

Six Recommendations to Enhance Canada's Support to Peace Processes

June 22, 2009

Summary

On June 10 2009, 50 representatives from Canadian civil society organizations, academia, and conflict resolution practitioners participated in a seminar *Fragile Peace in a Volatile World: What Role for Canada in Supporting Peace Processes?* Recommendations summarized in this paper are based on the seminar and research over last two years in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Afghanistan.¹

Background

Peace processes involve parties to conflict in a process of dialogue to jointly agree on, and implement, political, economic and social reforms to end violent conflict. Such processes can be formal and informal and can result in a peace agreement. Yet, too often peace negotiations are exclusive focusing on military and political elites to the neglect of those most affected by violent conflict.

Parallel multi-track and multilevel efforts are required to ensure the perspectives and priorities of conflict-affected communities, women's groups, and civil society and local leaders are reflected in peace agreements. Including these actors in peace processes can help build wider societal support for agreements by ensuring priorities of a range of actors are addressed in peace processes. Such efforts require work with, and through, local organizations including sometimes informal channels to build trust between citizens and states. However, too often externally-imposed models of state-building in the wake of violent conflict and state collapse have little resonance with the reality of conflict-affected communities.

International standards and guidelines such as the *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognize that building the relationship between societies and states is integral to supporting a sustainable peace. Practically, this means supporting mechanisms, institutions, and spaces for enabling citizens' interactions with their governments. National and international civil society organizations engaged in peace-building efforts are often positioned to function as a bridge between individuals, society, and state institutions.

The Canadian government and Canadians are involved in global conflict resolution initiatives in a number of ways: through key positions in the UN system, working in Canada's diplomatic missions, and engaging directly with conflict-affected communities through Canadian and international civil society organizations. The Canadian government has contributed significant funds to peace initiatives in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Middle East, Sudan, and Uganda (as just a few examples). However, these initiatives have been ad-hoc and without a clear policy framework and inter-departmental strategy to guide long term support for enabling a sustainable peace.

¹ The *Promoting an Inclusive Peace: A Call to Strengthen Canada's Peace-making Capacity* papers are available at: http://www.ccic.ca/what_we_do/humanitarian_peace_e.php.

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In order for Canada's investment in peace initiatives to be truly effective, the Canadian government must make supporting a sustainable, inclusive peace a priority in Canadian Foreign, Development, and Defence policy. A whole-of-government coordinated (but not integrated) strategy should be developed delineating roles and responsibilities of various departments and allocating a dedicated funding envelope for conflict resolution and mediation work. To this end, there are six recommendations to the Canadian government to enhance its ability to support peace processes.

1. Make conflict resolution, mediation and dialogue a policy and program priority within the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF) envelope.

A unit should be created at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), perhaps within the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START), focusing on providing policy and programming support to conflict resolution, mediation, and dialogue initiatives. The unit should have dedicated staff with specific skills and competencies in conflict and gender analysis, mediation, facilitation and dialogue, policy development, and program management.

The unit should be tasked with developing and monitoring a policy framework to guide Canada's technical and financial support to peace processes across geographic regions while taking into account that other components/actors within DFAIT may be leads on specific peace initiatives. The policy framework should outline criteria for how Canada provides financial and technical support to peace initiatives. The framework should also outline how Canada will comply with international commitments, including Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and 1820 on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Initiatives should be eligible for funding based on an assessment of need, capacity, and the credibility of submitted proposals and not be restricted to countries only on the GPSF country priority list.

To ensure awareness and support for initiatives at senior levels, DFAIT should appoint an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) to act as a focal point for all peace process related activities undertaken by Canada. The ADM would be responsible for monitoring and ensuring accountability for funding. The focal point would also be key in ensuring political level awareness and support for initiatives.²

2. Provide flexible multi-year funding for peace-building and peace processes.

A substantial limitation of recent peace initiatives funded by the Canadian government, and especially through the GPSF/START, has been short term funding often limited to 1 year or less in duration. Such short term funding severely limits the scope of activities which can be supported, and ultimately limits the sustainability of peace efforts. Funding for peace initiatives minimally needs to be medium term, in 3-5 year program cycles, with the possibility of continued long term support up to ten to fifteen years to be able to see actual results.

² For more on an ADM focal point see *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy* by Peter Jones: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>.

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Given the highly localized or regionalized character of many violent conflicts, it is essential that conflict management or resolution mechanisms be effective at the local and regional levels. Funding criteria should explicitly include support to credible track two initiatives and peace efforts led by civil society organizations, particularly those from conflict-affected regions. Flexible and sustained funding is required to support local and national civil society initiatives which may also involve working with informal channels and processes.

Quiet diplomacy and official mediation efforts should also be supported through the envelope. In such instances, avenues to support civil society organizations and women's groups to participate in peace efforts should also be included in funding considerations. To this end, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and DFAIT should make support for multi-track initiatives including civil society organizations and women's groups' part of the criteria for funding official peace processes.

3. Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security by developing and making public a National Action Plan on 1325.

Canada was a champion of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in the Security Council in 2000. Since 2000, a number of donors including Norway, the U.K., Sweden, and Denmark have developed National Action Plans outlining how UNSCR 1325 commitments will be implemented in foreign, development, and defence policy. Canada has not developed and made public a National Action Plan (NAP).

DFAIT, CIDA, the Department of National Defence (DND) and other relevant departments should develop an inter-departmental NAP through comprehensive and transparent consultation with Canadian civil society organizations and including women from conflict-affected regions. The NAP should be part of a broader policy framework on Canada's engagements in conflict resolution, mediation, and dialogue. To be effective, the Action Plan must include benchmarks, targets, indicators, clear lines of responsibility between departments and a specific budgetary allocation.

DFAIT and CIDA's criteria for supporting peace processes should include specific allocations in peace talk budgets to support gender advisors and women's participation. For example, experience from Uganda has demonstrated the positive difference gender advisors working with mediators and international facilitators can make in enabling the participation of female delegates on negotiating teams and women's rights experts as technical advisors.

DFAIT, through relevant UN and other multilateral channels, should work with other donors to peace processes and mediators to develop guidelines for operationalizing UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In particular, DFAIT should work with mediators and other donors to identify how to include provisions to stop sexual violence and end impunity in cease-fire and humanitarian access negotiations. To this end, a programming priority for the NAP and policy framework should be support for South-South-North dialogue consisting of women's rights experts working in, and on, conflict-affected countries to exchange experience

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with facilitators, researchers, and mediators.

4. Fund dialogue and consultation on transitional justice provisions in peace agreements.

Canada has supported recent transitional justice initiatives in Afghanistan, Rwanda, and Uganda (to name a few examples). In Uganda, public dialogue on transitional justice, reconciliation, and accountability for human rights abuses, played a strong role in shaping provisions in peace agreements. Learning from the Ugandan experience, Canada should fund national level dialogues on the most appropriate and effective forms of justice. Such support should include a range of technical expertise including legal and psycho-social experts including from other post-conflict countries to share lessons in the development of transitional justice processes and mechanisms.

Consideration for transitional justice initiatives should be included in any policy framework developed to guide Canada's engagements in peace processes. Enabling participation of victims groups and women's groups, and especially victims of sexual violence and displaced persons should be priorities in determining funding allocations. In addition to funds, technical assistance in the development of legislation to support transitional justice processes should also be included in activities eligible for support by the Canadian government.

Recent lessons from Sudan and Uganda demonstrate the need to support capacity building of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In particular, strengthening the Court's capacity in areas of outreach and education with local and national populations, communications with affected communities, and prosecutorial strategy vis-à-vis timing and sequencing of ICC investigations and indictments, could be a timely and relevant niche area for Canada.

5. Support and make clear departmental roles and responsibilities in funding long-term peace-building initiatives.

Peace talks attract donor attention and funding. However, funds for broader peace-building work at the national and local level are limited, particularly for local organizations. Building resilience, reducing dependence on external actors, and rebuilding the economy and livelihoods require long-term commitment from donors. Under the lead of CIDA, the Canadian government should support the elaboration of a policy framework making clear peace-building activities eligible for funding under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Official Development Assistance (ODA) rules.

The framework should clearly delineate and make public activities to be funded through CIDA and DFAIT/GPSF/START. To this end, DFAIT should make clear the countries of priority under the GPSF, criteria for their selection, and how these countries interface with CIDA's Countries of Concentration and moderate presence country lists. Roles and responsibilities between the GPSF/START and CIDA with regard to supporting peace processes and peace-building should be made clear and public. The framework should also include direct funding support for Canadian civil society and national and local organizations working in conflict-affected regions.

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6. Review of the use of force in UN-led and UN-authorized peace operations.

The majority of Western governments are now mainly providing military forces for UN-authorized but not UN-led peace operations resulting in Blue Helmet missions lacking the requisite numbers of forces, training and equipment. Canada should lead by example and recommit substantial military forces to UN-led peace operations. The deployment of Canadian Forces in any multilateral mission should be in support of a clear peace process or peace agreement.

In the context of Canada's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council, Canada should make as one of its priorities, if elected, the promotion of an examination by the International Community of the efficacy of, limitations of, and institutional arrangements for the military component of UN-led and UN-authorized peace operations. This would include examining much more closely and systematically the role of multilateral security forces under a Chapter VII mandate for the direct protection of civilians with a view to developing doctrine, standard operating procedures and training.
