

## **EPLO Seminar on Peacebuilding and Development**

**Wednesday 5 May 2010**

**Mundo B, Brussels**

### **Background**

This seminar was organised as a follow up to the seminar on peacebuilding and development which was co-organised by EPLO and EPLO member organisation Partners for Democratic Change International (PDCI) in April 2009 in Brussels.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for actors involved in peacebuilding and development to discuss EU policies and practices. It also provided an opportunity for EPLO member organisations and other peacebuilding actors to present their perspectives on development issues to development actors, including the EU institutions and non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs). Finally, the seminar enabled EPLO to gather input for its planned advocacy document on peacebuilding and development from a wide range of actors.

### **Participants**

The seminar was attended by representatives from peacebuilding and development NGOs and think tanks, officials from the European Commission (EC) and independent consultants.

### **Introduction**

Ms Catherine Woollard, Executive Director of EPLO, welcomed participants and reminded them of the objectives of the seminar.

### **Session 1: Peacebuilding and development: Is there really a difference?**

The objective of the first session was to identify and analyse the perceived differences between peacebuilding and development and to examine how those differences are articulated in EU and EU Member States' external policies.

The session was chaired by Ms Chiara Biscaldi, EPLO Policy Officer with responsibility for EPLO's Working Group on Peace, Development and Security (WG PeDS), and included presentations from the following speakers: Ms Daniela Dicorrado-Andreoni, Head of Sector, Peace and Security, DG Development, European Commission; Mr Andrew Sheriff, Senior Programme Officer, European Centre for Development Management (ECDPM); Ms Sophie Haspeslagh, Policy Analyst, Conciliation Resources; and Mr Simon Stocker, Director, Eurostep. Independent consultants Ms Laura Davies and Ms Natalia Mirimanova responded to the speakers' introductory remarks.

The speakers and discussants raised the following points (which are not necessarily the views of EPLO):

- Peacebuilding and development are notoriously vague concepts: Development organisations argue that peacebuilding is a component of development and vice-versa.
- The overall aim of peacebuilding and development is to provide change and results for society as a whole. Although there are clear linkages between the two concepts, there may be differences in their specific objectives.
- “Context is everything.”
- Peace, security and good governance are prerequisites of sustainable development. In this context, it is important to note that the peacebuilding community views security as human security rather than just hard security.
- Development and peacebuilding should be linked in all interventions.
- It is impossible for countries and/or regions to “develop themselves out of violent conflict”: violent conflicts need political solutions.
- Good peacebuilding practice contributes to development goals and vice-versa.
- All development has a conflictual element and, therefore, peacebuilding must be taken into account in all development interventions.
- All development projects and programmes need to be conflict sensitive but they do not all have to have peacebuilding objectives.
- Development is highly political in conflict-affected countries.
- If the objectives of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), including those on peace and security, are to be achieved, it is important to build the capacity of civil society in Africa. EU civil society organisations (CSOs) should be the main interlocutor for this capacity development.
- Peacebuilding and development are both about people and good governance. It is important for all actors to identify objectives for promoting good governance and improving people’s lives and then to see how peacebuilding and development fit in.
- Development must be locally-owned and participatory whereas peacemaking is often imposed from outside.
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be achieved in many conflict-affected-countries. Development is about change and development actors should actively engage in peace processes which – rather than just stopping violent conflicts, can provide the opportunity to achieve political and economic agreements and to lay the foundations for long-term political settlements.
- There is a clear need for a macro-level understanding of peacebuilding and development: a “whole-of-EU approach”.
- The Lisbon Treaty – and through it the European External Action Service (EEAS), has brought about a number of improvements which should benefit EU development co-operation. However, questions remain about how the EEAS will function. NGOs are concerned with the following questions: How to ensure that the management of the EU’s development policy and budget allows the broader remit of development to be achieved? How to avoid that the EU’s development policy and budget is misused?
- There is a need for much greater accountability in the EU’s external aid programmes.

An open discussion with the audience followed. Participants raised the following points:

- Development aid can be politicised. This is not helpful for peacebuilding.
- Regarding the EEAS, the question remains: How to establish a common approach without the subjugation of development to foreign policy objectives?
- There is an ongoing debate about policy coherence for development versus policy coherence for peacebuilding. The most important question is: How to ensure accountability?
- It may seem logical to separate peacebuilding and development at EU headquarters level but the same logic does not apply in conflict-affected countries and regions.
- The issues of ownership and accountability are equally important for peacebuilding and development.
- There is a common thread between peacebuilding, development and human rights: Peacebuilding is a “rights-based approach to conflict.”
- Good context analysis could lead to an integrated approach to EU interventions in developing countries.
- Some emerging donors are happy to fund undemocratic governments. Given this reality, it is even more important that the EU funds civil society to hold those governments to account.
- A major cause of NGOs’ concern is the perception that there is a broadening in the scope of development aid without an increasing the overall amount.
- Although peacebuilding and development are different topics, the two communities need to develop a common strategy to counteract the growing military agenda.

In response, the panellists concluded with the following points:

- Development aid is inherently political.
- The term ‘ownership’ usually refers to government ownership. It should, however, include people.
- CSOs have an important role to play in terms of empowering societies to hold their governments to account.
- There is an element of risk attached to the “whole-of-EU” approach: Its success or failure depends on who is leading it.

## **Session 2: We never learn! The futility of the aid effectiveness discourse**

The objective of the second session was to examine how the effectiveness of interventions is measured by different development and peacebuilding organisations and agencies and to explore the links between the practice of measuring aid effectiveness and policy discourse.

The session was chaired by Catherine Woollard and included presentations from the following speakers: Mr Duncan Hiscock, Team Leader, Conflict and Security, Saferworld; Ms Heidi Ober, Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, CARE International UK; Ms Juana De Catheu, International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and Dr Cristina Barrios, Researcher, Fundación par alas Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo (FRIDE).

The speakers raised the following points (which are not necessarily the views of EPLO):

- It is more appropriate to discuss 'development effectiveness' rather than 'aid effectiveness'.
- Development goals can be undermined by security goals. Security should be about creating the space for peacebuilding and development. In this context, it is vital that peacebuilding and development actors do not undermine each other.
- It is extremely difficult to attribute outcomes to specific activities. It is much more plausible to argue that a project/programme has contributed to a particular outcome. Unfortunately, there seems to be a general lack of understanding of this concept.
- Attribution should be measured at a much higher level (e.g. whole national or EU programme).
- A major question is: How does aid spent on peacebuilding contribute to the MDGs? Peacebuilding organisations need to be able to prove their impact on development. Unfortunately, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding programmes is generally low.
- The technical nature of terms such as 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' is problematic. The real starting point should be: What changes are we trying to achieve and how will we achieve them?
- It is crucial that monitoring and evaluation is context-specific.
- Monitoring and evaluation are often top-down: They do not necessarily translate into changes in actual interventions in developing countries.
- Policy coherence for development is crucial in situations of fragility.
- There is an urgent need for greater self-evaluation: The 'Do No Harm' approach does not seem to be a high priority in evaluation work.

The speakers' presentations were followed by a question and answer session. Participants raised the following points:

- The most important questions are: What needs to be done? Who is best placed to do it?
- It is not possible to attribute impact to any one organisation.
- It seems that there is too much lesson learning in evaluations and not enough accountability to beneficiaries.
- How can the counterfactual element be measured in monitoring and evaluation?
- The current focus on results means that there is a risk of overlooking processes. The question remains: How to monitor and evaluate processes?

In response, the speakers concluded with the following points:

- Lesson learning should be done internally.
- Theories of change are very important. Development and peacebuilding actors can be overly simplistic and there is opposition to challenging possibly flawed assumptions.
- Regarding results-based management, proponents claim that "what gets measured gets done". In reality, "what is measurable is programmed" (i.e. the easier it is to measure an activity; the more likely it is to be included in programmes). This is problematic for peacebuilding activities because they are often qualitative rather than quantitative.

### **Session 3: The Millennium Development Goals: A help or a hindrance to development progress?**

The objective of the third session was to explore the influence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on the way in which the development community considers impact and programme strategies and to examine if they are a useful set of aspirations or if they skew thinking towards a purely technical approach to development.

The session was chaired by Catherine Woollard and included presentations from the following speakers: Mr Phil Vernon, Director of the Africa Programme, International Alert; Ms Elise Ford, Head of Brussels Office, Oxfam International; and Mr Alexei Jones, DG Development, European Commission.

The speakers raised the following points (which are not necessarily the views of EPLO):

- The MDGs are a dangerous distraction from the clear thinking which is needed for societal change.
- Rather than looking at what development actors can do better within the narrow scope of the MDG framework, it is necessary to change the entire development framework. The ten year anniversary is a good time for this.
- The MDGs do not properly measure Objective Three of the Millennium Declaration: 'Promote and create global and national environments conducive to development and to the eradication of poverty, and make sufficient resources available.'
- The MDGs are goals: "the ends not the means." In addition, they are universal but used wrongly to measure progress at the local level.
- The MDGs, although not a comprehensive solution to development, are a great set of aspirations and have had positive results.
- The MDGs are a compromise: Therein lies their strength. They have played a crucial role in galvanising political support for development.
- Civil society has to hold governments to account if the MDGs are to be achieved.
- Now is not the time to be changing the development framework.
- For certain development actors, budget support is one of the most effective ways of ensuring development progress when it is linked to the MDGs. It can also help effect societal change by supporting better governance, an increased role for parliaments and by providing an incentive for civil society to monitor development interventions.
- Certain development actors would like to see the inclusion of conflict-related and climate-change-related MDGs.

The speakers' presentations were followed by a question and answer session. Participants raised the following points:

- The MDGs have served as a catalyst. They have put development on the agenda and have focused attention on funding. However, a concern is that the MDGs have been used to ignore other issues such as governance in a number of conflict-affected middle-income countries.
- Budget support can lead to a reduction in humanitarian space. This raises the question: What can be done when the state is an actor in a conflict?
- How can the issues of accountability and the construction of state-societal relations be built into budget support?
- What impact does statebuilding have on conflict?
- Why is statebuilding in its current format not working?
- How can the international human rights framework feed into the MDG debate?

- With the growing trend for allocating significant amounts of budget support, how can donors ensure that CSOs are able to perform their functions?

In response, the speakers concluded with the following points:

- The MDGs are aspirations. However, they are being treated as targets and skewing aid.
- The issue of policy coherence for development is central to discussions about the future of the MDGs.
- It is good that the current notion of statebuilding is being questioned. History suggests that it not possible to “build” a state the way the international community has tried to do it thus far.
- Certain development actors believe that budget support, if implemented properly and in the right environment, can hold the key to the achievement of the MDGs.
- The MDGs are often used as the starting point for development interventions. The *context* in a particular developing country or region should be the starting point.
- Conflict should be integrated into the MDG framework: .A conflict-sensitive MDG could support all the other goals.

## **Conclusions**

Catherine Woollard thanked all speakers, discussants and participants for their contributions. She recommended strongly that discussions on the links between peacebuilding and development continue.

Ms Woollard also thanked the European Commission for having provided the funding through the Initiative for Peacebuilding and to Chiara Biscaldi for having organised the seminar.

## EPLO MEMBERS

Berghof Conflict Research  
Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network (KATU)  
Conciliation Resources  
Crisis Management Initiative  
European Network for Civil Peace Services  
European Centre for Conflict Prevention  
ESSEC IRÉNÉ  
Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE)  
Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation  
International Alert  
International Center for Transitional Justice  
International Crisis Group  
Interpeace  
Kvinna till Kvinna  
Life and Peace Institute  
Nansen Dialogue Network  
NGO Support Centre  
Nonviolent Peaceforce  
Partners for Democratic Change International  
Pax Christi International  
Quaker Council for European Affairs  
Saferworld  
Search for Common Ground  
Swisspeace  
Toledo International Centre for Peace  
World Vision

## THE EUROPEAN PEACEBUILDING LIAISON OFFICE EPLO

EPLO is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union.

EPLO aims to influence the EU so it promotes and implements measures that lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and that transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development world wide and the crucial role NGOs have to play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

EPLO advances the interests of its members through common policy positions and consequently advocating for those common positions. EPLO disseminates information and promotes understanding of EU policies of concern to its Members. The Office builds also solidarity and cooperation amongst its members and with other relevant NGO networks. Finally, EPLO raises awareness about the contribution the EU should make to peacebuilding and the need to hold the EU accountable to its own political commitments of helping secure peace within and outside its borders.

### **EPLO Contacts:**

Catherine Woollard  
Director  
Phone +32 (0) 2 233 37 32  
E-mail: [cwoollard@eplo.org](mailto:cwoollard@eplo.org)

Ben Moore  
Policy Officer  
Phone: +32 (0) 2 233 37 33  
E-mail: [bmoore@eplo.org](mailto:bmoore@eplo.org)

European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)  
Rue Belliard 205, Box 12  
1040 Brussels  
Phone: +32 (0)2 233 37 37  
Fax: +32 (0)2 233 37 38  
E-mail: [office@eplo.org](mailto:office@eplo.org)  
Website: [www.eplo.org](http://www.eplo.org)