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This post-conflict reconstruction phase, the period in which a society begins to emerge from violent, internal (intra-state) conflict, is unique for one overarching reason: the violence was the result of a breakdown in established structures of governance. Common features which are characteristic of this type of conflict are:

- collapse or destruction of political order
- delegitimation of a wide range of social and political institutions
- political fragmentation and factionalisation of state and society
- disappearance of social cohesion and inter-group cooperation
- heavy militarization at institutional, societal, and cultural levels
- massive psychosocial trauma
- heavy damage to infrastructure, economy, and human resources

While it is necessary to understand post-conflict reconstruction as an inherently ongoing, long-term process, the Canadian policy interest in supporting *self-sustaining* local foundations means that our external initiatives will be short-term. Such policy initiatives will be implemented during the window of opportunity, typically from 24 to 36 months, that exists during negotiations to end a conflict and the associated cessation of hostilities. This time period allows for the establishment of preliminary community-based foundations which will sustain an effective and secure peace-building process once the international donor community has ended its external support. The challenge now is to take the accumulated research and analysis on peace-building and close the gap with the policy-making community, such that this knowledge is put into *effective policy practice*.

With this preliminary outline of the type of policy interventions envisaged, four basic priority areas for discussion were proposed: 1) determining priorities and timelines; 2) appropriate sequencing; 3) targeting actors in reconstruction; 4) implementing reconstruction. From these focused discussions, a clearer understanding of the Canadian resources for peace-building interventions was developed.