

early 1990s saw certain nation states embrace the interventionist mantra as NGOs also discovered their potential as peacebuilders.

Peacebuilding and NGOs

The Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict has defined peacebuilding - or "structural prevention" - as "strategies to address the root causes of deadly conflict." This is compared with "operation prevention" which consists of the strategies and tactics in the face of crisis. In other words, peacebuilding is concerned with the longer term reconstruction and development of society as to prevent deadly conflict.⁴ The Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, has defined peacebuilding as "a package of measures to strengthen and solidify peace by building a sustainable infrastructure of human security. Peacebuilding aims to put in place the minimal conditions under which a country can take charge of its destiny, and social, political and economic development become possible." Axworthy adds:

I see peacebuilding as casting a life line to foundering societies struggling to end the cycle of violence, restore civility and get back on their feet. After the fighting has stopped and the immediate humanitarian needs have been addressed, there exists a brief critical period when a country sits balanced on a fulcrum. Tilted the wrong way, it retreats into conflict. But with the right help, delivered during that brief, critical window of opportunity, it will move towards peace and stability.⁵

The ethic of peacebuilding appears to have first been raised by the former secretary general of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his 1992 *An Agenda for Peace*. Boutros-Ghali designated peacebuilding as an "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict."⁶ While he limited peacebuilding to post-conflict support of peace agreements and the rebuilding of torn societies, many observers have since expanded the purpose of peacebuilding. John Lederach has asserted that "peacebuilding is more than postaccord reconstruction... peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable,

⁴ Robert Miller, "Governance and Peacebuilding," Second Annual Peacebuilding Consultations, 1998, www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/gngoc_governance.asp

⁵ Lloyd Axworthy, "Building Peace To Last: Establishing a Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative," Notes for an address at York University, 30 October 1996, www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statements/96_state/96_046e.htm

⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, United Nations, Office of the Secretary General, 1992.