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Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade



Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international

Seminar on

***STRENGTHENING CO-OPERATIVE
APPROACHES TO CONFLICT PREVENTION***
The Role of Regional Organizations and the United Nations

FINAL REPORT

March 11-13, 1998

International Development Research Centre
Conference Area, 14th Floor
250 Albert St., Ottawa

Sponsors:

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
International Development Research Centre

Co-sponsors:

Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict
International Peace Academy
United Nations Institute for Training and Research

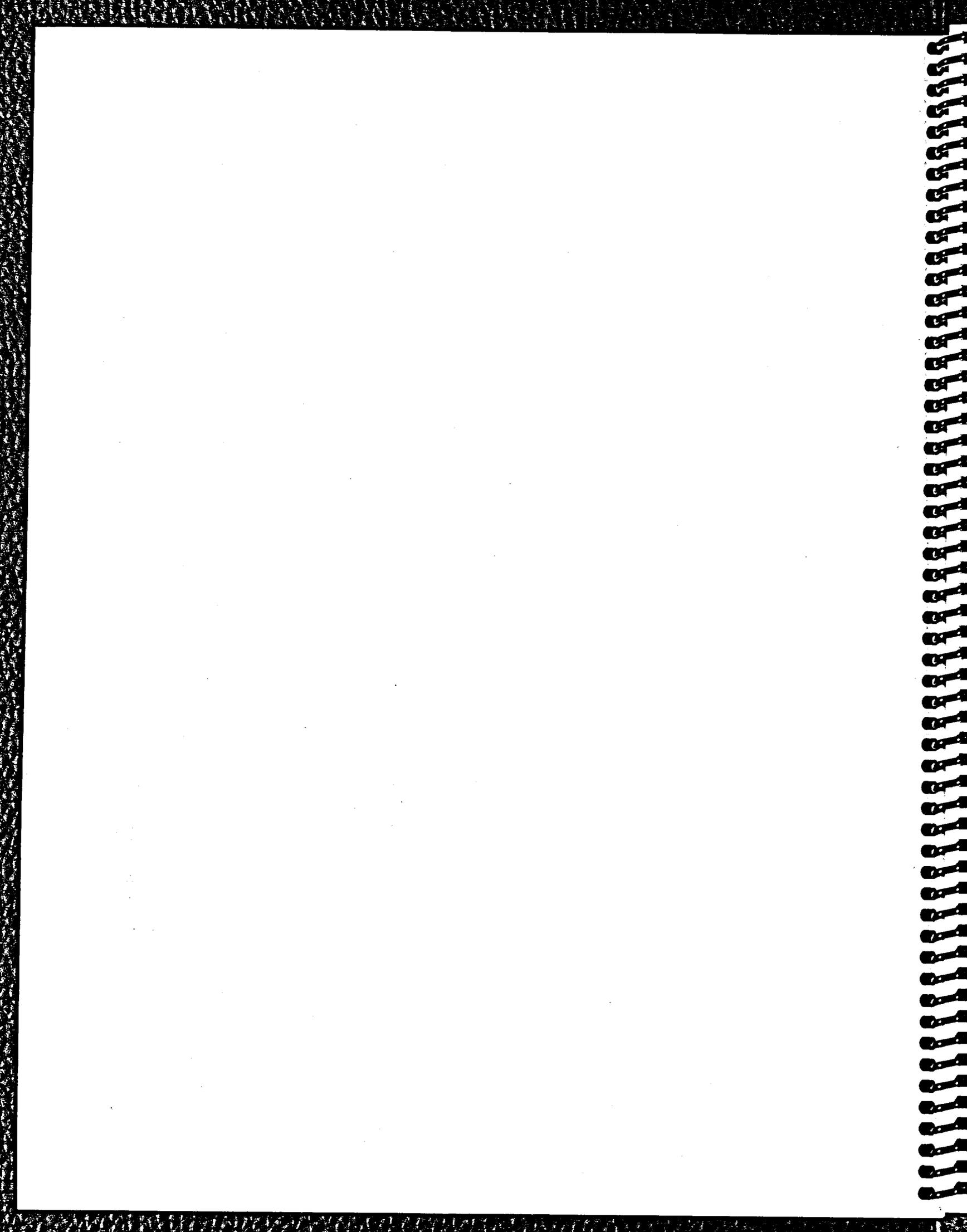


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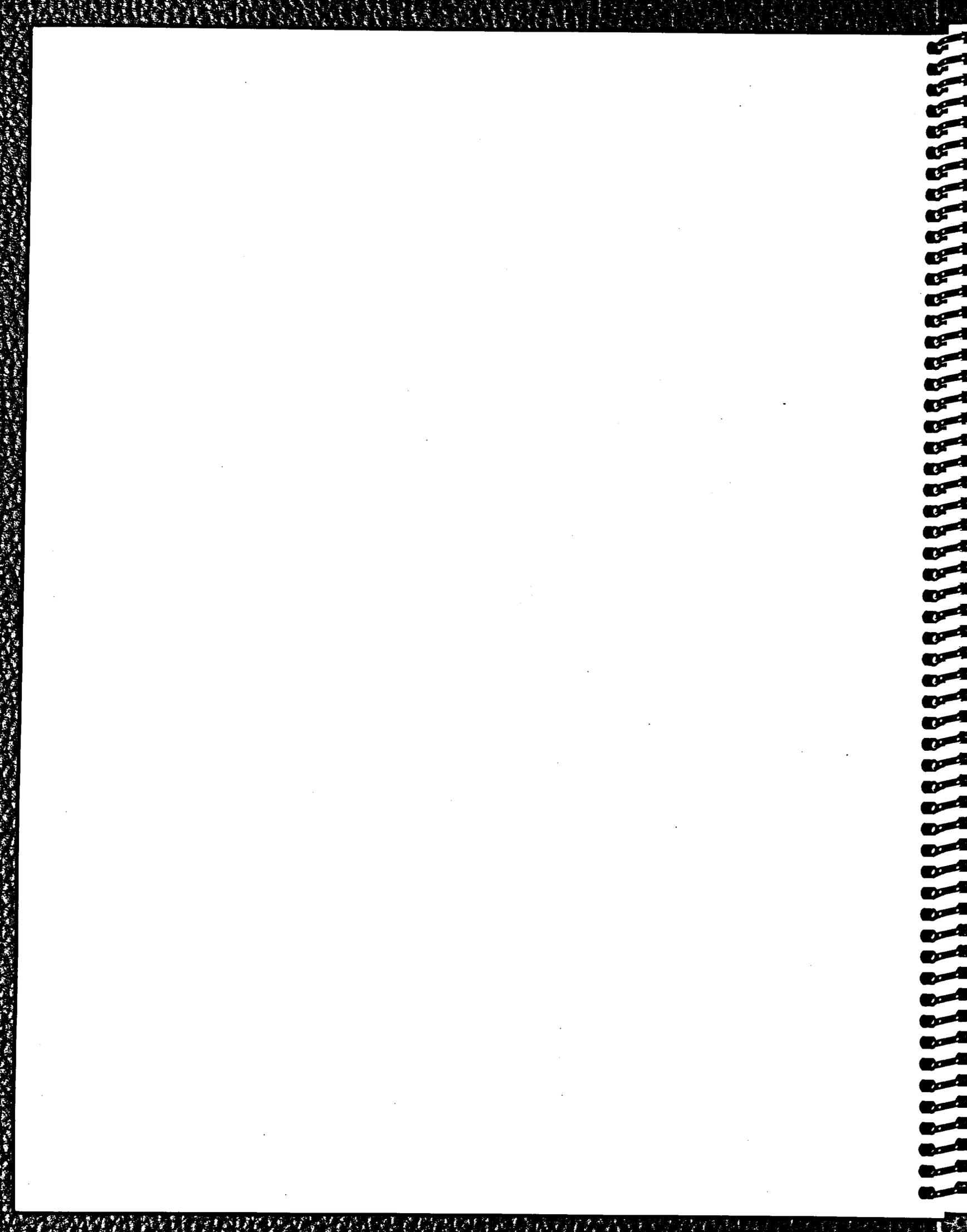
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

Since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations, regional and inter-governmental organizations have been increasingly required to assume greater responsibility for preventing deadly conflict. In response to this challenge, multilateral organizations, their member states and non-governmental organizations have developed many new co-operative approaches to conflict prevention. There is a need to take stock of recent innovations in different parts of the world, to refine these approaches and to analyze how they could be adapted to other regions. The goal of this seminar was to begin such a dialogue.

Sponsors:

The seminar was organized and sponsored by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the International Development Research Centre. It was co-sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the International Peace Academy, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. The seminar was held in Ottawa at the IDRC, from March 11-13, 1998.

Participants:

The seminar brought together senior practitioners from around the world to share their approaches, insights and experience in conflict prevention. The invitees were selected from a broad cross-section of the principal regional and inter-governmental organizations involved in conflict prevention, as well as the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Senior diplomats involved in shaping member states' policies towards these organizations were invited, along with representatives of non-governmental organizations that have worked with multilateral organizations in conflict prevention. Representatives of the organizations sponsoring and co-sponsoring the seminar also participated in the discussion. The seminar was chaired by Gordon Smith, Chairperson of the Board of Governors of IDRC and former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Focus of the Discussion:

The seminar took a broad definition of conflict prevention, covering not only preventive diplomacy, but also the promotion of human rights, democratic development, and socio-economic development. The emphasis was on preventing conflict at an early stage through preventive diplomacy and pre-conflict peacebuilding. The discussion focused principally on intra-state conflicts, since in the 1990s the vast majority of conflicts that have compelled the attention of the international community have started within states, rather than between them. Furthermore, most of the innovations in conflict prevention in this decade have been developed to address intra-state conflict. Nevertheless, the discussion also took stock of new methods to reduce tensions between states in regions of the world where the risk of inter-state conflict remains a serious challenge.

Record of the Discussion:

All participants were invited in their personal capacity and their remarks were treated as "off-the-record". A rapporteur, Professor Fen Hampson of Carleton University, was asked by the Chair to produce a report at the end of the seminar which would synthesize the analysis of various issues and recommendations made by the participants. However, the report did not attempt to be a consensus text and it did not presume that all of the seminar participants supported all of its findings. The Chair alone assumed responsibility for its content as a Canadian reference document. Based on the discussion following presentation of the first draft, the rapporteur's report was revised and finalized for dissemination by the sponsoring and co-sponsoring organizations.

Follow-Up to the Seminar:

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade undertook to follow-up the results of the seminar with the participants and the other sponsoring and co-sponsoring organizations. For further information on follow-up activities, please contact:

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The contents of this final report have been posted on the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's homepage: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding>

Copies of this final report are also available in French from the above address and on the DFAIT homepage.

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RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT



STRENGTHENING CO-OPERATIVE APPROACHES TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

The Role of Regional Organizations and the United Nations

Rapporteur's Report

The Challenge of Conflict Prevention

There are different kinds of challenges and obstacles to conflict prevention. Some pertain to the potential intervening actor(s). Some pertain to the regional environment and to regional actors. Others involve the target of the intervention itself: states in conflict, or at risk of conflict and different factions within the state, each with its own agenda and interests. Various international and regional organizations also have their own unique institutional obstacles to playing a more effective conflict prevention role. Many of these derive from the mandates of the organizations and the limitations of those mandates in addressing intrastate conflict. Of the many challenges to creating and strengthening political will for conflict prevention that were identified at this conference, the following received considerable attention:

Organizational Problems

- Lack of analytical knowledge about potential for conflict in a given country and the lack of clear indicators which can serve as early warning triggers for action.
- Institutional competition and rivalries within and between international and regional organizations that stifle initiative, erode political responsibility and accountability, and thwart preventive action.
- Consultation processes that stymie rather than lead to action, erode authority, and prevent a clear delegation of responsibility for preventive action.
- Lack of institutional capacity, trained personnel, and adequate resources to engage in various kinds of conflict prevention such as fact finding, the provision of "good offices," mediation, peacekeeping, etc.
- Lack of clear conflict prevention strategies within organizations because of organizational mandates; lack of proper focal points within the bureaucracy; and members of the organization who are worried about intrusions into their sovereignty.

Entry and Engagement Problems

- Resistance to external intervention from the parties to the conflict, especially in the case of failing but not completely failed states; these derive from concerns about a

loss of sovereignty, concerns about a further weakening of the political legitimacy and authority of those in power, and the potential escalation of stakes as a result of intervention by an external actor.

- Once entry has been gained, there may be additional problems such as how to deal with spoilers or potential spoilers in the peace process. Additionally, the presence of many different factions may create difficulties in deciding who should be involved in the negotiation process.
- Lack of proper coordinating mechanisms and designation of institutional and individual responsibilities, once entry into a conflict has been gained (i.e., too many mediators and special representatives in some conflict situations who end up sending mixed and confusing signals to the parties in the dispute).

Creating Conditions for Conflict Prevention

Much of the discussion about the how third parties can create conditions for conflict prevention focused on the need to address longer term conflict prevention measures within different organizational and institutional settings. The following points came up repeatedly in the discussion:

- The need to distinguish between operational and structural prevention and to focus on problems such as the protection of minorities, human rights, electoral assistance, democratic development, and socio-economic development, all of which should be part of an integrated or "holistic" conflict prevention strategy.
- The need to complement global conflict prevention strategies and approaches with regional and locally-based strategies.
- The need to more carefully calibrate the comparative advantage of different organizations and institutions to different phases or stages in the conflict cycle as well as to different kinds of conflict (e.g., intrastate versus interstate conflict). Depending upon the level and intensity of violence, the potential for further escalation, and whether the parties have or have not committed themselves to political negotiated solutions, some third parties may have better access and influence/leverage over the disputants than others.
- The importance of developing cooperative solutions along with normative deterrent frameworks.
- The need to foster a "culture of dialogue" within a state itself by strengthening the institutions of civil society, particularly those with memberships and affiliations that cut across factional or ethnic lines.
- The importance of cultivating and supporting moderate local leaders as a central component of conflict prevention.

International conventions, courts, commissions, and tribunals that promote norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are critical components of a broad-based strategy of conflict prevention. Considerable attention was paid to how a culture of conflict prevention can be fostered through the creation, amplification, deepening, and widening of

international legal and normative regimes, particularly in the areas of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law at both global and regional levels. Some of these recommendations are discussed below.

Preventive Diplomacy

The presentations on case studies of preventive diplomacy provided useful insights into the different modalities of mediation as an intervention technique. In practice, mediation takes a wide variety of forms and so-called "mediators" can serve as facilitators, go-betweens, and brokers who actively manipulate the parties and the negotiation process. From a conflict prevention standpoint, where the challenge is to gain entry into the conflict and initiate a process of dialogue with the parties, a problem-solving approach where the third party provides "good offices" in a low-key setting that is removed from the political spotlight is often desirable. Such dialogues can be initiated by various non-governmental actors and groupings--what is called Track II diplomacy. When such initiatives are undertaken by an international organization, the party providing the "good offices" is advised to eschew the formal language of "mediation" and "preventive diplomacy" and to establish some distance between him or herself and the sponsoring organization in order to cultivate the trust of the parties and maintain flexibility. Some of the other lessons that emerged in the discussion were as follows:

- Lack of bureaucratic encumbrances that allow for a creative approach in the field are essential to successful "mediation."
- The first phase of prenegotiation must build confidence between the parties.
- Sometimes it may necessary to keep participants to a minimum in such discussions as in the case of the Oslo talks. In other instances, it may be necessary to develop a more inclusive strategy that engages a wide variety of social and political actors. The goal of such dialogues is to engage the parties for a period of time in order to foster personal relationships and develop trust.
- Track II initiatives require close cooperation between those doing the mediating and the government/organization sponsoring the initiative. Some Track II initiatives, which had considerable potential to alleviate conflict or reduce tensions, failed because they did not receive adequate support from governments.
- Those providing "good offices" should be sensitive to local culture and conditions. Where possible, they should try to build upon local methods and institutions of conflict management and resolution. Third parties should resist the temptation to simply focus their efforts on urban areas and should include rural areas where the majority of the population may live.

Preventive diplomacy must also situate particular initiatives within a broader framework of comprehensive security. International norms and standards are critical components of a comprehensive strategy, especially when issues of identity, citizenship, political participation, access to education, access to resources, and cultural matters lie at the heart of conflict.

Minorities & Human Rights

Human rights violations are important causes of conflict and not just consequences. Any policy of conflict prevention must pay close attention to human rights even though there may be strong institutional and organizational pressures to relegate human rights to the back burner. Human rights include civil, political, cultural, economic, and social rights and it is important to recognize that the denial of economic and cultural rights is also a source of conflict. More effort should go into developing mechanisms of "remedial prevention" by sending human rights observers and monitors into areas where there is strong evidence of human rights violations. Technical assistance in drafting human rights legislation in countries undergoing democratic transition can further the goals of structural conflict prevention. There is a continuing need to bring human rights considerations into the operations and normative frameworks of international financial and lending institutions, the global trading regime, and regional trade organizations. Other points in the discussion were:

- The effectiveness of human rights mechanisms and institutions in some regional organizations is hampered by a lack of adequate resources and insufficient personnel.
- Some member states, which are critical to a viable, regional human rights regime, are not part of the system because they have not yet ratified key conventions.
- The distance between international organizations and local human rights groups and nongovernmental organizations should be narrowed.

Electoral Assistance, Democratic Development

There was widespread consensus that the international community has placed too much emphasis on elections as a "quick fix" to the problem of establishing democracy. Elections have been too closely tied to "exit strategies" as opposed to long-term strategies of engagement in war-torn societies. Timing is crucial. If elections are held before political parties have had a chance to form or before moderate political elements have built their political base, they may perpetuate conflict and further polarize attitudes while political entrepreneurs exploit the situation. Even so, a well conducted and professionally managed election can help to resolve/prevent conflict particularly in those situations where tensions are high and a "contested" electoral process could trigger an uncontrollable escalation of violence. Those involved in mediation should also seek out the advice of electoral experts as they negotiate peace settlements.

- Electoral observation is an extremely costly undertaking for most regional and international organizations and more cost-effective ways have to be found.
- Monitors and observers in elections should also be local and not simply international.
- Outside organizations have to become involved early in the preparation efforts leading up to an election to ensure that they are free and fair.
- Parliamentarians, political parties, and their staff require training, and more international effort and resources have to go into these kinds of governance undertakings.

- More attention and effort has to go into the development of political party structures.
- Civic education is a priority at both local and national levels.

Socio-Economic Development

The discussion of socio-economic issues in conflict prevention focused on how to integrate the concerns of conflict analysis into the development work and operations of multilateral donor and development agencies so that they are more attendant to the impact of their programs on conflict processes. The efforts of the World Bank centre increasingly on governance, human security, and regional and sub-regional economic integration as conflict prevention tools. Post-conflict programs in the World Bank are centred in the Development Grant Facility. At the organizational and programmatic level, there have been interesting and important innovations in the Facility, including the use of watching briefs, transitional support strategies, and greater attention to opportunities for "early reconstruction" in such areas as institutional programs and reforms, local government, civil society, demining and demobilization, and refugee resettlement and integration. Funding and programmatic priorities in the Bank are increasingly directed toward social and economic activities that will promote a cognitive transformation within society that will reduce the likelihood of conflict.

The United Nations Development Programme is usually on the ground when conflict breaks out and has the comparative advantage of having a "capital of trust" with local actors. UNDP's mandate is to put people at the centre of its development work. The agency is spending approximately one-third of its resources in crisis and complex emergency situations. It has undertaken a number of institutional reforms and has encouraged its preventive mechanisms to work more closely with those engaged in emergency response. It is strengthening its own capacities for analysis and is using national indicators in the annual Human Development Reports to establish self-dialogue and institutionalize a culture of early warning and prevention at the socio-economic level. Other points in the discussion were:

- Programming and implementation in socio-economic sectors has to be rapid, flexible, and multi-level.
- The informal economy should not be ignored as a security and development tool, particularly in those countries where it accounts for much of the overall economic activity.
- It is important to establish a balance between social and economic reconstruction programs directed at urban and rural areas and not to ignore one at the expense of the other.
- It is vital to develop projects and activities that create and strengthen opportunities for community-wide collaboration and participation at the local level.

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

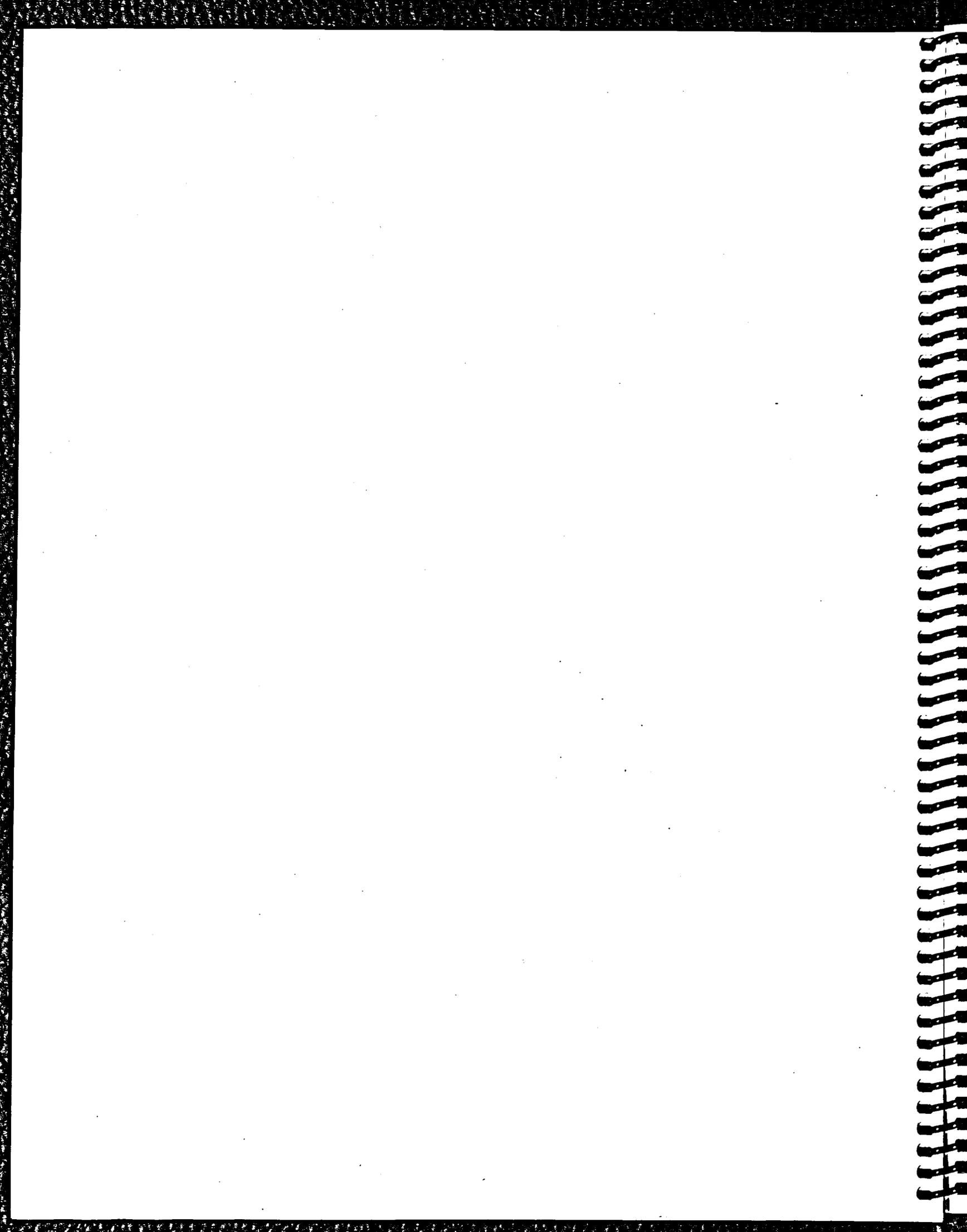
- Systematic analysis of "lessons learned" from failures and successes in conflict prevention within both regional and global organizations.
- Strengthen and improve institutional and inter-agency coordination through:
 - 1) revival of regular consultations between UN and regional organizations;
 - 2)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

- 3) regularized and institutionalized consultations that promote greater awareness of organizational mandates and the comparative advantages of various organizations/agencies in different conflict prevention and management functions;
- 4) clearer rules of the road which identify lead players and establish a unified economic, political and social approach to conflict prevention.

- Improved joint training opportunities for UN and regional organization personnel in such areas as mediation, negotiation, and problem-solving approaches to conflict resolution, particularly for those who are going into the field for the first time.
- Creation of focal points within UN and regional organizations for conflict prevention, particularly in the areas of collecting information and developing action strategies.
- Greater use of mechanisms like ad hoc liaison committees, all donor committees, and joint action plans that integrate interagency goals and missions into a coherent, coordinated conflict prevention/peacebuilding strategy.
- Create a stronger conflict prevention presence on the ground through the use, for example, of special representatives who are knowledgeable about local culture, language, and conditions, and can take a "command from the saddle approach" to conflict prevention and management.
- More attention should be given to anticipating and developing better hand-over strategies to local actors and interests when external actors, including international and regional organizations, are involved in election monitoring, peacekeeping, and other confidence-building activities.

Legal and Normative Recommendations

- Strengthen and widen the scope of deterrent normative frameworks at regional and global levels for those who usurp democratic institutions and violate human rights, including the creation of an International Criminal Court of Justice.
- Develop regional "codes of conduct" where none exist.
- Widen and deepen existing arms control regimes as in the case of land mines.
- Lay the foundation for an international regime that will control the flow of small arms by initially supporting research, developing data bases, and monitoring licit arms flows.
- Support regional efforts that promote human security, as opposed to military security.
- Support efforts to enhance transparency and strengthen public oversight of military expenditures.
- Strengthen international, regional, and local prohibitions against violence directed at women and children; initiate efforts that will relegitimize safe sanctuaries as places where violence is prohibited.
- Initiate dialogue and discussion on the role of business and multinational corporations in both contributing to the causes of conflict and in conflict avoidance/prevention with the aim of developing better corporate "codes of conduct".
- Provide much greater levels of support for human rights and defenders of approaches that promote the peaceful resolution of disputes.



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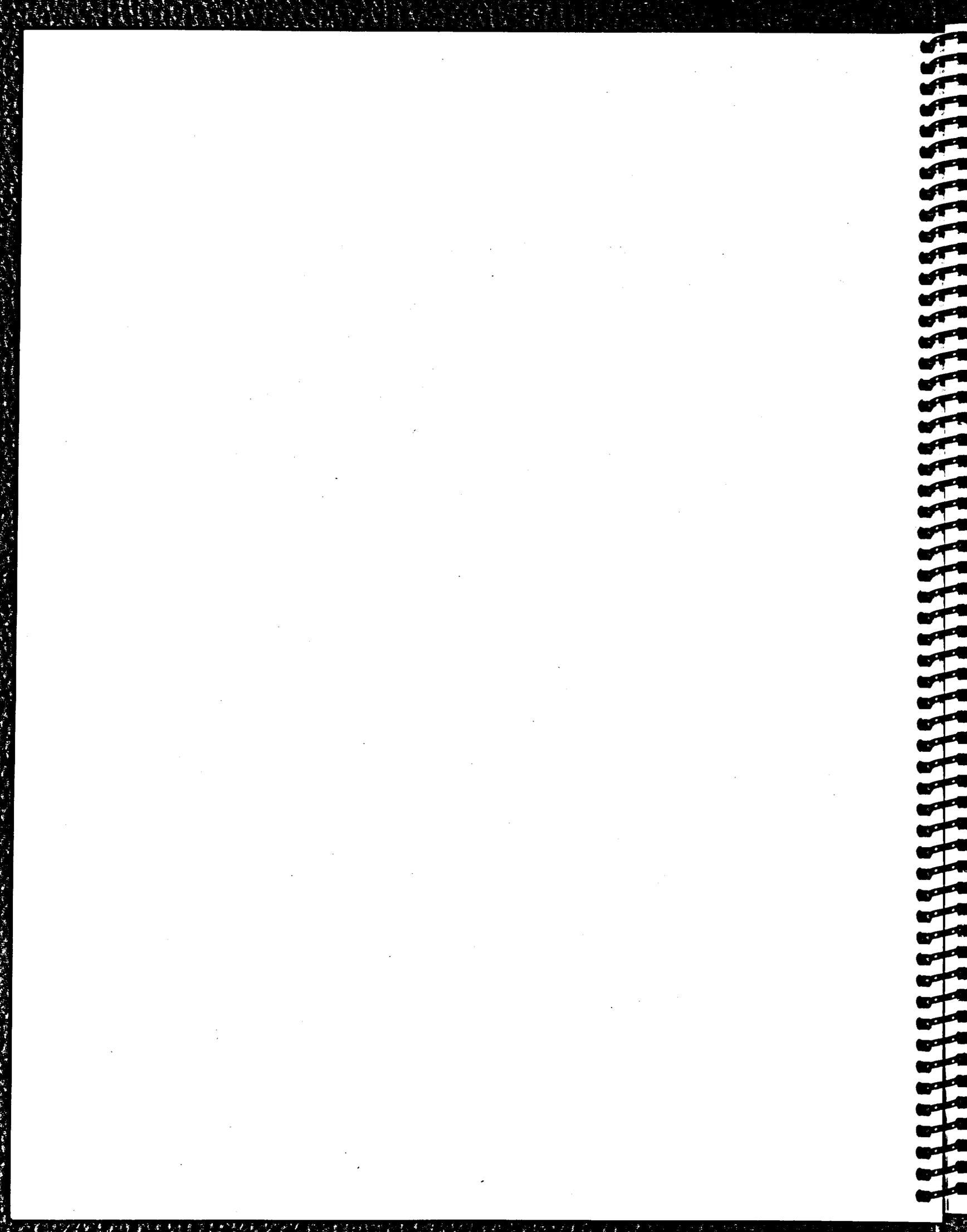
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and International Trade



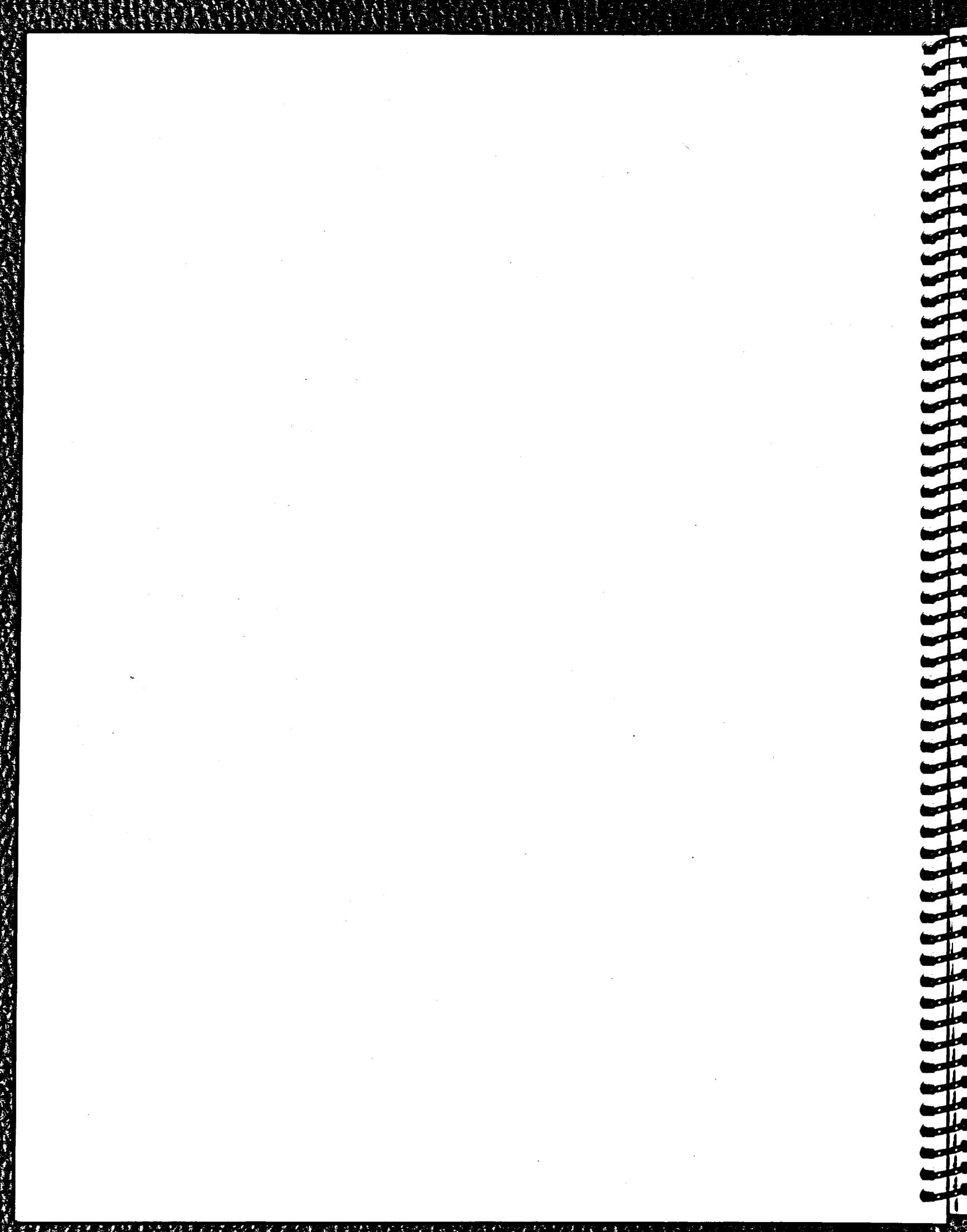
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international

Seminar on

***STRENGTHENING CO-OPERATIVE
APPROACHES TO CONFLICT PREVENTION***

The Role of Regional Organizations and the United Nations

AGENDA



SEMINAR AGENDA

DAY 1

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11, 1998

09:00 - 09:15

WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Mr. Gordon Smith

Chairperson, International Development Research Centre

09:15 - 10:15

THE CHALLENGE OF CONFLICT PREVENTION

Presentations and discussion will centre on the character of late Twentieth Century conflict, the nature and potential of conflict prevention, and the prospects for cooperative approaches to the prevention of conflict.

10:15 - 10:30

Coffee break

10:30 - 12:30

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUCCESSES AND FAILURES IN
CONFLICT PREVENTION

The purpose of this session is to use concrete cases to highlight the factors that facilitate or constrain conflict prevention efforts. Each presenter will be asked to provide an assessment of their organization's notable successes and failures in conflict prevention and to identify their current challenges in preventing future conflicts.

Questions for Discussion

- a. What factors internal to the conflict tend to determine the likelihood of success or failure in conflict prevention (e.g. the number of parties to a conflict, or the balance of power between them)?
- b. What factors external to the conflict tend to determine the likelihood of success or failure conflict prevention (e.g. the balance of power among neighbouring states, the degree of interest from outside donors, the presence of significant expatriate communities with a stake in conflict)?
- c. What factors internal to the multilateral organizations themselves tend to determine the likelihood of success or failure in conflict prevention?
- d. Considering the cases of conflict prevention just presented, and with the benefit of hindsight, are there things which the regional or international community could have done that might have led to a better outcome?

12:30 - 13:30 **LUNCH**
International Development Research Centre, 14th Floor

13:30 - 15:00 **LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUCCESSES AND FAILURES IN
CONFLICT PREVENTION cont.**

Questions for Discussion (as above)

15:00 - 15:15 **Coffee break**

15:15 - 17:00 **CREATING CONDITIONS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION**

The purpose of this session is to analyze the factors which encourage or inhibit member-states from making full use of multilateral organizations' capacities to prevent conflict. Presenters will be asked to consider how member states can build trust among themselves to use the conflict prevention mechanisms at their disposal; how the secretariats of organizations can facilitate the use of these mechanisms; and how non-governmental organizations can encourage this process.

Questions for Discussion

- a. What factors encourage the governments of states suffering internal conflicts to invite multilateral organizations to assist in preventing or resolving that conflict? What factors discourage governments from doing so?
- b. What factors encourage other member states to support conflict prevention initiatives proposed for multilateral organizations? What factors discourage member states from supporting such initiatives?
- c. When a role is proposed for multilateral organizations in preventing internal conflicts, what are the best approaches for addressing concerns about issues of sovereignty?
- d. How can multilateral organizations build on specific successes in conflict prevention to create a climate of confidence among member states that will support future initiatives? How can organizations recover the confidence of member states after failed initiatives?
- e. How can non-governmental organizations contribute constructively to building a climate of confidence between governments that will promote conflict prevention?

17:30 - 18:30 **WELCOMING RECEPTION**
Hosted by the International Development Research Centre
14th Floor at IDRC

DAY 2THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Each segment of Thursday's meeting is intended to present a sample of the different approaches to conflict prevention practiced by multilateral organizations. Presenters will be asked to give a brief overview of the methods used by their organization, and how those methods contribute to preventing conflict. In the discussion, participants will be encouraged to focus on the scope for adapting strategies that have worked for one organization to meet other organizations' needs.

09:00 - 10:30 PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

Methods that could be discussed include:

- Early response instruments and mechanisms
- Special envoys and representatives
- Short and long-term conflict prevention missions
- Informal "Track II" dialogues
- Other methods

Questions for Discussion

- a. How can a potential conflict which has not yet reached the crisis stage best be brought to the attention of multilateral organizations?
- b. What "entry points" have proved effective for preventive diplomacy?
- c. Do standing mechanisms work for preventive diplomacy; or are the most effective responses inevitably ad hoc?
- d. What are the relative advantages of using representatives of member states versus secretariat staff for preventive diplomacy missions?
- e. When can non-governmental actors prove effective in exercising preventive diplomacy? When can they be counter-productive? Is there a useful division of labour between non-governmental actors and multilateral organizations in preventive diplomacy?
- f. How can the skills for preventive diplomacy be developed by government and non-government experts?
- g. Overall, how adequate to the task are the existing mechanisms and resources for preventive diplomacy in most multilateral organizations? What is the prospect of refining them or improving them?

10:45 - 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 - 12:30 THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Methods that could be discussed include:

- Formal human rights instruments
- Appointment of special rapporteurs
- Human rights field operations
- Technical assistance and training programs
- Community level dialogues
- Other Methods

Questions for Discussion

- a. How can international human rights instruments be used by multilateral organizations to help prevent conflict? How can they be used by non-governmental organizations?
- b. How can governments use human rights instruments as tools for national capacity building in conflict prevention? How can multilateral organizations assist them?
- c. Is there a natural division of labour between global bodies and regional ones in developing new human rights instruments?
- d. How can multilateral organizations assist national governments in developing strategies to accommodate minorities?
- e. What kind of community level mechanisms can be encouraged within countries to promote greater dialogue on minority issues and find local solutions to potential conflicts?

12:30 - 13:30 LUNCH
International Development Research Centre, 14th Floor

13:30 - 15:00 ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE, DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Methods that could be discussed include:

- Building national capacity to conduct and observe elections
- International electoral observation and reporting
- Technical assistance for legislatures, judiciaries and political parties
- Improving government accountability and transparency
- Improving government-civil society relations
- Training in conflict resolution and promoting democratic culture

- Other methods

Questions for Discussion

- a. Does international electoral observation actually contribute to reducing the risk of post-electoral conflict? How can it be made more effective? How can it support the development of local institutions to build confidence in electoral results?
- b. How can promoting "good governance" serve to prevent conflict? Are there certain functions of government that are obvious entry points for technical assistance as a long term conflict prevention strategy?
- c. What kinds of democratic development assistance are multilateral political bodies best equipped to provide? Specialized agencies ? NGOs?
- d. Transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes are often accompanied by violence. How can the risk of violence in a transitional period be reduced by support from external actors? Are there alternatives to early elections?
- e. Democratic electoral systems provide no guarantee against the use of violence in a society for political purposes. How can a culture of democracy be created which supports a culture of peace?

15:00 - 15:15 Coffee Break

15:15 - 17:00 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Methods that could be discussed include:

- Economic development programs to reduce income disparities
- Development programs targeted towards vulnerable groups
- Environmental cooperation to reduce conflict over scarce resources
- Regional development strategies to address sources of cross-border conflicts
- Other methods

Questions for Discussion

- a. How can national development strategies be designed to serve the goal of conflict prevention? How can multilateral organizations contribute to that process?
- b. How can social and economic development programs serve as a catalyst for reducing tensions and preventing conflicts?
- c. How can development strategies targetted towards marginal populations or vulnerable groups be designed to reduce the risk of conflict?

- d. How can scarce natural resources be managed in a way to increase co-operation, rather than competition between interest groups?
- e. Can regional development strategies provide a basis for dialogue between governments on more sensitive political issues, such as internal conflicts that generate cross-border effects?

17:45 - 19:15 **RECEPTION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**
Hosted by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Pearson Building A-Tower, 9th Floor

DAY 3 **FRIDAY, MARCH 13**

09:00 - 10:45 **ENHANCING SUCCESS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION**

For the final session, participants will be invited to think outside of existing institutional and political constraints to identify new approaches which could be used to prevent conflict.

Strategies that could be discussed include:

- New mandates and structures for existing organizations
- New habits of cooperation between organizations
- New working partnerships with national and international NGOs
- New coalitions of member states to prevent conflict
- Other methods

Questions for Discussion

- a. Is there a natural division of labour between sub-regional, regional and international organizations in conflict prevention?
- b. What are the practical incentives that would promote co-operation between these organizations in this task?
- c. How can national governments promote greater collaboration in conflict prevention between the multilateral organizations to which they belong?

- d. Are informal "coalitions of the willing" becoming a more effective approach to conflict prevention, as compared to existing formal multilateral bodies?
- e. Are non-government organizations useful or necessary partners in such informal coalitions of the willing?
- f. In terms of conflict prevention, what future challenges are most likely to present themselves to regional organizations and the United Nations? What can be done to enhance the international community's capacity to meet these challenges?
- g. How can the necessary international consensus, political will and resources for conflict prevention be generated?
- h. Can conflict prevention become a habitual practice of international relations, rather than always a crisis response?

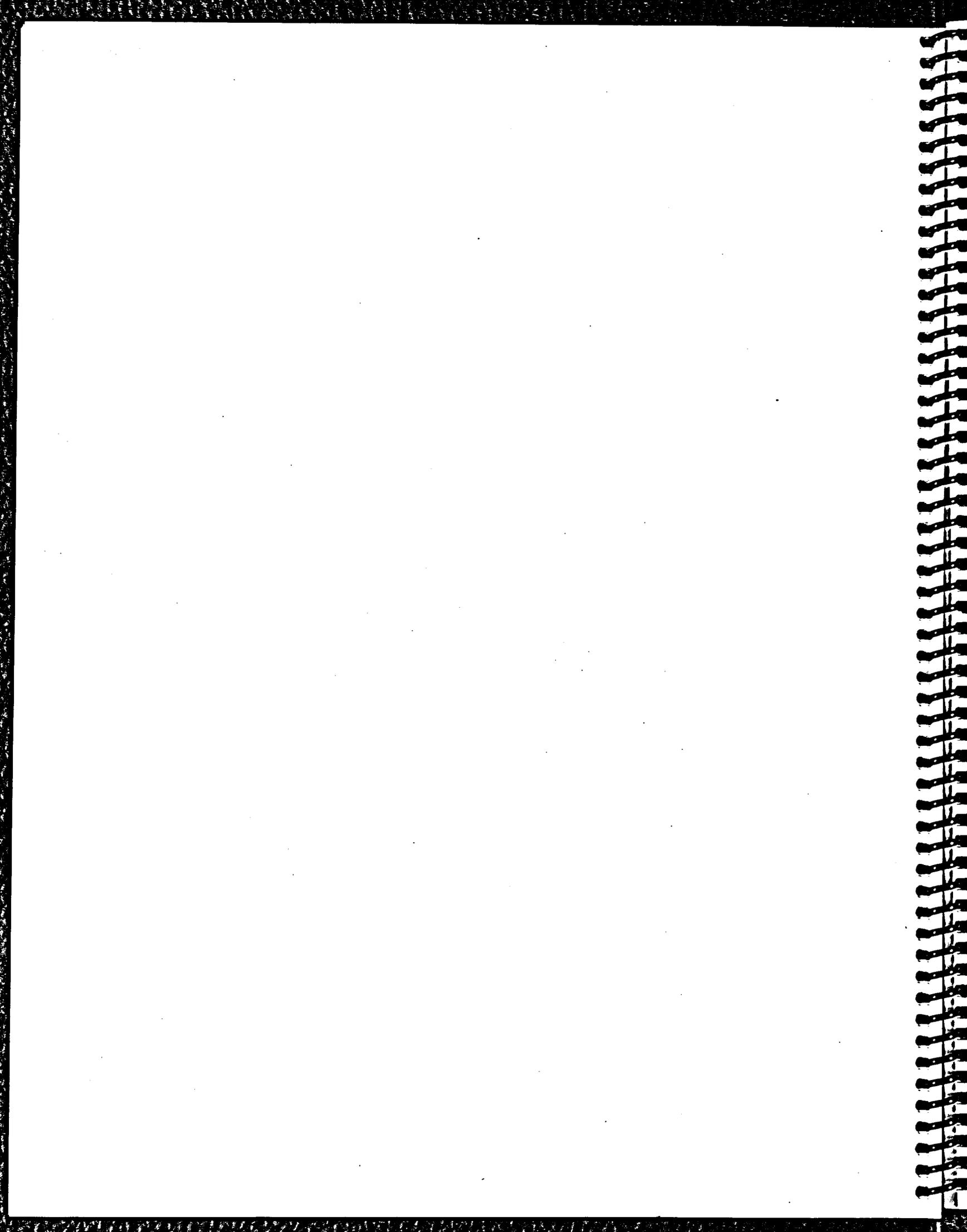
11:00 - 11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:15 - 12:15 **SEMINAR REPORT AND CONCLUSIONS**

A first draft of the report summarizing the principal conclusions of the seminar will be presented under the authority of the chair. Participants will be invited to propose options for following up and implementing some of the strategies identified during the seminar. These comments will be included in the final version of the report to be distributed after the seminar.

12:15 **LUNCH**
International Development Research Centre, 14th Floor

14:00 **END OF THE SEMINAR**



Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade



Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international

Seminar on

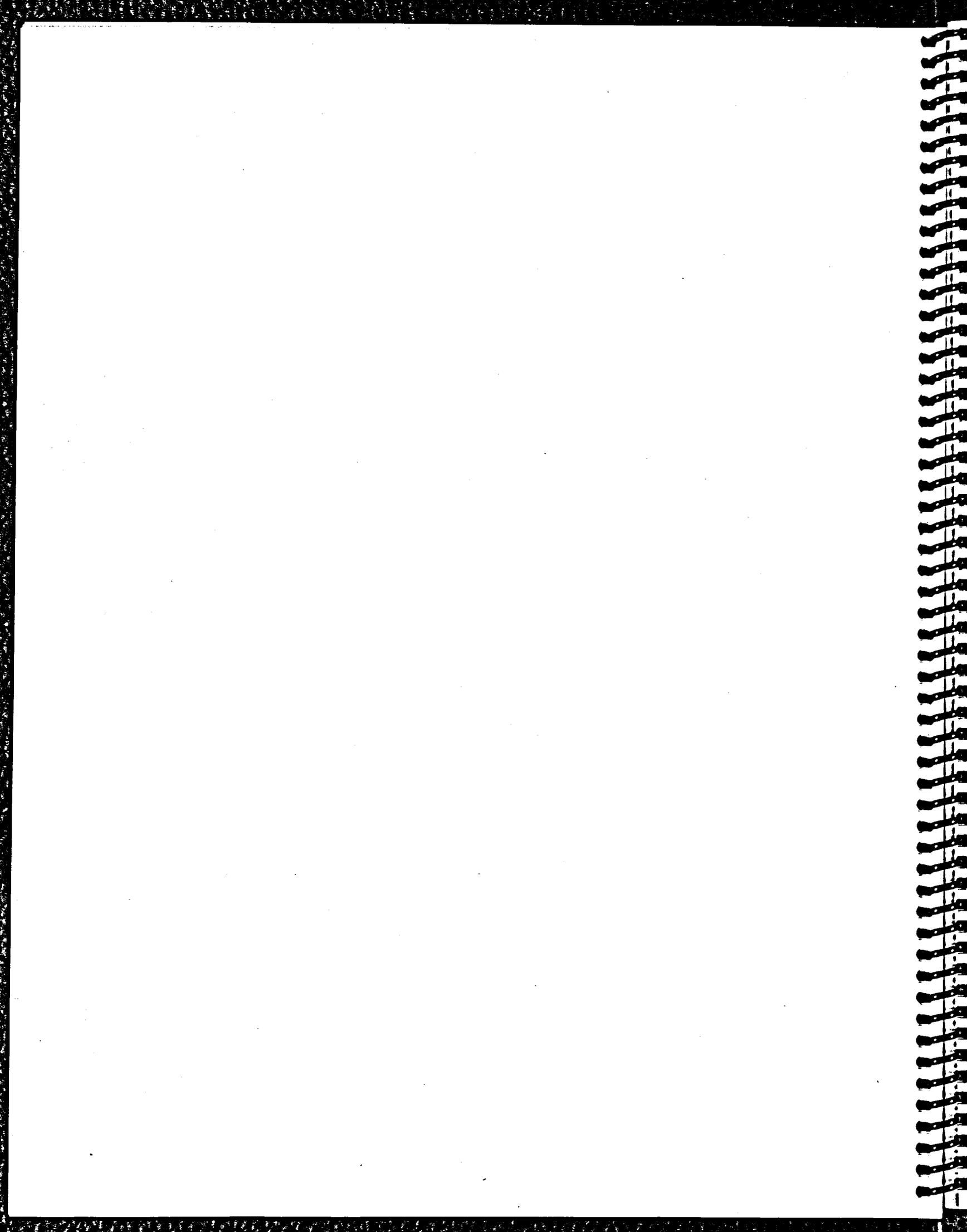
***STRENGTHENING CO-OPERATIVE
APPROACHES TO CONFLICT PREVENTION***

The Role of Regional Organizations and the United Nations

DISCUSSION PAPER

Prepared by Dr. Connie Peck

UNITAR



**STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVE APPROACHES
TO CONFLICT PREVENTION:
THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Discussion Paper
Prepared by Dr. Connie Peck, UNITAR

With the end of the cold war, the United Nations, regional and sub-regional organizations have had to assume greater responsibility for preventing deadly conflict. In struggling to respond to this challenge, experience has been gained and a number of innovative institutional mechanisms and approaches have been developed. Even so, there is an urgent need to refine what already exists and to further devise appropriate methods for more effective conflict prevention.

This meeting originates from a project commissioned by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. The project reviewed the conflict prevention work of the United Nations and a sample of regional and non-governmental organizations and offered recommendations for the further development of a suitable approach. The project culminated in a book entitled: *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict*, a complimentary copy of which will be available to all participants at the time of the conference. A copy of the Carnegie Commission's overall report, entitled *Preventing Deadly Conflict* will also be provided.

Following the completion of above-mentioned study, the next logical step seemed to be bring together those who were actually doing this work, so that they might discuss their approaches and experience, as well as their ideas about what was needed to enhance this capacity and how the obstacles which hinder their efforts might be more effectively surmounted. A proposal for such a meeting was made to the Division of Peacebuilding and Human Development of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which undertook to organize and fund this conference, in conjunction with the Canadian International Development Research Center, with input from the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the International Peace Academy and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

Accordingly, a small group of relevant staff from the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has been invited to participate in this meeting, along with a few participants from the principal NGOs which have acted as thinktanks in assisting multilateral organizations to develop their capacity for conflict prevention.

As the author of the Carnegie project, I was asked to prepare a background paper for this meeting. In doing so, I have attempted to outline some of my own thoughts about where we are and where we need to go in building a more solid and acceptable methodology for conflict prevention. It is not anticipated that all participants will agree with these views. They are offered simply to stimulate discussion on this vital topic.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE

Until the end of the cold war, the major threat to state security was considered to be external. Even when internal problems arose, they were frequently attributed to external agents (often as a matter of political expediency). Security was defined in terms of "state security", and problems within states were typically blamed on "communist", "capitalist" or "extremist" influence, rather than on real grievances or a government's own policies and shortcomings.

Since the end of the cold war, however, as recent data by Wallensteen and Sollenberg clearly demonstrate, the great majority of conflicts have been *within* states.¹ (In their review of conflicts since the end of the cold war, 91 of 96 conflicts have been intra-state in nature, although a number have spilled over into neighboring states). This transition from inter-state to intra-state conflict has presented a dilemma for multilateral organizations, whose instruments for the "peaceful settlement of disputes" were based on a collective security approach and designed for disputes *between* states. Even more problematic was the fact that the charters of the UN and regional organizations contained specific prohibitions against interference in the internal affairs of their members. Thus, in response to this new geopolitical environment, the UN and regional organizations were forced to undertake a major reappraisal of the causes of contemporary conflict and their institutional responses to it. Coming to terms with this new reality and trying to find a mandate and a more appropriate methodology to meet this challenge has not been easy.

Beginning with the Root Causes of Conflict

Developing a new methodology for preventing conflict within states has required a better understanding of the root causes of this type of conflict. Fortunately, the end of the cold war also brought about a shift in scholarly activity away from issues such as the nuclear threat and the superpower rivalry to a more in-depth study of conflicts within states.

This work has shown that many of these situations have their basis in perceptions of injustice which occur when individual and group needs for physical safety and well-being; access to political and economic participation; and cultural and religious expression are threatened or frustrated over long periods of time.² Grievances tend to be most acute when one's identity group is perceived to be unfairly disadvantaged in relation to other groups, especially when cleavages between groups are based on ethnic, religious or class divisions. Although many of today's conflicts have violent historical roots, it is their continued manifestation in systematic patterns of discrimination and injustice that generate contemporary grievances. Group mobilization occurs when groups begin to collectively organize to express their concern and seek redress.

Since it is the state that provides physical and cultural safety and regulates political and economic access, the prime objective of group mobilization tends to be greater access to political decision-making.³ Studies that have tracked such movements over time have shown that government responses have played a significant role in determining outcomes. In situations where governments recognize, listen to and accommodate dissatisfied groups, grievances tend to be lessened or resolved. Problems arise when governments ignore or repress these concerns. These studies have also found that mobilization typically begins with nonviolent protest, but may escalate to violence when concerns are ignored. In authoritarian regimes, the escalation tends to occur more rapidly, because the state is likely to be repressive rather than reformist, denying rather than addressing human needs. In democracies, the progression tends to be slower, thus allowing time for governments to respond.⁴

In response to this analysis, the concept of "human security" has been advanced as the best foundation upon which "state security" can be built. The evidence suggests that the most secure states are those that are able to provide the greatest human security to their populations.⁵ Weak states are those that either do not, or cannot, provide human security. Often this very weakness leads political elites into a vicious cycle which further weakens their security. In an attempt to increase their physical safety, they often amass the trappings of strength, investing heavily in military hardware or employing repressive tactics. But diversion of resources away from their peoples' needs or massive repression (although it may seem effective in the short-term) typically leads to greater discontent among the populace and increased long-term vulnerability for the elite. Consequently, assisting states in their capacity to enhance human security offers a promising approach to conflict prevention.

There has also been a corresponding political recognition that the international community should assume greater responsibility for assisting states that have serious problems which they cannot solve on their own. Zaagman (1995b) has noted that simply tracking events and admonishing governments that are having difficulties is insufficient--"a more positive commitment is needed".⁶ And indeed, a number of multilateral organizations have now begun to work in this direction.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH A COOPERATIVE SECURITY APPROACH

The previous analysis suggests that problems within states may require a somewhat different approach than disputes between states. Since governments must consent to involvement by the international and regional community, at least at an early stage, a cooperative security methodology is more likely to be effective than a collective security approach.⁷ Attempts to exert influence by coercive methods often backfire and create counter-coercion or reactance (the latter being a situation whereby the government resists the attempt to influence in an effort to reassert its freedom)--thus making persuasion less, rather than more likely.

In contrast, socialization, assistance and mutual problem solving are more likely to provide powerful incentives for gradual and constructive change. What is needed appears to be a set of strategies that address human security issues but which states can also accept because they see it as in their own best interest to do so.

Timing

There has been a growing recognition that timing is important for the success of conflict prevention and that early assistance is likely to be more cost-effective than efforts to contain conflict once it has begun or to rebuild war-torn societies. In the past, the slowness of the multilateral decision-making process too often resulted in multilateral organizations becoming involved in trying to prevent or resolve conflict at the very time when their efforts were *least* likely to be effective, due to the self-perpetuating dynamics of conflict escalation. In response, there is an increasing acceptance that multilateral efforts need to focus more attention "upstream" on conflict prevention rather than "downstream" on conflict management.

There is also a gradual realization that both short-term and long-term approaches to early conflict prevention are required. Not only is more effective preventive diplomacy needed to keep disputes from turning into violent conflict, by offering assistance in dispute resolution at an *early* stage, but if peace is to be sustained, it is clear that this will need to be backed up by a longer-term approach, aimed at addressing the structural causes of conflict and fostering institutions which will promote the kinds of distributive and procedural justice that have been shown to make violent conflict less likely.

The Evolving Agenda for Prevention

The linkage between development, democracy, human rights and peace is now being more widely articulated than ever before.⁸ This synthesis argues that peace cannot exist without development and development cannot proceed without peace, shortcircuiting the old North-South "development versus security" debate. Equally important, the addition of democracy and human rights to the equation provides a prescription for how these goals can be achieved. It suggests that what is needed to create the opportunity for both peace and development is a *fairer process*--a process which is capable of reducing grievances before they grow into major problems; which allows the people to have a say in decision-making; which safeguards and promotes their civil, political, economic and cultural rights; and provides a pluralist environment, in which they can live together in peace, with the freedom and opportunity to develop in all ways. That fairer process is *good governance*.

Thus, prevention can be defined (at least in part) as an effort to assist in building human security through the promotion of good governance at all levels of society--locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. This would mean providing assistance to local and national governments in good governance, with special assistance for weak states and those in transition to democracy. It would also mean strengthening the governance structures and

mechanisms of subregional, regional and international organizations--to create a greater "voice" for all peoples and a fairer distribution of resources within and between regions.

Following the lead of the Brundtland Commission, which blended environmental responsibility and development into the new and more dynamic concept of "sustainable development", it will be argued here that the pairing of good governance and early conflict prevention offers the best path to what will be called "sustainable peace". Together the twin concepts of "sustainable development" and "sustainable peace" could offer a full and more focused and acceptable agenda for conflict prevention in the twenty-first century.

Promoting Agreed-Upon Standards and Norms for Good Governance

It can be argued that the international community has already agreed upon the standards and norms for good governance in the more than 70 human rights instruments that the United Nations has endorsed over the past 50 years, as well as through the development of a number of regional instruments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the many other international and regional declarations which have followed in their wake, actually provide a *blueprint for good governance*, specifying in detail exactly *how* "human security" can be ensured. The key demands of individuals and communal groups--the desire for political access to decision-making; for access to economic opportunity; and for cultural rights--are all prescribed as the *duty* of states in these documents. The connection between human needs and conflict prevention, as set out in the preamble to the Universal Declaration, reminds governments as to *why* it is in their interest to guarantee human rights: "*Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.*"

But if "human security" and good governance are to be developed, the establishment of widely agreed-upon norms is merely the first step. What will be crucial in translating these norms into reality is the provision of *assistance* and the development of *positive incentives* to help governance structures at all levels move in this direction. Thus, a major focal point for prevention by international and regional organizations is their ability to provide socialization, assistance and problem solving to strengthen the capacity of states to enhance human security. The current meeting will examine how the UN and regional organizations have approached this goal and what methodologies they have developed in this regard. A few examples will be outlined briefly below to help set the stage for this discussion.

Providing Assistance for Good Governance

In the last few years, a new preventive methodology has been evolving, both within the United Nations and regional organizations, and provides the seeds for a potentially useful and more integrative approach to conflict prevention. While it has not attracted much attention as such, it has, nonetheless, been received with enthusiasm by the consumers.

One major feature of the new methodology is the offering of technical *assistance* to member states. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights, which has often been unpopular with certain member states because of its involvement in monitoring human rights abuses, has received considerable praise and support from these same states for the development of its advisory and technical assistance services--which offer governments assistance in drafting constitutions, legislation, or bills of rights or in bringing national laws into conformity with international standards.

Electoral assistance can be seen as another form of technical assistance and is now offered by the UN, the OAS, the OAU, the COE, the OSCE, as well as by a number of non-governmental organizations. The response to this service has been equally enthusiastic.

Several regional organizations have even moved a step further by offering assistance in building democratic institutions. The OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the COE Programmes for Assistance to Central and Eastern Europe prepare and support key institutional actors in the reforms needed to create good governance.

Another variation can be seen in the work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, who offers assistance to OSCE participating states in preventive diplomacy. Through discussions with all concerned, he seeks to understand the basis for minority grievances, and offers specific recommendations to governments for change to legislation, regulation or practice. His informal, quiet approach, which does not involve either "early warning" or formal mediation, overcomes the traditional opposition of governments to preventive diplomacy within states, since it avoids "internationalizing" the problem and bypasses governments' concern over recognizing and legitimizing leaders of disaffected minority movements. Since the government is never required to sit down at the table with the leaders of these groups, it does not have to formally recognize them. It is simply asked to listen to and consider seriously the suggestions of the High Commissioner.⁹

The Long-term Preventive Diplomacy Missions of the OSCE offer a similar kind of assistance. They are typically small (8-20 persons), deployed at the invitation of participating states, and provide an "on the ground" presence which assists the national government in devising and implementing means of reducing tensions within the country.

What all of these assistance programs share is the availability of advice and options which governments are free to choose or refuse--but which they have usually accepted. Indeed, this type of assistance has been embraced by states with a wide range of governance structures. It is attractive to governments precisely because it is *low-key, subject to their consent and builds "local capacity"*. Most importantly, this approach provides an acceptable basis for international organizations to become involved in conflict prevention *within* states. It ensures that when a government is ready to take even halting steps toward reform, there is international or regional support to help it move in that direction.

It will be essential, however, that the promotion of good governance should not be conceived as a neo-colonial imposition of "Western democracy" or the "Western system" on the rest of the world. Rather it should be viewed *as a means of empowerment for local peoples and ideas and tailored to local cultural norms and practices, as well as to local issues*. What is transferable in terms of assistance is information on how to establish a fairer process (e.g., a fair electoral or judicial process), but the agenda which that process addresses and the way it will evolve in a given context, must be decided by the local, national and regional community.

An assistance approach does not, of course, replace the more legalistic structures that have been established by the UN and regional organizations to monitor and enforce human rights or the political leverage and action that are sometimes needed to influence states to comply with international law. Legal and political "back-up" approaches remain important for governments that do not live up to their obligations, but the necessity to resort to them can be reduced by providing adequate knowledge, exposure to alternatives, and positive incentives for change.

Providing Incentives for Good Governance

It is noteworthy that one of the most important incentives for change is group socialization. Indeed, the whole evolution of international law and governance can be seen in these terms. The United Nations, regional organizations, sub-regional organizations, bilateral relationships, non-governmental organizations, as well as individual citizens all have an important role to play in socializing governments to comply with the group norms which they have collectively developed to make conflict less likely. The creation of group rules and norms (outlined in IGO charters, conventions, resolutions and practices, as well as in bilateral agreements and treaties) and the use of mechanisms which monitor and respond when parties do not comply with the rules they have mutually established, have become powerful tools for influencing individual governments to conform to the norms, institutions and practices of the larger community.

The necessary political architecture for socialization has begun to appear recently with the strengthening of regional and sub-regional organizations, and the institutionalization of representative political fora within each, which meet regularly to: discuss potential and existing problems; consider ways to prevent these from growing into bigger problems; recommend a course of action to the governments involved; and urge them to respond (e.g., the OAU Central Organ, the OSCE Permanent Council, the OAS Permanent Council, as well as their corresponding higher level fora which meet less frequently). The process provides ongoing corrective feedback, which helps governments understand and conform to the group's norms. This is a welcome development, especially when such fora focus their attention on prevention, as they have begun to do. Non-governmental organizations have also played a major role in this regard, both directly and through the promotion of a more active civil society.

A related socialization process occurs when a critical mass of states with a common agenda for promoting good governance coalesces. Once ascendant, this agenda exerts a pull on the other members of the community who want to be accepted into the "club". This pull is particularly strong when accompanied by an expectation of related advantages. For example, Eastern European and CIS countries have been eager to join the Council of Europe, and to meet its requirements for democratization and conformity with human rights standards, in order to have the option of joining other parts of the European architecture, such as the European Union, with its consequent economic advantages, or NATO, with its security umbrella. The rapid democratization in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern and Central Europe derives, in part, from this kind of regional socialization of governments and peoples. Observation of models of governance which appear to be more successful than their own, makes both citizens and governments more likely to reform their own structures, in the hope that reform will bring them the same advantages.

More could be done, however, to structure positive incentives for movement toward better governance. Indeed, if the international community were to agree that good governance is a vital key to prevention, the Bretton Woods institutions and the various bilateral aid organizations could provide assistance for this purpose, so that governments could take steps in this direction. Financial assistance could, for example, be provided to help a government fight corruption, to strengthen an independent judiciary, to restructure and retrain its police force or prison personnel, to develop an Electoral Commission, to set up a parliament, to create a commission for minorities, or to develop an ombudsman's office.

Of course, if clumsily carried out, positive influence strategies can also create "reactance" (where attempts at influence are resisted in a bid to retain freedom of action as, for example, when a party perceives that another's agenda is being imposed through "bribery"). Thus, the blunt use of "carrots" with explicit "conditionalities" is likely to be less effective than a more nuanced approach which relies on socialization or assistance and the gradual adoption of new practices which the parties have been involved in creating.

Institutionalizing a Problem-Solving Approach

Underpinning the strategies outlined above is a problem-solving approach that seeks to reconcile parties' legitimate interests through innovative solutions. Using an interest-based, problem-solving approach to address grievances early in a dispute can obviate the need to resort to more costly power-based approaches.¹⁰

Since the kind of approach that each party adopts in a conflict tends to determine the response of the other side, both governments and disaffected groups will need to learn how to become more adept at using a problem-solving methodology. Institutionalizing such an approach through the creation of local structures that promote dialogue and generate new options (e.g., Minority Councils) may help governments and minority groups to arrive at more satisfactory solutions for all concerned.

FORMING A MORE STRATEGIC COALITION OF ACTORS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION

In recent years, there has been much debate about the relative merits of United Nations, regional, sub-regional and non-governmental organizations in conflict prevention. But framing the issue in an either-or context may be counter-productive. Instead, it would seem more useful to think strategically about how these organizations could work together to augment one another and to achieve a greater complementarity.

Providing More Effective Regional Assistance in Conflict Prevention

Since coordination could be facilitated by proximity, one way to expand and build on the emerging efforts would be for regional organizations and the UN to join together in a closer partnership to provide assistance in dispute settlement and the promotion of good governance--at a regional level. Small, dedicated assistance programs could be established with staff who are experts in governance and dispute resolution. The creation of a professional "service" which could offer assistance to member states would help to overcome some of the past problems encountered with a more political approach. To be effective, assistance programs would probably need to adopt a quiet, proactive approach, offering help and support and relying on regional and international socialization to provide positive incentives for cooperation.

The concept of *horizontal transfer of knowledge and experience within each region* could also be a cornerstone of this approach. Those within the region who have found solutions to their local problems and have developed relatively successful governance structures could be tapped to assist others in this endeavor.

Such work would also benefit by being more closely coordinated with regional and international research institutes and thinktanks and selected non-governmental organizations. This would help to ensure that constructive ideas from all levels of civil society would be heard and incorporated into solutions that would be acceptable and well-tailored to local concerns, culture and circumstances.

Figures 1-3 briefly outline how such a strategic partnership might operate, including some of the kinds of assistance which could be offered. These will be sketched out below, but are explained in more detail elsewhere in the context of a proposal for a more formal structure for such cooperation through the development of Regional Centers for Sustainable Peace (see Chapter 13 of *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict*).

Assistance in Developing Good Governance

Since recent studies have shown that one of the most important factors in avoiding ethnic conflict during periods of transition is the willingness of the state to address ethnic

issues *early* in the process, regional assistance programs could be developed to help governments in transition to better accommodate minority concerns, by offering advice in the writing of an appropriate constitution or in the inclusion of ethnic groups in satisfactory power-sharing arrangements. Assistance could also be offered in helping a state revise or reform its laws, regulations and practices, to bring them into line with regional and international standards. Some of the issues where advice might be offered are the separation of government powers; freedom of expression, association or assembly; independence of the judiciary; the role of the judiciary in overseeing the police and prison systems; protection of national minorities; electoral laws; and citizenship and asylum laws.

Help could also be offered to those institutions which have a fundamental role in the administration of law and the regulation of conflict. Special training programs could be offered for parliamentarians, judges, magistrates, lawyers, prosecutors, police officers, and prison personnel. Seminars and workshops with experienced professionals could be scheduled to discuss issues related to fair and independent systems for administering justice; professional ethics; independence of judges and lawyers; fair trial procedures; human rights during investigations; legal means of crowd control; issues of police command, management and control; standards for the treatment of prisoners; prison administration and discipline; or community policing.

Other key institutions, such as the media, might also benefit from workshops on topics such as freedom of information and expression; access to information; professional codes of ethics; censorship; and the importance of the press in developing multi-cultural understanding. Study visits to observe how things are done elsewhere might also be useful.

When states are in transition to civilian rule from a military regime or where the military has been actively involved in governing a state in the recent past, assistance to the military in finding a new role for itself may also be vital. Exchanges with other military establishments which enjoy a constructive relationship with civilian government or regional assistance in the development of training curriculum for military officers and recruits might offer some benefit.

Financial and technical assistance in the establishment of anti-corruption legislation, monitoring and enforcement could also be made available where required. Successful experience from other countries could be shared with local and national officials and special training in anti-corruption investigation and prosecution offered.

Since development assistance can actually exacerbate conflict if not properly managed, a more nuanced approach to development may also be needed in multi-ethnic societies. For example, the seeds for discontent can be sown in situations when unmanaged, rapid growth-oriented development strategies lead to the deepening of a dual economy, and where the modern sector becomes prosperous, while the urban and rural poor are further marginalized. Thus, assistance could be offered to governments in how to achieve more equitable sectoral, regional or communal balance in development. Assistance might also be

provided in initiating and implementing programs of land reform. In this case, experts could point to successful programs elsewhere and help governments develop programs for compensation and distribution. As well, advice and assistance might be given in devising more individualistic policies for overcoming patterns of discrimination and providing economic opportunity, such as quotas for members of minority groups in government hiring or military recruitment, special loans, or special arrangements for entry to university.

Encouragement could be also given for the adoption of policies more conducive to tolerance and cross-cultural understanding. Models for multiculturalism could be introduced through seminars for government ministries, the media, parliamentarians, local authorities, and minority groups, so that they could consider how such models might be adapted locally. In addition, the topic could be integrated into school curriculum. In societies where the mass media are pervasive, encouragement (and financial incentives) could be provided for multi-cultural programming. Where appropriate, assistance could also be provided for the introduction of laws and judicial practices which prohibit incitement to ethnic or racial hatred, discrimination or violence.

Assistance in Dispute Settlement

A more strategic partnership could also be formed to provide a range of expert assistance in helping to reduce tension between or within states. Regular and routine visits throughout the region by a small team of professional staff with expertise in problem-solving approaches to dispute resolution would facilitate a more indepth knowledge of local and regional problems and would help to build trust and a reputation for fairness. Quiet assistance could thus progress in a manner which did not call attention to itself and which did not "internationalize" a dispute.

Problems within states could be approached much as the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities has done. After obtaining a thorough understanding of the problem, professional staff could offer non-binding recommendations to governments in a low-key manner, including models of how such problems have been resolved elsewhere. Help could be provided to establish ongoing mechanisms to promote dialogue and generate solutions, through roundtable discussions, ombudsmen's offices, or special commissions for minority issues. This approach, practiced with a great deal of skill by the OSCE High Commissioner, has been widely accepted by OSCE participating states, with most adopting the High Commissioner's recommendations. Minority groups could also be encouraged to adopt legal or politically constructive means for pursuing their interests. When disputes escalate, assistance staff could also offer their good offices to avert violence, either through formal or informal meetings with both sides or through shuttle diplomacy.

Outside experts could also be used to study a situation and to make recommendations. Assistance programs could call upon the full range of regional or UN agencies, as well as member states to provide economic or technical assistance. Since even modest amounts of

funds can be helpful in alleviating ethnic tension, it might be useful to establish a central fund which could be tapped for this purpose.

Of course, regular and routine visits throughout the region would also allow assistance staff to become more familiar with inter-state disputes and to offer more timely assistance. They could encourage parties to de-escalate tensions through confidence-building measures; facilitate track II diplomacy efforts; encourage and support negotiation; offer to provide good offices or mediation; help parties seek conciliation, arbitration or adjudication; monitor compliance with agreements; or act as a "trip wire" which would bring a situation to the attention of the international or regional community when it was escalating in a dangerous manner.

Making Use of All Available Resources

Using Small Assistance Missions: In some situations, it can be advantageous to deploy small, expert assistance missions. In the governance area, such missions could provide a greater degree of ongoing support for good governance reforms. Small assistance missions may also be helpful in dispute settlement by providing an "on-the-ground" presence, which can serve as a calming influence, by showing that the international community is aware of the problems and interested in helping to resolve them.

Using the Expertise of Regional and International Scholars: To tailor solutions to local conditions, regional research institutes, universities and thinktanks could support assistance in both good governance and dispute settlement. A network of scholars and other experts from these institutions could act as consultants to help professional assistance staff sharpen their analysis of specific problems and broaden their consideration of potential solutions. They would also be able to assist in the development of a deeper understanding of the root causes of conflict and a more effective long-term agenda for conflict prevention.

Using the Expertise of NGOs and Civil Society: NGOs working in the area of conflict resolution, democracy, human rights and development could extend the work of both types of assistance. NGOs with expertise in human rights and democracy could work with civil society to highlight the advantages of widespread participation in decision-making and to establish effective local governance. NGOs with appropriate expertise in conflict resolution could provide training to local actors in problem-solving methods, offer track II diplomacy and propose the creation of mechanisms for dialogue and problem solving at the local level.

Using the Experience of Regional Leaders: Groups of eminent persons (former prime ministers, presidents, judges, Nobel Laureates, prominent intellectuals and other high-profile persons) could be formed to work alongside assistance staff in order to extend this work upward into the highest levels of government. Eminent persons with expertise in good governance could work quietly with government leaders to urge them to move in the

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

conflicting rights can be expected to slowly overcome bureaucratic inertia and entrenched practices.

Thus, it is crucial for those committed to more effective conflict prevention to have the opportunity to discuss their evolving methodology and how it can best be adapted to overcome the remaining obstacles. It is hoped that this meeting will advance this dialogue.

PROMOTING MORE EFFECTIVE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Finally, there is also a pressing need to develop more effective regional and international governance, including the creation of a fairer process which can offer greater access by all states to political and economic decision-making and participation in the international system. Among the reforms needed are: a more satisfactory international power-sharing arrangement; more equitable economic opportunity through macroeconomic reform; a reorientation of multilateral organizations to a more preventive approach; a more focused and integrative agenda, methodology and partnership for the creation of sustainable peace and sustainable development; the enhancement of regional capacity through the further development of regional organizations; the strengthening of capacity and effectiveness of IGO secretariats and foreign ministries, and the development of a vision of the possible.

Through such developments, good regional and international governance could mutually reinforce good national and local governance. Revitalized regional and international institutions could promote procedural and distributive justice within and between regions. Greater democratization and pluralism at the regional and international levels could go hand-in-hand with greater democratization and pluralism nationally and locally.

As the international community faces the many complex and difficult challenges of the next century, the member states of international organizations will need to work together more effectively than ever before. Increasing globalization and the accelerating rate of change will require more efficient multilateral decision-making and action, based on a wide international consensus about needs and priorities. In short, if major global problems are to be avoided, international organizations will have to become more effective instruments for achieving sustainable development and sustainable peace.

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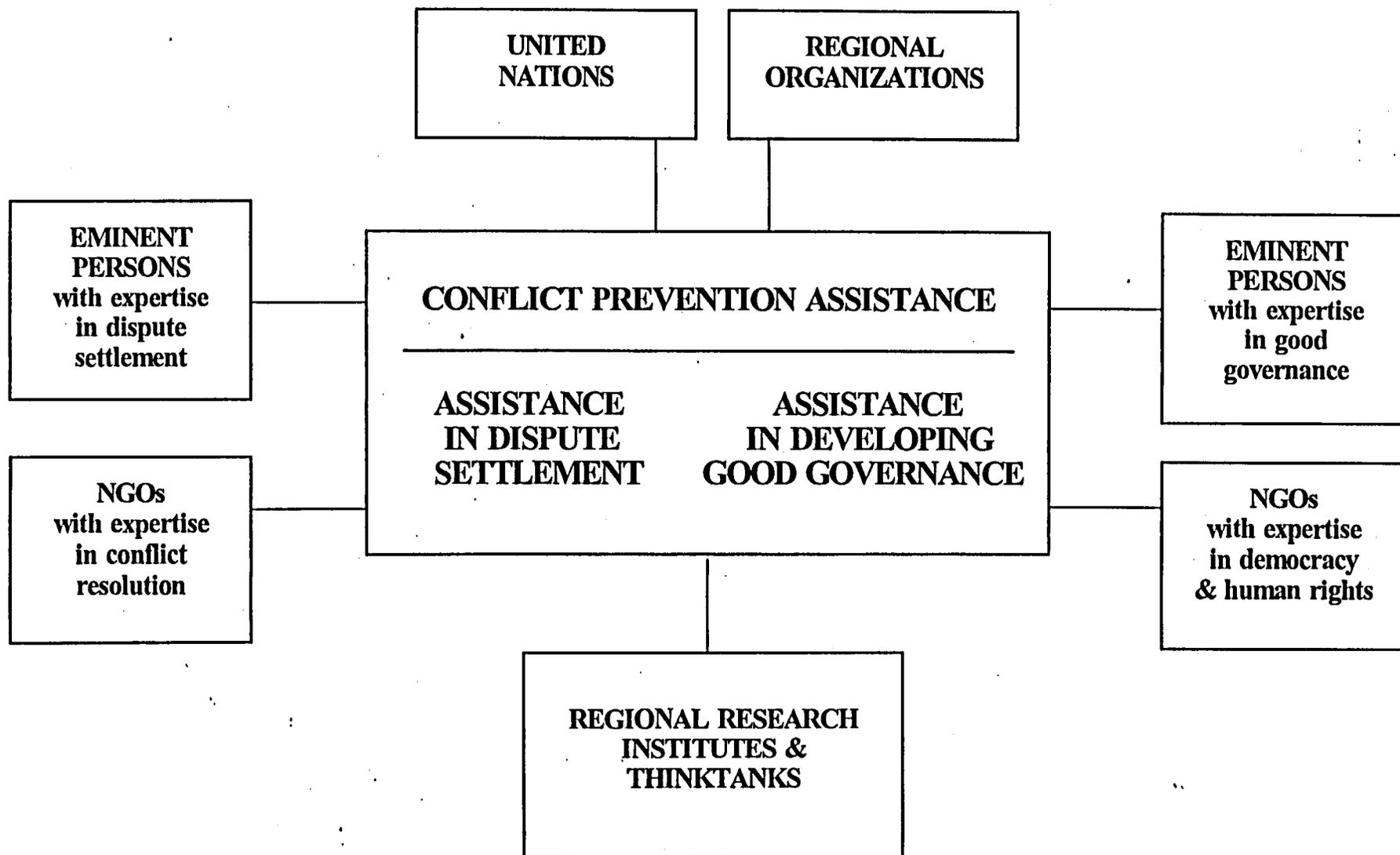


Figure 1: A Strategic Partnership for Conflict Prevention

CONFLICT PREVENTION ASSISTANCE

ASSISTANCE IN DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

Within States

- carry out on-site needs assessment and discuss with a wide range of interlocutors to understand grievances and concerns
- encourage a constructive approach on all sides
- advise all parties of their obligations, consequences of actions and recommend structural solutions to governments, e.g., changes in laws or practice
- follow up/assist with the implementation of recommendations
- establish ongoing fora for dialogue and problem solving
- act as a "trip wire" to UN and regional organization if situation deteriorates

Between States

- carry out on-site needs assessment to gain an in-depth understanding of the problems
- offer assistance with dispute settlement, e.g.,
 - facilitate track II workshops
 - provide good offices
 - help parties seek conciliation, arbitration or adjudication
- assist as a "trip wire" if dispute escalates and recommend options to UN and regional organization
- provide ongoing monitoring of events

Long-Term Preventive Diplomacy Missions

- develop in-depth understanding of the situation through assessment "on the ground"
- recommend structural solutions to government
- help government implement recommendations
- establish ongoing fora for dialogue and problem solving

ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING GOOD GOVERNANCE

Within States

- advise government and parliament on constitutions, laws, regulations, practices
- work with government ministries to help implement reform
- provide consultants when specialized expertise is required
- offer training, study visits to observe procedures elsewhere and support to key institutional actors, e.g.,
 - executive branch
 - judiciary
 - police
 - local officials
 - media
- assist military in defining a new role within civilian society through contact with military structures elsewhere
- assist in establishing new institutions, e.g.,
 - national human rights commissions
 - electoral commissions
- assist in the development of pluralism
- provide training in problem-solving approaches to dispute settlement

Figure 2: Range of Potential IGO Activities in Conflict Prevention

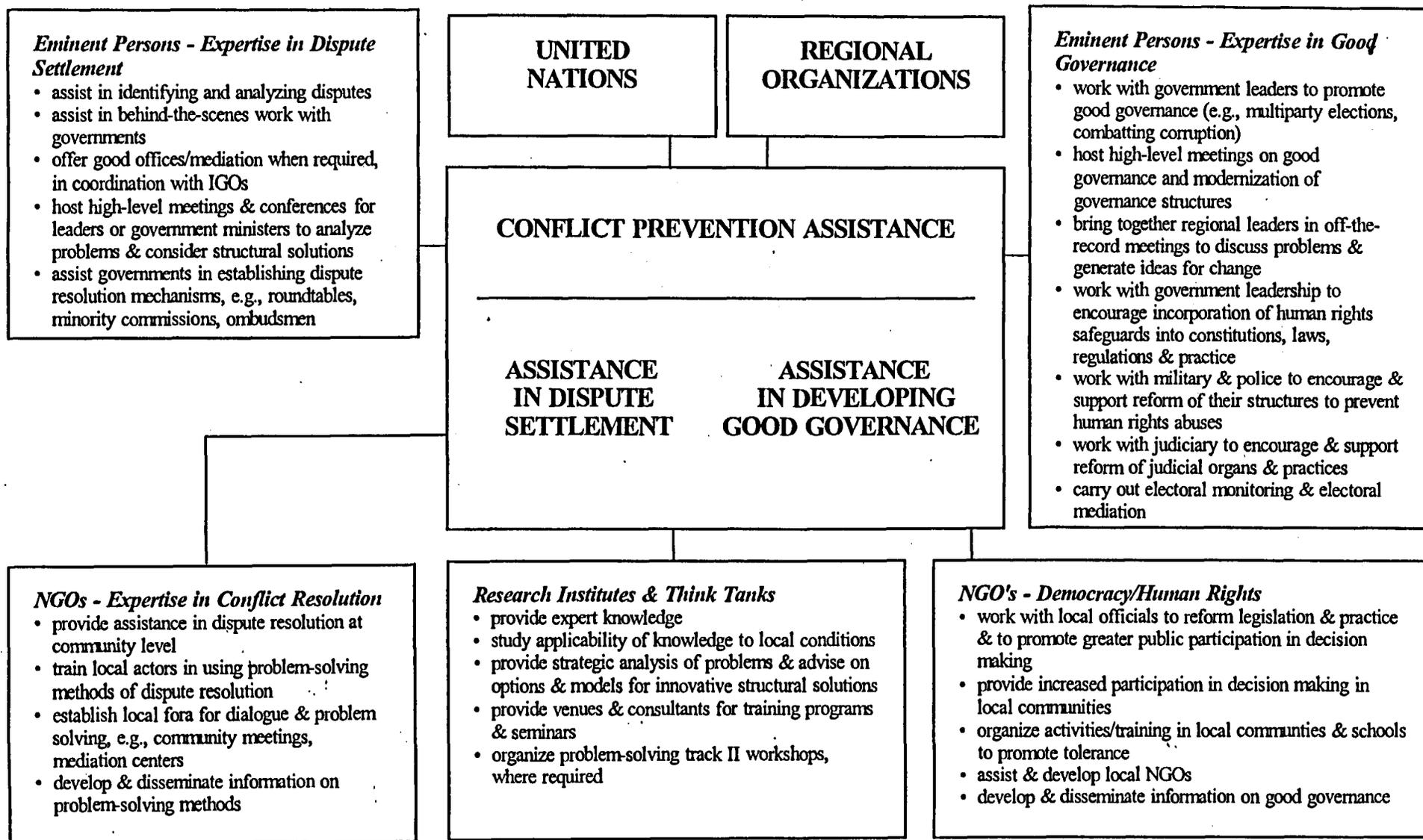
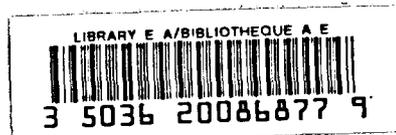


Figure 3: Sample of Functions to be Carried Out by Actors Associated with NGOs



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Prevention : the Role of Regional
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