



## Infrastructures for Peace

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### 1. Introduction

You have been given an overview of Campaigns for a Ministry of Peace, and during this Panel you will hear more on the inspiring stories of Nepal and Costa Rica. The focus of this Panel is on governments that have a Ministry of Peace and we will highlight *why* they have such a Ministry and *what* those Ministries are doing.

The 'Ministry of Peace' concept started to be developed in 2003, mainly in the global North, with the aim of creating a practical model to advance a culture of peace. It was later taken up by others in the South.

During the same period, several countries in the South experienced protracted conflicts, particularly in Africa, where such conflicts were especially likely to arise during elections. In some cases, these events gave rise to the beginnings of 'infrastructures for peace'.

In Ghana, between 1980 and 2002, 23 conflicts were recorded in the three northern regions of the country. When another eruption of violence in 2002 in the Dagombas led to the slaying of the King of Dagbon and many of his elders and close advisors, the government feared these events might derail upcoming elections, and decided that a process should be started to address the root causes. The UNDP was asked to advise, and a process towards a Peace Architecture was initiated, leading to the 2006 Parliament adoption of a National Architecture for Peace. This made Ghana the first African government to implement a Resolution of African Leaders at the first Standing Conference on Stability, Security and Development in Durban in 2002, which called for each country to establish a national framework for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

Kenya is beset by a multitude of local conflicts that have the potential to escalate at any moment, as a result of resource crises, land tenure issues and political machinations. These issues led to the establishment of a National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, the NSC. The Office of the President, through the NSC, embarked on a process towards the development of a national policy on peacebuilding and conflict management in 2004. A draft National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, including the lessons learned from the Post-election Violence of 2008, was published by the Office of the President in December 2008.

Both countries realized that they could never achieve stability and sustainable peace if the roots of their conflicts were not addressed.

Both developments, the Ministries of Peace and establishing a Peace Architecture, are very important, complementary and inspiring. I am glad that we will have the opportunity to share these models with you during this Panel.

Babu Ayindo, who has extensive experience with the Kenyan Peace Architecture, will speak about these developments.

I will give a general introduction on the concept of Infrastructures for Peace, why it is important, and an overview its main components and challenges.

## **2. Importance of the concept and added value**

A very important argument for establishing such an Infrastructure in Ghana and Kenya, was that structural conflicts in these countries were continuing to destabilize them and formed a threat to security, development and peace.

Both countries had general elections recently and in both countries, the existence of these structures has helped in preventing and reducing violent conflict: civil society initiatives and National and Local Peace Councils helped prevent the occurrence of large scale violence in Ghana during the last general elections of 2008 as did CSOs and District Peace Councils in Kenya during the post-election violence in 2008.

A very important argument in favour of infrastructures for peace is now that these structures really helped in preventing and reducing violent conflict: as you will hear in Babu Ayindo's presentation, there is proof that it worked!

A year and a half ago, the world was shocked at the post-election violence that took place in Kenya – a country perceived to be stable and peaceful. If such sudden violence can happen in Kenya, it can happen anywhere. In the coming three years, elections will be held in some thirty other African countries. There is great concern in the international community that much more *electoral violence* may occur as a result.

There are other arguments, too.

While most people want to live in peace and while peace is a pre-condition for development, we lack an overall systems approach to peacebuilding: what are the capacities, tools, mechanisms, structures and institutions we need to build sustainable peace in countries? All societies have numerous conflicts –which can often become violent - but most countries lack the instruments and institutions to address those conflicts systematically.

Building such an Infrastructure, can be done gradually and planned in a broad and participatory process, realizing ownership at all levels. This is major advantage above interventions that are carried out during a crisis. With the escalation of violence in a country, the international community often has limited instruments for intervention with a predominant focus on military intervention, while the international community is often divided and has a great difficulty in reaching common decisions.

Both reasons are strong arguments to build national and local capacities and structures in advance when there is no escalating conflict.

This is needed now more than ever, as experts expect an increase in violent conflicts due to environmental degradation, climate change, resource competition, migration and lack of social cohesion, elections and the fallout from the present global economic downturn. In such a potentially violent context, mechanisms and institutions are needed to deal with growing tensions and conflicts.

If we wait until the conflict escalates, it is more difficult to intervene and far more costly: in lives and in all the other disastrous effects of violent conflicts. Peacekeeping troops in a country easily costs billions. Building the infrastructure for Peace in Ghana on the other hand cost only some 2.5 million dollars over the first three years.

A crucial component of such an Infrastructure, is to establish a Platform for all peace actors and stakeholders for dialogue, consultation, cooperation and coordination. Peace and peacebuilding are complex processes and need urgently such a Platform. This approach acknowledges that sustainable peace needs a collaborative institutional framework between state and non-state actors.

Responses to conflicts are often reactive, law and order based, top-bottom and more aiming for managing the conflict than to solve it. This approach however is pro-active, participatory, non-violent, transformative and principle-based. It is positive in character and stimulates to work with everything and everyone on behalf of the greater good.

It has the potential to grow over time towards an International Alliance of Governments and CSOs that work nationally and internationally for sustainable peace.

### **3. Main components of an Infrastructure for Peace**

The policy objective for an Infrastructure for Peace is to enable and facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among all the relevant stakeholders in peacebuilding by promoting cooperative problem solving to conflicts and by institutionalizing the processes of response to conflicts to produce outcomes that lead to conflict transformation, social, political and religious reconciliation and transformative dialogues.

What follows is a list of possible components, many of which are taken from the policy documents from Ghana and Kenya:

- A National Peace Council (NPC) The NPC consists of highly respected persons of great integrity who are capable of bridging political divides and with competence, knowledge and experience in matters relating to conflict transformation and peace. The members of the NPC shall be nominated by a broad range of identified stakeholders. Parliament shall vet and endorse Councilors. The President shall make the final appointment based on the recommendations of the Parliament. The mandate of the NPC will be to promote sustainable peace and human security. Its functions will include to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts and work to build inter-group trust and confidence. The NPC shall establish a Secretariat with an appropriate number of staff. *It is important to include the main protagonists in the composition of the NPC, but also people who enjoy high levels*

*of trust and who have the capacity to hold the centre in the midst of centrifugal forces.  
How to find a good balance between 'hawks' and 'doves'?.?*

- District and Local Peace Councils (DPCs and LPCs) District and Local Peace Councils have similar tasks as the NPC, at the district and local level, and bring together the different stakeholders at the district and local level. The main objectives and strategies that LPCs have pursued in practice were: violence reduction; promoting dialogue; problem solving and community-building; reconciliation.
- A National Peace Forum (NPF) A Platform for consultation, collaboration, cooperation and coordination of peace issues by all peace actors and stakeholders
- A Government Unit or Department on Peacebuilding One Unit or Department of the Government will develop the overall Government policy on Peacebuilding together with the National Peace Council and the National Peace Forum and will implement it. It will among others draft the relevant legislation; facilitate the establishment of the National Peace Council and related organs and facilitate the capacity building of staff from the ministries relevant to this policy.
- A whole of Government approach This Unit or Department, will liaise and cooperate with other Ministries or Departments with related policies on peace, justice, defense, foreign affairs, social cohesion, conflict resolution in schools, environment, social and economic development and health.
- A bill on the National Peace Infrastructure The National Peace Infrastructure has to be based on a Bill, presented to and approved by the Parliament. Some countries such as Japan, Costa Rica and Ecuador, have even included significant articles in their Constitution.
- Building national capacities for Peace To increase the capacity of peacebuilding institutions of government departments; of National, District and Local Peace Councils and others, as chiefs, women and youth groups, civil society groups and others. Broad-based skills training will be offered to those functionaries, public servants or members of civil society in peacebuilding and conflict management, including conflict analysis, conflict early warning and response, conflict resolution and supporting dialogue processes.
- Traditional perspectives on Conflict Resolution Traditional perspectives, understanding and solutions to conflicts will be offered. These traditional mechanisms will be strengthened to provide ownership and cultural relevance to the interventions in each conflict context.
- Promotion of a shared vision of society It is very important to promote common values and a shared vision of society and establish the policies and structures to implement such a vision. Values of reconciliation, tolerance, trust and confidence building, mediation and dialogue as responses to conflict, will be highlighted. The coming decades will see a huge increase in the diversity of citizens within each country of the world. Everywhere states are struggling to manage the tensions which arise from diversity. A concerted effort is required to manage diversity effectively and promote and ensure social inclusion and cohesion.
- Promotion of a Culture of Peace Understanding one's own conflict context and having the expertise, knowledge and skills to handle any upcoming conflict, is crucial. Effective peacebuilding and conflict management must be underpinned by a well informed population for constructive handling of conflicts. Peace Education is vital for people to own peacebuilding processes. Consequently, strategies for Peace Education should be

established in all sectors and levels of society both in the formal sector of schools, but also the informal sector and lifelong learning. The International Day of Peace, 21 September, can be an excellent rallying point to raise awareness on the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Capacity building programs for Media practitioners will be organized.

- Linking to the Regional and International Community Adequate communication and cooperation with Regional and International Organisations and the UN has to take place, similar to CSO-and other networks.
- Establishing and Implementing an Infrastructure for Peace Sustainable Peace requires the involvement of all stakeholders. It is crucial in the initial phase of establishing an Infrastructure, to consult and involve all stakeholders: government and non-state actors; different sectors of society; and the national, district and local level. When such a policy is decided, it has to be operationalized and regular assessments have to be executed.
- Budget Peacebuilding and conflict management intervention strategies require long-term funding by government, donors, NGOs and communities. Such a strategy needs a flexible budgeting and rapid financial disbursement procedures, including national and district peace contingency funds. There must be decentralized decision-making, giving districts and communities easy access to funds.

These components are not a straitjacket, but possible pillars for a National Infrastructure for Peace. It is essential that each process, structure and mechanism is authentic and designed by the stakeholders themselves or in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

#### **4. Main challenges**

There are numerous challenges.

To mention a few:

- One of the basic tenets of this approach is the inclusion of governments from the beginning of the process. However, governments might deny the very existence of problems and they some will close their eyes to the possibility of electoral violence.
- Many governments fear CSO influence. In many countries, governments have curtailed their influence, and may hesitate to set-up structures in cooperation with CSOs.
- A challenge will be getting such governments involved, what are good entry points ?
- How to find a good balance between the power of the government Departments and the National, District and Local Peace Councils?
- How to find a good balance within the Peace Councils, between the 'hawks' and the 'doves' ?
- Setting up such a Peace Architecture will diminish the power of political parties and Parliament and give some power to National and District Peace Councils. How will the politicians respond ?
- The envisioned National Peace Forum, aims to be a Platform for consultation and cooperation of peace issues by all peace actors and stakeholders. How will this be managed? And how will potential spoilers respond?
- The *Main Components* for such an Infrastructure, lists many key elements and perhaps too many. What is essential and where to start?

- How will this be funded? Despite the fact that investing in conflict prevention is relatively cheap, funding this Peace Architecture will still be taking funds away from other pressing needs and development priorities.

And there will be many more challenges.

## **5. Seminar in Nairobi and further outreach**

Learning how this Peace Architecture has contributed to preventing and reducing violence during recent elections in Ghana and Kenya and realizing how general elections will be held in some thirty African countries within three years, did UNDP/BCPR decide to organize a Seminar this fall in Nairobi to see how such a Peace Infrastructure can help to transform Conflicts and if more Infrastructures for Peace can be established in African countries. GPPAC is closely cooperating with BCPR, together with GPPAC regional secretariats for Eastern and Central and Western Africa, namely NPI-Africa and WANEP.

Several countries will be invited for this Seminar and hopefully national activities will be organized as a follow-up.

Potentially, similar Seminars will be held in Latin America and Asia.

### *Some key documents*

- National Architecture for Peace in Ghana; issued by the Ministry of Interior; 10 May 2006
- National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (draft); Office of the President of Kenya, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security; December 2008
- Local Peace Committees: some reflections and lessons learned, by Andries Odendaal and Retief Olivier; 2008