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B) Prioritising Human Security Needs

Conflict breaks out in societies where development has not focused successfully on basic human needs, where state institutions are often corrupt and inefficient. In many cases even the notion of "reconstruction" may be a misnomer, as what is required is the building of a new civil society from the ground up. Support of the people is crucial, and their expectations must be heard and addressed, particularly as these relate to recognition and participation needs. Channels for the articulation of *popular participation* are therefore very important, so that there is a general perception of alternatives to frustration and violence. This absence of alternatives and the potential for violence is particularly evident in postcolonial countries in which state centralisation of power is "over-developed", relative to the role of civil society and grassroots movements. As a consequence, root problems such as absence of accountability and representation, land alienation, refugee migration, and elite domination persist and worsen over a period of decades.

Peace-building is a window of opportunity to make peace self-sustaining. What people need for this to work, in addition to opportunities for participation, is a sense of *security*. Even in the aftermath of conflict, concerns persist at the societal level about violent crime, education for children, and employment. Such basic needs are familiar to Canadians, and this gives us a potential to provide effective assistance. In terms of the shape of such external assistance, the policies should be *technical* and oriented toward *institutional capacity-building*.

At the *state* level, this includes support for an accessible and unbiased judiciary, professional police, and non-corrupt bureaucracy. These are areas of technical expertise for Canada. At the level of *civil society*, local NGOs which were present during the conflict need to be engaged in the process of promoting democratic participation at the popular level. Donor policies should make use of this local NGO expertise for the promotion of a democratic political culture. For example, a human rights group can expand its activities to civic education on rights and democracy. The integration of these two levels is what will ensure sustainable *representative political institutions*. Government accountability will have to rest on the presence of *credible alternatives* (such as broad-based political parties, labour unions) and the *ability* of the people to support these.