

Enhancing Success in Conflict Prevention Recommendations for Action

There were numerous recommendations for enhancing the success of conflict prevention efforts by regional and international organizations. Of these, some addressed the oft-mentioned problem of how to create and strengthen political will for conflict prevention. There were a range of useful suggestions about how to promote better coordination between different organizations and agencies at the level of secretariats and headquarters where some of the main problems of coordination lie. Many of the participants felt that the problems of coordination in the field at the inter-agency level are less serious because field operatives are forced to work together closely and are more familiar with the problems on the ground. Successful conflict prevention, as noted above, also requires a stronger "culture of prevention." Hence, the attention given to strengthening normative and legal frameworks at regional and global levels.

Recommendations to Create and Strengthen Political Will

- Coordinated use of Group of Friends and Eminent Persons Groups to foster regional action and cultivate initiatives in conflict prevention.
- Greater use of low-level, informal conflict prevention mechanisms and approaches (e.g., Unit for the Promotion of Democracy in the OAS, High Commissioner on National Minorities in the OSCE) to foster dialogue and reduce tensions between parties.
- Establish and strengthen normative/legal rules and frameworks which create "triggers" and prompt regional and international organizations to take action when there is a crisis that threatens democracy and human rights (e.g. Council of Europe provisions regarding democracy and human rights violations; Commonwealth CMAG machinery governed by the Harare principles; Permanent Council mechanisms in the OSCE; Resolution 1080 of the OAS and the Washington Protocol - noting that the latter does not enjoy unanimous support from all OAS member states).
- Strengthen and enhance UN and regional organizational capacity in the areas of information gathering and independent analysis of conflict causes and conditions.
- Develop key tracking indicators that provide clear warning about human rights violations, loss of free speech and freedom of the press, and the threat of impending violence.

Organizational Recommendations

- Systematic analysis of "lessons learned" from failures and successes in conflict prevention within both regional and global organizations.
- Strengthen and improve institutional and inter-agency coordination through:
 - 1) revival of regular consultations between UN and regional organizations;
 - 2) exchange of personnel not just between regional organizations and the UN but among regional organizations themselves;