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PEACE-BUILDING OVERVIEW¹

Peace-building encompasses measures in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations for the explicit purpose of preventing violent conflict and promoting lasting and sustainable peace.

This issues brief outlines the factors that should be taken into account when designing or implementing country- and/or region-specific peace-building strategies.

Underlined words are hyperlinks to other topics available at www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/issuesbriefs.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Peace-building covers a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of lasting and sustainable peace.
- Peace-building has three mutually reinforcing dimensions: 1) security; 2) governance and political; 3) social, economic and environmental.
- In all peace-building interventions, particular emphasis should be given to promoting and fostering national ownership/alignment, co-ordination of the international community's efforts, and harmonisation of procedures.
- Strategic frameworks for the international community's peace-building efforts should be based on joint conflict analyses and needs assessments.

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the UN report *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* introduced the term peace-building. The concept of peace-building was further developed and clarified in a series of subsequent documents, among those the Brahimi Report on UN peace operations and Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The latest policy statement on peace-building from the Security Council is the Presidential Statement of 20 February 2001. It recognises that peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building are closely interrelated and that peace-building is aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence or continuation of

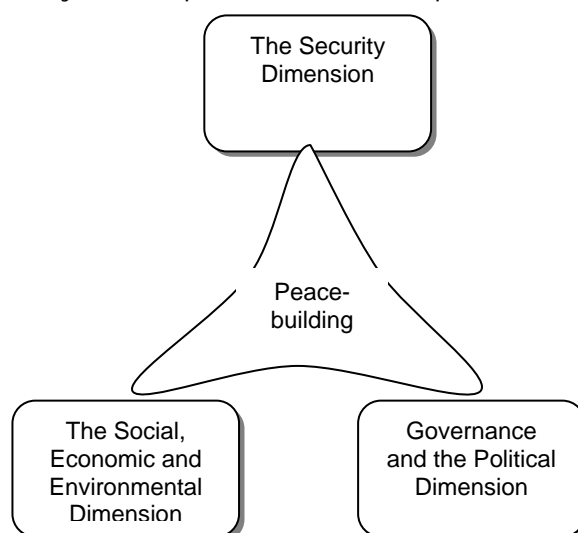
¹ The drafting of this issues brief was led by the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

violent conflict² and therefore encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms. The UN High Level Panel (2004) suggests that peace-building should focus on statebuilding – usually, but not exclusively, in a post-conflict situation.

[The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict](#) (2001) provides a detailed introduction to current thinking on conflict prevention, peace-building and development co-operation, and on its practical application.

KEY CONCEPTS

Peace-building can be understood as a supplement to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking processes, conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations. It encompasses measures in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations for the explicit purpose of preventing violent conflict and promoting lasting and sustainable peace. Many peace-building activities are similar to development co-operation activities in countries that are not affected by conflict, but the context and purposes are different. A conflict-sensitive approach to what should be done and how it should be done is required. We need strategic conflict analyses³ and peace and conflict impact assessments.



The Security Dimension

The security dimension encompasses the security of the country and the personal security of its inhabitants. In post-ceasefire (post-conflict) situations, some elements that have to be considered are:

- *Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration* of ex-combatants into the local community. This should include special programmes for women and children.
- *Humanitarian mine action*. This includes mine clearance, stockpile destruction, support to victims of landmines, and awareness programmes.

² Conflicts are an unavoidable part of processes of social change in all societies. This issues brief deals with violent conflict but, from here on, uses "conflict" as shorthand for it.

³ Example agency guidance on conflict analysis is provided on the DAC's CPDC webpage at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/analysis>. The DAC Network on Governance is looking at political economy analysis to identify good practice in using the different approaches being developed such as drivers of change (go to <http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance>). See also www.conflictsensitivity.org.

- Improving control of [small arms and light weapons](#). This includes measures to prevent misuse and illegal trade, providing incentives to hand in weapons, and dealing with the underlying causes of demand for such weapons.
- [Security system reform \(SSR\)](#) emphasises the importance of civilian control, transparency and accountability as regards the military, the police, the justice and the penal services.

Governance and the Political Dimension

Some of the underlying or triggering causes of conflict are illegitimate or weak institutions, corruption, insufficient respect for human rights, lack of good governance, and the perception that the administrative and political channels are not adequate or that they are inaccessible. Such underlying or triggering causes of conflict have to be addressed.

- Support for *political and administrative authorities and structures* may be necessary in a transitional period in order to help rebuild and strengthen governments and state institutions so that they can perform sovereign functions effectively and responsibly. This may also include support for the transformation of armed movements into political parties and members of a new government.
- Lasting and sustainable peace depends not only on the commitment of political leaders, but also on social acceptance of peace by the population. Peace-building requires [reconciliation and the promotion of non-violent conflict resolution](#) at all levels of society: in the military, among political, religious and business leaders, in middle management and at grass-roots levels.
- Assistance to institutions and processes that promote *good governance, democracy and human rights* is equally important. Special attention must be given to ensuring the inclusion of marginalised and informal groups in political processes, i.e. to promote a culture of peace.
- Support to governments must be complemented by support for the peace-oriented elements of [civil society, including the media](#).
- The issue of *legal action and truth commissions* must be addressed. An appropriate balance needs to be found between truth, [justice](#), punishment, reconciliation and impunity.

The Social, Economic and Environmental Dimension

Increasing socio-economic differences, unequal distribution of benefits or burdens, marginalisation of vulnerable groups or geographical regions, and relative deprivation are all factors that may cause or trigger conflict. Others are competition for limited natural resources for livelihoods, such as [water](#) and arable [land](#), as well as environmental degradation. Conflicts may be fuelled by competition for valuable and easily tradable [natural resources](#), such as [diamonds](#), oil and metals. Efforts to build peace must address these fundamental or triggering drivers of conflict.

- A pressing challenge in post-conflict situations is the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons.
- Infrastructure and important government functions may have to be built or rebuilt (often called “quick impact projects”)

- Efforts to promote lasting and sustainable peace must encompass not only quick impact projects, but also long-term development programmes for high-quality and accessible education and health services for everyone.
- Peace-building should include measures to stimulate productive sector development, employment, trade and [investment](#). This includes legal and economic reforms, institutional co-operation and technical co-operation.
- Technical and financial assistance from the international community may be needed to build and expand national capacity for sustainable environmental and resource management.

Every conflict situation is unique, and it is obviously not possible to develop an approach that covers every situation. The elements to be included, the order in which the measures are to be implemented, the timing and the amount of effort required will always vary according to the situation. But all three dimensions discussed above must be carefully reviewed when designing specific interventions, so that the peace-building efforts can be tailored as far as possible to the situation at hand.

GOOD PEACE-BUILDING PRACTICES

Several aspects of good donor practices in peace-building need to be mentioned:

Ownership, alignment and harmonisation⁴

In all peace-building interventions particular emphasis should be given to national ownership of the process. Work may need to be done to ensure that it is truly representative and not perpetuating existing divisions in society.

The international community's peace-building efforts in specific countries should be based on joint analyses⁵, common needs assessments and common strategic frameworks for action. The country's [poverty-reduction](#) strategies or other planning documents should be the basis for intervention. Where such strategies do not exist, donors must provide space, time and support for them to be developed.

The low capacity of national partners to deliver functions of a state is a serious problem in many peace-building situations, and an obstacle to alignment behind partner countries' policies and procedures. Donors must take collective action to help partner countries strengthen their national systems by stepping up capacity building.⁶

Where there are illegitimate governments or serious concerns about governments' commitment to peace-building and poverty reduction there may be reasons for not using government in aid-delivery. In these cases donors should harmonise their procedures in a way compatible with government systems, and coordinate their efforts.

Multilateral organisations and bilateral donors should harmonise procedures and co-ordinate their engagement, working with civil

⁴ This links closely with the objectives of the 2005 [Paris Declaration](#) on Aid Effectiveness (see www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness)

⁵ Example agency guidance on conflict analysis is provided on the DAC's CPDC webpage at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/analysis>. The DAC Network on Governance is looking at political economy analysis to identify good practice in using the different approaches being developed such as drivers of change (go to <http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance>). See also www.conflictsensitivity.org

⁶ A major output of the DAC Network on Governance (GOVNET) in 2005 is the Good Practice Paper on Capacity Development.

society and the private sector.

Peace-building and conflict prevention activities should be closely coordinated with peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts where appropriate. The UN proposals (2004) for a Peace-building Commission and Support Office seek to address this point.

The gender perspective⁷

The UN Security Council highlighted the importance of *gender perspectives* in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peace building in Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Women and men experience and respond to crisis in different ways. In peace-building, women tend to be excluded. For a sustainable peace, women must be included in all aspects of the peace process, agreements and transitional governance structures. Gender perspectives and issues of gender equality must be addressed at all stages and all levels of planning, implementation and evaluation, in conflict prevention, and at every rung of the ladder to peace.

The role of multilateral organisations

The UN has a central role to play in the international efforts for peace-building –in establishing norms and developing policy, and through concerted and crosscutting actions in the field. In many situations, it is well positioned to promote conflict prevention and peace-building in co-operation with international financial institutions (IFIs), regional organisations, bilateral donors and NGOs. However, other regional organisations such as the AU and the EU are also increasing their capacity to engage in peace-building.

The NGOs in donor countries

In peace-building, implementing organisations must be part of the planning process that determines priorities, as well as timing, channels and division of responsibility. NGOs in donor countries can provide long-term support for civil society in partner countries in their various roles as advocate, watchdog, agent of reconciliation, etc. While there may be a need in the early phases of peace-building for NGOs as channels and service providers, this need will gradually diminish as national [institutions](#) improve their performance and reliability.

Timing

Erratic and inappropriate follow-up in post-conflict situations increases the likelihood that violence will recur. In many post-conflict situations too much assistance may come in too fast, paying insufficient attention to the ability of the country to properly use it. This is often followed by a rapid decline in funds and inadequate funding for long-term needs. Thus in many cases, despite improved "absorptive" capacity, very little assistance is provided during the period three to five years after a conflict, when needs remain at a critical level.

The international community must, while facilitating (and pressing for) fast results, have the stamina for long-term efforts to promote lasting and sustainable peace. It is vital to understand that the critical period for preventing the recurrence of conflict can last for well over a decade.

⁷ See the tipsheets produced by the DAC Network on Gender Equality (www.oecd.org/dac/gender).
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Resources

Peace-building requires substantial financial and human resources. Transitional assistance makes it possible to bridge the gap between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development co-operation in countries emerging from prolonged deep-seated conflict. Such funds are primarily used to support viable political and administrative structures, democracy and respect for human rights. They may also be used to strengthen the international community's capacity and competence in connection with peace-building. Broad-based, comprehensive peace-building efforts require close political and administrative co-ordination of the use of funds from different budget chapters.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Websites and reference documents can be found through www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/themes.

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