

Regional organizations are also increasingly carving out a role for themselves in conflict prevention — not only the African bodies I mentioned, but also the OSCE, the OAS [Organization of American States], the Commonwealth and la Francophonie. Another recent trend is the formation of informal "coalitions of the willing" to build peace, of the kind Canada used to push successfully for the landmines treaty. Canada has just joined a new organization based on this principle, International IDEA. International IDEA has an innovative mix of developed and developing country members, all of whom are committed to supporting democratic transitions.

Finally, to mobilize and deploy Canadian skills for peacebuilding takes much longer. It requires an investment in building domestic capacity for peacebuilding. The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre — which trains civilians as well as military officers — has been one such investment. The roster of Canadian experts in human rights and democracy, CANADEM, is another. A third is the NGO-led peacebuilding capacity and training survey, whose results you will be discussing later this morning. Knowing what skills we have in Canada, and who has them, is a critical first step toward sharpening our ability to respond quickly and creatively to new opportunities.

What Are the New Issues?

Finally, what are the new, critical issues for peacebuilding? Well, I am expecting the participants in this consultation to tell me. But to judge by your agenda today, you will be working on at least four of them. My own quick take on each of them is as follows:

Gender and Peacebuilding: Canada has long been a leader in factoring the gender dimension into development assistance, and in pursuing women's equality as an international human rights issue. We need to examine the gender dimensions of peacebuilding: how conflict and conflict resolution engages and affects both men and women.

Governance: Governance is a critical concept, which even the IMF [International Monetary Fund] has now discovered. I am intrigued by the concept of the "ecology of governance", as developed by the Institute on Governance, which defines good governance as maintaining a balance between the institutions of state, civil society and the marketplace. Canadians, I think, instinctively understand this concept. It has informed our approach to funding peacebuilding projects in places such as Guatemala and Cambodia. I look forward to hearing how you will refine it in your consultations.

Community-Level Conflict Resolution: This is a critical dimension of peacebuilding. It is the level of action that most engages local people, and local capacities, in societies in conflict. It is the level of action where an awareness of the gender dimensions of peacebuilding is most likely to lead to creative solutions. The challenge is to find ways to translate the gains made from conflict resolution at the community level to the regional or national level for societies in conflict. The Peacebuilding Fund project in eastern Zaire is one attempt to do just his.

Small Arms Proliferation: Proliferation is a major threat to human security in many parts of the world. To counter it requires controlling illegal arms flows into societies in conflict. It also requires finding ways of rebuilding communities, restoring a sense of public security, and rebuilding the authority and legitimacy of the state, so that the public demand for weapons decreases. These factors tie directly into issues of governance and local-level conflict resolution.

There are also a number of specific areas of action that resonate across these four broad issues, such as developing free media and reducing the impact of conflict on children, particularly child soldiers. I will be interested to hear your views on how we tackle these issues where they converge on the ground, in countries in the shadow of deadly conflict.

Conclusion

Peacebuilding is a cross-cutting, ongoing process and a way of thinking, not simply a limited set of activities. The themes and priority countries that command our attention will evolve constantly. We will