

During discussions the participants raised a number of problems, including the following:

- The UN cannot intervene without the consent of the country concerned. This principle might eventually be changed by member states, but doing so again raises the issue of interference.
- It is difficult for the UN to intervene to impose peace in countries that are not psychologically prepared for it.
- Power vacuums may occur.
- Struggles for influence between neighbouring countries make it difficult to resolve conflicts.
- Problems such as drugs and arms proliferation must be addressed.
- Time is an essential factor. Regular funding mechanisms and standing units prepared to intervene are needed for effective prevention.
- Parties financing the war should be included in the peace process and, once committed to it, should be required to contribute to fund the process.
- Co-ordination between the UN and the sub-regional organizations should be made more systematic.
- Countries bordering an area of conflict can play an important role, provided they remain neutral.
- There should be a deterrent capability that can intervene very rapidly when a problem arises.

It is clear, however, that problems will remain unless an imaginative approach is taken to development issues in African countries. Early warning has regional, humanitarian, political and economic dimensions. Refugees can return only if there is national reconciliation and reconstruction in all the countries of the sub-region.

c) Preventive diplomacy: the experience of the OAU and of African sub-regional organizations since 1993

A regional dynamic has existed in Africa since 1993. The OAU has changed its approach. An attempt is under way to organize at the regional level, in particular through the creation of the OAU Mechanism. This has been used in Burundi; in the Congo since the 1992 elections, where its initiatives have quietened the situation, albeit without finding a solution; and in the Nigeria-Cameroon conflict. These examples are proof that the OAU has decided to act.

The OAU has developed co-operative relationships with sub-regional organizations. Since it cannot do everything, the sub-regions will have to find solutions at their level, and the OAU will intervene to support them. It can be an organization for conflict resolution only if its means are increased.