

The G8 Africa Action Plan will build upon this positive momentum, Angell said, noting that there was a very explicit request in the NEPAD for support to emerging conflict prevention mechanisms in Africa. The transition from the OAU to the African Union is quite a remarkable development in Africa's history and it has a major bearing on the peace and security architecture of the continent, he said. Other issues such as combating the spread of illicit weapons, addressing the linkage between resource exploitation and armed conflict, providing support to societies emerging from armed conflict and consolidating peace also have an impact.

Later, replying to questions from the audience, General Dallaire remarked that new military skills are needed to deal with new types of conflicts. These are skills that we do not have because we have been concentrating on classic warfare. War-fighting skills are required where the scale demands it, but war-fighting skills are not enough. Canadian soldiers require a whole new set of skills to try and help to resolve local disputes in these conflict areas. This requires knowledge of subjects such as anthropology, philosophy and sociology. Furthermore, there is a need to integrate security and humanitarian diplomacy -- coordinated planning is essential as well as multi-skilled commanders at various levels. Despite attempts at reforms since 1989, we are still adapting Cold War methodologies and integrated approaches of NGOs, CIDA and diplomats have not been finalized.

Asked for his views on unilateral versus multilateral peace operations, General Dallaire said he did not believe singly-lead coalitions can go in and solve the problem or that the United Nations should become a "sideshow". A country that decides to kill rather than attempting to bring people to an international court reflects a very severe deficiency in the maturity of the international system and in that country particularly. For Canada, he said, many think we are a middle power, small in the big leagues, or even smaller than we actually are. Instead of taking niche opportunities, we tend to want to move within the big team and not maximize our middle power strengths -- a good work ethic, mastery of technology and no overseas colonial past. Canada can be a leader with the UN - always within the UN - in groupings protecting human security or human rights. Should we continue to support efforts in areas where we have no self-interest but where human beings are suffering? We need to use our skills, people, will and values to provide support to them for a better world.

John Harker, of Dalhousie University, argued that if we look at our partnership and the conditions in the NEPAD document -- referred to by Prime Minister Chretien as pre-conditions to sustainability, not just conditions -- we will have to provide increased help for local capacities in Africa. Aid programs of one department or another have done quite a bit to use Canadian NGOs to sustain civil society in Africa. However, we have not put as much effort as we should in ensuring that peacebuilding processes include local experiences and inputs from civil society alongside those of the elites who were trying to rearrange things for themselves or the people they ostensibly represented. This seems to me to be a major area where we could do more good.

Regarding the peace process in the Congo, the inter-communal dialogue talks fostered by Canada only two years ago have been a reasonable success. They will only work if civil society in the Congo has a sense of ownership in what processes emerge. Similarly with the Sudan, British Prime Minister Tony Blair has said he hopes the G8 will focus a lot on this conflict. However,