

direction of good governance and to make good governance issues more salient in the region, e.g., by hosting high-level conferences on specific governance issues.

Eminent persons with expertise in dispute settlement could be convened on a regular basis for off-the-record meetings with assistance staff and selected scholars to identify and analyze emerging or existing disputes. This group could also host high-level meetings of leaders or officials to analyze regional or sub-regional problems and to consider a range of possible structural solutions. In some instances, eminent persons might be asked to provide good offices or mediation (with back-up from assistance staff).

The Benefits of a Strategic Coalition of Actors: Working together would allow organizations to pool their expertise, use their comparative advantages and be better informed about individual situations, as well as the overall causes of conflict within a region. Although the activities of assistance programs themselves would be subject to the direct consent of governments, the other three sets of actors (NGOs, scholars and groups of eminent persons) would be able to offer input and assistance even in cases where a country has not become formally involved with an assistance program. Thus, such an alliance would extend the reach of assistance programs beyond that of multilateral influence.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

Through the joint efforts of member states and the secretariats of IGOs, the necessary methodology for conflict prevention in the twenty-first century is slowly being put in place. The development of a cooperative security approach based upon the promotion of agreed-upon regional and international norms, assistance, and problem solving is alleviating (at least partially) some of the concerns about sovereignty and interference in internal affairs. The evolution of quiet, proactive, effective approaches, more carefully tailored to intra-state problems and sensitivities, can be expected to gradually create greater acceptance of such procedures and overcome fears of internationalizing internal disputes. The formation of dedicated assistance programs with highly professional staff, who are knowledgeable about dispute resolution and governance issues and who can be viewed as "honest-brokers" should help to overcome concerns and fears about political "agendas" and interventionist intent, which are always present when political fora are involved.

A more integrative, holistic approach to conflict prevention, where peace and development are considered to be interdependent, should also help overcome past fears that the peace and security agenda will out-compete the social and economic agenda for scarce resources.

The development of even a few mechanisms which are effectively implementing preventive diplomacy and pre-conflict peacebuilding are helping to overcome the vacuum which previously existed, where the lack of a clear operational vision of how conflict prevention might be practiced impeded progress. New knowledge and skills about the root causes of conflict and success in finding workable solutions which can accommodate