

making it public in order to rebuild the country. The latter will help to address impunity, facilitate healing and reconciliation, and ensure the rule of law. In addition, it is meant to enhance a human rights culture in Sierra Leone. It is important to handle the relationship between the two institutions carefully, Oosterveld said, especially because both mechanisms will run concurrently and could contend for the same information. However, there are great opportunities for cooperation between the two, for example, in witness protection. Both institutions will lay the groundwork for the judicial system of Sierra Leone and most importantly, build lasting peace in the country.

Alex Neve, of Amnesty International Canada, commented that, throughout history, justice has been short-circuited and impunity has prevailed. When a country is emerging from conflict, one of the biggest challenges it faces is dealing with justice. While crimes against humanity have decreased over the last decade and recently some have been prosecuted, international jurisdiction to prosecute such crimes is currently lacking. This will begin to be remedied with the formation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was to enter into force on July 1st 2002 and would prosecute crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Seventy-six countries have ratified the Statute and will complement their national courts' jurisdiction with the ICC, however, the number of ratifying countries needs to grow and countries with high rates of human rights violations need to be encouraged to fully adopt the Statute. In order for the ICC to successfully achieve its purposes, national governments and NGOs must support the ICC with their expertise and input. In this way, the world will be able to build peace through justice.

Leon Wessels, of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in South Africa, remarked that in November 1993, although violence was still occurring in South Africa, a general excitement regarding the democratization of the country could also be felt. People showed interest in the elections and in the drafting of the constitution, however, moving forward remained a painful process. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created to provide a bridge "from the shame of the past to the hope of the future." The TRC faced several difficulties including the debate over granting amnesties to perpetrators in exchange for testimony and low participation rates due in part to the shame and denial associated with human rights violations. In spite of these issues, the commission was an important part of the healing process for South Africans. The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation was subsequently created as a follow-up to the commission.

Barbara Bedont from the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice emphasized that there are several possible approaches to crimes, including granting amnesty, as was frequently the case under Latin American military regimes in the 1970s and exposing the truth through informal mechanisms, for example, the release of East German secret police files once Germany was reunified. The question in these two cases is whether justice should be sacrificed for peace. Bedont argued that justice and peace are mutually dependent -- without justice a strong foundation for peace cannot exist. When amnesties are granted, the message that crimes are unacceptable is not sent and it is only a matter of time before the crimes will be repeated. Likewise, the suffering of victims is not properly addressed when truth is exposed through informal means. While the traditional goals of criminal justice -- retribution, rehabilitation, prevention and deterrence -- may have some forgiveness and healing to occur -- Bedont argued