EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper seeks to fill a vacuum in the literature on confidence building by considering specifically African contexts of conflict resolution. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) describes CBMs as "measure[s] undertaken by states to help reduce the danger of armed conflict and of misunderstanding or miscalculation of military activities." Other definitions usually also include elements of reciprocity and verifiability and the establishment of trust and transparency between parties.

This paper suggests that greater attention needs to be paid to the *intra*-state nature of contemporary conflicts. Most conflicts in Africa and elsewhere are civil wars not interstate wars. Civil wars are more difficult to resolve peacefully than interstate wars because, among other things, at least one of the disputants is required to disarm and thereby increase its vulnerability. Other factors such as an international community which is reluctant to intervene, issues of sovereignty, the nature of the rebel movements themselves and the multi-dimensional nature of Africa's wars also present obstacles to the effective use of CBMs.

Despite these constraints, however, there are a number of techniques which can be used to establish or restore confidence and trust between disputants. A number of these borrow from traditional methods of confidence building. In this paper, CBMs are divided into three categories: 1) signals of benign intentions; 2) measures which reduce vulnerabilities associated with peace processes, and; 3) various stabilizing measures. The first of these three categories involves statements of goodwill, visits and dialogue among factions, disarmament and development projects — measures which are meant to convey an adversary's desire for peace to its opponent. The second type of CBM includes measures which minimize the adverse effects of an adversary's defection from the peace process. They include the dispersal of troops during demobilization processes, the decomposition of agreement implementation, the effective use of peace monitors, and disarmament. The third and final type of CBM involves measures which attempt to stabilize relations between parties by increasing their ability to communicate with each other. An additional section outlines various behaviours which have the effect of undermining confidence.

There are a number of supporting conditions which increase the chances of successful implementation of CBMs. First, disputants must be genuinely committed to peace and not merely using CBMs as a tactic to buy time. Second confidence building must be seen as an iterated process. Third, peace processes must involve the smallest number of participants. Fourth, confidence is best developed under existing political structures, where the effects of anarchy are minimized. Fifth, certain resources – particularly food and money – must be easily mobilized. And finally, local disputants must have trust and confidence in mediators and peacekeepers overseeing the peace process.

This paper also considers two additional issues associated with confidence building: the roles of disarmament and of the international community. Concerning disarmament, this paper argues that while the eventual reduction of weapons must be seen as an objective, local parties and mediators