

Citizens Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa has been the scene of large-scale human suffering and conflict for decades. Marked by recurrent civil wars and border disputes, the Horn of Africa is representative of the cyclical nature of conflicts and the need to find creative ways to break these cycles of violence.

A grass roots approach and solid knowledge of the region has led to a constructive dialogue between the local governmental and civil society leaders.

With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, a Canadian NGO, Project Ploughshares, has held a series of workshops in the Horn of Africa with local civil society and leadership. Its grass roots approach and its

solid knowledge of the region has led to a constructive dialogue between the local governmental and civil society leaders.

The project involves meetings and training sessions, and supports studies done by and for the Horn of Africa's civil society leadership. This is a long-term task which requires addressing the root causes of conflict by the populations concerned.

The Peacebuilding Fund is also working directly with the UN-based War Torn Societies



Project to help develop local Somali capacity to analyze their own reconstruction challenges and address their post-conflict problems. In addition, a forum to explore the role that civil society and the diaspora might play in peacebuilding in Somalia was organized in Ottawa in July, 1998, by a Somali-Canadian NGO, with

support from the Peacebuilding Program. The workshop was well-attended and resulted in concrete recommendations to the Canadian government and NGOs in promoting civil society's role in the peace process in Africa.

