

THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2006



All too often the roots and dynamics of past conflicts are not properly addressed and so widespread violence re-emerges. The ability of the International Community to help prevent the renewal of violent conflict depends, therefore, on whether it can elaborate and collectively adhere to a clearly-defined, holistic and integrated peace-building strategy in post-conflict settings. If the foundations of long-term peace and stability are not laid, no international development targets will be met and poverty reduction efforts will be impossible to sustain.

In this light, we give our full support to the on-going efforts to launch the UN Peacebuilding Commission. We join ourselves to those government and multilateral delegations that are focussing on how the Commission can really make a difference and who argue that:

- The operationalisation of the Commission must take place as soon as possible. The immediate needs of millions in Burundi, Liberia, Sudan and elsewhere prohibit the luxury of protracted diplomatic wrangling and bureaucratic delays. ***The most urgent priorities*** are to:
 - *Appoint* a committed and effective president of the organisational committee. The committee as well as each Country Working Group must be chaired by an individual of the highest calibre, capable of bringing on board and reconciling the wide range of interested parties.
 - *Equip* the Support Office with the highest quality staff and sufficient financial capacity to draw fully on existing analyses and expertise and build on existing co-operation mechanisms in the international system. The Goals of the Commission, globally and in country-specific situations, will not be achieved without an effective support office.
 - *Select*, based entirely on merit and experience, a high-quality and politically astute individual to head the support office. He or she must have direct access to the Secretary-General and be capable of co-ordinating all UN agencies into the strategic framework for peacebuilding agreed by the Commission. The Heads of the relevant agencies must meet regularly and systematically to ensure that the in-country activities of their respective agencies are guided by this strategy in the short, medium and long term.

- *Finance* the Standing Fund in sufficient amounts for it to work credibly and effectively
 - *Pressure* the World Bank and IMF to collaborate closely in the operationalisation and on-going work of the Commission.
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- The focus of the Commission's Organisational Committee must be to set down the global framework under which its Country Working Groups will operate, including the definition of objective criteria for country selection. It is, however, the Country Working Groups that must take on the primary responsibility for ***defining context-specific operational objectives and activities***.
 - Each Country Working Group must be able and equipped to ***define, within a very short timeframe, a strategic framework for peace-building***. It is too often the case that post-conflict interventions are piece-meal and unconnected to each other. A joint, coherent and context-specific strategy must be used to plan and implement all security and development-related activities. The framework should also be a reference point for humanitarian action. The Working Group should have the ability to convene other UN agencies and lead on planning and overall resource allocation. These are critical elements for ensuring that approaches to peace-building take place within a coherent strategic framework.
 - The current "advisory" mandate of the Commission is likely to limit its ability to ensure coherence among UN and other international actors. Particular attention must be given to strengthening its role at the earliest opportunity. For conflict to be effectively *prevented*, this should include empowering the Commission to begin its work *before* the outbreak or recurrence of widespread instability and violence.
 - The Organisational Committee and each Country Working Group must both assume the responsibility of ensuring the ***highest possible levels of commitment*** (political and financial) for up to a decade or more of peace-building.
 - The Commission's Country Working Group must be ***enabled and prepared for rapid action***. Building on existing information from conflict analyses that are available in the international system, a comprehensive assessment should be conducted on needs and existing and planned interventions. This would provide the basis for prioritising and sequencing action over the short, medium and long-term. Given past problems of funding gaps, it is vital that the Commission quickly identifies, and on an ongoing basis, where essential activities are under-funded or not funded at all.
 - In its composition, each Country Working Group must be ***responsive to the***

needs and interests of the people that it is established ultimately to help. Emphasis should be given to widening research and dialogue to include groups who have no access or engagement with official channels. It is not sufficient that these needs and interests are defined only by national authorities and other stakeholder groups located in capital.

- To be responsive to truly national needs, each Country Working Group ***must rapidly begin to consult systematically with non-governmental actors*** active on the ground. It is vital that, beyond the necessary focus on local civil society, business groups can also be heard, and are listened to. The private sector has a fundamental contribution to make to economic recovery, confidence-building and improved governance.
- In many conflict contexts, the ***voice of women and young people*** is particularly hard to hear and a dedicated effort is needed in order to ensure their equal participation in dialogue processes and decision-making. Women's and youth groups must, therefore, be systematically involved in the work of all country-specific configurations of the Commission.
- International NGOs share a responsibility to participate in and facilitate these interactions between official channels and non-governmental groups that can help lay the foundations for peace. All parties must, though, take care not to raise expectations that cannot be fulfilled in the short term.
- The Commission and its Support Office will be judged by their capacity to deliver. From the outset, attention must be paid to ensuring clear reporting lines, co-ordination with national authorities and the ongoing ***monitoring and evaluation*** of outcomes.

Backed by enough political will and equipped with sufficient capabilities, the Commission can play a defining role in laying secure and lasting foundations for peace and sustainable development. It is a goal to which we, as partners in this endeavour, fully subscribe.

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The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

EPLO is the alliance 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.

Activities

EPLO develops its political positions and campaigns in its Working Groups. Currently, EPLO has three working groups:

- **Civilian Intervention for Sustainable Peace (CISP).** The goal of this WG is to increase the awareness, the scope and the effectiveness of civilian contributions to conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding and to reduce the dependence on military forces for activities which are better carried out by civilians. CISP aims to propose alternative solutions for strengthening EU capacity and coherence in all relevant areas in the Council and Commission.
- **Peacebuilding and Development (PBD).** This WG aims at strengthening the EU's capacity to prevent violent conflict and build peace. The working group is based upon the belief that sustainable development is a critical aspect of peacebuilding, alongside security, good governance, justice and reconciliation, and vice versa: peacebuilding is an essential element of sustainable development and of meeting the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations.

Funding for Peace (FfP). This WG engages in EU budget discussions in relation to peacebuilding activities of the EU with a focus on financial planning, EU budget capabilities, program funding, and Financial Perspectives. In peacebuilding and security issues there is a lack of knowledgeable involvement of NGOs which EPLO aims to fill through increasing its capacity in this field. The WG advocates the role of the EU as a serious player in the safeguarding of human security. The EU budget must be capable of fulfilling the EU's external relations commitments to peacebuilding. FfP will influence the EU for a special budget on civilian conflict prevention activities and it will work for the establishment of an EU Peacebuilding Agency.

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**EUROPEAN PEACEBUILDING LIAISON OFFICE - EPLO
MEMBER ORGANISATIONS 2006**

**Berghof Research Center for
Constructive Conflict Management**
www.berghof-center.org

Crisis Management Initiative — CMI
www.cmi.fi

**European Network for Civil Peace Services
EN.CPS**
www.en-cps.org

European Centre for Conflict Prevention
www.conflict-prevention.net

Field Diplomacy Initiative — FDI
www.fielddiplomacy.be

**German Platform for Peaceful Conflict Man-
agement**
www.konfliktbearbeitung.net

**Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la
Paix et la Sécurité — GRIP**
www.grip.org

International Alert
www.international-alert.org

**International Center for Transitional
Justice—ICTJ**
www.ictj.org

**International Security Information Service,
Europe — ISIS Europe**
www.isis-europe.org

KATU
www.katunet.fi

Nonviolent Peaceforce
www.npeurope.org

Oxfam International
www.oxfaminternational.org

**Pax Christi International & Life and Peace
Institute**
www.paxchristi.net - www.life-peace.org

Peace Team Forum
www.fredsforum.se

Quaker Council for European Affairs
www.quaker.org/qcea

Saferworld

www.saferworld.org.uk

Search for Common Ground — SFCG
www.sfcg.org

Swisspeace
www.swisspeace.org

World Vision
www.wveurope.org