

**PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE PEACE:  
A CALL TO STRENGTHEN CANADA'S PEACE-MAKING CAPACITY**

**INTRODUCTION**

**DISCUSSION PAPER  
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**RESEARCH FOR THIS DISCUSSION PAPER WAS SUPPORTED BY THE  
WALTER & DUNCAN GORDON FOUNDATION**

**NOVEMBER 2008**



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# PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE PEACE: A CALL TO STRENGTHEN CANADA'S PEACE-MAKING CAPACITY

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 OVERVIEW

Canada's global role in promoting peace has been a central feature of Canadians' understanding of their role in the world. Canada has made important contributions to supporting peace processes to reduce violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and northern Uganda. Canada is also supporting peace initiatives in Afghanistan. In recent years there has been greater debate about donors' roles in preventing, mediating or exacerbating violent conflicts. As the nature of armed conflict has evolved, in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, there is a greater understanding of the multiple complexities of peace building, the links between peace and justice, and how citizens, and not just states, must be involved in supporting the foundations for a durable peace.

### 1.1 Background

Research on Canada's support for peace processes was conducted over one year through a Global Youth Fellowship with the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and supported by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC).

Three conflicts were selected as case studies: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and northern Uganda. The countries were selected because in each Canada has supported peace efforts. *Afghanistan: A Study on Prospects for Peace*, released in March 2008, presented findings from the Afghanistan research. This study focuses on the Democratic Republic of Congo and northern Uganda.

### 1.2 Methodology

The study consisted of document review (literature, website, policy documents) and qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and southern Sudan. Policy-makers and civil society representatives in Canada were also interviewed.

As part of the field research, 74 people were interviewed over the course of six weeks. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa, Goma, and Bukavu), 22 individual interviews were held (10 men, 12 women) and a focus group of 15 people (10 women, 5 men) was conducted in July 2008. In Uganda (Kampala and Gulu), 25 individual interviews (10 men, 15 women) and one focus group with four young women were held in August 2008. Eight people were also interviewed in Juba, southern Sudan.

### 1.3 Limitations

Field research was limited to a period of six weeks in July and August, 2008 and is, therefore, by no means comprehensive or exhaustive. Interviews were held primarily in English or French, with interpretation required for interviews in local languages.

Attribution was not granted by the majority of government officials and diplomats interviewed, and to lesser extent civil society representatives/community representatives. While the agreement on non-attribution enabled more openness in interviewees, it has made sourcing references difficult.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 What are peace processes?

Peace processes are concerted efforts to involve parties to conflict in a process of dialogue to jointly reach and implement an agreement to reduce violent conflict and set parameters for political, economic and social reforms. Such processes can be formal and informal and can operate at private, public, and political levels.<sup>1</sup> The central feature of a peace process is often a negotiated settlement. However, negotiations alone are not sufficient to ensure that a peace process, or even a peace agreement, will lead to a lasting peace.

This study explores peace processes as:

1. Negotiations to achieve a peace agreement; and,
2. Broader peace-building activities that respond to the causes and consequences of violent conflict that occur during the period in which negotiations are being explored, but where a formal agreement has not yet been secured.

Peace processes that focus *only* on a political settlement are inherently top-down, elite-driven, and often exclusionary because primary consideration is given to high-level combatants and senior officials in warring parties (who are usually men). Admittedly, attention to these actors is essential, since without their buy-in it is not likely that a negotiated settlement will be reached. However, the wider population, including civil society, local communities, and women's groups, must also be involved in supporting the foundations for peace that are established during a peace process. Lack of local ownership and weak support from diverse constituencies can be impediments to a sustainable peace.

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<sup>1</sup> For a simple overview of peace processes, see Hugo Slim, The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, *A guide to mediation: Enabling peace processes in violent conflicts*, 2007: <http://www.hdcentre.org/files/mediation%20guidelines.pdf>.

## 2.2 Why Women?

The exclusive nature of political negotiations means that women are too often left out of peace-deals. There are four, not unrelated, arguments for women's inclusion in peace processes:

1. Women's rights articulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, explicitly call for the participation of women in political and conflict resolution processes.
2. If an analysis of the different needs, experiences and aspirations of women and men is not brought into the peace process, then gender equality perspectives will be absent from post-conflict rebuilding efforts.
3. Gender analysis is part of a wider social and power analysis critical to understanding the causes and dynamics of conflict.
4. Women are often found in convening, facilitating, mobilizing, and consultative roles. These skills are assets in peace processes.

In practice, a combination of these factors form the rationale for considering gender equality and women's participation in peace processes. Unfortunately, the push for inclusion still overwhelmingly comes from women's rights advocates (who tend to be female) rather than from mediators, international facilitators, or negotiators (who tend to be male).

In this study, the call for women's participation draws on the above four arguments. It is also premised on the hypothesis that in order for a peace process to be sustainable, it must have the support of diverse constituencies and communities. Bringing women and women's groups into peace processes engages diverse groups and creates local ownership.

## 2.3 Why support peace processes?

Project Ploughshares *2008 Armed Conflict Report* reveals that 30 conflicts (with at least 1,000 fatalities) are ongoing in the world today.<sup>2</sup> The report estimates 40% of conflicts to be in Africa, followed by 37% in Asia, 13% in the Middle East, 7% in the Americas, and 3% in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Ten of these conflicts have each resulted in over 100,000 combined civilian and military deaths.<sup>4</sup> In spite of a downward trend in the number of world-wide conflicts since the 1990's, clearly the world is still plagued by the devastating toll violent conflict brings to civilians. Given the cross-border and transnational nature of modern armed conflicts, there is both a security and humanitarian imperative for supporting peace processes.

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<sup>2</sup> Project Ploughshares 2008 Armed Conflicts Report: <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/ACRText/Summary2007.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

*The Human Security Report* reported a downward trend in armed conflicts over the 1990s and has linked that trend to the end of the Cold War and to increased efforts in peace-making, peacekeeping, and peace-building.<sup>5</sup> According to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, since the 1990's more wars have been stopped by negotiated settlements than outright military victories. Between 2000 and 2005 there were four times as many negotiated settlements as there were military victories<sup>6</sup>. The same report states that 40% of the world's conflicts do not receive mediation support and that a troubling 43% of negotiated settlements relapse into conflict within five years<sup>7</sup>. Rather than evidence that peace processes do not work, the high relapse rate could be due to the exclusive nature of negotiations and insufficient support for the implementation phases of an agreement. Support must be given to multi-level, multi-track peace processes that seek to build local ownership.

Both the *Human Security Report* and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue research suggests that there is the need for international peace-making efforts and that these efforts can lead to good results.

## **2.4 Why should Canada support peace processes?**

How and why should Canada become more involved in supporting peace processes globally?

Canada, as a middle power, is often seen as having fewer vested interests compared with other larger super-powers such as the U.S. and U.K. Canada also has the advantage of not being a former colonial power and is without the membership constraints of the European Union countries. Additionally, Canada's mixed heritage, diverse population, and its English and French speaking capacity has meant it could play a more active role in French speaking countries. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Canada is highly regarded for its support and role in chairing the Group of Friends to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Canada's role in supporting the 2003 political transition in the DRC is also highly regarded by Congolese civil society and government representatives. In Uganda, Canada is remembered for its role at the United Nations Security Council in helping to place northern Uganda on the agenda and for its advocacy around war-affected children. In both instances, Canada's initial involvement was perceived as being that of a good global citizen rather than being guided by vested political or economic incentives. In DRC and Uganda, Canada was not involved in a mediating role, rather Canadian officials were involved as chairs, facilitators, and observers to peace talks.

According to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Canada has mediated only about 1% of conflicts globally. However, the Centre also recognizes Canada as one of a few countries (the others are Finland, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and Switzerland) that have "active peace diplomacy structures".<sup>8</sup> Canada's lack of experience as a mediator should not prevent it from playing a more active role in supporting mediators and peace processes.

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<sup>5</sup> Human Security Report: <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/>.

<sup>6</sup> Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, *Charting the roads to peace: Facts, figures and trends in conflict resolution*, October 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Canada did play an active role in advancing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Resolution calls for the role of women in peace processes, including in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements. Since 2000, Canada has made promoting the Women, Peace and Security commitments a part of its foreign policy agenda.

Canadian non-governmental organizations, including those financially supported by the Canadian International Development Agency and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, have been highly involved in supporting peace-building efforts through local civil society organizations and women's groups and facilitating peace missions in both the DRC and Uganda.

Canada is well-positioned to promote inclusive peace processes – peace processes that include women, local communities, and civil society organizations. However, Canada's support, to be more effective, will need to go beyond just sending observers to peace-talks. Canada must strengthen its peace-making and peace-building capacities to ensure its diplomatic and financial resources are invested in ways that will help build the sustainability of peace processes.

This study maps relevant government policy instruments, examines case studies of the DRC and Uganda, and proposes recommendations to the Canadian government to strengthen its support for inclusive peace processes.