International Peace Academy

WSP International

THE PEACEBUILDING
FORUM 2004

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BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS
IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES

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CONFERENCE REPORT

New York, 7 October 2004

organized by
IPA's Security-Development Nexus Program
and WSP International

At the Peacebuilding Forum Conference, nearly 150 participants representing internal and external actors reviewed and endorsed the proposals that had emerged from the year-long Peacebuilding Forum process. The process drew on the experiences and insights of peacebuilding practitioners from both donor and recipient countries, as well as on the work of bilateral and multilateral agencies, regional organizations, research institutions and NGOs involved in reviewing peacebuilding policy and practice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Peacebuilding Forum Conference, organized by WSP International with the support of the International Peace Academy's Security-Development Nexus Program, was held in New York on 7 October 2004. It was the culmination of a year-long reflective and analytical process. The conference attracted nearly 150 participants, including peacebuilding practitioners, members of the United Nations (UN) community and representatives of UN member states, regional organizations and academics.

- The conference was co-chaired by H.E. President Martti Ahtisaari and H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, respectively Chair and Vice-Chair of WSP International's Governing Board. UN Under-Secretary-General Kieran Prendergast gave a keynote address on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The one-day meeting took the form of a series of panel presentations and discussions on the relationship between internal and external actors in post-conflict situations and on ways of improving joint efforts to rebuild after war. Participants in the panels included experts from "recipient countries" and important decision-makers from the international assistance community.

- In his introductory remarks, Sir Kieran Prendergast recalled the fundamental difference between the stakes for internal actors and those of external actors: for local populations, peacebuilding is often a life-or-death matter. External actors make great efforts to coordinate among themselves but spend little time working with internal actors to build better partnerships with them and to ensure that they play the leading role. Often, even when internal actors are in the driving seat, it is as chauffeurs rather than as navigators, while external actors give directions from the back seat. He also stressed the need to understand properly and give meaning and content to terms such as "ownership", "partnership", "participation" and "stakeholder".

- Matthias Stiefel (Executive Director, WSP International) and Neclâ Tschirgi (Acting President, IPA) presented the Conference Document, which analysed the reasons for the dysfunction in the internal-external actor relationship. They briefly outlined the ten proposals which had emerged from the Peacebuilding Forum consultation process and which aim to improve this relationship and thus lead to more effective and sustainable peacebuilding practice.

- Many speakers emphasized that the Peacebuilding Forum process and conference, as well as the analysis on which the proposals were based, were particularly timely and important given the current re-examination of the role of the United Nations in the fields of peace, security and development. The key role of regional organizations – which have the characteristics of both external and internal actors – was also stressed, as was the regional dimension of many conflicts. While the Forum's focus was post-conflict peacebuilding, all agreed that most of the proposals in the Conference Document were equally applicable to conflict prevention. It was also pointed out that peacebuilding and conflict prevention are fundamentally political activities and that both internal and external actors have their own constraints, agendas and interests.

- The panellists presenting the perspective of internal actors were Zainab Bangura (Sierra Leone), Ali Abdulkhader Yahya (Somalia) and Rubén Zamora (El Salvador). Peter Maurer (Switzerland) was the initial commentator. Internal actors bore witness to the terribly dehumanizing effect of conflict. Individuals and groups caught up in conflict experience feelings of helplessness, humiliation and loss of dignity. Enormous courage is required to pick up the pieces and begin anew; building peace is much more difficult than making war.

- Being part of the Peacebuilding Forum process has helped internal actors to better understand the bigger picture and has also underlined the importance of the proposal to promote horizontal exchanges among internal actors in post-conflict countries. Internal actors cannot build peace without carefully prepared dialogue among themselves and this should be at several levels, from local to national.

- Among the other points raised by the internal actors was that external actors can make mistakes and waste money because they are under pressure to act and disburse rapidly. They may try to be non-political and risk-avoiding, but that is not viable, and may in reality deepen friction among national actors. On the other hand, influential internal actors can obstruct transformative peacebuilding. It is obvious that external actors are extremely important to peacebuilding and bring valuable perspectives, knowledge and resources, so the key is to find the right balance between local ownership and partnerships with international actors.

- The panellists representing the perspective of external actors were Marika Fahlen (Sweden), Richard Manning (Chair, OECD/Development Assistance Committee) and Danilo Türk (UN Assistant Secretary-General). Bernardo Arévalo de Léon (Guatemala) was the initial commentator. While the international community understands and accepts the importance of alignment behind national priorities, and harmonization in assistance thereafter, this is difficult to achieve in practice – and doubly so in post-conflict and fragile countries where the legitimacy of interlocutors may not be easy to establish and state institutions function poorly. On the other hand, a fragile national polity faced with a very coherent group of external actors may find it extremely difficult to assert local ownership.

- The OECD/DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict are highly relevant, and their dissemination and use – particularly for peacebuilding – should be a priority for all DAC donors, as suggested by the Forum process, and DAC peer reviews should deepen their attention to peacebuilding performance. It was emphasized that the central challenge for external actors is to support positive transformative processes in the fundamentally political arena of peacebuilding, and to be clear about this in their assistance programmes. One consequence is that because good timing is a key to effectiveness, on-the-ground flexibility is especially important. External actors also need to think about the nature of the partnerships among themselves, since they have different political and financial profiles (e.g. UN System, bilateral aid agencies, European Union, World Bank) and each peacebuilding situation requires an optimum response.

- The ten proposals submitted to the conference for endorsement aim to help improve peacebuilding practice and the effectiveness of international assistance in fragile states by addressing key issues from the perspective of the internal–external actor relationship. Proposals 1 and 2 were supported by participants and proposed for further consideration in appropriate UN policy fora. Proposals 3 through 10 received the full endorsement of the Conference. They were finalized on the basis of the discussions and transformed into recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Introduce assessed budgets for peacebuilding
This recommendation supports existing calls for the United Nations to consider introducing an assessed budget for peacebuilding activities in the context of UN Peace Operations. This would also strengthen local peacebuilding processes and activities that help to prepare the ground for UN action and to render such action more sustainable. It is furthermore suggested to create a Voluntary Peacebuilding Funding Facility to allow for more flexible use of funds to support partner organizations and agencies.

Recommendation 2: Political oversight of peacebuilding
It is suggested that oversight responsibility for peacebuilding should be assigned to a political subsidiary organ of the UN, perhaps a body reporting to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the Security Council. Such an organ would have the responsibility to provide advice on peacebuilding mandates, to monitor over time the implementation of peacebuilding strategies and to suggest adjustments when necessary.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the UN capacity to promote national dialogue and consultation processes in post-conflict countries
The United Nations and its key partners should seek to create an institutional capacity to promote, underpin and where appropriate facilitate broadly participatory national dialogue and consensus-building processes in fragile and post-conflict countries with a view to formulating a common vision for the future, to agree on key priorities and to develop appropriate long-term strategies. If undertaken at an early stage, such dialogue processes can inform and thus give legitimacy to needs assessments as well as initiatives for reconciliation. Such a UN capacity could provide services to existing and future UN Peace Operations, Peacebuilding Support Offices and to UN Resident Coordinators in fragile countries. It is recommended that this capacity begin as an extra-budgetary and inter-departmental pilot project, and that its contribution and impact be assessed after three years.

Recommendation 4: Promote exchanges between post-conflict countries
It is suggested that the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in close consultation with, and with the support of, the UN's Office of the Special Advisor on Africa and the African Union's Peace and Security Council and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), should consider initiating a programme of cross-country exchanges and workshops for governmental and civil society actors engaged in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Africa. They should invite peacebuilding practitioners to design and facilitate productive discussions, and document and disseminate the results. The ECA could liaise with the other UN regional economic commissions, as well as with UNDP's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, in

order to broaden the programme over time. Other regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), are also encouraged to promote horizontal exchanges as described above.

Recommendation 5: Foster closer links between the OECD/DAC's Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation and representatives of post-conflict countries

DAC/CPDC should aim to foster closer and more regular links with state and civil society actors in fragile and post-conflict countries and with relevant governmental and non-governmental regional organizations. The objective should be to improve dialogue with these actors in respect of the peacebuilding and conflict prevention policies and practices of CPDC members and benefit from their feedback. Informal consultations could also be undertaken on relevant CPDC outputs. Once recommendation 4 becomes inter-regional, more formal consultation mechanisms should be considered.

Recommendation 6: Encourage external accountability to internal officials and representatives

The IPU should use its existing procedures to encourage parliaments in fragile and post-conflict countries to invite major external actors to discuss annual reports on their programmes, funding and alignment to nationally defined priorities. The IPU should liaise with and support parliamentary Speakers who would establish appropriate arrangements on a national basis. In support of this, and if earmarked donor funding were made available, UNDP could also examine ways of building capacities to assist parliaments to take on these responsibilities, for example through the training of Members of Parliament in international assistance issues. Preliminary results from the implementation of this recommendation could be presented or reviewed at the Conference on the role of parliaments in crisis and post-crisis situations, organized by UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy and scheduled for late 2005 or early 2006 in Brussels, Belgium.

Recommendation 7: Establish independent national evaluation capacities in post-conflict countries

In order to create credible national capacity for monitoring and evaluation, UNDP should facilitate the establishment of independent evaluation capacities in fragile and post-conflict countries. These entities would acquire the tools and expertise to evaluate and constructively comment on the programmes and implementation performance of external actors and national governments in these countries, with particular attention to the monitoring and evaluation of reconstruction processes and targets built into peace agreements and needs assessments/PRSPs. Wherever possible, these capacities should underpin parliamentary reviews of the effectiveness and alignment of international assistance in their countries (see recommendation 6). The recommendation could proceed with the design and implementation of pilot projects in two to three post-conflict countries.

Recommendation 8: Better use and dissemination of DAC Guidelines

DAC/CPDC should focus on ensuring that better use is made of its policy guidance by operational staff and that internal actors are included when disseminating this guidance. In addition to the toolbox of good practice "tipsheets" currently being developed in the

CPDC, options include developing (a) a user-friendly abstract of conflict prevention and peacebuilding guidance; (b) best practice recommendations to donor officials on how to engage with partners, and (c) easily accessible handbooks on how this guidance should be applied in day-to-day working practices. DAC members should be encouraged to translate, where relevant, this guidance into local languages and disseminate it to internal and external actors in post-conflict countries. The DAC as a whole should consider assessing through the peer review process the application of its conflict prevention and peacebuilding guidelines.

Recommendation 9: Ensure professional development for peacebuilding and conflict prevention
The competent UN departments and agencies, including their respective Human Resources management sections, should consider strengthening professional development courses to equip the operational staff of the UN and regional organizations, as well as that of relevant bilateral and non-governmental crisis management organizations, with the skills and attitudes appropriate to working with internal actors in fragile and post-conflict societies. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) should consider offering an appropriate training programme in this regard. The UN Executive Committees for Humanitarian Affairs and for Peace and Security should consider integrating the courses into regular deployment procedures for all UN personnel performing peacebuilding and conflict-prevention tasks, and consider making them mandatory. Special short courses could also be prepared targeting SRSGs, DSRSGs and RSGs upon assignment and prior to their deployment.

Recommendation 10: Introduce mandatory orientation briefings upon deployment
UNDP should commission credible internal actors in each post-conflict country to prepare and present orientation courses – as described above – for UN officials deployed to that country and ensure that all UN officials working there attend these courses shortly after arrival. The courses should be made available to all external actors in the country on request.

▪ In his closing remarks, UN Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari exhorted the organizations identified in recommendations 3 through 10 to respond to the Conference's endorsement by carrying them forward, developing them and implementing them.

This report is structured in three parts: A. Organization, Participants, Agenda and Documents; B. Summary of Opening Statement and Introductory Remarks; and C. Summary of Plenary Presentations and Discussions.

A. ORGANIZATION, PARTICIPANTS, AGENDA AND DOCUMENTS

Organization: The International Peace Academy and WSP International co-hosted the Peacebuilding Forum Conference on 7 October 2004 at the New York Helmsley Hotel.

Participants: Nearly 150 people representing internal and external actors from all over the world participated in the Conference. These included peacebuilding practitioners, members of the United Nations (UN) community, regional organizations, representatives of UN member states and academics (see List of Participants).

Agenda: The one-day meeting began with an opening session followed by four plenary sessions: I. Striking a Balance between Partnership and Ownership; II. The Perspective of Internal Actors; III. The Perspective of External Actors; and IV. Taking the Process Forward (see Agenda). The opening session and Plenary I introduced the Peacebuilding Forum and the proposals to the participants. In Plenary sessions II and III, internal and external actors respectively discussed and commented on the analysis and proposals contained in the Conference Document. Plenary IV summed up the discussions and called upon the relevant organizations, agencies and programmes to implement the proposals.

Documents: Several background documents were made available at the Conference and helped inform the discussions: the main Conference Document, which presents the results of the one-year process of reflection and consultations and tables the proposals at the Conference; Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Revisited: Achievements, Limitations and Challenges, which provides a macro-perspective of the evolution of donor policies and practice in recent years; and Internal and External Actors and the Quality of Their Dialogue in Post-Conflict Countries, which is a summary of country surveys from Afghanistan, Guatemala, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.

B. SUMMARY OF OPENING STATEMENT AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Opening statement (Mohamed Sahnoun, Special Adviser for Africa to the UN Secretary-General and Vice-Chair of the Governing Board of WSP International)

The international community has gained a much better understanding of peacebuilding after the end of the Cold War. Translating good concepts into operational practice, however, has lagged behind. It is not enough to know in theory what must be done; it is important to make it work in reality.

Peacebuilding is a process whereby a society emerging from conflict builds a common vision for the future and also invests in institutional mechanisms for mediating all kinds of conflicts. Such mechanisms to sustain peace, stability and democracy are essential, because conflict is inherent in all societies.

WSP International has come to realize that one of the keys to effective peacebuilding lies in the functioning the relationship between internal and external actors in post-conflict settings.[1] With this in mind, it launched the Peacebuilding Forum to put that relationship under the microscope and to grasp better its dynamics and the impact it has on the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts in war-torn countries.

This Forum is very timely indeed, since a fundamental re-examination of the role of the United Nations as an actor in peace, security and sustainable development is under way, particularly through the work of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

Introductory remarks (Sir Kieran Prendergast, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on behalf of Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General)

The International Peace Academy and WSP International have chosen to tackle the partnership between internal and external actors. Not only is this a fundamental and crucial issue, but it is also one that is crying out to be addressed. The terms "partnership", "ownership" and "participation" are used liberally in the context of peacebuilding, but what do they really mean?

Today, the spotlight is on the internal and external actors with a stake in peacebuilding. Yet, there is a big difference between the "stakes" of external actors, no matter how much time and money they invest, and those of internal actors, who have to live with the consequences of whatever is done in the name of peacebuilding. It would not be an overstatement to say that for local populations the outcome of a peacebuilding process is literally a matter of life and death. Killings spiral when peacebuilding fails, as illustrated in Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and Somalia.

External actors spend a considerable amount of time and energy on coordination amongst themselves but not enough on reflecting how they could be better partners with internal actors. They tend to pay lip service to the idea that the local population is in the driving seat. Too often, if internal actors are in the driving seat, it is as chauffeurs rather than as navigators. External actors give directions from the back seat, deciding on the route to be taken, the destination and the speed at which to go, because in their minds they know best. Seldom do external actors pause to consider how they might better structure their partnerships with internal actors.

The reality of post-conflict environments is that the international community often does end up dictating the terms, especially in situations where there is not yet a way to designate legitimate local representatives as interlocutors. But when this happens it ought to be done in ways that respect rather than undermine the principle of and potential for local ownership of the process. Even in cases of apparent chaos such as Somalia, there are always highly qualified internal actors who are familiar with the context, the dynamics of the conflict and the environment in ways that no external actor could ever be. They are also able to lead the

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[1] Internal actors are considered to include governments, political parties, NGOs and other civil society organizations, internally displaced persons and the diaspora, including refugees. External actors include donors, multilateral bodies, such as the UN, and international non-governmental organizations.

peacebuilding effort if given the necessary resources, technical assistance and political support.

It is now widely recognized as a principle that sustainable peacebuilding should as far as politically possible be locally driven. There is also a vague idea of what it means for a process to be locally driven: that it should be modest in its expected outcomes; that it should be committed to as long a presence as is needed; and that responses should be tailored to local conditions and informed by a deeper understanding of the local environment. Local capacities should be strengthened from the outset, and international organizations should avoid bringing in expatriate staff where local capacity exists or can be developed.

The main problem is that in general external actors are aware of all of this, but still do not know how to make it happen. They continue to lament the lack of legitimate interlocutors but fail to find a way to identify such people in the absence of hasty elections.

There is a need to transform concepts such as partnership, ownership, participation and stakeholder not just in token ways, but into specific steps that can actually go towards achieving meaningful peacebuilding. In this context, the Conference Document and the proposals that have emerged from the Peacebuilding Forum offer valuable insights and ideas to set us on the right track.

C. SUMMARY OF PLENARY PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Plenary Session I: Striking a Balance between Partnership and Ownership

The Forum's origins and aims and the proposals for improved peacebuilding (Matthias Stiefel, Executive Director, WSP International, and Neclâ Tschirgi, Acting President, International Peace Academy)

The Peacebuilding Forum has chosen to focus on the relationship between internal and external actors in post-conflict countries in the belief that therein lies the key to improving peacebuilding practice. Four main factors explain why it is so difficult to achieve more successful outcomes in peacebuilding:

First, while the challenges of post-conflict rebuilding generally correspond to those encountered in normal development situations, the big difference is that in post-conflict situations these challenges are amplified many times over by the highly volatile environment. How do you promote participation in a situation where each side is entrenched and nobody trusts each other? How do you promote local ownership and ensure the primacy of internal actors in finding solutions when needs are urgent and swift action is required? And how do you forge partnerships in a context where there are no clearly identifiable local and internal actors to work with?

Secondly, peacebuilding goes far beyond the mere physical, political and economic reconstruction of societies and institutions. It presupposes the rebuilding of trust and

relationships. For this to happen, external actors can only play a facilitating role, by creating an environment conducive to dialogue. They can also encourage and support internal actors in defining a common vision for their country.

Thirdly, in a post-conflict setting, many actors are involved in multiple ways and at different levels – local, national and international. Priority-setting is thus crucial and becomes a fundamental strategic political act, which should be led by internal actors. However, external actors usually end up defining the priorities for internal actors. The WSP experience has shown that priorities defined by external actors are often quite different from those identified by internal actors When they do have the opportunity to define their own priorities, internal actors tend to do so with a long-term development perspective; external actors, meanwhile, tend to view the situation through the lens of a short-term emergency.

Lastly, peacebuilding requires an integrated concept and approach, but responses are usually sectoral. External actors are generally successful in establishing integrated policy statements, but have difficulty in implementing them.

The broad study of peacebuilding practice undertaken within the framework of the Peacebuilding Forum has shown that peacebuilding is multidimensional and requires the engagement of a whole range of actors, but that it lacks a coherent overall strategy and an institutional home in the international system. Unlike peacekeeping, peacebuilding is supported through voluntary contributions and remains acutely underfunded. Peacebuilding assistance is driven by supply rather than demand and seems to have been overtaken by other international priorities since the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington of 11 September 2001.

The Peacebuilding Forum Proposals

This conference is the culmination of a process which originated in a meeting organized by WSP in Bossey, Switzerland in 1998. Five years on, WSP International felt it would be opportune to review the recommendations formulated at that time by representatives of international agencies and members of WSP field teams in what was known as the "Bossey Statement". Following initial discussions with members of WSP International's Governing Board, it was concluded that a series of meetings organized into a process, and not a single event, would increase the chances of having the desired impact.

The ten proposals that have emerged from this process and that are presented here for endorsement are intended as a modest contribution within the broader effort to improve international peacebuilding practice. They are designed to complement and influence past and ongoing initiatives, such as: the work on transition issues undertaken by the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance; the conclusions of the Copenhagen Seminar on Civilian Crisis Management; and the work of the Utstein Group, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) and the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

Proposals 1 and 2 address broad structural and policy issues/problems. Action on these proposals is beyond the remit of this conference and requires following up within the appropriate UN frameworks. These two proposals also differ from the others in that the rest are more practical and doable in the short to medium term and at relatively low cost.

Proposal 3 calls for the strengthening of the UN's capacity to promote national dialogue processes. This could be integrated into peace-support operations and peacebuilding offices.

Proposal 4 suggests that empowerment can be engendered by an exchange of experiences between countries that share common problems. In practical terms, such an exercise could start in Africa and then be extended to different continents and across continents.

Proposal 5 calls upon the OECD/DAC and its Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation (CPDC) to foster closer relations and more systematic links with representatives of internal actors.

Proposal 6 is designed to increase the accountability of external actors to internal actors. It suggests that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) encourage national parliaments in post-conflict countries to invite external actors to present reports on their assistance plans.

Proposal 7 encourages internal actors to establish mechanisms to evaluate peacebuilding work.

Proposal 8 is technical and suggests that valuable tools such as the DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict be more widely disseminated as they remain largely unknown in the field.

Proposal 9 stresses that the quality of people who work in peacebuilding is fundamental and underlines the importance of specific training in attitudes and skills prior to international assignments.

Proposal 10 suggests that international staff deployed in post-conflict countries receive mandatory orientation briefings on arrival, conducted by internal actors.

Plenary Session II: The Perspective of Internal Actors

<u>Improving the Quality of Dialogue for Sustainable Peace</u>

Panellists representing internal actors:
Zainab Bangura, National Accountability Group, Sierra Leone
Rubén Zamora, Civil Society Activist, Former Speaker of Parliament, El Salvador
Ali Abdulkadir Yahya, Centre for Research and Dialogue, south-central Somalia

Summary of comments from the panellists and the audience

Internal actors describe violent conflict as the most dehumanizing experience to which any individual or group can be subjected. Feelings of helplessness, humiliation and loss of dignity are commonplace among the population. Picking up the pieces after a war and moving on require exceptional strength and courage.

Given the enormity of the task, internal actors need and want the support of external actors. However, it is much harder to build peace than to make war. Peacebuilding is also a risky endeavour, as countries recovering from conflict can quickly revert to war, as happened in Liberia, Angola and Somalia.

The Peacebuilding Forum has helped internal actors pinpoint some of the difficulties that complicate their relationship with external actors. The process also familiarized internal actors with how external actors perceive peacebuilding challenges. Many participants representing internal actors became aware of international efforts to improve peacebuilding, such as the DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict, through the Peacebuilding Forum.

Liberia is a good illustration of the persistent challenges facing peacebuilding today. Liberians – from ordinary citizens to civil society groups, from government ministers to members of parliament – feel anger, bitterness and helplessness at the sheer number of external actors that have "invaded" their country. Liberia's leaders are frustrated by their inability to comply with the stringent deadlines set by external actors and have the impression they are being obliged to fit in with predetermined frameworks established in New York, Washington, Brussels and other European capitals.

The Conference Document presents some encouraging ideas for coping with these difficulties. Local ownership has often just been a banner or empty slogan under which external actors conduct their peacebuilding programmes. For there to be *real* local ownership, the relationship between internal and external actors should be governed by certain "rules". What is meant by partnership also needs to be stated more clearly, as the current relationship between internal and external actors is very asymmetrical.

National dialogue. War is by definition the breakdown of conflict-mediating mechanisms and the absence of consensus. National dialogue is therefore a fundamental component of peacebuilding. Governments often forget their promise of national reconciliation after peace agreements are signed or perceive national dialogue processes as obstacles. The government of El Salvador is currently trying to revive a national dialogue that should have taken place

during the implementation of the peace accord, whereas in Guatemala civil society actors succeeded in keeping dialogue alive throughout the peace process.

External accountability. In addition to being accountable to their own institutions, external actors must be accountable to their beneficiaries. The IPU can play a role in promoting greater accountability on the part of external actors by calling on national parliaments to request that they make available reports on their programmes and funding decisions and come to discuss how their actions are aligned with nationally defined priorities. However, for this to be effective, members of parliament need to be more knowledgeable about peacebuilding challenges. Another possibility is to increase external actors' accountability to members of civil society, where there is a better understanding and knowledge of the workings of international assistance.

Training. International staff must have a good understanding of the context in which they will be operating and the challenges that confront them. Moreover, recognizing that peacebuilding is highly politicized and that external actors have their own political agendas can help clarify roles and manage expectations. Another aspect to be taken into account is that of identifying and learning lessons, as well as ensuring that institutional memory is not lost.

Horizontal exchanges. Sharing experiences among internal actors from countries emerging from conflict can be a valuable element of capacity building. Initiatives of this kind have already taken place and should be further supported. The themes can vary: national dialogue processes, reconciliation, truth commissions, security sector reform, rule of law, constitutional reforms, and so on. Facilitating such exchanges should not be restricted to Africa, but should be expanded to Latin America and Asia and ultimately become global.

If a genuine partnership is to be built, external actors should avoid idealizing internal actors. Internal actors are not a uniform, monolithic group; they are diverse, dispersed and do not always act in the best interests of their countries. Internal actors can also make the wrong decisions and need the support and guidance of external actors in rebuilding their societies.

Lastly, external actors should also reflect upon their own partnerships, since they have different political and financial profiles and also diverging interests. This would help them avoid duplication and waste of valuable resources. It would also prevent their actions from deepening friction and competition among internal actors.

Commentator representing external actors:
Peter Maurer, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations

The Conference Document calls for an approach to post-conflict assistance that is more inclusive and takes into account the views and perspectives of internal actors. Local ownership is one of the main thrusts of the Document and has been at the centre of the debate. Switzerland's experience of 700 years of local ownership shows, however, that this concept is not without its pitfalls.

Local ownership can be (mis)used as a pretext not to make progress at the national level. It can actually be employed as a strategy to hinder social change or to obstruct a national foreign policy that is open to a global perspective. In order to guard against local ownership

becoming a simple "one size fits all" ideological formula, the concept should include a commitment to democratic values and respect for human rights.

The Conference Document rightly gives precedence to supporting processes over achieving instant results. However, there are times when the rapid delivery of products is vital, and external actors are better placed to do this than internal actors, who are often grappling with overwhelming difficulties. External actors agree that over the years they have not found a credible way of extricating themselves gracefully after a swift humanitarian intervention. The problem is not the rapidity of the response, but the absence of an exit strategy.

The concept of local ownership is linked to the issue of partnership. It has to be emphasized that external actors are not only partners in peace processes but also stakeholders with substantive interests. The commitment of external actors to a real partnership depends on their policies, agendas and interests – and they, too, are far from forming a coherent and cohesive group.

The other point stressed in the Conference Document is the disparity between policy and reality. While recognizing that there are frustrations, one should acknowledge that there have also been achievements. There are success stories that should be told. The Human Security Report, which will be available in early 2005, is an example of a document that gives the positive developments in the field of peacebuilding over the past 15 years their fair due.

In this context, it is also important not to underestimate the political constraints that exist in donor countries. There is a strong current in donor countries that demands value for money, results-based budgeting and coordinated and integrated approaches. This trend is not compatible with the rhythm and interests of peace processes. So, how can these opposing forces be reconciled? How can the political dynamics of donors be made more responsive to the needs of post-conflict countries?

There is a consensus on the need to devise joint peacebuilding policies and strategies at the international level, but responses on the ground continue to be fragmented. Switzerland and some other countries have made a strategic decision to identify peacebuilding as an independent policy domain backed up by adequate funding mechanisms, but the UN has yet to follow suit.

Plenary Session III: The Perspective of External Actors

Opening statement (Martti Ahtisaari, Chair of the Governing Board of WSP International, UN Special Envoy and Former President of Finland)

There have been many meetings focusing on UN reform. By now, everybody knows what needs to be done, but nobody knows how to put words into action. Here, it looks as if a conference has tabled proposals to improve the performance of international organizations in general, and the UN in particular, that are for once practical and doable.

There appears to be a greater openness on all sides now than ever before to learn from mistakes. There is less bureaucratic resistance, more flexibility and a stronger will to improve peacebuilding practice.

Today, the state plays the role of facilitator: it provides its citizens with an education and health care and a chance to develop their lives, but it also reminds them of their responsibilities. Similarly, the role of external actors is to enable, facilitate and support change.

Why is it so difficult to fulfil such a role? As mentioned earlier, external actors are also the victims of the imperatives of effectiveness, value for money, results-oriented approaches and other pressures. More attention has to be paid to the needs of those on the receiving end of international assistance.

Peacebuilding should be viewed holistically. External actors tend to be excessively compartmentalized and as a result lose sight of the bigger picture.

Translating Policy into Practice

Panellists representing external actors:
Marika Fahlen, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
Richard Manning, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee
Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, United Nations

Summary of comments from panellists and the audience

External actors generally agree that, even with the best of intentions, they have not been very successful in translating policies into practice. Yet, one of the fundamental challenges if peace is to prevail over violent conflict is more, not less, involvement from the international community. It is true that there is no coherent peacebuilding doctrine, but neat concepts do not necessarily reflect the complexities of the issues at hand. Every context has its own array of political, economic, social and cultural factors which are at once the causes and the cure of a conflict – and these have to be taken into account in defining appropriate responses.

There is a need for better diagnosis of the country context and a more coherent sense of purpose in responding to conflict among peacebuilding actors. Peacebuilding needs a clear mandate for complex peace operations, well-defined roles and responsibilities of actors, both internal and external, common guiding principles, a resource mobilization strategy up front, and time-bound phasing based on feedback concerning objective circumstances and needs. Recent progress made in the area of HIV/AIDS, which called for the adoption of one policy framework, one coordinating mechanism and one monitoring and evaluation system, can be of relevance to peacebuilding.

Much work has been done on harmonizing donor practices and procedures within the OECD/DAC, several of them also applicable to peacebuilding and post-conflict situations, and this was not reflected in the analytical part of the Conference Document. Donors have even agreed in some cases to delegate responsibility for the management of aid programmes to other donor countries to avoid duplication and reduce transaction costs. Donors should reflect on the criticism that results-based management can lead to counterproductive

behaviour in fluid post-conflict situations; perhaps the notion of "results" needs to be pitched at a higher level.

From the UN perspective, the quality of peacebuilding work needs to be tackled on three fronts: 1) the political basis for peace; 2) the design of peace operations and post-conflict peacebuilding missions; and 3) the design of international partnerships.

The quality of the peace achieved, whether through a peace agreement or a UN Security Council resolution, becomes the political basis for international assistance. If the political basis is sound, international assistance has a greater chance of success. For example, in spite of the circumstances surrounding the political changes in Afghanistan, the Bonn Agreement provided a solid platform for reconstruction efforts; in comparison, UN Security Council resolution 1244 on Kosovo left open several key political questions related to the final status of the territory, thus hampering progress.

The design of peace operations requires the creation of all the necessary mechanisms to rebuild state structures and national capacities. The Security Council recently recognized the importance and urgency of the restoration of justice and the rule of law in post-conflict societies to redress past abuses and to promote national reconciliation. Special attention must also be paid to the situation of women, in particular to ending the impunity for violations of their rights during armed conflict as part of a strategy to attain peace and justice.

In the design of international partnerships, it is important to define more precisely what is meant by "partnership", as there are different kinds of partnership in different situations. The UN has made good headway in this respect, but it has yet to find a way to combine the more targeted contributions of UN agencies with the large-scale assistance of the major international financial institutions, such as the World Bank. Continuity in funding, and equity related to the objective needs of different peacebuilding situations, are fundamental concerns. Bilateral agencies need to guard against the dispersion and competitiveness that can result from supporting a plethora of their own national NGOs in post-conflict situations. Most importantly, the roles of regional organizations and neighbouring states in post-conflict also need to be examined and clarified.

Accountability. The question of transparency and accountability should also be addressed at different levels – local, national and international. If external actors are to be held accountable for their performance, the beneficiaries of their assistance must play a more direct role in this process. There has been some experience with donors reporting to the parliament of the Solomon Islands, which has confirmed the need to build institutional and human capacity in parliaments for peacebuilding oversight. A challenge for external actors is that peacebuilding should be both transformative and nationally owned; a difficult balance indeed.

Horizontal exchanges. There are initiatives promoting horizontal exchanges within the framework of the African Union and sub-regional organizations involving countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. It is important, however, not to make such consultations and exchanges between different actors overly bureaucratic or formal and to use such opportunities for multi-actor interchange, including across continents.

Evaluation. Knowledge gained through evaluation is vital and should not be limited to assessing how external actors have performed. The collection of baseline data, monitoring and evaluation of progress in peacebuilding should be carried out by institutions within crisis countries. Their work should be based on the need to rebuild the capacities of the state, *inter alia*, to inform policy, guide priorities and support resource allocation, as well as become an integral part of the new systems that are being built. This type of knowledge also strengthens accountability at the local level and promotes national ownership.

Training. The proposals on training and orientation briefings have clear merits but ought to fall within the management responsibility of organizations deploying staff in the field. Even if the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the UN Staff College, the University for Peace or other learning institutes offer training, it is the responsibility of the UN and other external actors to ensure their staff have or acquire the necessary skills, competencies, sensitivity and creativity to face complex and unpredictable challenges.

DAC Guidelines. It is indeed disappointing that the DAC Guidelines are not more widely known and applied. It is simplistic to expect, however, that DAC should take all the responsibility for the dissemination of these Guidelines. They should be disseminated and made applicable by all those who have adopted them. Moreover, it is not only a matter of translating the DAC Guidelines into local languages, but also of adapting them to local conditions. The DAC Guidelines should be used more extensively in peacebuilding training programmes.

It was pointed out that peacebuilding after state collapse can be more challenging than post-conflict, since in the former case there is a higher risk of relapse into conflict. Lastly, external actors asked why the proposals were placed only in the context of post-conflict situations. The proposals tabled at the Conference were found to be also relevant to enhancing development work from the angle of conflict prevention.

Commentator representing internal actors:
Bernardo Arévalo de Léon, Director of the WSP International Regional Office for Latin America and Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Guatemala

The political nature of peacebuilding is evident and has been reiterated several times during this meeting. Not only do external actors intervene in a political context, they also become political actors. Their intervention necessarily modifies the balance of power between the various national actors. It is not neutral, cannot be neutral and should not be neutral. Peacebuilding presupposes promoting social change on the basis of democratic values and respect for human rights. Recognizing this helps to clarify the roles and limits of external actors in the eyes of internal actors.

Societies emerging from conflict are by their nature unconsolidated polities. They find themselves in a state of flux, going through constant change and uncertainty. Different forces exist: some support positive change and others want to prevent change. By definition, these societies confront enormous problems of representation and legitimacy. This is the reason why it is not easy for external actors to identify national and local counterparts. There is no one counterpart capable of legitimizing all actions. There is no one counterpart truly

representative of the whole society. External actors have to be aware that this is a difficult game to play with far-reaching implications.

Dialogue is not a panacea. The challenge lies in finding out when and how to use dialogue. In Guatemala, had there been a true dialogue process during the peace negotiations, the peace accords would probably never have been signed. Later on, however, it was important to translate the peace accords into a document that was owned by the society. Dialogue was therefore crucial, and turned out to be more effective not as one national dialogue alone, but rather as many dialogues on specific issues at different levels.

Accountability of external actors to the beneficiaries of assistance is also important, but the political institutions in post-conflict countries do not always function as they should. External actors may end up becoming accountable to unrecognized and illegitimate parliaments. Other ways of enhancing accountability also need to be found.

The Guatemala survey confirmed that the peacebuilding community in that country was unaware of the DAC Guidelines. The only donor official who knew the Guidelines mentioned that they were too cumbersome to be applied. The challenge is thus to make this institutional knowledge available to the wider peacebuilding community, which will have to find ways of reconciling two sets of expectations, those emanating from donor capitals and those of internal actors.

Lastly, there has been much discussion about harmonization of donor policies and procedures. Is it really possible and desirable? Internal actors would surely feel terrified were they to be confronted by a united group of external actors forming a sort of cartel, who have already agreed on what needs to be done in that particular country. If harmonization is nevertheless necessary, it has to be pursued with the priorities and needs of internal actors foremost in mind.

Plenary Session IV: Taking the Process Forward (Chair: Martti Ahtisaari)

Summation (Matthias Stiefel and Neclâ Tschirgi)

The key recurring themes that have been raised during this event and have been identified as central to and underpinning post-conflict peacebuilding are:

1) A recognition that conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding are two sides of the same coin. It is impossible to deal with post-conflict peacebuilding without integrating the notion of conflict prevention into peacebuilding strategies, thinking and instruments.

2) International efforts need to begin further upstream of the process. That is, external actors have to build into the peace agreements they broker and the development assistance strategies they devise a conflict-sensitive approach to diplomacy, human security and development. This is crucial for the harmonization of policy and coherence in peacebuilding practice.

3) The regional dimension of conflicts was also frequently raised. It was felt that more emphasis should be placed on the role of neighbours and not just on donors and distant actors. It is important to tap into regional capacities and resources and to understand the regional dynamics, where conflicts often find their origins, but also their solutions.

4) There was broad support for the idea of defining certain "rules" of local ownership. This aspect needs to be further reflected upon and integrated into the kind of analysis presented in the Conference Document.

5) The proposals should not be read as restricted to African institutions, since they can also be implemented in Latin America, Asia and other regions.

6) Data collection, evaluation and monitoring should be the realm of internal actors rather than just the task of external actors and international institutions.

7) All institutions – and especially bilateral agencies – should tailor some of these proposals to their needs and think how to apply the three "ones" into the peacebuilding field: one policy framework, one coordinating mechanism and one monitoring and evaluation system.

Peacebuilding is a core element of the peace and security challenges facing the world today. The international community is currently grappling with a whole range of difficult cases, and more will certainly arise in the future. External actors do have to learn to do better. They do have to learn collectively how to prevent crises and, if they do arise, they should be able to respond in a way which helps countries deal with and cope with the legacy of conflict in a much more sustainable way.

External actors tend to operate in emergency mode and to think that history can be changed overnight with a peace agreement. They have to recognize that societies that have undergone sometimes decades of conflict take time to heal and change. The bitter memories of war are carried from generation to generation and eventually become the root causes of the next war, unless the cycle of conflict is broken.

The difficulty of getting peacebuilding right is manifested in multiple ways. First, there is a technical and institutional dimension to these problems that has to do with streamlining procedures and aid mechanisms. Second, there is a political dimension, as peacebuilding is highly politicized. The extent to which external actors become political players is often underestimated. Third, it is an issue of attitude, respect and humility. External actors tend to adopt an attitude of superiority and to think that they know better than the internal actors. Above all, a change in attitude is required.

Following through on the Conference (Ibrahim A. Gambari, Under-Secretary-General/Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations)

This Conference is both important and timely. It is important because of the centrality of peacebuilding to the reduction of suffering and promotion of human welfare, which are the

raison d'être of the United Nations. It is timely because of the ongoing fundamental re-examination of the role of the UN as the premier multilateral actor in the promotion of global peace, security and development.

The focus on the role of internal actors in peacebuilding is not to negate the importance – and sometimes the crucial impact – of both a discreet and forceful external diplomacy. But such diplomacy must be understood as facilitation, nudging or even pushing the protagonists, as necessary, but not as a substitute for the interaction between and the leading role of the protagonists themselves. The parties to a conflict have the primary responsibility for finding their own solutions.

The emphasis placed on inclusive and therefore legitimate dialogue processes among the internal stakeholders in post-conflict societies is very welcome. Healing a fractured society takes more than quick military or diplomatic fixes; it requires opening the political space to all the internal stakeholders.

In peacebuilding, external actors must not only understand what is "right to do", but must also "do it right". There has been progress in understanding what "the right thing" is, but they seem to be struggling with how to "do it right". The challenge today remains: how can external actors "do peacebuilding right"? In this regard, this Conference has endorsed a package of proposals, all of which go some way to "doing it right". The task now is to take these proposals forward.

For a start, those organizations and bodies identified in the proposals should feel that they have a mandate from this meeting to take action as appropriate: this would mean elaborating the proposals in more detail, so as to make them implementable and able to attract funding. It is also important to begin thinking about the necessary mechanism to follow up on the proposals as a whole.

Such a mechanism should also support and encourage each of the organizations identified in the proposals in moving forward and, in this regard, it would be desirable to promote synergies among them for greater effectiveness in peacebuilding. Lastly, it is also hoped that the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel will take note of these proposals.