectively through multilateral fora - above all through the UN - and not on the basis of unilateral action. This approach is one built on the principle that international norms and standards should apply to all and be complied with by all. We call on our governments to fulfil their commitments and to demand the consistent adherence to these standards by all countries. This will counter the destabilising effects of unilateral action. An effective system for conflict prevention, therefore, should be undertaken within a strong multilateral framework that includes co-ordinated and systematic responses. We believe that CSOs have an important role to play in an expanded conception of multilateralism.*

Efforts to highlight the need for multilateral mechanisms to secure the peace (including to address global terrorism) must underline the primacy of the United Nations, while working towards a strengthened and reformed institution. We must also look to regional and national mechanisms as essential actors in conflict prevention.

6. A New Partnership for Prevention between Civil Society, Governments and IGOs. *Effective conflict prevention requires the creation of collaborative, strategic partnerships for prevention at the national, regional and international level. CSOs can undertake initiatives that government officials cannot and are well placed to mobilise wider societal support for prevention. The effectiveness of this partnership hinges on official acknowledgement of the legitimacy of CSOs that are representative and accountable in peace and security matters; recognition of their roles in the conflict prevention partnership; and mechanisms and resources to fulfil their potential*

⁵ 'Responsibility to Protect', International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canadian Government, para 8.33. Found at: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/iciss-ciise/report2-en.asp>.

operationally. This new partnership will serve to affirm and build on the principle identified in UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Report on "The Prevention of Armed Conflict", where he recognised that conflict prevention cannot happen without civil society involvement.

In order to participate as equal partners in conflict prevention, the participation rights of CSOs in national, regional and international fora, and the need for well-defined concepts and frameworks for partnering at home and abroad must be given appropriate attention. The principle of subsidiarity is important ie. that prevention must occur at the "lowest" level possible.

7. Primacy of Local Ownership. *Primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with local actors: a key role belongs to those local CSOs that directly represent the conflict-affected populations. Governments must live up to their responsibilities to protect, to prevent violent conflict and to build a culture of peace. For prevention to be sustainable, the people must feel that the process is 'theirs' and that it is not externally imposed. Generally, initiatives should be internally generated and externally supported in order to build on existing capacities. The international community – foreign governments, multilateral institutions, and international NGOs – should create spaces and support inclusive processes that enable people directly involved to build their own capacity and to make decisions on ways to resolve violent conflict. As a general rule, 'outsiders' should avoid displacing local initiatives. Where democratic institutions do not already exist, the international community should encourage their creation. It should also promote the inclusion in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes of all relevant groups – particularly women, youth and minority groups – which are often excluded.*

In addition to women, youth and minority groups, the poor are also often excluded from prevention and peacebuilding processes. Built into grassroots ownership of such processes should be recognition of the need for the protection of the safety of participants – "safe spaces" and mechanisms for the protection of human rights at the community level.

8. Inclusion and Equality. *A failure to ensure effective political participation is often one of the root causes of conflict because those who feel excluded invariably try to defend their interests through other means, sometimes through violence. One of the difficult challenges for preventing or resolving violent conflict is to generate sufficient confidence and establish specifically agreed arrangements to ensure that this exclusion is addressed and does not repeat itself. The will of the people can only be truly represented if there are effective mechanisms for genuine public participation by the different elements that comprise that society. To promote human security, governments, international agencies, and CSOs must ensure that their actions actively promote gender equality, and include people from diverse political, ethnic, religious, cultural, socio-economic and other minority backgrounds in processes that promote social justice. This is particularly relevant to immigrant and diaspora communities in the European context. We strongly support UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security that specifically addresses the impact of war on women,*

and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. We call on relevant decision-makers and agencies to resource its full and consistent implementation.

Sexual orientation and gender identity should be included in the list of “minority backgrounds” that must be respected to achieve human security. The balance of power within groups, not just between groups, must also be considered.

9. Learning from Practice and Accountability. *To become more effective in our work, we need to reflect upon and examine the lessons we are learning from that work, and how we are learning them. We must aim to be reflective practitioners: cognisant of our role, mandate, and contribution at every stage. There are various approaches and methodologies to guide us in this task. Monitoring and evaluating our own activities is, however, just a starting point for a more generalized learning. A significant body of knowledge on best practices in the field of conflict prevention can only be assembled if practitioners understand that they have a responsibility to pass on the knowledge they gain to those who are likely to face similar challenges in the future. This task is an essential aspect of developing the accountability, not only of CSOs, but also of governmental and inter-governmental institutions, and of the field as a whole. It will also be a vital component of developing effective and accountable partnerships for prevention involving CSOs, governments and IGOs.*

The development of organizations or organizational mandates to coordinate and support the activities of national and international CSOs working on conflict prevention activities would be valuable. Solid program planning and the institution of evaluation processes prior to beginning a project are important to project effectiveness.

10. Sustainability. *All the points mentioned above will combine to produce an integrated, holistic and more sustainable approach towards conflict prevention. Without a culture shift towards prevention over the longer term, security for the people, true multilateralism and new partnerships, local ownership and inclusion of people from different backgrounds, no conflict prevention effort can be sustainable. The obstacles to achieving this sustainability should not be underestimated and will necessitate persistent effort on the part of CSOs, as well as their partners in governments and multilateral institutions. Traditionally, CSOs have a long-term perspective towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. They, in turn, require increased funding to enhance their sustainability.*

The challenge is to achieve sustainable peace in a context that is characterised by a lack of conflict sensitivity by a range of actors, passively condoned or actively promoted by governments and IGOs. Some areas of trade policy and investment promotion are major obstacles to the goal of preventing violent conflict, for example. This lack of policy coherence undermines some governments' and IGOs' own objectives for sustainable development and peace. Therefore CSOs need to ensure that advocacy for social and economic justice is at the core of our own work for sustainable peace. In addition, governments and IGOs need to involve CSOs in designing broader policy frameworks on

trade, security and development that are strategically coherent with peacebuilding objectives.

Sustainability depends to a great extent on the meaningful involvement of local actors from the beginning of any endeavour that will affect their future. Also crucial to sustainability is the need to have effective evaluation processes in place before projects begin.

The Canadian Action Agenda includes the following additional principles:

Structural Prevention. Preventing conflict requires addressing structural conflict and the root causes of violence: economic, social and political. Active support of human democratic development and the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals are of paramount importance to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Addressing structural injustice must be at the core of work for sustainable peace and the prevention of conflict.

Delegitimization of War. One of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and to take effective *collective* measures for the removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace. The UN Charter requires that all Member states refrain from the threat or use of force against other states and imposes upon them a duty to settle their international disputes by peaceful means. The use of armed force by one state against the territorial integrity or political independence of another is therefore a fundamental breach of international law unless it is duly authorized by the UN Security Council or it falls within the inherent right of self-defence as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. A doctrine of “pre-emptive self-defence” does not exist in international law. Such action constitutes illegal aggression, the most serious and dangerous form of the illegal use of force.

All sectors of international society (international organizations, governments, the business sector and civil society) have a duty to abide by and promote agreed fundamental international human rights which have as their purpose the prevention of armed conflict, to adhere to basic rules of international law designed to manage, limit and mitigate conflict, and to rely on legal processes to resolve disputes that cannot be resolved through bilateral or multilateral negotiation.

ANNEX B

BACKGROUND TO CANADIAN ACTION AGENDA

In June 2001, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called for the 'mainstreaming' of conflict prevention within the UN system, urging international and regional organizations to work more closely with civil society. The underlying premise of the Secretary General's statement was that conflict prevention can only be successful if it rests on the coordination of activities between the UN, regional organizations, states and civil society organizations (CSOs), capitalizing on the expertise and skill of each.

In response to this call for more concerted action, in 2001 the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) initiated a global strategy of research, dialogue and consultation, collaborating with both regional and international partners. As part of this process, a number of regional conferences are being held worldwide and will culminate in a major international conference at UN headquarters in 2005. The objective is to increase the effectiveness of conflict prevention by improving coordination and interaction among CSOs, the UN, regional organizations and governments.

In order to contribute to the global process, as well as to build civil society conflict prevention capacity within Canada, the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC) and its Conflict Prevention Working Group established a Canadian Conflict Prevention Initiative (CCPI). The activities of the CCPI include: network building; policy dialogue; research; training; and outreach.

An important first step was to identify Canadian individuals and organizations involved in conflict prevention, and their interests and needs. The CCPI therefore undertook a survey for these purposes, as well as to begin to define the unique Canadian perspective on conflict prevention. Conducted from July to September 2003 through email and telephone interviews, the survey culminated in a final report that was distributed widely in Canada and presented to a Canadian government and civil society audience in October 2003.

The CCPI then organized a meeting of conflict prevention professionals from Canada, with the involvement of experts from Latin America, the United States and Europe. The meeting helped to identify the unique areas in which a Canadian voice could contribute to the dialogue on global partnerships for conflict prevention. In October 2004, a second meeting was held for the purposes of obtaining input on key issues and recommendations to include in a Canadian Action Agenda on conflict prevention. A background document, surveying some of the ideas proposed by Canadian academics and NGOs, was used as a basis for the discussions. The draft that resulted from these meetings was distributed widely within Canada for feedback. The final document will be used as the basis for Canadian input into North American and Hemispheric meetings on conflict prevention in Ottawa on December 9-10, 2004 and thus the global process, and can also be used as a tool for Canadian conflict prevention practitioners.