'Connecting the Dots':

An Integrated Approach to Peacemaking, Peacebuilding and Development

**A workshop co-hosted by Interpeace and
the Peacebuilding and Stabilization Unit of the Government of the Netherlands**

Summary Report *(draft)*
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Introduction

This report provides a brief summary of the discussions that took place at a joint workshop co-hosted by Interpeace and the Peacebuilding and Stabilization Unit of the Government of the Netherlands on peacemaking, peacebuilding and development on 8 June 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop took place under Chatham House Rules and so none of the input or views, other than introductions and welcoming remarks have been attributed. It was acknowledged from the outset that a three-hour workshop on this subject could not be exhaustive. The purpose of the workshop was therefore to canvass perspectives and discuss strategic approaches on how best to integrate short, medium and longer term approaches to peacemaking, peacebuilding and development in societies emerging from violent conflict. The workshop also served to prompt the thinking of various stakeholders on the practicalities and strategic challenges associated with this exercise, as well as to frame some ideas for an agenda for future endeavors in order to better translate the rhetoric of a holistic approach into the pragmatic integration of diverse strategies.

The underlying assumption of this workshop, reinforced by the introductory inputs by the co-hosts, was the acknowledgement of the fact that the path to building durable peace is neither linear nor neatly sequential. By the same token, the evolution of objectives in the move from the short term goals of stopping the bloodshed, to the longer-term aspiration for sustainable peace in societies emerging from violent conflict, was quickly recognized as a matter of common cause amongst mediators, peacebuilding practitioners and development actors alike. Political, developmental and identity-based issues are more often than not inextricably intertwined in the complex trajectory of conflicts, both at the local and at the national and regional levels. In this sense, it makes little sense to falsely segment the roles of political, social and developmental actors. This perspective was implicitly recognized in the original outline of the goals of the joint workshop, which stated:

"Peacebuilding is more often than not used as a vague concept. One interpretation of peacebuilding is sequential: it is the phase that comes after the stabilization and early recovery and therefore more long term and closely interlinked with development. Another interpretation is more holistic: it is what is done to restore relationships and basic trust between individuals, groups and of people in their institutions, and to strengthen the capacities throughout a society to manage its conflicts without violence. This view would envisage the peace-making process or mediated political settlement as one important moment within a wider peacebuilding continuum."

However, these common sense assumptions do not translate as easily into the practice of integrated strategy, coordination and coherence amongst the range of actors in the mediation, peacebuilding and development fields. Indeed, there are some inhibiting factors that need to be identified, named and creatively addressed. Among others, these are: the challenges of segmented rather than integrated

funding in this arena; the lack of coordination and coherence in the operations of the 'international community'; different political priorities and an emphasis on different players/stakeholders in the peacemaking, as opposed to peacebuilding or development sectors; substantially divergent practices behind the increasingly common rhetoric of "local ownership"; and inconsistency in the extent to which key local stakeholders and particularly marginal or vulnerable groups who might not be politically articulate or organized in the political settlement processes, but who nonetheless have a critical interest and role in the durability of peacebuilding are fully integrated and have the capacity to engage in these processes. In this latter regard, the particular role and standing of women and the gender discourse more generally, requires specific attention if it is not to be reduced to symbolic gesture, rather than a substantial (and indispensible) dimension of peacemaking, peacebuilding and development strategies alike. Finally, it would also be inadequate to fail to recognize the risks of competition – both over resources and over the relative importance of institutional mandates – within and between those who self-identify as peacemakers, peacebuilders and development actors, despite acknowledgements from all sides that this is not helpful.

With these concerns in mind, the joint workshop framed some key questions for discussion:

- *What is the appropriate role of development strategies and approaches in the political mediation process and what are the risks at play?*
- *How do linkages between mediation, peacebuilding and development actors and processes contribute to long term peace? How can we ensure coherence between objectives, principles and activities of mediation and peace processes (short term) and development (long term)?*
- *How can we strengthen the coordination between political actors and development actors?*
- *How to ensure linkages between national actors and international actors in political mediation and development discussions?*

The workshop discussion summarized below, broadly engaged these issues. As a platform for the discussion, brief inputs were made on two country cases – those of **Guatemala** and **Burund**i – as well as a further input reflecting on some donor-government perspectives on this range of issues.

Summary of the Main Discussions

The workshop was opened by President John A. Kufour, former President of Ghana and Chair of Interpeace's Governing Council. In his opening remarks, President Kufour noted that:
"… [W]hile a more intense collaboration between those activities would certainly be desirable, it also comes with a certain number of inherent dilemmas that the various actors involved in those stages of a peace process need to discuss. This event is intended as a first step to identify the dilemmas and questions that such a dialogue will have to address…"

His opening remarks were followed by introductory comments and words of welcome by Mr. Koen Davidse, one of the co-hosts and Director of the Peacebuilding and Stabilization Unit of the Government of Netherlands. He emphasized the need for a holistic approach and encouraged participants to consider the particular challenges of security and the role of security forces, and the specific role (and frequent exclusion) of women in these processes. He emphasized that the challenges to sustainable peace were often embedded in the patterns of exclusion of key groups from peacemaking, peacebuilding and development processes, and encouraged those participating to consider the topic through the lens of a violence prevention approach, which reaches beyond the shorter-term cessation of existing hostilities.

Scott Weber, Director-General of Interpeace, focused in his opening remarks on the need to view these 'debates' through the eyes of local actors in the affected societies. He emphasized that for most of these local actors, the processes of peacemaking, peacebuilding and development are in many respects 'indivisible' in the first place and that for them there may be "no dots to connect." He suggested that the inclination to view peace as a series of phases is more the product of the international community with

different organizations and agencies looking at conflicts through their own mandates resulting in "an agency-induced glaucoma". On this basis, he encouraged participants at the workshop to think 'outside of the boxes' that have come to traditionally segment different roles and role-players.

The workshop discussion was facilitated by Graeme Simpson, a Senior Advisor to Interpeace. It was attended by approximately 35 participants from various peacemaking, peacebuilding and development agencies, research think-tanks and governmental agencies, as well as members of Interpeace's Governing Council. The perspectives set out in this summary report are not attributable to any individual and do not represent the views of either Interpeace as an organization, or the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The workshop began by considering two case studies. The first of these was **Guatemala** where the signing of a comprehensive peace accord (rather than a mere cessation of hostilities) included an elaborate framework for socio-political transformation. This example therefore presented a key opportunity to consider the relationship between the shorter-term peace process and a longer-term peacebuilding and development agenda. It also offered some challenging insights into problems associated with the actual implementation of the peace accords, the specific role of the international community, as well as challenges around inclusion and participation of key stakeholders in the process. In the course of the conversation it was pointed out that in Guatemala, a key feature of the process was that the Peace Accords were produced by a process of democratization, rather than democracy being ushered in by the Peace Accords. It was noted that the process was domestically driven and that although the negotiations of the Accords was largely driven by two political actors – the government and the counter-insurgency – there was a parallel process involving civil society stakeholders, who were able to submit proposals into the process from time to time. As regards the specific role of the international community, it was suggested that although the process was substantially assisted by the involvement of international actors, this remained driven and shaped by the ability and capacity of local actors to lead the process, but who frequently invoked the involvement of international actors as a way of driving their own domestic agendas.

The second country case considered was that of **Burundi**. In this case, in contrast to Guatemala, it was pointed out that the process was a long and arduous, involving multiple groups, and which extended both before and after the signing of the Arusha peace agreement – ultimately only drawing in some key rebel groups as much as ten years after it began. It was noted that the peace process was also actively facilitated by outside mediators and that in this instance it was primarily oriented around engaging the legacy of ethnic conflict and was centrally focused on navigating between key political and military players, sometimes at the expense of an engagement with underlying fault-lines of violence and conflict at the local level. It was pointed out that one of the major dilemmas in the Burundian process was the challenge of delivering on the developmental 'peace dividends' that were expected by the population and which were seen as a 'promise' of the peace process. In this light, it was stated that the main objective of the political parties and military groups was to secure their own positions of political power and influence, at the expense of the wider population who were still "waiting for bread". It was ultimately suggested that the failure to adequately attend to the development agenda in the peace process produced as one of its side effects, a slide towards enduring problems of banditry and criminality in the country.

After these two cases were briefly discussed, attention was turned to some reflections on how these issues might be contemplated from the perspective of a bilateral aid /donor country, with a dual concern for both political processes and peace and stability on one hand, as well as for the development agenda on the other. Several questions were canvassed, including how to move beyond the allure of the short-term global political spotlight, to more sustained support for long-term peacebuilding processes that might be less tolerable for home-country tax-paying constituencies, especially in tough economic times. A further challenge was also noted in the danger that the segmentation of funding channels for governance/democratization, human rights and development, might in fact bump up against the more elaborate objectives of coordination and coherence in the arenas of peacemaking, peacebuilding and development.

In response to these questions and the substance of the earlier discussion of the Guatemala and Burundian cases, it was firmly asserted that there is a clear recognition on the part of some bilateral donor countries investing in peace and development, of the need to bring the longer-term issues and actors into the peace process from early on, in the interest of addressing the security and peace dividends simultaneously. This was not naively asserted, but was mindful of the dangers of over-crowding the delicate early stage of peace negotiations with both numerous actors and too many issues. However, the example of Afghanistan was raised and it was asserted by way of illustration that there is a grave danger in investing in security and in security forces in the country, without investing in parallel in the 'scaffolding' of a vibrant civil society in that country, as a development priority. Also in this context, it was noted that there are some interesting country-specific examples of smartly integrated funding channels, particularly through the lens of holistic "reconstruction" objectives. However, it was also acknowledged that monitoring, control and strategic leverage is not always as functional in practice as it may appear to be in principle and that donor countries still need to do more to "integrate the pots" as a part of "connecting the dots" of peacemaking, peacebuilding and development.

After these initial conversations, the topic was thrown open to the floor for general conversation in which several of these themes and issues were pursued and a number of new ones were put on the table. This note will not do justice to the rich conversation which transpired, but will endeavor to capture some of the main debates and points made.

A key conversation was prompted by the proposition that mediated peace processes are complicated enough without being overloaded with the weighty responsibility of finding accords on key social, political and developmental issues, for which these processes are often not optimally suited anyway. Furthermore, it was posited that these fragile peace processes and the role of those mediating or facilitating them, may well be overtaxed already, without the addition of more actors, concerned with longer-term developmental and peacebuilding policy and approaches. It was suggested that as important as these issues may be, in some instances they simply weren't a short-term priority. It was also suggested that it might rather be more important to build mediation expertise and sustain it, not only in national processes, but at the local level. It was clearly acknowledged that this perspective ought not to be treated as a rule, but was dependent on the context of the peace process and the conflict analysis in any particular country and so some processes might be more suited to early accommodation of longer-term peacebuilding and development approaches than in other cases.

This in turn prompted a range of responses. It was recognized by several participants that there was a clear need to respect the short-term risks to newly created peace processes. However, it was also clearly recognized that failure to engage the wider peacebuilding and development agendas early in the process may well mean that these issues instead present risk factors for re-emerging violent conflict at some later point in the process. For some this was articulated as the need to recognize that even if these issues did not get priority attention early on, they nonetheless need to be on the agenda so that the whole "peacebuilding toolbox" is being utilized in an integrated way and the medium to longer term objectives are recognized, anticipated and engaged as early as possible. A further perspective on this was that there are dangers implicit in the changing role of different stakeholders through the peacebuilding continuum. It was noted that the 'champions' of the peacebuilding and development agenda are often unlikely to be the same players who are at the table in the peacemaking negotiations. Both from the perspective of continuity, and from the perspective of ensuring that the spaces for engaging the underlying causes of violent conflict are not actually narrowed or shut down by political elites or armed groups, it was thus argued that there is a simple utility in ensuring that peacebuilders with an eye on conflict-sensitive development approaches should be involved in an integrated peacebuilding process as early as is possible.

These views were picked up upon and were illustrated through particular examples. One such example that was raised was the case of Sierra Leone where it was argued that many of the deeper peacebuilding and development issues that potentially underpinned the conflict in that country, were not on the agenda during the formal process of forging the peace agreements. A strong view was expressed that this served to exclude some of these "structural" considerations from the process and that this played a significant role in the continued lack of resolution of fundamental questions such as land and resource allocation and

the fundamental distribution of power within Sierra Leonean society. It was suggested that precisely because these issues were not contemplated as integral to the peace settlement, that the political space to deal with them is in fact harder to carve out in the wake of that process, with the result that these key issues have still not been adequately addressed.

Other examples that were raised to illustrate these concerns included the cases of Zimbabwe and Kenya, as well as DRC. In this instance the cautionary note that was articulated was of situations in which the political elite and military groups might find common cause at the negotiating table, where the resulting power sharing arrangements might ultimately serve to: a. build elite consensus around *not* dealing with accountability for past wrongs; b. facilitate political pacts which ultimately reward past violent activities or which serve to sustain a "winner-takes-all" perspective (which implies that access to state power also enables the opportunity for exploitation of key resources through this new vehicle); or c. simply facilitate elite pacts for sharing the spoils of conflict and state power. All these results are at the expense of long term peacebuilding and development objectives and prospects, and are, more often than not, premised on the absence of these objectives – and those stakeholders that champion them – at the negotiating table. Finally, it was noted that the potential consequences of these sorts of elite pacts and the political discourses they rely upon, can do lasting damage to the integrity and trust in the very process of democratization, as well as compromising the building of durable peace and development. In this context it was also noted too that there are some contexts where the kind of peace agreements that are reached can actually do harm.

However, in response to this range of stated concerns for a more integrated peacebuilding process, it was also noted that economic development offered as a 'peace dividend' or as a 'reward' for peace settlements – when integrated and on the table during peacemaking processes – can also have a detrimental effect and can 'pollute' good faith negotiations in several ways. It was recognized that as an incentive or "carrot" to move the peace process forward this can have its utilitarian advantages, however, it can also create unrealistic and false expectations that can provoke future volatility and insecurity. An interesting point was raised in this context, which reoriented the logic of an integrated approach to peacemaking, peacebuilding and development by suggesting that this was not just about the importance of peacebuilders and development practitioners being integrated into the peacemaking processes, but rather that this also entailed the importance of mediation and negotiation expertise being deployed in the course of development processes. Premised on the recognition that development processes, rather than being inherently functional to durable peace, in fact have great potential to provoke conflict – particularly in the context of fragile states or societies emerging from violent conflict – this perspective argued that conflict-sensitive development approaches also need the support and expertise of peacemakers and mediators. This was framed not as a counter but as a complement to the earlier arguments for an integrated and holistic approach, which understood the need for carefully sequencing and timing different interventions as a strategic approach and which presented challenges to development actors to find new ways of engaging these challenges.

A further broad theme of the conversation revolved around the role of international donors and the "international community" and how they relate to these notions of an integrated or holistic approach. Views on this issue varied substantially on the nature of the challenges faced by the international community. Some self-consciously expressed substantial cynicism about the very existence of an international "community" and strongly suggested that they "do more harm than good" in respect of the matters under consideration. This view also led to some skepticism about the prospects of integrating peacebuilding and developmental strategies, if the primary development aid agencies could not "get on the same page" about this. Others suggested a more moderated set of concerns, for example, relating to competing interests within donor and aid communities which undermined coordinated action on these objectives for integrated approaches. An example that was cited was related to debates over whether or not humanitarian aid and development aid could be aligned in this way. For still others, there was a different view. This was expressed through the suggestion that how the 'international community' is constituted and how it might operate, varies significantly from country context to country context. This perspective suggested that different development aid and donor countries have diverse interests in various conflict or post-conflict societies: Portugal and the EU are major players in the case of Guinea Bissau, but the donor community is substantially different, for example, in Somalia. This view went

beyond just arguing that there are therefore several international *communities*, to argue strongly that what mattered was how the particular range of international players support a national vision and local peacebuilding processes in any given context. This also provoked some debate on the demands this placed on country-level leadership and the sometimes unrealistically high expectations that national leaders would be willing and able to guide and direct international actors. This aspect of the conversation went full circle when the retort was expressed that actors from the international community do not operate on the basis of the needs and expectations of the people and local stakeholders in the countries that they engage with, but rather that individual donor countries act primarily on the basis of their own agendas – despite the rhetoric about the importance of local ownership. On this basis it was argued that international actors still run the real risk of doing harm in these fragile contexts.

An important aside that is worth noting was framed by a comment about how we need to reflect on what we refer to when we talk about the 'international community.' The specific point was made that the international 'business community' has its own particular challenges and trajectories, which can also play a potentially positive – but frequently very negative –role in 'connecting the dots of peace and development' in societies emerging from conflict.

At this point the conversation re-oriented slightly and a new theme emerged, refocusing attention on the internal or national actors rather than the role of the international community. This was initiated by the argument that the key issue in seeking to develop holistic approaches to peacebuilding, peacemaking and development, is not how the international community produces its own coordination, but rather how it can help or support the coordinated action of local actors. In partial response to this assertion, it was also pointed out that we cannot afford to "romanticize" a unitary notion of local community any more than we can mystify the international 'community'. In particular, it was emphasized that there is a need to critically assess the relationship between leadership and the population at large in these countries, mindful of precisely the dangers of elite pacts or manipulation, which operate at the potential expense of local populations. These distinctions were viewed as critical to ensuring that societies emerging from conflict are resilient and able to sustain peace and resist new patterns of violence or a return to violent conflict. To this end, it was proposed by some participants that an important agenda would be to properly and scientifically assess those countries or communities that have successfully sustained fragile peace. An example that was cited was Interpeace's peacemapping project in the Somali Region and reference was also made to the South African transition more generally.

These last threads of the conversation were drawn together by some speakers who pointed out that the objectives of 'connecting the dots' – as challenging as this was – could not be attained by exclusively focusing on *either* the local or the global, or treating these as strategic choices between focusing on the roles of external actors or internal actors. Instead, it was asserted that this was about a dynamic relationship between the two which placed at the centre the internal actors, but which recognized that although their priorities might differ, there was some mutual dependence between these two sets of actors. In this context it was also pointed out that it might be misleading to frame all conflicts and their potential "resolution" by reference to the boundaries of nation states. Indeed, attention was drawn to the real danger that when we think of integration or a holistic approach, we nonetheless seek to frame national solutions to violent conflicts that often transcend the boundaries of nation states. It was argued that sophisticated conflict analyses are imperative and an understanding of the fact that national peace processes can be as easily be undone by local conflicts as by cross-border conflicts, should facilitate an understanding that most conflicts today are simultaneously internationalized and localized. This strongly suggests, it was argued, that the goals of coordination and coherence in peacemaking, peacebuilding and development, must recognize the symbiotic relationship between the local and the global and must therefore be operationalized simultaneously at local, national, regional and global levels.

Conclusion: Some reflections and setting an agenda

In drawing conclusions, synthesizing the conversations and framing some agenda points for ongoing discussion on this topic, the workshop facilitator noted that it was very difficult to neatly summarize the diverse range of inputs and perspectives that were shared in the course of the workshop. Nonetheless,

there were some overarching themes that did come out of the conversation, many of which prompted new and interesting questions which could deepen the discussion and the analysis of how to build an integrated approach to peacemaking, peacebuilding and development. These might include:

✓ In seeking coordination and coherence in these interventions, it is critical to acknowledge that peacebuilding processes are not linear, that priorities and opportunities may change over time, gains made may be reversed, and that what is possible at any given point may rely heavily on the traction and credibility of the peace itself and the resulting perceptions of safety and security. For this reason, it is critical to seek every opportunity to integrate longer term peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development objectives into negotiated and mediated peace processes.

✓ The non-linear nature of the peacebuilding continuum, itself provides a range of opportunities (sometimes dangerous opportunities) for sequencing different kinds of peacebuilding interventions. Sometimes this requires opportunistic or responsive interventions. In this respect, pursuing an integrated or holistic approach is a matter of 'high strategy' rather than a matter of 'high principle'. However, it was also clearly recognized by participants in the workshop that an all-inclusive approach to peacemaking and peacebuilding – as a matter of principle – could overload the process with unrealistic expectations based on the assumptions that peacebuilding is about almost everything, or that peacemakers are needed in virtually every situation.

✓ The importance of integrating peacebuilding and development into peacemaking strategies is based on the fact that mediated peace agreements simply do not always address the underlying causes of conflict. This is not a naïve or simplistic general statement about the need to address "root causes", but rather is an understanding of the importance of a forward-looking *prevention* approach, that is rooted in sound conflict analysis which endeavours to understand and anticipate the fault-lines and risk factors for future violence, rather than just past violence.

✓ A critical motivation for a holistic approach is based on the recognition that mediated or negotiated peace processes might often exclude key stakeholders who are not politically or militarily organized or articulate. These patterns of inclusion or the entrenchment of exclusion might have a fundamental impact on the sustainability of the peace that is built. Prevention-based peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development have the potential to provide platforms for the engagement of otherwise marginalized and vulnerable groups, thereby potentially insulating – rather than possibly undermining – fragile peace agreements.

✓ Not enough attention was paid to the role of gender in violent conflict, as well as in peacebuilding, peacemaking and development. Yet as a thematic lens, gender (both related to the impact of violence on women and their role in peacemaking, peacebuilding, and development, as well as a focus on the roles of young men and masculinity) offers a critical tool for integrating and bridging the peacemaking, peacebuilding and developmental interventions and engagements.

✓ Formal democratization, peace agreements and even the constitutionalization of politics in previously divided and violence-ridden societies, frequently fails to achieve change at the systemic and structural levels. This means that for some marginal and vulnerable groupings in societies emerging from violence, the danger is that amidst all the anticipated changes, the problem is that too much stays the same in their everyday life. The danger that peace processes may entrench rather than redress the experiences of exclusion – for example of young men – may, in the absence of human security and developmentally-based peacebuilding, provoke a new generation of disaffected and potentially violent protagonists.

✓ Peace processes which forge agreements between political elites, frequently fail to translate into rebuilding relationships and re-stitching the social fabric at the community level in societies emerging from conflict. The insight that there is a symbiotic relationship between the local and the global when it comes to the durability of peace and the fault-lines for re-emerging conflict, provides a vital warning sign that, on one hand, national narratives are vulnerable to unresolved local grievances, whilst on the other local peacebuilding and development processes remain vulnerable if national peace-making

is fragile or undermined. The same is true where sub-regional or regional conflicts are treated exclusively through national level interventions.

✓ Finally, it is clear that economic development is not simply a catch-all solution to violence and conflict in formerly war-torn societies. Not only is development strategy itself hotly contested, but in fact economic development frequently provokes renewed violence in societies emerging from conflict, especially where access to and control over resources frequently lay at the heart of much of the historical conflict, or where those societies are reluctant to acknowledge and engage their own divided histories. Furthermore, an integrated and holistic approach to peacemaking, peacebuilding and development, is best equipped to address the entrenchment and sustained resilience of war-based illicit economies.

The range of points briefly discussed here, provide a creative incentive for deeper engagement in the relationship between peacemaking, peacebuilding and development. And this is by no means an exhaustive list. These are just some of the valuable avenues for thinking through a rationalization of resources, an integration of complementary strategies and the commitment to building peace that is durable.