

## Helping Prevent Violent Conflict

### Introduction

Widespread violent conflict has a destructive impact on development and well-being and has forced the international community to take a closer look at conflict prevention and peace-building. Human suffering, civilian casualties, and population displacement are only some of the consequences of wars and conflicts. Their impact on production, livelihoods and infrastructures damages the economy, the environment, and the legitimacy of the state, often undoing decades of positive development efforts.

Violent conflicts have caused over 5 million casualties since the end of the Cold War; 95% of these were civilians. More than two thirds of the poorest countries of the world are in conflict. About half of the affected countries from 1980-1994 were in Africa (See the OECD's *Development Co-operation Report*, 2001, Chapter V).

Conflict also contributes to unsustainable debt. About 35 highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) could ultimately qualify for debt relief under the G7 countries' original and enhanced HIPC initiatives, but roughly a dozen of them – mostly in sub-Saharan Africa – have yet to qualify because they have been affected by conflict or have suffered from governance problems that foreclosed the possibility of effective debt write-offs (See the OECD's *Development Co-operation Report*, 2001, Chapter V).

The OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) Guidelines on *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* are based on 7 years of work in the DAC Network on Conflict Peace and Development Cooperation among policy makers and experts in this field. The guidelines offer policy guidance and stress some fundamentals for preventing violent conflict through efforts to:

- integrate a conflict prevention "lens" and create a "culture of prevention" in all government branches, i.e., development co-operation programmes, foreign policy action, trade policies, defence, etc.
- take account of the political economy of war, such as corruption, criminality, and powerful groups and individuals with vested interests in sparking and perpetuating violent conflicts.
- address the need to help developing countries build legitimate and accountable security systems, as an integral part of governance and public sector management.
- recognise the potential, but also the limits of the international community's influence over violent conflict situations, and use constructive engagement to promote peace and discourage violence.

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### Box 1: Impact assessments and prevention

When conflict risk and vulnerability analysis and impact assessments demonstrate that a country is in acute danger of severe conflict, concentrating external actions in the following areas seems to produce positive results. Some of these actions involve development co-operation. Many require coherence across governments.

The DAC *Latin America Consultation on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation*, raised the following points related to prevention:

- External actors are better able to engage constructively and help prevent violence when they know and analyse the ways in which the conflict is transforming.
- Conflict is a normal part of societal transformation. Maintaining legitimate space for opposition and protest can keep societies from resorting to violence. Conflicting tendencies in societies should not be suppressed.
- Dissemination of information on humanitarian law and human rights norms, and how they relate to local traditional value systems, may help groups establish creative measures to reduce brutality and increase the accountability of all warring parties. As shown by the case of Chiapas, promoting a cultural resistance to violence can contribute to humanising war and dissuade many people from resorting to violence.
- Promoting citizenship and a culture of peace and social cohesion is an investment in prevention. This can be done through formal and informal education at all levels.
- Criminalisation, corruption, and the emergence of economies which breed violence cause “human security” problems and eventually threaten state security. Providing expanded development alternatives might curb these tendencies.

Illegal economic activities and illegal trade routes often sustain and transform conflict. For example, the link between violent conflict and drug trafficking in Colombia has been a formidable complicating factor in negotiating political peace. These illegal activities can be prevented in part by disseminating information on consequences of national and international legal norms and punitive measures.

Source: DAC Latin America Consultation on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation, 2000.

- help societies grapple with the challenges of justice and reconciliation, and support peace processes that include women and marginalised groups.
- support regional co-operation and consultation to address the regional dimensions of conflict and strengthen regional approaches and response capacities.
- encourage partnership with civil society. A relatively neglected area is the role of business – domestic and international. Business can make positive economic and social contributions to preventing violence and avoiding actions that feed it.
- enhance donor co-ordination to improve prevention initiatives and responses to violent conflict situations.

*Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* presents the full range of DAC guidance on conflict prevention in one volume. Part I, *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientations for External Partners*, includes the 2001 Ministerial Statement and Supplement. Part II, *Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Thresh-*

*old of the 21st Century* comprises the first groundbreaking policy statement and guidelines from 1997. Development Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials responsible for development co-operation met at their annual High-Level Meeting in April 2001 and reaffirmed their commitment to conflict prevention as central for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Both sets of guidance were recognised as important for enhancing the role of development co-operation for conflict prevention and peace-building by the G8, at the Summit in Denver in 1997 and at the Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Rome in 2001.

This *Policy Brief* presents the main conclusions of the extensive work, since 1995, to develop guidance on conflict prevention and address the deepening interest in conflict-related development assistance. This guidance can be used to help donors in their work with countries involved in conflict and with their government counterparts in other ministries. It can also lend support to the international community as it strives to co-ordinate aid and assistance, and provide guidance to partners in developing country

governments, civil society organisations and business. The ways in which development strategies may also be applicable to preventing some forms of terrorism will be explored through DAC work in 2002 and 2003. ■

## Why is conflict prevention central?

Violent conflict and its ruinous impact on people's lives demands that the development co-operation community renew its commitment to peace and prevention. To prevent violent conflict, societies must build voluntary co-operation that results in peaceful co-existence among diverse communities within and between nations. Conflict prevention<sup>1</sup> is central to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Development agencies now accept the need to work in and on conflicts rather than around them, and make peace-building the main focus when dealing with conflict situations.<sup>2</sup> This is a significant step toward long-term engagement and away from an earlier short-term concentration on post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts.

To work effectively toward peace, development agencies need to work alongside partners in developing countries before, during and after conflict. Promoting peace-building and conflict prevention require that donor agencies work with other relevant branches of their governments and other actors in the international community. With a "culture of prevention" and in-depth analysis, such as peace and conflict impact assessments and scenario building, donors can work better together to achieve sustainable peace. Policies also need to be clear, coherent, comprehensive and co-ordinated in order to improve effectiveness in conflict prevention and management. Relevant policy areas involve trade, finance and investment, foreign affairs, defence, and development co-operation. Responding to this imperative, development agencies are accepting the risks of moving more deeply into this sensitive political terrain.

Economic well-being, social development and environmental sustainability and regeneration are major goals of development co-operation that require structural stability. Structural stability<sup>3</sup> embraces the mutually reinforcing goals of social peace, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and social and economic development. It is supported by dynamic and representative political structures, including accountable security systems capable of managing change and resolving disputes through peaceful means. ■

## How to work effectively towards peace

Experience and research point to some basic principles for preventing conflict. These principles call on the external actors in general and the development community in particular to:

- Recognise the potential — and limits — of the international community to take actions that favour peace and discourage violence.
- Use constructive engagement and creative approaches that provide incentives to peace.
- Act on the costly lessons learned on the importance of consistent, coherent policies and comprehensive tools in order to do maximum good and avoid unintended harm.
- Be transparent, communicate intentions, and widen and deepen dialogue with partners at all levels in order to ensure ownership.
- Actively engage women, men and youth in peace-building and policy-making processes. All actors need to take better account of the pervasive linkages between gender differences and violent conflicts and their prevention and resolution.
- Work in a flexible and timely manner, guided by long-term perspectives and political and socio-economic analyses (see Boxes 1 and 2) of regional, national and local situations, even for short-term actions.
- Reinforce local capacities to influence public policy, and tackle social and political exclusion. ■

1. "Conflict prevention" means the prevention of violent disputes, controversies and conflict. It includes the notion of long-term engagement, not only short-term response. Non-violent conflict is a normal part of society. What has to be prevented is the use of large-scale violence to address or resolve conflict as well as activities that can destabilise and lead to collective violence.

2. When development agencies working in crisis or in pre-war situations circumvent conflict-related issues they are, in the terms of the guidelines, "working around conflict". When they modify their programmes and make efforts to recognise the conflict they are "working in the conflict". When there is an attempt to proactively prevent, mitigate or resolve the conflict(s) this is "working on the conflict".

3. Defined in the 1997 guidelines found in *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict, Part II, Box 1, "Terms and time-frames"*. Structural stability requires voluntary co-operation between individuals and groups in a society and between communities based on their belief that the benefits of co-operating outweigh the costs entailed.

### Box 2. A strategic framework for assistance: an illustrative checklist<sup>(1)</sup>

A strategic framework articulates the rationale for the programme of relief assistance and recovery. It defines the underlying political, economic and social determinants and provides the context and the logic for a rational allocation of resources devoted to relief, reconstruction and development. Strategic frameworks are both a consensus-building process and a product, and are elaborated in consultation with the government, and other local actors, major bilateral donors and IFIs. It should seek to answer the following questions:

#### Situation analysis

- What is the prevailing political, economic, social and security environment?
- What are the implications of recent developments, for example the return of a large number of displaced people?
- What is the government's response to these events, in terms of policy, governance, institutions and economic management?
- What are the macroeconomic parameters?
- What domestic and external financial resources are available?

#### Risk assessment

- Can political arrangements that withstand the tensions and stresses of accommodation be reached?
- Can security conditions create an adequate environment to begin reconstruction?
- Can external assistance help overcome the legacy of violent conflict and set in motion a process leading to a more just, humane and productive society?

#### Programme response

- What are the programme goals, immediate and long-term objectives?

- What are the principal programme components aiming at conflict resolution, reconciliation and recovery that need external support (e.g. reintegration and reconstruction, capacity-building, governance and judicial systems)?
- Is there a road-map for reaching those goals (including a transitional "safety net" covering basic needs for food, water, shelter and medicine provision of basic health, education and other social services and infrastructure; support for a return to productive work and sustainable livelihoods; strengthening of indigenous community-based management and administrative systems)?
- Is there a gender strategy available or being prepared on major thematic programmes such as security sector reform, national reconciliation, institution-building?
- How is the available budget apportioned between the above objectives?

#### Requirements for success

- Where are the critical requirements for successful programme implementation?
- What is the capacity of local groups and communities to identify and deal with their needs?
- Has specific attention been given to the role women can play in reconciliation and reconstruction?
- Is effective co-ordination among national and international actors in place?
- How can short vs. long-term needs be reconciled and dependency avoided?
- Have exit arrangements been formulated for all forms of direct support?
- Are resources available to cover recurrent costs?

1. Strategic frameworks for assistance have tended to focus on countries recovering from crisis and conflict. Similar approaches in cases of conflict prevention are not well developed.

## Engaging long term and using a conflict prevention "lens"

"Moving upstream" to help prevent violent conflict at its source is a shared goal of the development cooperation community, and the international community at large. Donors are learning to apply a conflict prevention "lens" to policies in many areas to make them coherent and comprehensive. The "lens" is a metaphor for looking at how conflict prevention can

be incorporated into all arenas of policy, and all arenas of government e.g. from development to trade, investment, commerce, defence and foreign policy. This can also be referred to as building a culture of prevention. Concrete actions such as analysing and monitoring developments in conflict-prone situations are steps toward detecting and curbing conflict early on. Growing evidence suggests that early preventive action that works is far less costly than coming in later to stop violence and repair damage.<sup>4</sup> Working with a

human rights focus as part of a conflict prevention lens is important and helps minimise potential negative side effects of development co-operation and other external partners<sup>5</sup> in conflict situations.<sup>6</sup>

Donors recognise that all aid can influence conflict situations and create incentives or disincentives for peace. They are taking steps to better understand, monitor and foresee how development programmes affect divided societies by dealing with peace-building both at the national/regional and project level. In looking at the national level, donors address democracy, security and better governance as major issues. To do so, they need to:

- Disentangle and analyse factors of grievance and greed at play as conflict situations evolve.
- Devise appropriate ways to evaluate, monitor and assess their action and its impact in close collaboration with developing country partners, particularly since this type of development co-operation work does not always fit a general framework for "results-based management".
- Extend this concern for the impact of aid on conflict to the design of policies aimed at macroeconomic stability and structural adjustment in order to encourage growth in incomes, employment and public services.
- Target assistance to help strengthen democratic systems toward the structural stability that allows for the non-violent resolution of conflicts, taking account of the distribution and the transfer of power, as well as the protection and inclusion of minorities and marginalised groups.
- Recognise how important it is for countries to form political parties and support this step as part of a democratic process and as a way to promote the transformation from violent conflict to peace. The

perspective of democratic, inclusive governance is an important aspect of this dynamic process.

- Maximise opportunities to help strengthen state capacity to respond appropriately to conflict, including support to a range of state functions and activities as well as partnerships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).
- Promote multiculturalism and pluralism by reinforcing activities that have a high degree of cross-ethnic group involvement and support partners working toward this goal.

Setting up monitoring and evaluation systems presents a challenge in these complex new areas of development co-operation. Sharing results, establishing benchmarks and evaluating lessons are vital to improving approaches and co-ordination.

The OECD is currently looking at ways to support development agencies (and other parts of government) in their efforts to integrate conflict prevention strategies into their programmes and policies, in particular in fragile situations or conflict-prone, crisis regions. ■

## Ensuring peace through security

Security, including "human security", is a critical foundation for sustainable development.<sup>7</sup> This implies protection from human rights abuses, physical threats, violence and extreme economic, social and environmental risks, and territorial and sovereignty threats. It is a primary pre-condition and goal for poor people to make lasting improvements in their lives. The *DAC Guidelines on Poverty Reduction*, and consultations with the poor in all regions, have underlined how critical basic security is for poor people.<sup>8</sup>

Poverty and insecurity systematically reinforce each other. The requirement for security (see Box 3) in this

4. As one illustration, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict estimated in 1999 that if effective preventive measures had been taken in nine countries affected by conflict or in possible conflict situations in the 1990s, OECD countries alone could have saved more than US\$ 160 billion. This does not account for the incalculable human costs to those countries in conflict (Michael E. Brown and Richard N. Rosecrance (eds.), *The Costs of Conflict*, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 1999, page 225).

5. "External partners" refers to any actor, government or non-governmental (NGO), or any multilateral institution, development bank, bilateral aid agency, or private sector representative that has a legitimate partnership with the developing country in question. In this context, it also indicates that different OECD government ministries or departments, not just their development agencies, can have a role to play.

6. This includes: working with international refugee law; international humanitarian and human rights law and conventions including the convention on the rights of the child; and the convention on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

7. *Helpin Prevent Violent Conflict, Part I, Chapter III, "Security and Development"*, addresses security reform processes, one key aspect of providing human security, but does not discuss the security, sustainable development and human security linkages at any length.

8. See, for example, *Voices of the Poor*, World Bank, Oxford University Press, 2000.



### Box 3: Security-related definitions

“Security ” is increasingly viewed as an all-encompassing condition in which people and communities live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being. Underpinning this broader understanding is a recognition that the security of people and the security of states are mutually reinforcing. It follows that a wide range of state institutions and other entities may be responsible for ensuring some aspect of security. This understanding of security is consistent with the broad notion of human security promoted by the United Nations Development Programme and widely used by development actors.

The “Security sector ” includes security forces and the relevant civilian bodies and processes needed to manage them and encompasses: state institutions which have a formal mandate to ensure the safety of the state and its citizens against acts of violence and coercion (e.g. the armed forces, the police and paramilitary forces, the intelligence services and similar bodies; judicial and penal institutions; and the elected and duly appointed civil authorities responsible for control and oversight (e.g. Parliament, the Executive, the Defence Ministry, etc.).

“Security sector reform” is the transformation of the “security system” which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions, so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework.

*Source:* “Security Issues and Development Co-operation: A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Policy Coherence”, *The DAC Journal*, Vol.2, No.3.

context has to go beyond the classic requisites of defence from military attack and extend to the well-being and the protection of persons and property. Actors in international, national and local government and civil society have thus come together around a changing concept of security aimed at freeing people from pervasive threats to their lives, safety or rights. This is especially critical for the poor.

Helping developing countries build legitimate and accountable systems of security — in defence, police, judicial and penal systems — has become a high priority, including for external partners, even though there are risks involved. Security system reform

should be treated as a normal part of work on good governance. Though this is a vital area for donors, not all development agencies are equally ready or have the mandate to engage in activities directly related to improving security systems. Development agencies are working together to define agreed uses of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in such activities. (See Box 5).

Donor assistance can help improve the capacity of relevant civilian bodies in government to manage the security forces more effectively. Within developing countries, there is growing recognition of the need to use the same principles of good public sector management in the security sector as apply to all public sectors. These principles include transparency, accountability and informed debate and participation and are key to getting military expenditure and other security-related spending planned and implemented right. Reinforcing legislative capacity to conduct effective oversight of security forces, in particular the role of relevant parliamentary committees, is one such area for assistance.

Research is underway in the OECD to look at how developing countries and donors currently address security system reform in an effort to develop best practice principles in this area. ■

### Supporting regional co-operation

Even with the predominance of intra-state conflicts, there are cross-border and regional linkages in conflicts. Strategies for prevention, peacekeeping, and recovery can be regionally designed. Many national conflicts can only be dealt with effectively in their regional contexts, taking account of cross-border influences. Regional co-operation and integration — through economic, environmental and other measures — can contribute to peace-building, particularly around scarce common goods such as water. Donor support should focus on strengthening the capacity of relevant regional institutions.

Co-ordinated foreign policy actions are needed to support regional and sub-regional co-operation in combating drug trafficking, organised crime and terrorism, and controlling illicit or irregular arms trade, as well as the flow of arms generally. Such co-ordinated action can also underpin peace negotiations and regional peacekeeping capabilities, help build regional networks for the protection of human rights, refugees, peace initiatives, and democratisation, and establish security reform processes. The business sector,

including foreign investors, also has a role to play in regional co-operation.

While pursuing "regional solutions for regional problems" is a good principle, there are situations — like those in East Timor, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes and central African regions, Central Asia and others — which call for a response by the whole international community to support regional actors. ■

## Peace, justice and reconciliation

The international community, including donor agencies, can assist peace-building before violence erupts, support peace processes and opportunities, help societies grapple with the complexities of justice and reconciliation in the wake of violent conflict, and encourage fundamental principles of democracy. There are no easy formulas, but there are ways to support national solutions that respect basic international legal norms (see Box 4).

Once the peace is deemed won, donors tend to focus their support more on the state, away from civil society. This happens even when donors have channelled support exclusively to civil society during the conflict. But donor support to civil society peace-building initiatives should begin early and continue.

Peace can often occur in pockets, whilst violent conflict continues or exacerbates in others. Further efforts are required to include all parts of society in peace processes. The marginalised or weakened segments of society in conflict-torn arenas may have very little voice and access to decision making and formal peace processes. Women's abilities to manage survival and negotiate and implement peace at the local and informal levels is well recognised. They tend to be included at local levels. More can be done to involve women in national level peace negotiations.

A cardinal rule in post-conflict justice and reconciliation is to promote open and continuing communication as a key potential antidote to lingering grievances and recriminations, and to avoid relapses into violent conflict. Support for non-partisan and peace-building media is important here.

To avoid the recurrence of conflict, long and short-term peace rely in part on:

- Demobilisation and disarmament of ex-combatants, including women and child soldiers.

### Box 4: Contrasting impacts on peace and conflict of two water projects in Sri Lanka

The Gal Oya water management project in Sri Lanka generated both development and peace-building benefits. Interestingly, its peace-building function was entirely incidental to the project which was designed and implemented according to development criteria. By cultivating the mutual interests of members from different ethnic and socio-economic groups, the project managed to thrive even in the midst of severe communal conflict. And perhaps more importantly, it resulted in the construction of ad hoc institutions of inter-communal co-operation beyond the scope of water management. In other words, it had a significant, positive impact on the incentives for peace within a particular area of Sri Lanka.

Another water project in Sri Lanka - the Maduru Oya project which was one component of the massive Mahaweli Project - illustrates the dangers of not considering the peace-building requirements of development projects. Although the Maduru Oya project was designed to meet a number of development objectives, the failure to fully consider the highly political issue of population displacement and resettlement in the context of a communal civil war, ultimately led to its downfall. The project would have resettled displaced Sinhalese villagers in the Batticaloa District where Tamils constitute two thirds of the population and where ethnic tensions were escalating. Opposition to what some called the West Bank plan to alter the demographic and thus political balance in the East had reached a critical point even before project implementation started.

What does the Gal Oya teach us about successful peace-building? Some of the factors that contributed to its success as a development project also contributed to its success in peace-building explained in part by its thoroughly participatory development approach. The emphasis on promoting participation – as both a means and an end – generated a number of operating principles which have clear peace-building implications:

- Ensuring continuity of personnel to make a learning process more feasible.
- Having a network of supportive, committed people in a variety of positions.
- Avoiding partisan political involvement.
- Attracting and retaining the right kind of community leadership.
- Going beyond narrow conceptions of self-interest.

- Reintegration of all people uprooted and affected by conflict — women, men, youth, children and ex-combatants.

### Box 5: Eligibility of peace-related assistance as official development assistance

From the earliest stages of the collective international aid effort in the 1950s and 1960s, donor countries have worked together in the DAC to agree on definitions of the characteristics and boundaries of aid that should be categorised and calculated as Official Development Assistance (ODA) for purposes of international reporting and comparisons. The basic criteria that have always been applied are that aid, to be counted as ODA, must be provided to or for specified developing countries and territories, by the official sector in DAC countries, with promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective, and meeting a minimum level of concessionality in the financial terms.

Many, if not most, of the donor countries have provided other forms of international assistance over the decades, which have been reported on nationally and internationally, as appropriate [included in DAC reporting as Other Official Flows (OOF)]. The statistical experts of DAC Members have discussed interpretation of the ODA eligibility rules, reaching decisions by consensus, as in all DAC deliberations.

With the growing recognition over the 1990s of the close linkages between peace, security and development, and expanding activities by donors in related areas, the eligibility of these expenditures as ODA has become a topic of considerable discussion. It has not always been easy for Members to reach consensus on some components. The reasons for these difficulties include differing judgements as to whether development is the main objective of some such forms of assistance. This is compounded by a special sensitivity (and, in some countries, legal restrictions) around security-related assistance in the light of much Cold War experience, and other instances of assistance to security forces which subsequently engaged in human rights violations, attacked neighbouring countries, or committed other abuses. In addition, the large scale of some peace-related international assistance in the 1990s has intensified concerns about the possible diversion of limited and declining levels of ODA expenditure from core development co-operation work to activities that might

more appropriately be financed from other budgets. If other budgets claimed some of their expenditures as ODA, these would count towards the UN target for ODA of 0.7% of Gross National Product (GNP). In this case, traditional and non-traditional aid activities would go towards fulfilling the ODA target.

Discussions among Members have led over the years to agreement on the eligibility of a broad range of assistance to be classified as ODA. These include activities under UN post-conflict peace-building operations: demobilisation; the conversion of production facilities from military to civilian outputs; and explosive mine removal for developmental purposes. A number of civilian, security-related development activities, including civilian oversight of police forces, police and judicial reform, and justice systems, may also be included in ODA. ODA eligibility does not yet cover support to civilian oversight of defence and military issues and sectors.

As of December 2000, a number of other areas of peace-related activities were still being debated for ODA eligibility, with no consensus emerging. These include support for: security reviews that examine the roles of security forces such as military, gendarmerie, police and security institutions and mechanisms such as intelligence, foreign affairs, justice and penal systems. Other areas being considered are: the management of security-related expenditures; military reforms and training and sensitising military forces in areas such as human rights; civilian expertise on security issues; civilian oversight of the military; regional confidence-building and peacekeeping capacity; preventing the recruitment of child soldiers; and building developing countries' research capacities on external security matters.

In general, there is not a consensus to broaden ODA eligibility to include expenditure items within the security sector itself. Several Members are also concerned that even if parts of certain activities could be considered ODA-eligible, identifying and accounting for these components could be extremely difficult.

In supporting peace processes donors, the international community and developing countries need to realise that the challenge of reintegration depends on jobs and growth, but can only be fully achieved with reconciliation. ■

### Partnership for peace

Peace-building hinges on trust and co-operation among groups and is reinforced by wider and deeper

partnerships. A legitimate state authority and a healthy civil society ultimately need each other. However, a crisis of legitimacy exists in many states, not only in "failed" or "failing" ones. Signs of this can be seen when the state takes on an oppressive and predatory role in relation to society, foments internal conflict and abrogates its core functions as "protector". Donor engagement with oppressive regimes can be problematic. At the same time complete withdrawal of donor involvement may have negative impacts and be read



as a signal of external indifference. Normal partnerships are difficult or impossible to maintain in some conflict situations. But experience and realism now suggest that external partners, including multilateral institutions, can play key roles in encouraging partnership between government and civil society organisations, including with those who are excluded or in opposition. The extent and types of partnership must be gauged by the country situation.

For donors to enter into effective partnerships for conflict prevention with developing countries, a pivotal requirement is greater coherence and co-ordination among donors themselves. The recent pursuit of better co-ordinated partnership among development co-operation actors offers an important opportunity to address conflict issues and co-ordinate more effectively (e.g. Comprehensive Development Frameworks, country-produced poverty reduction strategies and the UN Development Assistance Frameworks).

It has become clearer that a constructive relationship between humanitarian assistance and development co-operation entities requires shared objectives, common approaches to planning processes, and co-ordination mechanisms. In harmonising these efforts, donor and humanitarian assistance agencies entrusted with these responsibilities cannot escape the need to work together better through quite long transition periods. ■

## Working with business

Another widening space for stronger partnerships is with business — local, national and international — to help maximise its positive economic and social contributions and to ensure against feeding into the negative dynamics of conflict. At times this involves dialogue between external partner governments and firms that are taking actions that worsen violent conflict.

Virtually all developing countries are now convinced they need the vitality, know-how and efficiency of a vigorous private sector to generate strong enough economic growth for sustainable development. Fostering private sector-led growth in jobs and incomes

within a rights and rules-based approach is a basic long-term component of conflict prevention.

A widening community of business actors is already moving to adopt new approaches to corporate social responsibility, and pursuing a "triple bottom line" of profitability, social responsibility and good environmental practices. Enlightened economic self-interest of firms can lead them to engage as corporate citizens working to help solve local problems, including the threats of violent conflict. Donors should support these trends by taking steps such as raising awareness of conflict prevention issues in national and international business communities.

Donors, through the DAC, are currently investigating what role aid agencies can play to help business actors work towards building peace and helping to prevent violence. ■

## Countering negative economic forces

However, external partners — public and private — need to help combat illicit trafficking, rent-seeking and corrupt resource deals that fuel and thrive on conflict. This can be done through G8 and UN embargoes such as those on conflict diamonds<sup>9</sup> and be supported by other international instruments<sup>10</sup>. Donors must take account of the political economy of violent conflict in which powerful groups and networks, using violent and non-violent means, develop a vested interest in their perpetuation, as well as the corrupt and ethnically biased economic practices that can help start them. ■

## For more information

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9. *Prospects of serious action on these issues by the international community have been heightened by UN Security Council action against embargo-breaking trafficking in diamonds and subsequent measures undertaken by the main actors in the international diamond trade to stifle the illegal traffic in conflict diamonds.*

10. *Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Officials in International Business Transactions; OECD Principles of Corporate Governance; OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises; and DAC Recommendations on Anti-Corruption Proposals for Aid-Funded Procurement.*

**Ministerial Statement on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict:  
Orientations for External Partners**

*Development Ministers, Aid Agency Heads and other Senior Officials responsible for Development Co-operation, endorsed this Ministerial Statement and the accompanying supplement to the 1997 DAC Guidelines at the High Level Meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in April 2001.*

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| <p><b>Conflict prevention is an integral part of the quest to reduce poverty.</b></p> <p><b>Coherent policies can help ensure that our work has maximum positive impact.</b></p> <p><b>It is important to counter negative economic dynamics, fight corruption and combat illicit trafficking.</b></p> <p><b>Greater co-ordination will improve responses to conflict.</b></p> <p><b>Encouraging and supporting timely action can help prevent conflict from turning violent.</b></p> <p><b>Our actions will be guided by basic principles.</b></p> | <p>The widespread recurrence of violent conflict and its ruinous impact bring us to renew our commitment to building peace and addressing conflict. We reaffirm conflict prevention as an integral part of our efforts to help partner countries reduce poverty, promote economic growth and improve people’s lives, in the context of sustainable development. We intend to promote a culture of conflict prevention in our work with developing countries, shared consistently across the different parts of our own governments. We endorse Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientations for External Partners, a supplement to the DAC guidelines on conflict, peace and development co-operation. This Supplement relates primarily to collective conflict – among groups within or across nations. It also covers, to some extent, state violence against groups and individuals.</p> <p>We will strive to increase coherence among our policies – trade, finance and investment, foreign affairs and defence, and development co-operation – that impact on conflict prevention. We will strengthen our capacity to analyse risks and causes of violent conflict through approaches such as vulnerability analysis, peace and conflict impact assessments and scenario building. This will help identify coherent strategies and opportunities to prevent conflict.</p> <p>It is important to understand and take account of the political economy of violent conflict. Powerful groups, businesses and individuals, using violent or non-violent means, can acquire a vested interest in sparking and perpetuating violent conflict. Just as it is important to limit the proliferation of weapons, external partners – public and private – need to help combat illicit trafficking, corrupt resource deals, rent seeking and the flow of economic resources that can stoke or be the aim of violent conflicts. This can be done through joint international actions including: UN and G8 embargoes such as those on conflict diamonds; <i>the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Officials in International Business Transactions</i>; <i>OECD Principles of Corporate Governance</i>; <i>the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises</i>; and <i>the DAC Recommendations on Anti-Corruption Proposals for Aid-Funded Procurement</i>.</p> <p>Africa has been hit the hardest by violent conflict. But every region of the world has experienced widespread violent conflict with its devastating impact on human lives and development. We will improve our prevention initiatives and responses to violent conflict through better co-ordinated decision making. This will involve, wherever feasible, shared analysis, effectively co-ordinated and agreed strategic mechanisms and frameworks for action.</p> <p>Lasting peace and structural stability require long-term processes. We will encourage and support early action and seize opportunities to strengthen co-operation in societies, in particular those at risk, to help prevent the outbreak of collective violence. Where this can be done it is far less costly in human, political, environmental and economic terms than coming in later to stop violent conflict and repair the damage.</p> <p>Experience, research and our consultations with developing countries point to some fundamental principles that underpin conflict prevention strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognise the potential – and limits – of the international community to take actions that favour peace and discourage violence.</li> <li>– Use constructive engagement and creative approaches that provide incentives to peace.</li> <li>– Act on the costly lessons learned on the importance of consistent, coherent policies and comprehensive tools in order to do maximum good and avoid unintended harm.</li> </ul> |
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| <p><b><i>Human security is vital to lasting improvement in the lives of poor people.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Good governance requires legitimate and accountable systems of security, and has national and international implications.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Building wide and deep partnerships helps prevent violent conflict.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Opening space for dialogue and peace-building can help societies grapple with the challenges of reintegration, justice and reconciliation.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Business can help actively prevent violent conflict.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Good governance is fundamental to peace.</i></b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be transparent, communicate intentions, and widen and deepen dialogue with partners at all levels in order to ensure ownership</li> <li>- Support peace-building initiatives early on and continue even when peace processes are perceived to have been achieved.</li> <li>- Actively engage women, men and youth in policy-making processes and peace-building.</li> <li>- Work in a flexible and timely manner, guided by long-term perspectives and political and socio-economic analyses of regional, national and local situations, even for short-term actions.</li> <li>- Reinforce local capacities to influence public policy and tackle social and political exclusion.</li> </ul> <p>Security from violence, extreme economic and social deprivation and environmental degradation is essential for poverty reduction, as emphasised in The DAC <i>Guidelines on Poverty Reduction</i>. As reflected in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, reinforcing security and peace requires integrating a gender perspective at all levels of conflict prevention, rehabilitation, peace negotiations and operations.</p> <p>We recognise the need to help partner countries build legitimate and accountable systems of security to prevent conflict. This is an integral aspect of good governance and public sector management. Security reform includes promoting transparency, the rule of law, accountability and informed debate, and reinforcing legislative capacity for adequate oversight of security systems. Security reform involves a range of actors from the military and the police, to judicial and penal systems, ministries of foreign affairs, trade, commerce and civil society organisations (CSOs). Such reforms are key to getting security-related expenditures right. Given restrictions on Official Development Assistance eligibility, interested OECD governments may need to draw on non-ODA sources to assist activities in this area.</p> <p>A legitimate state authority and a healthy civil society reinforce each other. We will strengthen our partnerships with the state and civil society, including women's organisations, to advance prevention efforts. Dilemmas arise on how, or in extreme cases whether, to engage with governments that set aside the rule of law, commit large-scale human rights abuses, target civilian populations, or foster unrest or wage war in neighbouring countries.</p> <p>Integration into society of all people uprooted and affected by violent conflict – women, men, youth and children – is an important challenge for development co-operation. This includes the demobilisation and disarmament of combatants. Reintegration depends on jobs and growth but can only be fully achieved with reconciliation.</p> <p>We will help societies grapple with the challenges of justice and reconciliation in the wake of violent conflict. There are no easy formulas. But there are ways for external action, including development co-operation, to open spaces for dialogue and peace-building and to support solutions that respect basic international norms.</p> <p>We encourage trends towards partnership with business – domestic and international – to raise awareness of how firms can be good corporate citizens, avoid feeding the negative dynamics of conflict, and make positive economic and social contributions to preventing violence.</p> <p>Enduring peace rests on fundamental principles of governance, human security, democracy, respect for the rule of law and human rights, gender equality and open and fair market economies. It relies on good governance at the national, regional and international levels. We commit to furthering our efforts and working together, across our governments, to strive towards peace.</p> |
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## For further reading

- **The DAC Guidelines:  
Helping Prevent Violent Conflict**  
Part I: *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientations for External Partners*  
Part II: *Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century*  
ISBN: 92-64-19507-6, 20 euros, 160p.  
**Also available on Internet at:**  
[www.oecd.org/dac/governance/conflict/](http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance/conflict/)
- **Security Issues and Development Co-operation: A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Policy Coherence**  
*OECD DAC Journal 2001, No. 2, Volume 3*  
ISBN: 92-64-19840-7, 47 euros  
**Available on Internet at:**  
[www.oecd.org/dac/](http://www.oecd.org/dac/)
- **The Influence of Aid in Situations of Violent Conflict**  
*OECD DAC Journal 2001, No. 2, Volume 3.*  
ISBN: 92-64-19840-7, 47 euros  
**Available on Internet at:**  
[www.oecd.org/dac/](http://www.oecd.org/dac/)
- **Development Co-operation Report 2001**  
*OECD DAC Journal 2002, Volume 3, No.1*  
ISBN: 92-64-19187-9, 47euros, 292p.  
**Also available on Internet at** [www.oecd.org/dac/](http://www.oecd.org/dac/)
- **Development Co-operation Report 2000**  
*OECD DAC Journal 2001, Volume 2, No.1*  
ISBN: 92-64-19000-7, 47euros, 296p.
- **For more information about Conflict prevention please visit our Internet site at:**  
[www.oecd.org/dac/governance/conflict/](http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance/conflict/)
- **Related Internet sites:**
  - **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace:** [www.ceip.org](http://www.ceip.org)
  - **Conflict, Security and Development Group:** [www.csdg.kcl.ac.uk](http://www.csdg.kcl.ac.uk)
  - **Developing Effective Conflict Prevention Strategies:** [www.caii-dc.com/ghai/strategies.htm](http://www.caii-dc.com/ghai/strategies.htm)
  - **International Alert:** [www.international-alert.org](http://www.international-alert.org)
  - **International Business Leaders' Forum:** [www.iblf.org](http://www.iblf.org)
  - **International Crisis Group:** [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org)
  - **International Food Policy Research Institute:** [www.ifpri.cgiar.org](http://www.ifpri.cgiar.org)
  - **International Peace Research Institute:** [www.prio.no](http://www.prio.no)

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