

**Background Paper: Voices of civil society organizations (CSOs) on  
peacebuilding and statebuilding**

Prepared as an input into the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

**March 2010**

**The views expressed within this document are a reflection of the input provided by the Civil Society Organizations consulted and therefore are not necessarily the view or opinion of Interpeace.**

# Introduction

This report is a summary of the responses and insights from a rapid consultative process with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to input into the first global meeting of the International Dialogue on peacebuilding and statebuilding to be held in Dili, Timor-Leste on 9-10 April 2010.

The International Dialogue is an intergovernmental dialogue initiative that was established as an outcome of the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in September 2008. It is chaired by a partner and donor country jointly (currently the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the UK).

The purpose of the International Dialogue is to examine good practices and key bottlenecks in international support for peacebuilding and statebuilding and to generate consensus around fundamental priorities and objectives in these areas. The International Dialogue will involve multiple international and national stakeholders and provide a forum to discuss issues that are under-addressed, or cannot be resolved at the country-level.

This report is based on input from **49 Civil Society Organizations (CSO) working on peacebuilding and statebuilding**. The consultation process was carried out by Interpeace, an international peacebuilding organization, in March 2010.

Two thirds of the organizations are Southern based CSOs supporting peacebuilding and statebuilding. Organizations are from Africa (West Africa network, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Somali Region, Sudan, Gambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Burundi, and DRC); Asia (South East Asia network, Timor-Leste, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines); Latin America (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras); Middle East (Israel and Lebanon) and international Civil Society Organizations supporting peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts and local CSOs around the world. Out of the 145 organizations that were contacted, 49 were able to engage.

The full list of participating Civil Society Organizations is found in **Annex 1**.

## A note on methodology

The rapid consultative process (called FAST TALK) involved identifying and contacting a list of CSO interlocutors to explain the process and input sought. Extensive use was made of existing networks of organizations working on peacebuilding and statebuilding issues. The CSO interlocutors were sent a set of 4 questions and were invited to provide short written responses related to: definitions of peacebuilding and statebuilding, the interaction between the two concepts, the roles and responsibilities of internal and external actors, and how to more effectively engage civil society in the International Dialogue.

The list of questions is found in **Annex 2**.

This process was carried out through email exchanges (in English, French and Spanish) and follow-up phone conversations/interviews.

This summary report has been shared with the participating organizations and there is a keen interest expressed by the CSOs to continue to be engaged in the International Dialogue.

# Central Observations

## 1. Peacebuilding and statebuilding are processes. Process matters. There is a need to focus on the ‘how’ and not only the ‘what’.

This section looks at how the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) consulted define peacebuilding and statebuilding. As a basis of the discussions, CSOs were asked if the definitions currently used by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) were useful and consistent in their own efforts. These definitions are as follow:

Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

*Source: Conceptual basis for peacebuilding for the UN system adopted by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee in May 2007*

Statebuilding is an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations. Positive statebuilding processes involve reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state.

*Source: OECD-DAC, Statebuilding in Situations of Fragility: Initial Findings, August 2008*

Some refinements and nuances were proposed to the definitions:

The definition of peacebuilding should pay more attention to: conflict prevention, to addressing the root causes of conflict and to reconciliation. The use of the term ‘conflict management’ may give the impression that a conflict is contained so it may be better to use the term ‘conflict transformation.’ The phrase ‘strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management’ tends in practice to mean government centric capacity building while capacity building to address conflict needs to be done at the society level. The definition should also clarify that peacebuilding is a process (statebuilding is defined as a process whereas peacebuilding is not).

The definition of statebuilding is focused on the ultimate goal which is described in a positive way, whereas the statebuilding process itself is often conflictual. There is also a need to take into account that there can be different understandings of the meaning of the term “State”, which is not restricted to a Western model of the State.

There is also a need to explain these processes in accessible language, especially at the grassroots level and to listen to the terms people in a given society use to discuss these concepts.

### Focus on process

However more important than the nuances made to the definitions is the recognition that while these are important and useful, too little attention is being paid to how these concepts are translated into reality.

Too often, the “how” (the process) is neglected with more focussed attention on the “what” that needs to be done. There is a need not only to focus on the end goal of peacebuilding and statebuilding, but on the process that will lead to building lasting peace and reviving (or creating for the first time) the social contract between the people and their State. Most often peacebuilding and statebuilding strategies fail not because of their content, but because of deficiencies in their process.

Peacebuilding and statebuilding are long-term endeavours requiring long-term commitment of both national and international actors. Peacebuilding and statebuilding processes do not follow a linear path. There can be moments of progress and there will be moments of regress (even simultaneously in different spheres).

*“Peacebuilding is a life time mission, rather than a project or a programme.”*

### **Context matters and contextual adaptations are necessary**

Peacebuilding and statebuilding are not merely / only technical exercises. There is a need to understand the deeper historical experiences of state-formation (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences) and the specific nature and dynamics of the conflict. While the international community often brings “cookie cutter” approaches to these contexts, there is a need to really understand that each situation has its own dynamics and key actors. What may be necessary and sufficient for one situation is not so for the other. There are no generic recipes.

While there is often a focus on national level peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts, it is important to understand that regional dynamics can play a role in national efforts. In addition, international phenomenon such as globalization, terrorism and drug trafficking also touch on national statebuilding and peacebuilding efforts.

## **2. Peacebuilding and statebuilding should be complementary and mutually reinforcing processes but tensions arise**

*“You cannot build a State in a social vacuum.” “Peacebuilding is about building relationships, but relationships cannot take place in a State vacuum.”*

While statebuilding by nature can be a conflict inducing process, there is clear recognition of the connection between peacebuilding and statebuilding. Peacebuilding approaches focus on inclusion and participation that can lead to more effective and inclusive institutions capable of addressing conflict. Statebuilding is seen as essential for the sustainability of the peacebuilding process.

There are also important tensions and possible contradictions that need to be recognized:

- There is the need for some form of political settlement in order to support sustainable statebuilding. Statebuilding cannot start too early and cannot substitute for processes which build trust between competing groups although it does have the potential to contribute significantly to trust building.
- If the state was party to the conflict, strengthening the state will not necessarily contribute to peace. There is a need to ensure that the statebuilding process does not recreate these tensions. The state can also be the main source of power and wealth, at risk therefore of being instrumentalized by particular interest groups. The need then is for reform of the state – and of the political culture.
- The timeframes and sequencing by international agendas can create tensions and have a destabilizing effect. For example, the introduction of democracy, elections, power-sharing etc. in highly divided societies can further polarize tensions especially if introduced too quickly as democracy may be seen as a “winner take all” situation. Democracy is a culture that takes time to be understood. When democracy is in a formative stage the lack of understanding of the term can

put the process at risk. In addition traditional mechanisms need to find a place within democratic systems.

- Peacebuilding and statebuilding are political undertakings that require real political will – not in the least of the national government. If this is absent this may produce frustrated expectations, provoke new conflicts and can damage the credibility of new democratic institutions.
- Conflict-sensitive statebuilding can be a necessary form of peacebuilding but need not be the only one. There may be other causes and drivers of conflict which need to be understood through a proper analysis and which reside outside of the role of the state.
- A focus on ‘statebuilding’ ignores the often very important regional dimensions of conflict and stability.

The tensions between peacebuilding and statebuilding can largely be mitigated by focusing on ensuring meaningful participation of people at all levels of society. This point is elaborated in the next section on local ownership and local actors.

### **3. Peacebuilding and statebuilding need to be internally-led and externally- supported**

*“Give local ownership to the processes of addressing conflict and building states. This is not just needed in terms of sustainability, but also gives people the necessary pride back that many violent conflicts have taken away from them.”*

Peacebuilding and statebuilding are the primary responsibility of internal actors. External actors have an important role in supporting these processes, but should not be in the driving seat.

*“The international community should remember its place as a supporter of the process and not the owner of the process.”*

#### **Local ownership and local/internal actors**

While it is commonly agreed that internal actors need to drive the peacebuilding and statebuilding process, too often internal actors are restricted to government actors. Internal actors need to be understood not only as the government and the State but also as society at large. There is a need to broaden ownership outside of the government. People cannot be seen as just the recipients of state services but need to feel that they are a part of the process.

*“Leaders often see a public that wants everything and is generally uninformed with little to contribute. The public sees decision making processes completely overtaken by partisan battling.”*

The political will of the government is a necessary condition to support peacebuilding and statebuilding but ownership needs to be extended beyond the government. Societies are often insufficiently engaged in issues of great importance to them and they feel the lack of mechanisms and channels for expression of public opinion. It is essential therefore to fully engage a larger spectrum of internal actors from the top level to the grass roots. There is a need for a society to develop a shared vision of the future and also to identify the main peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities and agree on the process to address these. Inclusive processes enhance the legitimacy of both peacebuilding and statebuilding and contribute to their potential for working in a complementary fashion.

## Support capacities for social reconciliation within and across communities

There is also a need to support capacities for social reconciliation within and across communities. As mentioned above, often the focus of capacity building is on the State. Peacebuilding should aim at enhancing the capacity of a society to address conflict and to rebuild trust. This type of capacity building should be seen as more than just providing training, but must be supported and accompanied by local Civil Society Organizations and external actors.

This is where civil society organizations play a critical role as an intermediary in bridging between the government and the population at large. This can be achieved through:

- ▶ Broader consultative and participatory processes that engage different groups within a society including those in more remote and excluded or marginalized sectors of society where the government has limited capacity or reach, or where these groups are not necessarily politically articulate and organized. This also includes engaging parliamentarians and constituencies, political parties with internal debate and political programmes, effective and responsible opposition.
- ▶ Awareness-raising via media and civic education, and the strengthening of capacities also of the local level.

Civil society organisations can play a meaningful role here if they are able to have an appropriate independence from government and a real connection to a population at large. Just having civil society representation does not necessarily equal citizens' representation. Civil society organizations must be linked to their base. There is also a risk of civil society springing up in response to funding possibilities.

*"In Kosovo, we have a project society, not a civil society."*

Civil society organizations face many challenges: some are specific for civil society in general, others are more acutely felt by CSOs in fragile and divided societies. These include: divisions among civil society; governments' perception of civil society as a threat; in some cases this includes the risk of persecution; politicization of civil society; instrumentalization of civil society by external actors; lack of funding; or weak capacity.

## External actors as enablers, not "do-ers"

*"Building capacities for peace requires that we include existing local knowledge and expertise and contextualize our interventions not in terms of giving [local actors] prescriptions but rather in strengthening their capacities to carry on the peacebuilding work themselves. There is no better person to build sustainable peace than the communities that are directly affected by violence."*

External actors (neighbouring countries, international donors, international CSOs) have an important role to play in supporting local capacities. They are enablers, but not do-ers of peacebuilding and statebuilding. In practice this means that some of the key support external actors can provide is:

- ▶ Providing ideas and knowledge from other peacebuilding and statebuilding contexts as well as technical support. However, there is a need for solutions proposed to be adapted to the context (not just "pre-cooked solutions") and owned and internalized by internal actors. That also holds for international values and their application to local realities.
- ▶ Supporting capacity building efforts. However, there is a need to recognize that capacities do exist in countries emerging from conflict in order not to substitute for or duplicate these capacities.

There is a need for external actors to reflect on the need for capacity building not just for the government but also for wider society. South-South exchanges are seen as a very credible and valuable learning opportunity.

- ▶ Providing financial resources
- ▶ Given that peacebuilding and statebuilding processes are not linear, and subject to bumps along the road, the presence of external actors can be seen to protect people. External actors can also serve as neutral third party facilitators.
- ▶ Applying pressure to see commitments respected (but also need to honour their own commitments).
- ▶ Recognizing that international actions have an impact on national peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts. For example, controlling the trade in illicit weapons, promoting fair practices in economic and trade systems, a better representation for fragile states in international fora and a more critical reflection on the 'aid and development' discourse.
- ▶ Recognize that these processes are long-term and require long-term accompaniment and support.

#### 4. Interest in continuing the conversation

The interlocutors in this rapid consultation processes expressed a strong desire to be able to engage with and contribute to the ongoing International Dialogue on this important topic, so as to be able to explore these issues in greater depth. They noted that it is important to allocate adequate time for civil society input as this process started in March for the meeting in April 2010.

**There is also a need for awareness raising about the International Dialogue process itself.**

Many CSOs were not aware about the International Dialogue process itself which may be a reflection of the intergovernmental nature of the process.

##### **Focus on regional level, South-South exchanges**

Practically speaking there was strong suggestion on continuing the dialogue at the **regional level** and feeding the results into the International Dialogue. There is a need for knowledge sharing between CSOs and regional platforms could feed into the International Dialogue. This can be achieved through regional workshops and can also be achieved by using existing networks of civil organizations and the use of interactive media such as websites, list serves, chat rooms.

**ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPATING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

	<b>CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
1.	Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits CENAP	Burundi
2.	Nairobi Peace Initiative	Kenya
3.	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)	West Africa region
4.	Programme for Research and Dialogue for Peace	Liberia
5.	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)	South Africa and Africa
6.	Center for Research and Dialogue, South-Central Somalia (CRD)	Somali Region
7.	Collaborative for Peace	Sudan
8.	Worldview The Gambia	Gambia
9.	Arcadia University and Nyerere Centre	Tanzania
10.	UPEACE Africa program	Ethiopia
11.	Puntland Development Research Center (PDRC)	Somali Region
12.	CNONGD - Conseil National des ONG de Développement	DRC
13.	Centre Résolution Conflits	DRC
14.	African Human Security Initiative	Ethiopia
15.	Voz di Paz	Guinea Bissau
16.	Center of Studies for Peace and Development, Timor Leste (CEPAD)	Timor Leste
17.	Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)	Philippines, Regional South-East Asia
18.	Regional Centre for Strategic Studies	Sri Lanka, South Asia
19.	VOICE	Bangladesh
20.	Alliance for Peace Nepal	Nepal
21.	Catholic Relief Services	Timor Leste
22.	National Peace Campaign	Nepal

23.	Centre for Peace-Building & Reconciliation - CPBR Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
24.	LDC Watch	Nepal
25.	Citizen's Constitutional Forum (CCF)	Fiji
26.	Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)	Pakistan
27.	Peacebuilding Academy	Lebanon
28.	Base 4 Discussion Programme	Israel
29.	FLASCO (Facultad Latino Americana de Ciencias Sociales)	Guatemala
30.	Propaz Foundation	Guatemala
31.	POLJUVE programme	Central America
32.	Turkish Cypriot Researcher	Cyprus
33.	Greek Cypriot Researcher	Cyprus
34.	International Alert	UK
35.	Search for Common Ground (SFCG)	USA, Belgium
36.	Conciliation Resources	UK
37.	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)	The Netherlands / global
38.	Life & Peace Institute In consultation with local DRC partner	Sweden DRC
39.	Nansen Dialogue Network	Norway and Balkans
40.	Peace Direct	UK
41.	Quaker Council for European Affairs	Belgium
42.	Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)	Switzerland
43.	CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (Reflecting Peace Practices project)	USA
44.	Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR), Columbia University	USA

45.	Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution	Austria
46.	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), Brussels, Belgium	Europe
47.	ELIAMEP	Greece
48.	Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP)	Switzerland
49.	Interpeace	Switzerland

## ANNEX 2: FAST TALK QUESTIONS

Definitions used by OECD-DAC

**"Peacebuilding** involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development."

*Source: Conceptual basis for peacebuilding for the UN system adopted by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee in May 2007*

**"Statebuilding** is an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations. Positive statebuilding processes involve reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state."

*Source: OECD-DAC, Statebuilding in Situations of Fragility: Initial Findings, August 2008*

### QUESTION 1: The definitions of peacebuilding and statebuilding

Do you consider the definitions of statebuilding and peacebuilding proposed by the OECD are consistent with and useful for your work in/on fragile situations?

Are there alternative terms that better describe the work you do?

### QUESTION 2: Roles and responsibilities of internal/national actors and external/international actors

What are the appropriate responsibilities and roles for internal (including CSOs and national and local authorities) and external actors (including international NGOs, international and regional organizations and the international development community) in peacebuilding and statebuilding?

How do you assess the role of internal/external actors in statebuilding and peacebuilding processes in relation to your context?

How can internal actors better support peacebuilding and statebuilding?

How can external actors better support peacebuilding and statebuilding?

How can ownership of peacebuilding and statebuilding be extended beyond the national government?

What are the opportunities and challenges for civil society organizations in peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts?

### QUESTION 3: The interaction between peacebuilding and statebuilding

Do you presume there is an obvious positive interaction between statebuilding and peacebuilding, that these processes are complementary, or that there are potential tensions between the two processes?

If you presume there are potential tensions, please explain what they could be and the way those tensions could be addressed.

How can statebuilding be supported in ways that contribute to social cohesion and peace?

How can peacebuilding service legitimate, accountable and effective statebuilding?

#### **QUESTION 4: Civil society and International Dialogue**

This present discussion/consultation is an initial engagement with civil society organizations in the International Dialogue process. What would in your view be a good process to ensure participation of civil society stakeholders in the future work of the International Dialogue?