

**STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVE APPROACHES  
TO CONFLICT PREVENTION:  
THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

*Discussion Paper*  
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With the end of the cold war, the United Nations, regional and sub-regional organizations have had to assume greater responsibility for preventing deadly conflict. In struggling to respond to this challenge, experience has been gained and a number of innovative institutional mechanisms and approaches have been developed. Even so, there is an urgent need to refine what already exists and to further devise appropriate methods for more effective conflict prevention.

This meeting originates from a project commissioned by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. The project reviewed the conflict prevention work of the United Nations and a sample of regional and non-governmental organizations and offered recommendations for the further development of a suitable approach. The project culminated in a book entitled: *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict*, a complimentary copy of which will be available to all participants at the time of the conference. A copy of the Carnegie Commission's overall report, entitled *Preventing Deadly Conflict* will also be provided.

Following the completion of above-mentioned study, the next logical step seemed to be bring together those who were actually doing this work, so that they might discuss their approaches and experience, as well as their ideas about what was needed to enhance this capacity and how the obstacles which hinder their efforts might be more effectively surmounted. A proposal for such a meeting was made to the Division of Peacebuilding and Human Development of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which undertook to organize and fund this conference, in conjunction with the Canadian International Development Research Center, with input from the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the International Peace Academy and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

Accordingly, a small group of relevant staff from the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has been invited to participate in this meeting, along with a few participants from the principal NGOs which have acted as thinktanks in assisting multilateral organizations to develop their capacity for conflict prevention.

As the author of the Carnegie project, I was asked to prepare a background paper for this meeting. In doing so, I have attempted to outline some of my own thoughts about where we are and where we need to go in building a more solid and acceptable methodology for conflict prevention. It is not anticipated that all participants will agree with these views. They are offered simply to stimulate discussion on this vital topic.