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Early warning researchers and advocates increasingly seek to influence policy-makers more effectively so that preventive action is taken to de-escalate intrastate conflict situations. In this endeavour they must seek to answer four basic questions: 1) what are the actors/organisations that are responsible for acting on early warning analysis, and have the capacity to implement rapid responses?; 2) what are the policy frameworks and bureaucratic mandates by which such decisions are made?; 3) what are the operational mechanisms, and their resource constraints, which correspond to each organisation's policy frameworks and mandates?; 4) by what processes, and in what format, should early warning be disseminated to these operational actors? This does not address, of course, the issue of what elements must be combined to constitute an effective preventive engagement operation, but such an understanding must inform this specific *strategic targeting* of actors. Let it suffice to note here that preventive peace operations, and particularly preventive peacebuilding, are understood to be much wider in scope than the perhaps outdated concept of "preventive diplomacy" suggests.¹ Inter-agency coordination between governmental foreign and defence ministries, intelligence units, development aid agencies, the UN system and its specialised agencies and funds, regional organisations, and NGOs in both donor countries and (most significantly) in conflict zones is the new operational reality for preventive peace operations. This complex and evolving policy environment demands a higher degree of routinised interaction between "early warners" and operational actors, and this paper seeks to outline some preliminary considerations which arise from the four questions posed above. While governments have an important role to play in facilitating and deploying responses, early warning must also be made more *response-oriented* - in other words, more fundamentally informed and structured by existing policy and operational realities.

I. Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Policy

While there are a number of sources (including academic/research, non-governmental, and media) of early warning information on internal conflicts, such information is rarely presented in a format relevant to policy-makers. As the 1996 joint donor evaluation of the Rwanda conflict found, what is needed is not so much information but policy-oriented analysis that will suggest logical operational responses. One could add, by stating the issue more sharply, that the debate on early warning has not yet moved forward to deal with the issue of the *process link* between early warning analysis and effective preventive action. This may be because existing early warning praxis is not effective in producing analysis (as distinct from reporting or monitoring) that clearly presents options for effective preventive action and rapid engagement policy.

"Political will" to act on early warning analysis is, no doubt, at least as important as the analysis itself. The Rwanda evaluation is only the most recent of a number of studies which have charged the international community and the UN with failing to confront conflict escalation with both political resolve as well as significant resources to