

## FHSMUN 31

### UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

#### INTEGRATING CONFLICT PREVENTION INTO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

##### Introduction

There is no shortage in the need for development programs throughout the world, particularly in war-torn areas where infrastructure is in short supply. Development over the last 40 years has been directed by the language of *UN General Assembly Resolution 2626* from the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade which states “in recognition of the special importance of the role which can be fulfilled only by official development assistance, a major part of financial resource transfers to the developing countries should be provided in the form of official development assistance. Each economically advanced country will progressively increase its official development assistance to the developing countries and will exert its best efforts to reach a minimum net amount of 0.7 per cent of its gross national product at market prices by the middle of the Decade.”<sup>1</sup>

Using GA Resolution 2626 as their basis, leaders of developed countries have already committed 0.7% of their total GNP to Official Development Assistance (ODA)<sup>2</sup>; unfortunately, however, the consistency of nations to keep up with this commitment, the distribution of these monies to developing states, and the use of funds after distribution have created a bittersweet track record for development assistance. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), only five OECD countries met or exceeded this 0.7% GNP target for ODA: Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.<sup>3</sup> The 2009 Human Development Report which tracks the development of every country and lays out the road ahead for development focuses on these four key areas and objectives<sup>4</sup>:

- 1) Achieving the MDGs and Reducing Human Poverty
- 2) Fostering Democratic Governance
- 3) Supporting Crisis Prevention and Recovery
- 4) Managing Energy and the Environment for Sustainable Development

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<sup>1</sup> International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. October 24, 1970. UN General Assembly Resolution 2626 (XXV), para. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Anup Shah, “US and Foreign Aid Assistance” April 13, 2009. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/35/us-and-foreign-aid-assistance#RichNationsAgreedatUNto07ofGNPToAid>

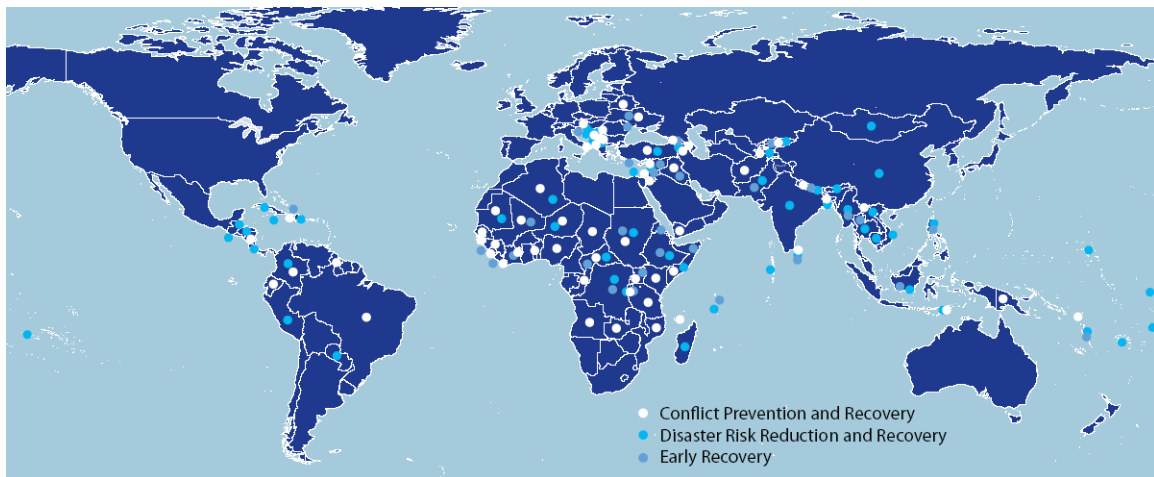
<sup>3</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “Development aid at its highest level ever in 2008” March 30, 2009. Found at: <http://webnet4.oecd.org/dcdgraphs/>

<sup>4</sup> UNDP, *UNDP Annual Report 2009*. <http://www.undp.org/hdr2009.shtml>

Additional focus has also been on the impact of women in their respective communities, micro-finance as a viable development tool for inclusive markets and electoral reform. It's worthwhile to note that while these areas are beginning implementation, early successes have already proven their value in supporting ODA.

### **The Void of Conflict Prevention**

In reference to the UNDP programs based around “supporting crisis prevention and recovery” at the country level, UNDP provided early recovery support to 20 countries in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Of course, this support was primarily strengthening infrastructure following the crises within the respective countries, rather than on prevention.



**Figure 1. Conflict Prevention and Recovery Efforts for UNDP (2006- 2008) 2009 UNDP Annual Report**

While UNDP programs certainly reach a great number of people in many developing countries<sup>5</sup>, essential development assistance does not always reach the source of greatest need. Furthermore, this aid may be squandered through inappropriate targeting or setting of priorities and through corruption, an important cause of conflict in many countries. According to the International Crisis Group, there are at least 74 conflicts currently ongoing around the world. While the briefly addressed UNDP program based on “supporting crisis prevention and recovery” is in existence, the majority of its funds and time are tied up in the actual aftermath recovery following a crisis or conflict. According to the UNDP, there are currently 35 million survivors of conflict—10 million refugees and 25 million internally displaced persons.

UNDP’s focus is on the repatriation and rehabilitation of the people who have been affected by conflict, but they do take a three-pronged approach to conflict

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<sup>5</sup> The UNDP is currently working on integrating conflict prevention into development programs in countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ecuador, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, and Sierra Leone. Found at: [http://www.undp.org/cpr/we\\_do/conflict\\_prevention.shtml](http://www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/conflict_prevention.shtml)

prevention. One of these prongs is the integration of conflict prevention into development programs. “To achieve this, and in collaboration with UN departments, agencies and partners, UNDP builds the capacity of national institutions and actors to analyze together common problems and identify joint solutions.”<sup>6</sup>

Conflict prevention is defined by UNDP as “the wide range of actions, interventions, programs, activities, mechanisms and procedures that address structural threats, prevent the escalations of tensions into violent conflict in addition of preventing the continuation or reoccurrence of violent conflict.”<sup>7</sup> In defining conflict prevention, UNDP identified three forms of conflict prevention which directly address the three types of conflict<sup>5</sup>:

- 1) Systemic prevention: global conflict factors, including global inequity, the negative effects of globalization, arms trafficking, and international organized crime;
- 2) Structural prevention: weak, failing or predatory states, group identities, horizontal inequalities, inequity, insecurity and lack of justice;
- 3) Operational prevention: conflict accelerators and triggers, including, among others, resource scarcity, influx of small arms, public health emergencies, military decommissioning, sudden migration or population displacement, land redistribution, severe inflation, contentious elections, etc.

Writing for the UNDP in October 2001, Michi Ebata noted that “conflict prevention involves the building of a system of rules that give order and predictability to interactions between people and peoples in society that prevents conflicts from escalating.”<sup>8</sup>

These can be difficult areas to address, particularly when considering the roots and triggers of the particular conflict, whose origins of conflict can go back generations in some cases and oftentimes, are prolonged and made more intricate by societal disparities. For instance, in the case of structural prevention, increasing sexual violence particularly against women and children in the midst of conflict, points to a direct correlation with gender and age inequalities in some developing countries. These issues are complex in nature and require great planning, resources and a long-term commitment to seeing results. With many resources tied in crisis situations and with a great many countries in states of burgeoning conflict, and not necessarily in full crisis, it can be difficult to decide where the priority areas are to begin implementing conflict prevention.

While education and advocacy can be effective tools for conflict prevention, overwhelmingly, it is clear that there must be an imperative for conflict prevention upheld and supported by the United Nations that is tethered by international law. With a concentration on conflict prevention, additional resources would likely follow suit. It

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP, “Integrating Conflict Prevention into Development Programmes”.  
[http://www.undp.org/cpr/we\\_do/integrating\\_conflict.shtml](http://www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/integrating_conflict.shtml)

<sup>7</sup> Conflict Prevention NHDR Thematic Guidance Note. August 2004. National Human Development Report Unit/HDRO Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery.

<sup>8</sup> Michi Ebata, “Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention in Analysis and Programming: A review of CCA/UNDAF processes” Toronto October 2001 p. 5.

takes a great deal of time to analyze states at risk for conflict and to understand the underlying factors and then develop a plan to either eliminate the conditions which could result in a crisis, or mitigate the contributing factors. States at risk for conflict must be provided with proper incentives for peace and rewarded for positive action to prevent conflict. Peaceful conditions would need to replace warlike conditions, and the implementation of such a chore would vary case by case. In the case of countries with widespread catalyzing issues, such as a failing political system, the investment of conflict prevention is ever the more necessary and concurrently, difficult to implement.

The June 2001 Report of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of armed conflict stated that “Conflict prevention and sustainable and equitable development are mutually reinforcing activities. An investment in national and international efforts for conflict prevention must be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development since the latter can best take place in an environment of sustainable peace.”<sup>9</sup> Though this notion of conflict prevention is a part of the overall strategic focus for UNDP, the inability to truly implement a full-scale plan to address the issue has result in fragmented results and lack of resources to truly address the problem.

However, as given by this same report, the international community takes a tertiary responsibility in conflict prevention; “The primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments, with civil society playing an important role. The main role of the United Nations and the international community is to support national efforts for conflict prevention and assist in building national capacity in this field.”<sup>6</sup>

If it is the national government’s responsibility, with civil society in the respective country, then the ability of the United Nations and the international community to truly implement long-term effective programs is severely limited, given the competition that true “prevention” would have with the need to provide immediate resources and aid to currently existing conflicts. Perhaps this discussion would be less important were it not for the impetus of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, during which world leaders came together to drastically shift focus from a “culture of reaction” to a “culture of prevention.” Both the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/2 and resolution 1318 (2000) adopted by the Security Council at the level of heads of State and Government recognized the vital role of all parts of the United Nations system in conflict prevention and pledged to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in this field.

Out of this same spirit, at the Millennium Summit, the Millennium Development Goals<sup>10</sup> (MDGs) were cast: the eight goals which world leaders must strive to achieve together by 2015. How precisely do the MDGs connect to conflict prevention? As stated by the NGO Observer, International Committee of the Red Cross at the Millennium

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<sup>9</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict. June 2001. UN General Assembly/ UN Security Council

<sup>10</sup> Millennium development Goals, United Nations, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Summit of the United Nations<sup>11</sup>, “there are correlations between extreme poverty and violence. The eradication of extreme poverty clearly has a conflict-prevention dimension.”

This same concept was expanded upon several years later in writings by Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet<sup>12</sup> who were perhaps best quoted as saying, “Extreme poverty literally kills.” In fact, the United States’ current Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, contributed a chapter to this same book where she discusses the negative implications of growing poverty in developing countries to global security.

Though the knowledge that conditions of extreme poverty can increase the reality of developing conflicts is not a new presumption, it has perhaps been the most ignored until the formation of the MDGs. The reality of progress on the MDGs has not been equal across the board, with realities of the individual priorities of states’ often clouding the overall goal of achieving such goals as maternal healthcare for all women and children. Nonetheless, this important, but elusive task of integrating conflict prevention into the development framework remains a lesser publicized priority of the international community. Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, expressed this idea poignantly when he said that “my strong hope -- more, my expectation -- is that the community of States will invest more into the prevention of armed conflicts and, should a conflict erupt despite all efforts, make it clear to all parties involved that they are expected to respect the rules of international humanitarian law.”

### **UNDP: Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention into Development Strategies**

Incorporating conflict prevention directly into development strategies requires assessing how effectively governments and related development partners integrate conflict resolution strategies and techniques. A crucial instrument that the UNDP and national governments utilize to measure the effectiveness of development strategies is the Common Country Assessment (CCA), established under the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Michi Ebata noted that a number of countries that are currently experiencing, or have recently experienced, violent armed conflict have succeeded in delineating the institutional failings and needs of countries such as Bosnia, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and Rwanda<sup>13</sup>; it is important to note that Colombia and Sri Lanka have recently experienced high levels of conflict – in the case of Sri Lanka, the 25-year long civil war ended in 2009 with the destruction of the main rebel army, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). As Sri Lanka rebuilds from the effects of the civil war, integrating appropriate and effective conflict prevention strategies into all development programs and projects will be critical to preventing future outbreaks of armed conflict and civil war. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) may have unintentionally reinforced rigid

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, 55th session, The Millennium Summit of the United Nations, Dr. Jakob Kellenberger, President, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), <http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/57JQJL>

<sup>12</sup> Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet. “*Too Poor for Peace? Global Poverty, Conflict, and Security in the 21st Century*” (pg. 3) 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Michi Ebata, “Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention in Analysis and Programming: A review of CCA/UNDAF processes” Toronto October 2001 p. 11.

Sinhalese positions when it granted a \$2.6 billion USD loan package to the Sri Lankan government with “relatively few strings attached”, especially relating to human rights concerns in the aftermath of the government’s victory over the LTTE.<sup>14</sup> With the approaching January 26, 2010 presidential elections in Sri Lanka, it is essential that Sri Lankan politicians and international development partners seek to resolve the outstanding issues from the civil war and fully integrate conflict prevention strategies and techniques into contemporary development plans.<sup>15</sup> One essential step that the UNDP needs to take is to persuade all countries to regularly conduct and update Common Country Assessments (CCAs).

The implementation of Common Country Assessments (CCAs) must be accompanied by an honest and even-handed appraisal of the roots of conflict as well as the actual functioning of the various instruments of the state, including courts and security forces. Michi Ebata concludes that the overwhelming majority of early CCAs were highly nationalistic and immediate in orientation because “regional contexts are not analysed sufficiently”; furthermore, “an analysis of the historical context and its legacies is often lacking.”<sup>16</sup> Decontextualized analyses of development initiatives invariably foster a climate of selective memory and historical amnesia in reference to the roots of conflict, thus making conflict prevention significantly more difficult to achieve.

While it is essential that the UNDP and national governments demonstrate their respective commitments to integrating conflict prevention into sustainable development initiatives, all related development partners, including international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank Group and regional development banks, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) exhibit considerable leadership, too. The European Union (EU) reformed its development assistance policies to emphasize the critical links between conflict prevention and sustainable development, especially in conflict-prone regions such as northern Uganda. As the EU learned from past mistakes, particularly during the period from 1992-1995, “poor co-ordination between donors has on occasion resulted in EU engagement undermining efforts specifically targeted to address the underlying causes of conflict.”<sup>17</sup> A contemporary positive development regarding the successful integration of conflict prevention strategies into sustainable development initiatives may be occurring within the US Congress; in December 2009, the first real reform aimed at the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 began taking shape.<sup>18</sup> While the final outcome of these reform efforts may not be implemented for several months, or longer, it is certainly worth noting that the US and other governments are including

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<sup>14</sup> *Economist*, “A loan for Sri Lanka” July 30, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Siri Gamage, “Presidential Election 2010: What is at Stake?” *Sri Lanka Guardian* January 9, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Michi Ebata, “Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention in Analysis and Programming: A review of CCA/UNDAF processes” Toronto October 2001 p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ben Lucy, “The EU, northern Uganda, and the prevention of violent conflict” *African Security Review* Vol. 9 No. 5/6 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Conflict Prevention and Resolution Forum (CPRF), “Development and Peacebuilding: Reforming the Foreign Assistance Act” December 2009.

Found at: [http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/forums/forums\\_conflict.html](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/forums/forums_conflict.html)

conflict prevention strategies and techniques as essential components of their foreign assistance packages.

### **Conclusion: Lessons Learned**

As the delegates to the UNDP reflect upon the lessons learned from years of integrating conflict prevention into development programs and projects, it may become readily apparent that countries need to emphasize the mainstreaming of conflict prevention into all aspects of development planning and implementation. To do so, the UNDP and its development partners must include all stakeholders throughout the development process; as women are frequently left out of, or actively prohibited from taking part in, development planning and implementation, it is absolutely essential to the success of conflict prevention and development initiatives that women be active participants and leaders during all stages of the development process.<sup>19</sup> Donor governments and organizations and international financial institutions (IFIs) must also reexamine how their aid and lending policies can be reformed to prevent future conflicts and ensure equitable sustainable development.

### **Guiding Questions:**

What specific actions can UNDP take to take the current mechanisms in place and more effectively address the inclusion of conflict prevention in development?

What position and actions has your country already taken in regards to addressing conflict prevention in development?

Since the current focus of the majority of work in “conflict prevention” in this arena is on the recovery after the crisis, what type of infrastructure and planning is required to strengthen the actual “prevention” portion?

Considering the 2001 Report of the Secretary General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, what actions have world leaders taken since then and where have there been missed opportunities? How can the observations and recommendations in this report have relevance to address current conditions?

Having already passed the midway point to achieve the right goals set back in 2000 (MDGs), how have national governments and the international community moved the dial forward in eradicating world poverty to better set the stage for conflict prevention?

How might highly developed countries be persuaded to meet the 0.7% of GDP target for Official Development Assistance (ODA)? If your country provides ODA to developing countries, what percentage of your country’s GNP is given in ODA? Has this amount increased, decreased, or stayed the same in recent years?

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<sup>19</sup> UNDP, “The Eight Point Agenda: Practical, positive outcomes for girls and women in crisis”. Found at: [http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/gender/eight\\_points\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/gender/eight_points_agenda.pdf)

