

Promoting public participation in peacemaking: recommendations for action in the United Nations system

Conciliation Resources Accord Programme paper presented at the International Peace Academy policy forum, New York, 12 February 2003

UN Peace Operations

- The Security Council should consider mainstreaming the principle of effective participation in the development of mandates for peace operations. It should set benchmarks for the implementation of previous resolutions promoting participation – such as Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – and monitor achievement.
- The design of peace operations should ensure that the various UN agencies and partner organisations develop comprehensive and coordinated strategies for supporting or complementing the peacemaking initiatives of local actors rather than displacing them. UN missions could be tasked with facilitating and monitoring implementation of this goal.

Department of Political Affairs & Special Representatives of the Secretary-General

- UNDPA should proactively seek to operationalise resolutions and conventions on political participation within its peacemaking activities. Reflection on the dilemmas and challenges of participation and how these have been addressed elsewhere could inform the development of principles and guidelines for mediation and peacemaking activities.
- The UN can use its influence with representatives of the government and the armed groups to encourage them to open peacemaking processes to other social sectors and political groupings, particularly in the identification of and deliberation on substantive and political issues.

UN Development Programme and UNIFEM

- UNDP has the potential to play important roles in supporting participation at all phases of the peace process. (1) Even prior to the emergence of sustained political negotiations, it can provide support to civil society actors to prepare them for effective participation

through training and capacity building in participation, negotiation, and policy formulation. (2) Prior to and possibly during the negotiation process, it could provide financial and technical support for multi-sectoral forums convening diverse civil society groupings to develop and debate the key issues that should be addressed in the negotiating agenda and, as relevant, to deliberate the substantive measures to address them. If appropriate, the Secretary-General's special representatives or special envoys can take part in these processes or be advised of the outcomes so as to develop comprehensive strategies. (3) UNDP can also be an important resource in the post-settlement implementation and peacebuilding phase in supporting participation and democratic governance.

- UNIFEM can work with other international agencies and local actors to ensure that women are able to participate effectively in all of the stages and processes outlined here.
- UNDP should consider adopting a focus on democratisation and peacemaking within its Thematic Trust Fund, possibly by integrating it into its Global Programme Portfolio, so as to develop more expertise and the exchange of experiences worldwide.

Department of Peacekeeping & Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Because basic physical safety is often a prerequisite for creating an atmosphere that enables widespread participation, the UN seek to protect those involved. Such measures as permanent human rights monitoring missions and the use of international peace monitors (including unarmed monitors) have been shown to be very helpful in increasing security.