

Executive Summary

This report presents the major priorities and policy responses discussed at a recent roundtable on Canada's role in supporting peace-building. Peace-building, or post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, is a unique phase in the life of societies emerging from internal strife, and demands context-specific policy initiatives. The central theme is the need for reconstruction to address the *basic human security needs* of war-torn societies in a *self-sustaining* manner. This entails donor support for local capacity-building, particularly at the level of civil society, which will secure the foundations for participatory structures of democratic governance. The importance of fostering self-reliance among local actors is stressed. To be both timely and effective, such support will be implemented during the window of opportunity which exists during negotiations to end a conflict and the associated cessation of armed hostilities. Cases such as Rwanda illustrate the need for peace-building initiatives to be implemented in an early and comprehensive way, such that political stability and social order is secured. Popular participation in a representative political process, credible law and order institutions, economic and social reconstruction, and protection of human rights are identified as priority areas in this regard. The sequence of phases in a peace process is presented in order to outline the appropriate timing of policy responses to these and other priorities. The implementation of such institutional responses in turn depends on greater collaboration and coordination among donor agencies, governments, and NGOs. Comparative advantages, division of responsibilities, and flexible strategic frameworks should be determined at the outset in order to maximise donor efficiency. While such policy and operational coordination among international actors is essential, it is also stressed that peace-building solutions cannot be imposed from the outside and must develop from the cooperative interaction of the local conflict actors. Sustainable peace-building will rest ultimately on local resources and initiatives. It is also argued that in the enacting of reconstruction, international commitments must be backed up with all the necessary resources to make them a success in practice. The report concludes with a survey of some suggestions for further research and action on how peace-building can be translated into effective, efficient, and sustainable policy initiatives.