

least-developed countries in the preparatory meetings leading to the establishment in 1998 of the UN-sponsored International Criminal Court [ICC]. The ICC will have jurisdiction to deal with crimes against humanity and thereby to end impunity.

These are only a sample of the initiatives we have supported through the Peacebuilding Fund; and they represent a small fraction of the range of Canadian support for peacebuilding, through bilateral and multilateral channels, in each of these countries. They do, however, provide a demonstration of what can be accomplished with a rapid-response mechanism like the Fund, in reacting to fast-breaking demands and opportunities.

What Have We Learned?

I would identify four lessons in particular that we have learned in the first 16 months of the Peacebuilding Initiative.

First, that peacebuilding depends on the willingness and the capacity of local populations to become engaged in the process. We have to avoid the presumption that outside experts from developed countries have all the answers, or can simply export the infrastructure of peace to developing countries.

Second, we need to do more work on conflict prevention. It is not enough to focus all our energies on post-conflict reconstruction. The demands of rebuilding war-torn societies, such as Bosnia or Cambodia, are enormous. There has to be a more cost-effective way to build peace than to put societies back together again after they have been torn apart by war. That is the principal message of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, which presented its final report in this auditorium yesterday. It is an issue I anticipate discussing further with the other Foreign Ministers of the P-8 prior to this year's Birmingham Summit.

African leaders, and their foreign partners, have drawn the same conclusion regarding conflict prevention from the series of conflicts across the continent over the past few years. Much work is already under way within Africa to build its own political institutions for conflict prevention. The OAU has its own unit, as does IGAD [Inter-Governmental Authority on Development] in the Horn. ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] will be doing the same for West Africa. All of these institutions are new. All need more support. But all of them send encouraging signals from African countries about their desire to co-operate in building sustainable peace in their regions.

Third, we have to work through multilateral structures to co-ordinate peacebuilding. External actors, such as Canada, will have a very minimal impact on peace unless our efforts are co-ordinated with local actors, other donors, and the neighbouring states of countries in conflict. The United Nations is the linchpin of the global security system, as we all know, and its continuing financial crisis only undermines its ability to play this role. For this reason, we have supported flexible UN mechanisms such as the Trust Fund for Preventive Action from the Peacebuilding Fund.

UNDP [United Nations Development Program] Resident Representatives have an essential role to play in co-ordinating peacebuilding activities on the ground in developing countries. The United Nations is also the place where limited-mandate peacekeeping operations and longer-term peacebuilding activities have to be pulled together. Canada was pleased that the Secretary-General's reform package of last year has strengthened the capacity of the UN Secretariat to do this.

In a rapidly moving crisis, the fastest and most effective response is often made through existing multilateral structures. If the structures are already in place — such as the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia, or MINUGUA [Mission des Nations unies au Guatemala] in Guatemala — we can respond quickly to new opportunities. For this reason, many of our initial Peacebuilding Fund projects have been through trust funds of one kind or another. If multilateral structures are not in place, or cannot respond quickly enough, the burden of co-ordinating international peacebuilding efforts often falls upon individual states. Canada learned just how onerous that burden can be when we offered to lead the Multinational Force for eastern Zaire, in the absence of a standing capacity within the United Nations to respond to such a crisis.