PEACEBUILDING

SDC Guidelines

During the 1990s, the prevention of crises and constructive conflict management became a central topic of international cooperation. Ever since war returned to Europe, many people in these parts have become aware of the close link between peace and development. Throughout the world we see poverty, state disintegration, and violence imposing a daily struggle for survival affecting millions of people. Often these three phenomena and their impact on the everyday life of those affected – and primarily women and children – are almost indistinguishable from each other.

The interaction between violence and poverty forms the backdrop before which UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has committed the UN and member states to a culture of prevention. The industrial countries have taken up the challenge and drafted policy guidelines on «Helping Prevent Violent Conflict» in the OECD Development Assistance Committee. They are intended not only to promote common peace policy activities among member states, but also to guide individual development agencies in their cooperation with local partners.

For Switzerland, the 1993 and 2000 foreign-policy reports of the Federal Council laid the cornerstone for strengthened commitment to peaceful coexistence between peoples. Swiss development cooperation in Eastern Europe as well as humanitarian aid should «strengthen its long-term activities in preventing violent conflicts, and also be active in reconstruction» (Report of the Federal Council on Foreign Policy of 15 November 2000). In the SDC's Strategy 2010, crisis prevention and transformation were declared to be one of the five thematic focus areas. In regard to the supreme goal of sustainable development, all activities are oriented toward reducing poverty and removing the structural causes of conflict.

The SDC sees its development-policy contribution to a more peaceful world as complementary to peace promotion in the Political Directorate of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) as well as to the peace policy measures of other federal institutions and civil society in Switzerland. These guidelines on peacebuilding reflect the policy developments mentioned and past practical experience in crisis development and conflict transformation. They shed light on the reasons for current crises and conflicts from the standpoint of policy on development, transition, and humanitarian concerns. They indicate the essential answers of development cooperation to such crisis situations. Their particular focus, however, is on «lessons learned». These Guidelines conclude with 10 principles for all SDC staff and their partners in development cooperation and humanitarian aid aimed at development toward a just peace and social freedom.

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Conflicts are a necessary component in the process of changing needs, goals, and activities of social groups and political actors. Development cooperation that supports social change and economic reform and sets the goal of freedom for poor and disadvantaged population groups must deal constructively with both time-honored and newly created conflicts of interest. The prerequisites for sustainable development are undermined only when conflicts lead to violence and war. Therefore, empowerment to make civil conflict transformation viable within and between groups is a central strategy of social and political transformation leading to lasting peace.

At the same time, sustainable peace is built on solid economic, socio-cultural, and political institutions. International peace operations, often planned and carried out as short-term crisis intervention, have shown that successful, long-term assurances of peace cannot be limited to occasional combat against symptoms. International cooperation must strive for long-term peacebuilding that recognizes the roots of violent conflict and can create structural premises to manage social conflicts peacefully.

The purpose of these Guidelines on Peacebuilding is to serve SDC staff members at Headquarters and the cooperation offices – along with their partner organizations – as an orientation framework within this complex topical area. The guidelines should clarify questions on concepts and set content priorities that help simplify operational implementation of the peacebuilding idea in cooperation with SDC partner organizations. In regard to coherent Swiss foreign policy, they should also help to uncover the complimentary aspects and to utilize synergies.

Last but not least, they are intended to strengthen the resolve of us all to abandon well-trodden paths and find new routes in cooperation with our partners.

The different facets of armed violence

Though most armed disputes today are inner-state conflicts, the effects of warlike violence seldom remain limited to a single country. Neighboring states and even entire regions become destabilized. Expulsion and flight of the civilian population over national borders, alliances with one or more warring parties based on ethnicity or religion, and economically devastating effects of wars on neighboring states or border regions are only a few of the key manifestations. The poorest countries in subsaharan Africa, or those affected or threatened by disintegration of the state in this area, are afflicted in an especially acute way by inner-state and regionalized conflicts. Yet other countries with major economic and political deficits in North Africa, the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia, and to a lesser extent in Latin America, also suffer. Though Europe has not remained untouched by grave conflicts in recent years either – above all in the transition countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe – violent crises are clearly less frequent in affluent countries.

The attacks in the USA have shown that terrorist violence is an effective instrument in the hands of extremist international networks pursuing diverse political goals. Terrorist groups exploit the widespread lack of hope and power among people who perceive modernization and secularization as the main reason for their own poverty. They see themselves shut out of economic globalization and feel abased and degraded by the dominance of the wealthy Western world.

The primarily military reaction by part of the Western world's governments made it clear that military violence is still regarded as a tried and true – if not the only – means of defending their own interests. The argument of «homeland security» and the war against «terrorism« apparently justify political repression, violations of international law, and massive human-rights violations, as long as the end justifies the means: the supposed eradication of «evil-doers».

Violence develops dynamics of its own

Many inner-state conflicts follow extremely dynamic patterns. A classical tension curve – in which stable peace develops into open conflict due to increasing tensions and then leads to a reconciliation phase and stable peace – proves the exception to the rule. The transitions between phases with highly different degrees of tension are usually fluid and seldom occur at the same time for the entire territory of the country affected. Thus over a prolonged period, areas in the same country find themselves in chronically open conflict, while other areas make the transition to a relatively peaceful normality. A simple glance at the conflicting parties and their interests reveals a diffuse and rapidly changing picture. Inner-state conflicts do not consist of two regular armies opposing each other, but rather of an often unclear multitude of armed fringe groups with differing goals, fragile command structures, and changing alliances.

Once escalated conflicts are marked by a fatal dynamic of their own, there emerges a vicious circle of violence. It even becomes difficult for the warring parties to establish an inside connection between the supposed reasons for the dispute and its intensity. Persisting war conditions (de facto) with changing sources of volatility engender immense human and material costs. It could take states and their inhabitants decades to recover. Millions of those affected find refuge within a secure zone in the country or flight beyond the national border the only option for survival. In one way or another, however, most must make arrangements with all conflict parties to secure their survival in a setting rife with conflict and with unclear and changing fronts.

Private violence based on war economies

Armed violence and loss of political and social stability alter a country's long-term economic framework. Due for the most part to the extensive planting of landmines, large areas can no longer be farmed. Production of goods, services, and trade only function in a limited sense, and new and illegal branches of activity emerge, e.g., delivery services for armed groups, arms smuggling, forced prostitution, and organized crime. Anchored in local exploitation of natural resources, war economies primarily serve the personal interests of warlords and their protagonists through global marketing channels. The basis of their power is war and the profit derived from it. This allows them to cement patronage over their clients. Ultimately they have no interest in peace. At the same time, internationally established criminal networks organized with high efficiency crop up in their wake. They orchestrate political chaos in order to maintain a lavishly supplied shadow economy. The ensuing privatization of the state's monopoly on the use of force, along with the criminalization of business relations, represent a complex challenge for those actors who – along with international partners enlisted to build peace and combat poverty – have prescribed a cure with civil measures and mechanisms proper to a state under the rule of law.

Violence leaves behind deep scars on society and people. It undermines its victims' dignity; it uproots entire communities; it creates insecurity and often abysmal distrust. Hatred, as well as the need for revenge and «getting even», causes violence to become the justification for ever more violence. Long-term armed conflicts weaken all those state institutions and social forces that are indispensable for sustainable development and a peaceful manner for dealing with conflicts. In a few cases, state structures are merely a fiction and give way to territorial rule of individual civil-war fringe groups or warlords who exert power according to their own rules. Usually in such situations only men with drawn guns command respect and are taken seriously. Other social forces – especially women who embrace the utopia of a peaceful future – are marginalized or annihilated. The longer the violent conflict goes on, the more violence is perceived as a matter of course. And so this path increasingly appears to be the one and only career option for the many young men who, during the time of war, learn nothing more than a warrior's craft or, limiting their vision to the here and now, coalesce in the local war economy.

Background and acceleration factors

Particularly susceptible to war are societies with widespread poverty, extreme and growing socio-economic disparities, and/or wealth in raw materials, on one hand, as well as a lack of future opportunities and personal freedom along with a lack of legitimate and credible institutions for conflict transformation, on the other hand. Often weak states and destabilized societies cannot cope with the challenges of rapid economic and social change without outbreaks of violence. Even rapid macroeconomic growth is incapable of suddenly interrupting an escalation which has been building up for a long time. Development and transition processes, both economic and political, can change power relationships, and this shift per se can cause a crisis within society. This applies above all where accelerated change from the outside tends to close rather than open opportunities for broad participation in political and social processes and the job market. It can lead to an acute loss of cultural identity and social cohesion. Alone the increasing differences in the cost/benefit ratio of economic development can marginalize disadvantaged groups and regions. For example, this affects rural producers who cannot gain access to diminishing national resources and even the migrants who settle in fast-growing urbanized areas.

Ethnic, religious, and cultural differences are seldom the real causes of conflicts. In the situations of increased tensions described above, actual or perceived differences are emphasized, exaggerated, and manipulated for personal political motives. Political polarization based along the lines of identity characteristics is observed above all where increasing economic imbalance between population groups can be discerned, where the colonial past has imposed arbitrary borders, where state institutions possess little legitimacy and are weak, where minorities have been forced to assimilate or be marginalized, and where territorially concentrated ethnic groups strive for greater independence.

On the other hand, observers have pointed out that diverging economic interests are significant and even primary causes for violent conflicts. The struggle for access to life-sustaining resources, such as water and fertile land, contributes to perilous tensions in many areas, especially if there are no effective political mechanisms to overcome them. Changes in land use and distribution, as well as undeterred environmental destruction and catastrophes, lead to growing conflicts of interest with regard to the management and allocation of such resources, conflicts which may even take on a regional dimension. In many areas, the established interests of certain powerful groups that want to exclude others from lucrative exploitation of mineral resources, can act as catalysts to waging war.

Rethinking during the 1990s

Many developing countries – among them some SDC priority countries – particularly suffer from the cyclical violence of war which generates an especially negative economic impact on already disadvantaged and politically marginalized population groups. Empowerment of the poor has reversed the spiral of violence in many areas and thus contributed to prevention of violent conflict without this being an expressed goal of donor organizations. However, in countries or regions where the political situation is too unstable and therefore sustainable results of cooperation are hardly to be expected, development cooperation has always been reticent. It was restricted to measures in conflict settings and left the immediate crisis areas to humanitarian aid, oriented primarily toward prompt survival assistance for victims and short-term reconstruction.

The 1990s brought about rethinking in many areas. As the already mentioned guidelines of the OECD Helping Prevent Violent Conflict emphasize, development organizations see themselves as part of a state and civil-society entanglement of national and international actors influencing the causes of violent conflict positively or negatively, intentionally or unintentionally, and contributing to their dynamics. In particular, it has admittedly been recognized that long-term visions of peaceful development must also guide the actions and reactions of rapid emergency aid in short-term crisis situations.

Conflict-conscious humanitarian aid

During recent decades, the SDC too has adopted a new outlook on political crises, violent conflicts, and on the role it intends to assume. A study[1] has revealed various experiences and trends: Emergency aid today is distributed in a more targeted manner so that the victims of a crisis (among them the poor and the weak, women and children, the elderly, refugees, and those persecuted within the country) actually receive it without unintentionally reinforcing the conflict dynamics or supporting war profiteers. SDC humanitarian aid is committed to comprehensive and long-term support as well as to strengthening victims of acute crises in the sense of protection and advocacy of their rights and dignity.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction after a violent conflict are not only confined to the infrastructure, but also include social structures in general. Thus they have become a long-term development-oriented challenge in the sense of the time continuum/contiguum between humanitarian aid and development cooperation. In this way, the SDC increasingly links rehabilitation of the infrastructure to the goal of promoting an often lengthy reconciliation process. Many SDC programs and projects promote active cooperation between representatives of the conflict parties in order to help bridge differences and to create new identification. The return of refugees and internally displaced persons is an especially sensitive problem of the postwar era. This has to succeed without fragmenting and destabilizing the weakened social groups. Special measures are needed to bring about economic and social reintegration. They must take adequate account of the needs and interests of people who remained in the conflict area. Thus SDC programs and projects support demobilization and social reintegration of partisans.

From conditionality to peacebuilding in bilateral cooperation

Support services have been linked since time immemorial to certain technical, financial, and policy criteria in the international cooperation framework. Hence, the SDC has also bound its development-policy activities – with the exception of humanitarian aid – to a certain minimal standard in regard to political stability and security. This occurred with the recognition that sustainable development is only possible under somewhat favorable framework conditions.

In practice, the minimum standard for development-policy commitment changed during the 1990s: It shifted from a technical framework to become a pressure instrument usually applied incoherently by rather large donor countries. Under the heading «political conditionality», the Federal Council too has expressly reserved the right since 1999 to cancel Swiss support services – except for

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[1] SDC, Prévention des crises et consolidation de la paix: le rôle de la Coopération au Développement, working document 5/2000, Berne, 2000, with reference to a status report on previous SDC preventive efforts in Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka (1979-2000); Markus Heiniger, Gewaltprävention und Friedenskonsolidierung in der Internationalen Zusammenarbeit der DEZA, Zurich, 2000.

humanitarian aid – if the political framework conditions are unfavorable (e.g., due to armed conflicts) and/or if a government has shown too little interest in improving stability and avoiding a future escalation of violence.

Experience has shown that political pressure, exerted in a coordinated manner by several donor states and organizations, can go far in improving a given government's will to reform. On the other hand, political pressure is of little help if – as is so often the case – it involves overcoming bad framework conditions and structural causes of conflicts that depend primarily on factors others than the government's will.

The SDC programs and projects basically influence structural causes of violent conflicts, usually without explicit formulation of specific peacebuilding goals. However, in a practical manner, the SDC has gathered relevant experience in the developing and transition countries.

For example, the SDC promotes:
• local mechanisms to resolve conflicts within the framework of community development;
• appropriate access to land and water resources within the framework of land development;
• an independent justice system and human rights within the framework of good governance programs;
• a culture of dialogue between various population groups and social strata within the framework of a partnership approach.

Experience cumulated from effective peace activities – both direct and indirect – has hardly been systematically evaluated to date. Capitalizing on experience and lessons learned will set the direction for future work by the SDC and its partners. At present, in a good number of its priority countries, the SDC has already integrated into its own projects and within the context of its activities, an analysis of the conflict dimension by way of a constructive and partner-like approach. Nonetheless, SDC activities have till now been largely re-active. They have concentrated on rehabilitation and reconstruction once the crisis has been overcome.

Specific preventive action – going further than the general prevention impact of development cooperation – has not been a past focus. A rapid and adequate reaction to growing tensions in priority countries has also been hindered by lack of budgetary flexibility. Finally, methods and tools to evaluate what impact development cooperation in the recipient states had on the existing tension structure – and vice versa – have heretofore been lacking.

The multilateral level: the development-policy dimension of international peace operations

Multilateral humanitarian organizations have an important presence and hence most of them also have a major coordination and intervention potential in many countries that need humanitarian aid due to armed conflicts. Development-policy institutions, such as the OECD Development Assistance Committee, the World Bank, and the UNDP, have also conceived their role as pioneer forces for the peacebuilding and conflict-prevention sectors. During recent years they have performed vital conceptual tasks. These must now be put into specific action in keeping with policy guidelines. The SDC has regularly taken part in discussions and included the know-how obtained in its own work.

Development policy considerations are also increasingly relevant for UN peace operations. UN blue helmets have been deployed in the past as «peacekeeping» units in many international and inner-state conflicts. Now as in the past, the military and particularly the «law-and-order» function of these operations is still of great importance. Yet precisely in complex peace operations, the understanding has prevailed that civil authorities are responsible for civil task areas. This not only applies to performance of emergency aid to the population, but also to demobilization and social reintegration of combatants as well as to rebuilding the infrastructure, the social and government institutions, and finally to the promotion of sustainable development. Thus civilian OSCE missions engage in preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures, human rights, democratization, and monitoring elections. In this way, they execute the various tasks of steering political processes, resolving conflicts, averting violence, and creating the social institutions befitting a state under the rule of law.

Despite limited capacity to prevent escalation of conflicts, the substantial presence of multilateral UN and OSCE peacekeeping operations has indeed made a contribution during the past decade in stabilizing peace structures in individual countries. Within the framework of a critical stocktaking, the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations[2] underscores the need for peacekeeping operations to be oriented toward effective and long-term strategies and methods to prevent conflicts. Rapporteur Brahimi calls for future peacekeeping operations to lend more weight to the aspect of long-term peacebuilding, thus specifically according increased accent and enhanced capacity to the prevention of future conflicts. A strategic and financial reorientation of peacekeeping operations is necessary to achieve this. Furthermore, it must be aimed at sustainable building of rule-of-law institutions and at national reconciliation. In short, civil peace building is to be vested with accrued importance.

[2] Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (the so-called Brahimi Report) of 21 August 2000 (A/55/305-S/2000/809).

Transforming direct and structural violence

Overcoming social and political tensions and crises peacefully requires mechanisms and processes that help transform conflicts of interest, both old and new, without resorting to violence, and are able to lead to a widely accepted solution. In this sense, «nonviolent» not only means the absence of physical violence, but also the reduction of structural violence by means of development. Structural violence includes power and property ratios that produce completely unequal opportunities in life for those of certain individual population groups, such as women, poor people, and minorities.

Reduction of the potential for violence goes hand in hand with the dismantling of structural violence. This means that conflict transformation is a complex and often lengthy process for which there is no simple recipe. The search for causes alone will be futile if actors and their positions are not understood at the same time, and the dynamics, triggering, and external factors are not included. The goal focuses less on finding rapid solutions for violent conflicts than on transforming systems of conflict in such a way that the rival parties and population groups concerned might be able to seek out sustainable solutions to their conflicts without resorting to violence. Empowerment in this context means changing the relationships between the parties involved so that interests, needs, and fears are formulated and addressed openly, thereby broadening the parties' perspective to include other optional solutions, while the use of violence to impose their interests simultaneously takes a backseat position. Transformation is based on the premise of mutual recognition in solving a common problem to the benefit of all involved. Yet at the same time it presumes long-term change in the social setting that removes structural violence while creating a constructive approach to resolving differences.

All conflicts begin without violence

Interventions of outside actors in a conflict phase of high intensity are obviously difficult and hold political risks, especially if they are not well prepared and lack a clear strategy. Hence, the attention of many outside actors is concentrating more and more on steps to prevent violent escalations. Prevention is not limited to the phase before an escalation; it is also needed during the crisis so as to contain it and limit the damage, as well as after the crisis in order to prevent any new escalation. Prevention here does not represent the idea of a repressive political order, but is to be understood instead as a key element to a constructive approach in dealing with conflict. Preventive mechanisms might be mediation between conflict parties, sharing and control of political power, creation of problem-solving mechanisms, peace committees and roundtable discussions, focused economic support and revenue promotion, as well as reactivation of traditional, local conflict-solving mechanisms. Crisis prevention in peacebuilding concentrates less than does the military, for example, on preventing acute escalation of violence; instead, it is engaged in influencing the unfolding of the crisis. After the first 1'000 fatalities, according to conflict research findings, conflicts can no longer be contained. A preventive approach is also demanded from an economic standpoint. Measured by the immense human and economic costs caused by an escalated violent conflict or a breakdown of state order, investments in social, economic, and political prevention of conflicts – even if quite costly per se – are ultimately more efficient.
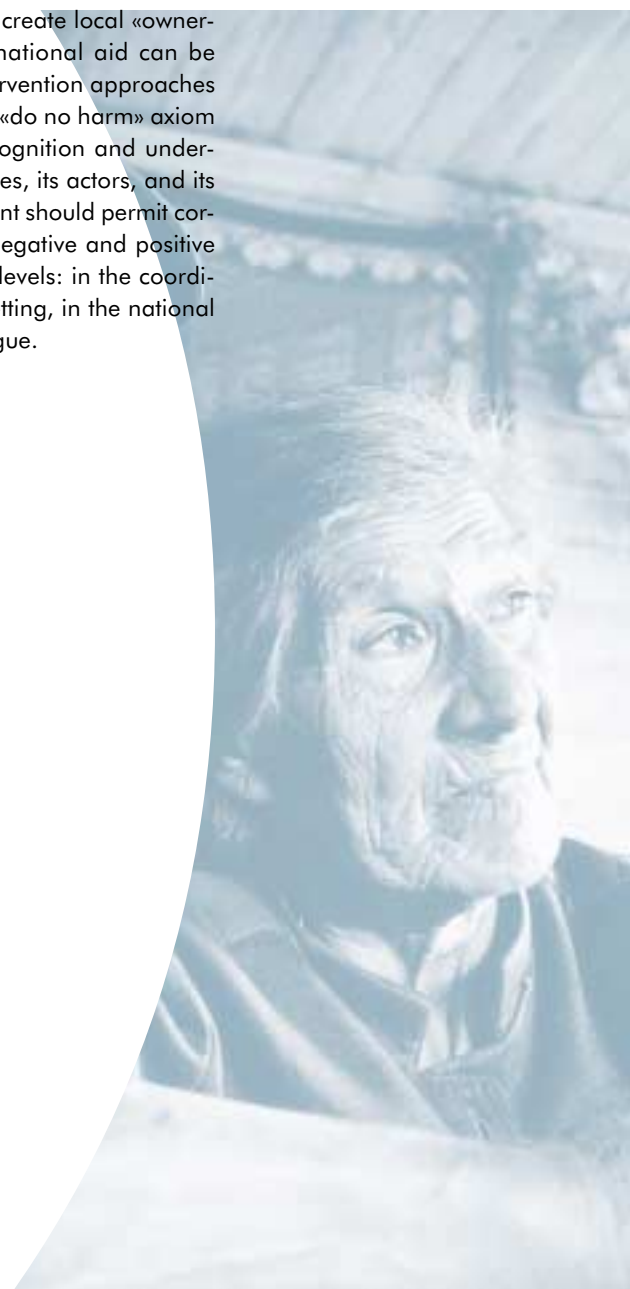
Strengthening framework conditions for peace

With the passage of time, the «causes of war» have become less an SDC concern than have the preconditions for peace, seen from the vantage point of a long-term objective and as an frame in which to foster empowerment. Even here there are no simple recipes; yet there are a few factors of outstanding importance. Based on the lessons of history, Dieter Senghaas has developed the «hexagon of civilization»[3]. The six cornerstone concepts below – a number of interconnected variables – converge to form a model for maintaining domestic peace:

• The state's monopoly on the use of force and the related de-privatization of violence;
• limitation and control of the state's monopoly on the use of force through constitutionally and politically legitimized institutions;
• an interdependent social structure in which people learn to avoid aggression and violence while recognizing the advantages of emotional control;
• political participation of the population without discrimination against certain groups;
• an active policy of equal opportunity and just distribution, and;
• a constructive approach to coping with conflict that enables a differentiated society to formulate and accept conflicting interests and to interiorize a constructive approach in dealing with them.

Systematic research is still lacking on how these core values can best be guaranteed and harmonized with each other in a specific country and how the long-term process of transforming state and society can be influenced by outside actors, if at all. Development cooperation's primary challenge is to create innovative incentives for peacebuilding.

Avoiding negative impact on conflicts

All international aid – even if it is seen as «technical» – is inevitably part of political dynamics and produces political results. Therefore, the most important principle for development organizations must be to avoid having negative repercussions on latent conflicts. The opinion of those affected by conflict situations is more important than any suppositions. Thus, the question of who belongs among the aid beneficiaries, and why, is just as crucial as is the impact of the aid itself. This means that adapted procedures that create local «ownership» in distribution of international aid can be much more effective than intervention approaches focused on rapid impact. The «do no harm» axiom is a lens to enable better recognition and understanding of a conflict, its causes, its actors, and its dynamics. Use of this instrument should permit correct assessment of both the negative and positive effects of one's actions at all levels: in the coordination office, in the project setting, in the national program, and in policy dialogue.

[3] Dieter Senghaas, Frieden denken, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1995

Correctly assessing one's potential for conflict transformation

Outside actors usually have a substantial potential for influence, but they must also remain realistic in their expectations. Their influence has clear limitations when confronting powerful internal conflict dynamics and a long history of unfairness and injustice. There are various instruments and mechanisms to respond to differing types and intensities of conflict. Which methods function best under what conditions is a matter of dispute. Nevertheless, a consensus holds that the specific response depends mainly on the intensity of the various conflict phases.

Immediate intervention in crisis situations or the direct handling of a conflict presents special policy risks for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Escalation usually depends on factors that lie beyond the control of outside actors. This also means that financial commitment – perhaps to rehabilitate a destroyed infrastructure during a delicate postwar phase – does not always lead to the tangible results desired. Peacebuilding activities after a crisis require a substantial and long-term investment in the future of a country and its people without always being able to show short-term success or measurable results. Even so, an approach sensitive to conflict – limited resources notwithstanding – can lay the cornerstone for sustainable peacebuilding.

Achieving effectiveness in all segments of society

If international efforts to avoid a crisis or to mediate in a crisis situation are to succeed, several segments of state and society must become involved. The first segment is the government or state institutions at the ministerial level. This segment is especial fragile in regions with acute «state disintegration» and thus needs special attention within the framework of a political dialogue between representatives and various multi- and bilateral actors. The second segment contains different groups, e.g., church dignitaries, eminent personalities, intellectuals, artists, representatives of national NGOs and associations. The third segment includes provincial governments, religious, social, and business circles at the middle level of society. The constitution of the second and third segments can be crucial, both with regard to a crisis being heated up by polarizing

Peace Promotion and Peacebuilding are Complementary

The DFA Directorate of Political Affairs' civil peace promotion and conflict transformation initiatives support Switzerland's peace policy with activities that, while building on the classical «good offices» concept, are today expanding well beyond it. Peace promotion measures are usually pro-active in orientation. They thus focus less on removing the original structural causes of conflict than on influencing the dynamics of conflicts and supporting peace-oriented processes. Although civil peace promotion and conflict transformation refer to Switzerland's diplomatic policy activities, they often cover areas at the social level («track two») as well. They unfold bilaterally in cooperation with other like-minded states and in connection with international organizations.

The Directorate of Political Affairs (Division IV) has set the following thematic priorities:

- Constitutional issues; decentralization and power-sharing including protection of minorities, support of constitutional procedures, voting, and political parties; reform of parliamentary, governmental, and justice systems; and civil society structures
- News media and violent conflicts
- Human security including the fight against landmines, reduction in small-arms proliferation, integration of nongovernmental conflict actors in peace processes, and reform of the security sector
- Human rights in violent conflicts and international humanitarian law
  Sustainable development is the supreme goal of the SDC. This includes the SDC's major axes: reducing poverty, removing the structural causes of conflict, and easing suffering. Measures for peacebuilding, such as those presented in this document, are introduced at the following levels:
- Promoting local peace efforts, reconstruction, and reintegration (including minorities);

forces, and in terms of cooperative actors who commit themselves to building a bridge between state, society, and the «grass roots». The fourth segment covers local officials, local associations and institutions within civil society, farmers, human-rights groups, cultural centers, and – partly in parallel to this – traditional leaders. In developing countries «under stress», communities can lie within the crisis region, yet at the same time exist completely removed from conflict events. In both situations, development of local capacities for peace is of overriding importance for long-term and sustainable development of a country in which human security is or should be guaranteed.

The SDC seeks dialogue and is building partnerships in all four segments. Which segment becomes the focus depends on the context and specific implementation of Strategy 2010. Given the need for comprehensive peacebuilding and a strategy of risk-sharing, it makes sense to be anchored in all segments at one and the same time.

An important aspect is the intermediary role of development cooperation in mediating between actors within the segments and especially among the segments.

Development cooperation stresses the continuity of the mediator's role: This requires that the confidence of the parties to the conflict be built up first. The role and tools of mediation can change depending on the intensity, length, and context of the conflict. In the development context, the major concerns are promoting dialogue, building provisional institutions, multi-party initiatives, public-relations work, promoting culture, and strengthening traditional mechanisms for settling disputes. The role of projects in «traditional sectors» such as health, jobs, and income as well as social and legal development, should not be underestimated as an impetus to integrating split societies or polarized communities.

- Strengthening civil society and the dialog between state and civil society;
- Strengthening state institutions in connection with development and transition processes;
- Crisis prevention and humanitarian readiness, mitigation of suffering, reconstruction and rebuilding;
- Promoting mutual understanding and transparency in conflict situations;
- Taking steps in connection with the SDC's various sector policies.

(Summarized from Civil Peace Promotion, Fostering Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Principles of Cooperation between the SDC and DPA/Div. IV, Berne, 28 November 2002)

Creating and fostering local peace alliances

Conflict systems involve numerous parties in various and changing roles, and at different levels. In addition to the conflict parties, there are usually important local social forces such as legitimate community officials, associations, NGOs, as well as most of the residents who do not want (or are unable) to be involved in armed conflicts. During high intensity phases of violence, the influence of such forces is regularly weakened. Yet they can play an influential role in de-escalating and transforming the conflict, in reconciliation, and in reconstruction.

Ultimately, outside intervention is successful only if the potential combat forces desirous of peace – which are normally found both inside and outside the parties at conflict – are identified and their capacities strengthened. Women, who usually remain outside the war system, often belong to this category. Cooperation has rich operational experience and demonstrable success to offer in promoting long-term local change processes of a structural nature. The task now at hand is to utilize these instruments and mechanisms specifically to enhance the process of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding and Governance: Two Sides of the Same Coin

In many countries, international cooperation is faced with weak state structures and institutions. The spectrum ranges from «difficult partners» and countries torn by inner-state violence, right down to collapsed states. Erosion of state monopoly on the use of force not only results in the spread of armed violence and privatized security, but also in a lack of government capacity with respect to the handling of public goods and the accessing of resources and services. Often, even a parallel civil-war economy surreptitiously develops to link local shadow economies with global markets.

Given this background, strengthening states is an important priority for international cooperation. Countries shaken by crises thus have to take an arduous route from a long-lasting and undemocratic state of war to a democratic peacebuilding process. The aim is not to copy Western democracies. As a partner, international cooperation strives instead to reinforce local groups that can produce a critical mass in structural stability and human security. This will allow conflicting interests to be resolved by civil means and with respect for human rights and dignity. The latter is a basic premise for democratic-government leadership or governance.

Within the context of peacebuilding, governance comprises four core elements:

1 Optimizing power-sharing between the central and regional governments as well as improving ties between the state, private sector, and civil society;

2 Creating or strengthening legitimate and effective legal, administrative, economic, and political institutions;

3 Strengthening actors who commit themselves on behalf of social justice, human rights, and equal rights for men and women with the goal of increasing human security while breaking through the vicious circle between exclusion and rising poverty; and

4 Promoting general principles of good governance at the international level in order to mutually learn and profit from one another in a global context.

Two specialized sections within the SDC – Governance (GOV) and Crisis Prevention (COPRET) – engage in close cooperation calculated to utilize their interactions and synergies in innovative ways so as to enhance SDC operational activities.

The SDC

1 takes into systematic account the complex interaction between combating poverty and peacebuilding in all its work and at all levels;

2 capitalizes on the confidence built up and the good country-specific knowledge gained in terms of crisis prevention, conflict management, reconstruction, and reconciliation in its priority countries through long-standing partnerships;

«Fields that have feet and cattle that want to roam»:

Resource conflicts in Niger
The sometimes bloody conflicts between farmers and nomads along the livestock breeders' north-south routes in Niger prompted the SDC in 1997 to join local partners in working out a concept to secure a specially marked corridor and in negotiating it with parties to the conflict. So far, the «programme d'appui au secteur de l'élevage» (PASEL) has made an essential contribution to reducing tensions between the groups as well as to developing the local nomad communities.

«Learning from the Jura conflict»:

Seminar on the Nepal crisis in Montézillon
Selected personalities from Nepal covering a broad spectrum of political players met from 12 to 16 February 2003 near Neuchâtel. Immediately after the truce between the government and Maoist rebels, the group focused on a political solution to the crisis in Nepal. Both the handling of the constitutional crisis that led to the formation of the Canton Jura and the negotiations to overcome Apartheid in South Africa served as comparative bases. Only the many years of confidence-based relations between Nepal and Switzerland enabled such an open discussion and learning process to occur.

(3)   promotes technical, social, and process competences of staff and partners regarding conflict- and peace-relevant aspects in programs and projects (transformation approach);

(4)   develops a culture of violence prevention that enables early spotting of tensions, correct assessment of its role in crisis situations, and timely action in adopting corrective measures;

«Impact»:

How sensitive to conflict is my country program in reality?
As the «peace and conflict impact assessments» (PCIAs) which were conducted, for instance, in Angola, Macedonia or Ecuador have shown us, along with good methods and a good knowledge of the situational context, a judicious arrangement of player participation in the preparation and on-site implementation as well as in the evaluation process, is of crucial importance in developing a common understanding of a program's relevance to peace. In essence, such a sensitivity program can be introduced at a project cycle's outset, midway point, or at its end.

«Every conflict begins without violence!»

The early-detection example
According to the «Prevention of Armed Conflict» report of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (7 June 2001), development measures – to be effective – should be integrated as early as possible and deeply anchored into the social and political roots. Early warning is a vital building block of prevention. FAST (early analysis of tensions and factual reporting) is an early-warning system that the SDC has designed for 22 priority countries. On a minimum quarterly basis, the system delivers a series of graphics for each country to illustrate the course of tensions during the last months. Only systematic monitoring permits solid commentary on future developments. All FAST products are freely accessible on the Internet (www.swisspeace.org).

The SDC

(5)   commits itself to working «around», «in» and «on» conflict after assessing the context and involvement options;

(6)   performs rapid emergency aid in humanitarian crises and enshrines this commitment in a long-term perspective of sustainable peacebuilding in order to counter crisis-intensification factors (continuum/contiguum);

«Caucasus Media Institute»:

Promoting dialog in an unstable region
The Caucasus Media Institute (CMI) is a regional interdisciplinary training center that aims at enhancing the professional skills of actors in the mass-media sector. Thus the CMI offers a one-year course for fledgling journalists. It also offers seasoned staff a series of workshops and runs a department for research and publications. Focusing on regional activities, the CMI creates a platform for exchange between journalists and other media people from Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Joint projects promote dialog on each country's unique features and particularly on political challenges facing the region as a whole.

«Strengthening humanitarian dialog»:

Peacebuilding in Iraq
Before humanitarian actors were able to know precisely if there would or would not be war in Iraq, an international meeting took place in Geneva on 15–16 February on the anticipated humanitarian aspects of intervention in Iraq. Its goal was to be prepared for the worse case scenario – in view of scarce resources – in order to provide aid quickly and efficiently to Iraq's civilian population, which is highly vulnerable in any case. As a result, an internal SDC working group also focused on long-term aspects relevant to development in reconstructing the country.

(7) avoids possible counterproductive effects caused by its activities through use of a «do no harm« approach and concentrates on the networking and integrating aspects;

(8) contributes to capacity-building of actors in fostering a comprehensive domestic peace order and thus particularly strengthens the potential of women;

«Do no harm!»:

Reconstruction in Afghanistan
The reconstruction of social and government structures is a sensitive process, especially in a country that has survived decades of civil wars, foreign rule and military intervention because of its robust traditional institutions. Mary B. Anderson, author of the bestseller «Do no Harm» and head of the Collaborative for Development Action, has established a two-year pilot monitoring project to assess the country's bi- and multilateral reconstruction on the basis of «do no harm» criteria.

«Fergana Valley»:

Mediating conflicts over land and water
The SDC has been conducting a pilot program for three years to prevent violence and promote development in the border and conflict regions of Central Asia's Fergana Valley. The region suffers from sporadic outbreaks of violence touched off especially in connection with land and water distribution. The SDC program operates at two levels: in strengthening conflict-resolution mechanisms and in identifying causes of conflict. It supports local NGOs that offer continuing education courses for local figures – among them an increasing number of women – who play a mediating role in conflict cases in and among communities. In addition, communities affected receive aid from a Foundation for Infrastructure Projects, so that causes of water conflicts can be eliminated.

The SDC

(9)   coordinates and networks in Switzerland and internationally with relevant actors for bi- and multilateral peace promotion and peacebuilding;

(10)   assesses the political and financial risks of its commitment realistically and accords value to financial and administrative flexibility in order to react appropriately to sudden change.

«A safe and dignified return«:

Coordination in the migration sector
Lack of comprehensively-understood human security is the core cause of migration, whether forced or motivated by desperation. The SDC cooperates closely with the Federal Office for Refugees (FOR): anyone seeking temporary protective asylum in Switzerland should be able to return safely and with dignity whenever the violent crisis ends. Within the scope of the repatriation aid program conceived and conducted jointly by the SDC and FOR, 10'000 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and 32'500 from Kosovo have voluntarily returned to their country of origin.

«Consensus of Cotonou«

A spontaneous contribution to risk reduction
The acute conflict that has been on the verge of escalation since September 2002 between the Ivory Coast government and rebels endangers the entire West African sub-region and thus SDC priority countries. To contribute to early conflict transformation as well as to reduce economic and humanitarian consequences – e.g. for Mali – the SDC supported a meeting of 85 «African intellectuals» in accordance with the Political Affairs Directorate. A delegation led by Prof. Albert Tevoedjre worked out a 20-point plan to resolve the crisis based on a situ-ation analysis provided by Ivory Coast participants. Tevoedjre was then appointed by Kofi Annan to push ahead systematically with the peace process in Abidjan.