

Draft Project Proposal for a global programme leading to an international conference at United Nations Headquarters in 2005

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'I urge NGO's with an interest in conflict prevention to organise an international conference of local, national and international NGO's on their role in conflict prevention and future interaction with the United Nations in this field.'

Report of the UN Secretary General
on the Prevention of Armed Conflict,
Recommendation 27 (June 2001).

The conflict prevention community has responded to the Secretary General's appeal. Plans are already well advanced for an integrated global programme of research and discussion, which will address many of the unresolved issues hampering the potential of this young but crucially important field. A series of national and regional conferences will focus the world's experience of conflict prevention and peace building and present an Agenda for the future at the United Nations in 2005.

Support from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

31 May 2002

Dear Mr. van Tongeren,

Thank you for your letter of 22 March 2002 expressing the willingness of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention to take on an important role in following up recommendation 27 of my report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

I support wholeheartedly your initiative to organize regional preparatory meetings leading to an international conference of local, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area of conflict prevention. I understand that the purpose of these meetings will be to help NGOs further define their roles and future interaction with the United Nations. This is directly in line with my report, which emphasizes that national actors bear the primary responsibility for conflict prevention, while noting that NGOs and civil society also have a major role in this regard.

The report focuses on the positive potential of a wide spectrum of NGOs engaged in conflict prevention. It is therefore important that the meetings you propose be as broadly inclusive and diverse as possible. I welcome your suggestion that the conference should be a real participatory process and trust that you will actively encourage broad geographical representation and a sense of ownership among the conflict prevention NGO community. I would also urge you to consider the contributions that regional organizations and various United Nations agencies can make to the process.

Your initiative is a timely and important contribution to engaging civil society in the task of developing a culture of prevention in the international community. As you embark on this important project, I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', is placed above the printed name.

Kofi A. Annan

Mr. Paul van Tongeren
Executive Director
European Centre for Conflict Prevention
Utrecht

Why now?

'We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind...' The opening words of the UN Charter, framed by the victorious allies at the end of the Second World War, echo strangely through the UN Millennium Declaration, signed by 147 heads of state and adopted by 191 nations in September 2000: 'We, the heads of state and government... will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between states, which has claimed more than five million lives in the past decade.'

Over the first half century of the United Nations existence, the scourge of war proved very difficult to quell. Existing mechanisms were exposed as inadequate. We avoided nuclear annihilation, but the Cold War spawned terribly destructive conflicts in the world's poorest regions. The New World Order envisaged after the collapse of the Soviet Union rapidly dissolved into a series of brutal civil wars in which, as our leaders admit, millions were killed and millions more displaced. Nations, driven by short-term pressures, usually reacted too late. The cost, in human misery and squandered resources, was vast. The scars will take generations to heal.

'The international community', embodied by the UN, too often proved ineffective when faced with the harshest realities. A new vision was required and began to emerge in the last decade of the twentieth century. The UN Secretary General spoke of the need to shift from a Culture of Reaction to a Culture of Prevention. Groups like the EU and the G8 took up the call. A new discipline developed – conflict prevention – that set out to integrate the efforts of all those working for peace. Community leaders, women's groups, academics, journalists and businessmen demonstrated that their influence could sometimes extend beyond that of soldiers and diplomats. Political leaders across the world became increasingly aware of civil society's potential to anticipate and resolve its own tensions. Academics began to give theoretical shape to methods developed ad hoc on the ground. Networks of NGO's and practitioners began to form. Experience was pooled. Lessons were learned.

The terrorist attacks on the United States and the subsequent US response appear to have ushered in a new era. Not the New World Order envisaged at the start of the 1990's, but an era apparently dominated by international divisions, by ideological forces independent of states, and by the unprecedented power of one nation. We have no idea how this era will develop. However, we can be absolutely certain that the myriad of conflicts which divide communities in all parts of the world and which stem from poverty, ethnic tensions, corrupt and incompetent government, social exclusion and scarce resources, will not go away. Any of them could descend into armed confrontation, with incalculable consequences.

Conflict will always be with us. But if humanity is not to be further shamed by an endless series of futile, destructive wars, we will have to learn when and how to prevent tension escalating into violence. It is a very long-term commitment, not a task to be accomplished in a couple of decades. Nor is it glamorous. Averted conflicts do not make the headlines. All the more important, then, that high-profile events do not monopolise the attention of policy makers. If world leaders are serious about their commitment to the Millennium Declaration, they need to put far more of their energy and resources into building capacity for peace.

Peace cannot be imposed by states. It has to take root. The final responsibility for preventing war and building peace may lie with states, but it is now widely accepted that civil society has a major role to play in the process. Conflict prevention is a young field. It is a broad inclusive field, covering all sectors, involving state and non-state actors. It is highly fragmented and hard to co-ordinate. But never before have we been able to communicate with each other so easily. The potential for co-operation is enormous. To realise this potential we need to build on the first decade of conflict prevention experience, to develop reliable mechanisms for working together and to define the responsibilities and competencies of the different sectors. Difficult issues of demarcation need to be faced. The programme described in this proposal is a major step in this direction.

What has been achieved already...

In 2002, in response to the Secretary General's Recommendation 27 (see front cover), the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) proposed an integrated global programme of research, consultation and discussion, leading to an international conference at UN Headquarters in New York. Kofi Annan supported the initiative and an intensive period of consultation within the conflict prevention community began. The outcome was an International Preparatory Meeting, scheduled for Nairobi in June 2003, but switched at the last minute to the Netherlands for security reasons. Sixty delegates from all over the world met at Soesterberg to discuss the purpose and planning of the programme. The scheme outlined in this proposal is the product of their discussions.

At Soesterberg a provisional International Steering Group (ISG) was set up to oversee the programme. The ECCP's offer to act as its secretariat was accepted. An overall structure was agreed: a series of parallel regional processes, flexible enough to encompass regional differences but sufficiently aligned to give coherence to the whole. These regional processes, described in this brochure, are the heart of the project. They offer each region a series of unique opportunities: to influence international policy and thinking on conflict prevention; to clarify their relations with the UN and its agencies; to build better relations with governments; to consolidate their networks: and to set their own regional agenda for the coming decade.

At this point some regions have already mandated specific organisations to initiate the process while others are still at the discussion stage. The ISG will remain provisional until each region is represented and has therefore asked the ECCP to continue driving the project until its membership has been finalised. Since the programme was broadly approved at Soesterberg, it is assumed that the process will not be substantially different from that described here.

Objectives and goals

Overall objective:

To develop a common platform for effective action in conflict prevention from the community to the global level

First goal

To explore fully the role of civil society in the prevention of armed conflict

Second goal

To improve the interaction between civil society, the UN, regional organisations and governments

Third goal

To strengthen regional and international networking

Fourth goal

To promote the development of a coherent body of research and theory that will help the conflict prevention community to play its full part in international debate

Fifth goal

To produce an International Agenda for Conflict Prevention to be agreed with the United Nations.

Regions

Africa:

West Africa

East Africa, including Horn & Great Lakes

Southern Africa

Asia:

Central Asia

South Asia

North-east and South-east Asia

Pacific

The Americas:

North America

Latin America and Caribbean

South America

The Middle East & North Africa

Europe:

Northern and Western Europe

Western Commonwealth of Independent

States region (including Russian Federation,

Belarus, Ukraine, Rumania and Bulgaria)

Balkans

Caucasus

International context of the programme

As Civil Society Organisations (CSO's), conflict prevention groups face many difficult issues. Many of the delegates at the International Preparatory Meeting of the programme in Soesterberg spoke of the problems of establishing genuine co-operation with governments and with the UN and its agencies. There is of course wide regional variation, but it was generally felt that many opportunities are being missed. At the same time, it was understood that the role of civil society in this field remains undefined and that questions of CSO accountability, legitimacy and transparency have yet to be faced.

Within the conflict prevention community itself, delegates saw lack of co-ordination leading to duplication and competition, reducing the effectiveness of everyone's efforts. Improved networking was seen as a partial solution, but the need for greater discipline cannot be ignored.

The reluctance of governments to admit non-state actors to the business of peace and security runs counter to the growing importance of civil society in other areas. One of the most striking features of the major international conferences held on global themes over the last decade, has been the huge increase in NGO involvement and influence. This has not been the case in the area of peace and security. Yet as the Carnegie Commission has argued: 'The prevention of deadly conflict is, over the long term, too hard - intellectually, technically and politically - to be the responsibility of any single institution or government, no matter how powerful. Strengths must be pooled, burdens shared and labour divided among actors. This is a practical necessity.' The EU has endorsed the theme in the Helsingborg Agenda: 'Our common ambition is to enhance our co-operation with NGO's, civil society, the business community and research institutions in the implementation of the conflict prevention agenda', while the UNDP has subtly bridged the divide by recognising that 'CSO's are not a substitute for government, but are central to sustainable governance.' Nowhere is this more true than in the search for sustainable peace. All the signs suggest that this programme is in tune with the times.

Structure and steering from the Regional to the International level: the International Steering Group

The overall objective of the Programme is to develop a common platform for effective action in conflict prevention from the community to the global level. For this platform to be genuinely global, it needs to be genuinely inclusive. This means that northern/western interests should not predominate and that international preoccupations should not drown the voice of the local community. The regional structure of the programme is designed to prevent such mistakes being made.

However, the international dimension is also very important. The original impulse came from the United Nations and we can assume that agreements made at the international level will increase the level of political commitment to conflict prevention and to the role of civil society within it. Thus the International Steering Group (ISG), besides guarding the coherence and the integrity of the programme, will also establish links to other international initiatives, such as the Human Security Network (in which thirteen governments are involved). It will work closely with the UN-NGO working group (Core Partnership for Action to Prevent Violent Conflict), which will liaise with the UN throughout the programme.

The International Steering Group (ISG) will have the following tasks:

To advise on the overall process to the conference at the UN in 2005;

To integrate the regional and international processes;

To co-operate in the search for funds and develop a common fundraising strategy;

To ensure communication within regions and, jointly with the secretariat, to ensure communication between regions and between regions and the secretariat;

To oversee the programme, its monitoring, reporting and evaluation;

To set direction for and integrate the work of the special groups (i.e. Action Plan, Awareness Raising, People Building Peace)

The composition of the ISG reflects this dual role. Each region active in the programme will be represented (by its Regional Initiator or mandated alternative), as will the working group on UN-NGO interaction and the international secretariat (ECCP). Representatives from at least one international NGO and from some sympathetic governments will also be invited to attend as observers. Regional Initiators are expected to submit their plans to the ISG, which will ensure that the overall programme retains its coherence, that it benefits from creative ideas and avoids unexpected pitfalls. Close contact within the ISG will be maintained via email and intranet. The international secretariat will advise and support regional processes and co-ordinate funding applications.

At the conclusion of the regional process, recommendations from the regional conferences will be sent to the ISG, which will use them to frame an Agenda to be presented at the International Conference at UN Headquarters. If further discussion is needed to prepare the Agenda, the ISG will summon a special Forum before we go to New York.

Structure and steering: the international secretariat

At Soesterberg a provisional International Steering Group (ISG) was set up to oversee the programme. This ISG accepted the European Centre for Conflict Prevention's offer to act as its secretariat.

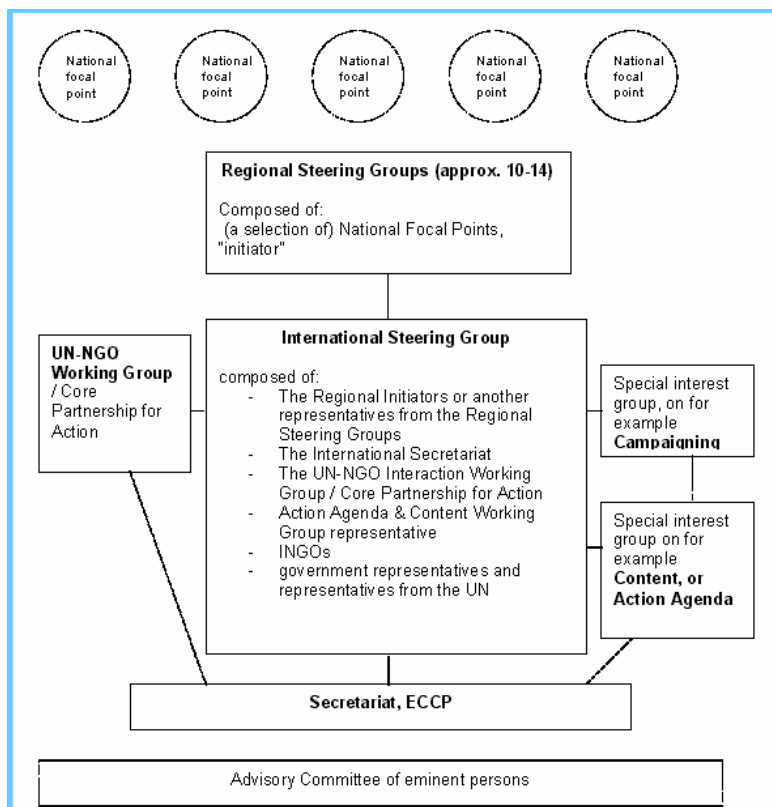
The European Centre for Conflict Prevention is a non-governmental organisation that promotes effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies, and actively supports and connects people working for peace world-wide.

It is an independent, non-governmental organisation, based in The Netherlands, with the mission to be a service and facilitating organisation for the broad field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As part of this, it acts as the secretariat of the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, a network of over 150 key organisations working in the field of conflict prevention and/or resolution. Through its *Searching for Peace Programme*, which is aimed at recording, describing and analysing prevention and peace-building efforts in the main violent conflicts in the world (with a special focus on multi-track diplomacy), and which includes extensive directories of organisations working in this field, the ECCP has gained an overview of some 1500 NGOs world-wide who are involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This network of contacts could be very helpful in the organisation of the proposed conference.

The international secretariat is responsible for:

- Managing the overall process, ensuring together with the ISG coherence and coordination
- Overall budget international programme and fundraising
- Acting as the secretariat for the International Steering Group
- Stimulating international consultation and networking
- Facilitating the preparatory process until the first International Preparatory Meeting in June
- Assisting regional initiators producing proposals for their regional conferences and help in joint fundraising
- Collecting case studies and lessons learned
- Collecting recommendations from the regional conferences
- Facilitating the process towards an Agenda for the Future

Organisational chart:



Structure and steering: Regional Process

The regional process is the heart of the programme. It is designed to ensure that all those working in conflict prevention, wherever they may be in the world, have a chance to contribute to the future development of the field. Within a broad framework necessary to preserve the coherence of the global initiative, each region is free to organise its own process in the most appropriate way. One outcome is defined - a regional conference in 2004 that will put forward recommendations for the international conference at UN Headquarters. But another possible outcome - a regional agenda for the coming decade - will be up to each region to frame.

At the same time, regions can learn from each other as the process evolves, either directly or via the International Steering Group (ISG) and its secretariat. To preserve balance and coherence, the ISG will ensure that the various regional processes are on roughly the same scale and that certain broad themes are addressed. For example: to bring out the main issues facing the conflict prevention community; to clarify relations with the UN and its agencies, with regional organisations and governments; to formulate lessons learned and best practice.

Broadly speaking, each region will mandate a Regional Initiator (for criteria see p....) to launch and co-ordinate the programme. The Initiator's tasks (after consulting with key regional and national CSO's, academics, UN agencies and perhaps governments) are:

- to set up a representative Regional Steering Group (RSG).
- to establish a secretariat
- to estimate budgets
- to draw up funding proposals

The RSG/secretariat will then:

- organise a regional programme of research and discussion that takes in all relevant actors in the (sub)region (either on a regional basis or via national focal points).
- raise funding for the regional process
- keep in touch with the international programme via the ISG/secretariat, which is available for advice and support as required.
- organise the Regional Conference
- prepare a regional Agenda and a set of recommendations for the International Conference at UN Headquarters.

It is important to stress that the various regions are currently at different stages in the process. Some have already mandated a regional initiator, while others are still busy consulting. In some cases the role may be shared between more than one organisation. Regional flexibility is the rule.

Each region can explore its own issues and priorities, as well as pursuing the general themes that emerge via the ISG. Regions are encouraged to involve all the relevant sectors and to ensure that grassroots practitioners play a major role in discussion. One common element of the programme is the request to collect case histories of conflict prevention in action. These stories from all over the world will be worked into a compelling book and presented at the final conference at UN Headquarters.

Example 1: South Asia

RCSS in Sri Lanka already had a regional mandate to support NGO's on conflict prevention issues and was thus a natural choice for Regional Initiator. National convenors have been identified for two countries (Pakistan and India) and others are being sought. A brainstorm session is scheduled to assess the research needs of the programme and six national conferences are planned (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India

Structure and steering: Regional Process—continued

(2), Nepal, Bangladesh) prior to the concluding Regional Conference. Various funding options are being considered.

Example 2: Latin America and the Caribbean

Meetings are planned for 2003 in four sub regions: Southern cone and Brazil, Andes Region, Central America and Mexico, and Greater Caribbean, leading up to a larger gathering in Mexico at the end of the year. The RSG will form in the course of the year. At present the emphasis is on making the process as broad and inclusive as possible.

Example 3: Western and Northern Europe

The European Regional Conference will be held in Dublin to coincide with Irish Presidency of the EU. It will be jointly run by the ECCP and the Irish government, whose involvement is particularly welcomed as a bridge between civil society and government cultures.

Example 4: Central and East Africa

Three African sub-regions worked closely with the ECCP in the consultation phase that preceded the programme. In East Africa a group of national, regional and continental organisations met in March 2003 and selected the Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa) as Regional Initiator for Central and East Africa, including the Horn and the Great Lakes. In the Horn they will be supported by the Inter Africa Group, based in Addis Ababa. A similar partner for the Great Lakes has yet to be confirmed. (But for security warnings, NPI-Africa would have hosted the International Preparatory Meeting in June.)

What are the Regional Initiators?

Responsible for:

- Acting as the secretariat for the Regional Steering Group
- Producing a proposal for the regional process and regional conference
- Finance and fundraising (if needed in cooperation with the ECCP)
- Connecting the grass-root with the regional and international processes;
- Stimulating regional consultation and networking
- Collecting case studies and lessons learned
- (co-)organising of the Regional Conferences
- Main contact of the CSP secretariat

Criteria:

- These regional initiators are usually organisations that fit the following description:
- Should be part of a strong network with links nationally, regionally and internationally
- Should be active in the field of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
- Should go beyond an issue-focused approach and have a broad scope
- Should have the organisational capacity and experience to successfully take on the initiator's role like organising conferences and research activities
- Should have convenor power and be a credible institution

Furthermore, we ask the initiator organisations to be inclusive in the process because a closed membership based approach would counter the third goal of the programme (strengthening regional networking). These organisations must also be non-governmental organisations, transparent in their approach and have a gender balance in their participation.

Regional Initiators and Regional Contacts

(This is still a provisional list. Where information is not available, an ECCP contact point is given. A definitive list will be published at a later date)

Central and East Africa

Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa)
Ms Florence Mpaayei, and
Ms Dorothy Ndung'u
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel. +254-2-444 1444
Fax. +254-2-444 0097
Email: npi@africaonline.co.ke

Southern Africa

Southern Africa Conflict Prevention Network (SACPN)
Mr. Sean Tait, co-ordinator
Cape Town, South Africa
Tel. +27-21-442 3600
Fax. +27-21-448 5476
Email: sean@umac.org.za

West Africa

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)
Ms Fatoumatta M'Boge
Accra, Ghana
Tel. +233-21-221 1318
Fax. +233-21-221 735
Email: fatou@wanep.org

Latin America and the Caribbean

CRIES (Regional Co-ordinator for Economic and Social Research)
Mr. Andrés Serbin
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Tel: (5411) 4812-7458 (54220) 4833317
Fax: (5411) 4812-7458
Email: Sanrafaelsrl@fibertel.com.ar,
cronzano@hotmail.com

North America

Canadian Peacebuilding Co-ordinating Committee (CPCC)
Mr. David Lord
Ottawa, Canada
Tel: +1 (613) 241-3446
Fax: +1 (613) 241-4846
Email: cpcc@web.ca
and

Alliance for International Conflict Prevention and Resolution
Mr Peter Woodrow
Tel: +1 (303) 442-7367
Fax: +1 (303) 442-7442
Email: pwoodrow@mediate.org

South Asia

Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)
Mr. Sridhar Khatri
Colombo, Sri Lanka
Tel: 94 (1) 599 734/5
Fax: 94 (1) 599 993
Email: rcss@sri.lanka.net

The Pacific

please contact: info@conflict-prevention.net

South-east & North-east Asia

please contact: info@conflict-prevention.net

Middle East and North Africa

co-Regional Initiators:
Regional Human Security Center (RSG secretariat)
Dr. Atef Odibat
Amman - Jordan
Tel: 00962 6 5930253
Fax: 00962 6 5930810
Email: odibat@id.gov.jo, rhsc@id.gov.jo
and
Panorama - The Palestinian Centre for the Dissemination of Democracy & Community Development
Mr. Walid Salem, Director Jerusalem Office
Jerusalem
Tel: ++972 2 6281151
Fax: ++97226283351
Email: walid@panoramacenter.org

Regional Initiators and Regional Contacts—continued

Western Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Non-violence International Newly Independent States

Mr. Andre A. Kamenshikov

Moscow, Russia

Tel: + 7 (095) 291 1142

Fax: + 7 (095) 291 2358

Email: ninis@online.ru

Central Asia

Foundation for Tolerance International

Ms. Raya Kadyrova, President

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Tel: + 996 312 644658

Fax: + 996 312 64 4463

Email Fti@infotel.kg

The Caucasus

International Center on Conflict & Negotiation (ICCN)

Ms. Tina Gogueliani

Tsiblisi, Georgia

Tel: + 995 (32) 99 99 87

Fax: + 995 (32) 93 91 78

Email: iccn@iccn.ge

The Balkans

please contact: Guido de Graaf Bierbrauwer at the international secretariat (ECCP)

Email: g.bierbrauwer@conflict-prevention.net

Northern and Western Europe

European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP)

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What will be the content of the programme?

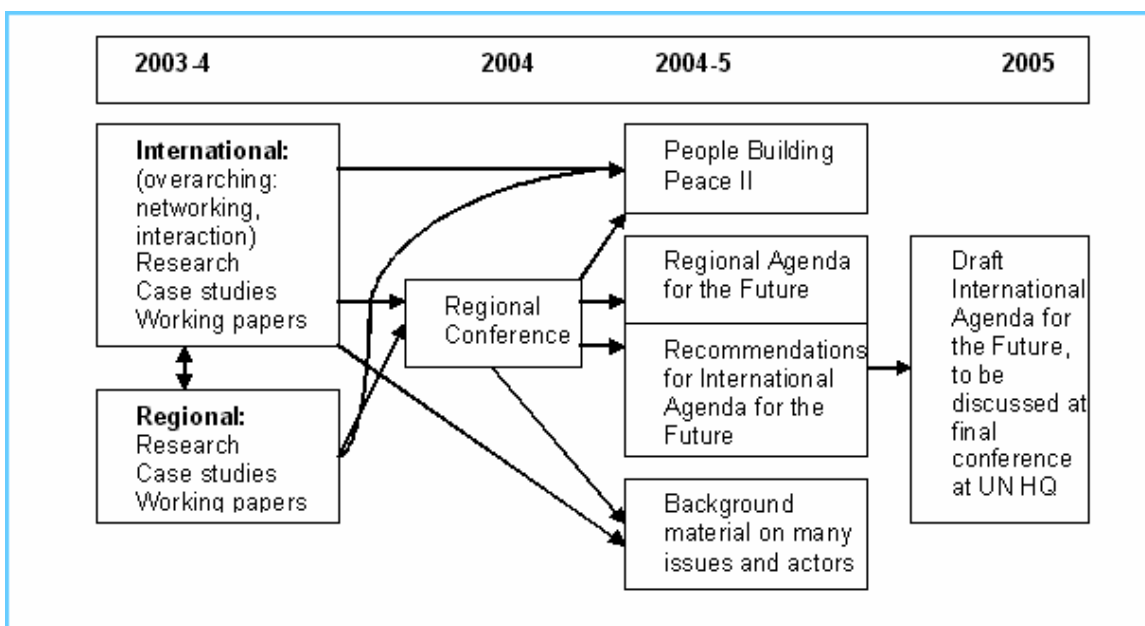
In general, the programme will look at the different roles that civil society actors and NGOs are playing, as well as to some important issues often referred to in discussions on multi-track diplomacy, and to some key issues in general, such as networking and interaction between civil society and NGOs on the one hand, and the UN, Regional Organisations and governments on the other.

The focus would be which contribution different actors or sectors could deliver to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, what their added value is, what they could contribute more and better than others. It will be an important task to collect good case studies or reports of good practices and lessons learned. Besides this, specific recommendations for these actors/sectors are required.

The programme foresees the following concrete outcomes:

1. Research and working documents
2. Regional and International Agendas for the Future in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
3. Publication of "The effectiveness of networking and networks for conflict prevention and peacebuilding"
4. Book publication People Building Peace
5. Publication on Interaction between NGOs and the UN

The Content flow:



Research and working documents

Although some research on the role of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is available, more research will be necessary to extract the specific information on the actors, sectors and issues, and the interaction between civil society and the UN, Regional Organisations and governments. Besides producing new material, it is necessary to collect data and make accessible for a broad audience already existing material. Especially for the preparatory conferences, working documents of high quality are needed, sharing theories, lessons learned, and best practices.

During the International Preparatory Meeting the participants could through a questionnaire give their opinion of about which actors and issues should be highlighted within this programme. End of 2003 and early 2004 several working papers will be produced on the main topics.

What will be the content of the programme? - Continued

Regional Agendas for the Future on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, leading to the final International Agenda for the Future

(Regional and International) Research, case studies and working papers will be the basis of the discussions at each Regional conference. As a result of these discussions, recommendations and an Agenda for the Future should be formulated, with both regional and more overarching international aspects. The Agendas will be an instrument to discuss within our field what we like to achieve, clarifying outputs and mechanisms on how to cooperate with others (development NGOs, governments, UN and so on), and a tool for lobby and advocacy.

To guide this process, and to guarantee that the different Regional Agendas for the Future will also lead to an International Agenda, the provisional International Steering Group established an Agenda Working Group. This Working Group, lead by International Alert and Saferworld, will provide a general framework for the regions, and guide an inclusive process in which the regional networks formulate their specific Agenda's on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding. Furthermore, it will abstract the overarching themes from the research & working papers, cases studies, and regional conferences, and will formulate a draft Agenda for the Future, to be discussed at the final conference at the United Nations.

Among the main guidelines the following is considered most relevant:

The primacy of local actors in relation to their own conflicts;

The recognition of ongoing work on significant themes, especially in those areas where thematic clusters working on relevant issues are in progress or in formation;

The recognition of the work of different sectors, convening members among their ranks to advance the work of conflict prevention from their perspectives; and, of national or regional formations or federations of peace advocates;

Working with other NGOs focused on relevant and related fields such as human rights, development, governance, humanitarian, and the environment;

The recognition of the importance of complementarity in working with governments or intergovernmental institutions, in particular, the United Nations and its agencies

Content: Issues and actors

Overarching issues, for example:

- The role of civil society and NGOs in peacebuilding and conflict prevention
- Development and Peacebuilding
- Interaction with governments, regional organisations and UN agencies
- Networking

Thematic Issues, for example:

- Early warning and early response
- Dialogue
- Awareness raising and NGO campaigns
- Advocacy & lobby
- Traditional conflict resolution techniques
- Code of Conduct
- Reconciliation
- Evaluation and best practices

Actors, for example:

- Education
- Women
- Community groups and social movements
- Regional organisations
- Local capacities for peace
- Youth
- Governments
- UN
- Civil peacebuilders
- Media

What will be the content of the programme?-Continued

Research on Networking in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are complex issues that require co-ordinated strategies and interventions and concerted actions by various stakeholders at different levels (local, national, regional, international). The network as an organisational structure and networking as a mechanism to deal with the complexity of conflict transformation processes have become a given in international development. Similarly the need to gain better insight in the different type of network and different ways of networking for conflict transformation has increased.

The central question with respect to networks is not whether we would like to work with them in partnership, but rather: how do we want or have to support networking and network organisations?

With this in mind, Cordaid and ICCO, Dutch co-financing agencies that are both actively funding networks for building peace, have commissioned a study on "The Effectiveness of networks and networking for conflict prevention and peacebuilding". The study runs parallel with the preparations for the overall programme. The study will start in the third quarter of 2003 and effectively end in 2005 when findings are presented in workshops in the UN conference and the final study will take shape after the conference.

Objectives and expected results

To gain insight in the way networking and networks have developed in peacebuilding and conflict prevention up till now;

To gain insight in the effectiveness of networks as an organisational structure and networking as a mechanism for peacebuilding and conflict prevention

To formulate key questions and/or issues that will challenge our (i.e. our and partner organisations and experts) thinking on networking and networks for conflict transformation

To produce a few advisory notes for Cordaid (ICCO), ECCP and other organisations and networks that work in conflict prevention and peacebuilding that may improve networking practice and policy

The study will produce a paper on "The state of the art of networking and networks in peacebuilding and conflict prevention". – end of 2003

The findings of the paper and questions formulated will be discussed by the researcher and members of the review panel at the various preparatory conferences leading to the New York conference – 2004

The findings of the preparatory conferences and final conference will result in a final document on "The effectiveness of networking and networks for conflict prevention and peace building" – 2005

What will be the content of the programme? - Continued

People Building Peace II (working title) – book project

As part of the Civil Society Programme we want to explore key issues and key civil society actors and highlight the experiences of interaction from NGOs with UN organisations. In line of People Building Peace – 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World, a publication of the European Centre (1999) we would like to present inspiring or successful case studies of peacebuilding in a journalistic way for a broad audience. The publication will aim to reach the broad conflict resolution and peacebuilding field (practitioners, local and international NGOs), development and humanitarian organisations, human rights groups, UN organisations, donor organisations and governments, regional organisations, academic world, and the media.

The foreseen document (approximately 500 pages) would be one of the main publications within CSP to highlight the role of civil society and interaction with the UN and will be presented at the International Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York in 2005.

Added Value

The People Building Peace book published in 1999 was received very positive and is still in great demand by NGOs, training institutes etc. From the 10.000 copies printed some 200 are left over. Although there is a growing number of publications on the subject peacebuilding and experiences from practitioners (see literature list) a publication focussed on inspiring stories how people can make a difference does not exist as such. Furthermore the CSP offers a great opportunity to work with different local organisations from all regions in collecting examples and experiences.

Aims of the publication are:

To provide lively and inspiring stories on the different ways people are working for peace

To formulate clearly the respective roles of the key actors and sectors peacebuilding and conflict transformation

To explore important issues such as networking, campaigning, interaction, early warning, development and peacebuilding, traditional methods of conflict resolution etc.

To present in a journalistic way successful initiatives taken by civil society organisations and NGOs worldwide, including the not so widely known activities from local NGOs

To collect best practices and lessons learned

Interaction between Civil Society and the United Nations, Regional Organisations and Governments

The programme will look at the interaction between Civil Society and NGOs on the one hand, and the United Nations, Regional Organisations, and Governments on the other in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The focus will be on past experiences in collaboration, developed or developing structures or mechanisms to improve interaction, on different levels (country, region, and global).

The international community is in the centre of a rapidly changing political and ideological environment. The Security Council has never been more divided since the end of the Cold War when it was quite paralyzed. Although the call for moving from reactive peacekeeping and conflict management to active conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of violence has gained greater attention in the international system, the paradigm shift has not yet been made thoroughly from the grassroots to the global levels.

The limits of the UN as a member states organisation

The United Nations is an organisation of states. Members are states recognized by other states. Civil society was not formally present at the UN's constitutive moments in 1945 in San Francisco and New York and the manner in which the UN interacts with civil society still is in the making. However, by adopting unprecedented measures such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has taken extraordinary steps toward the creation of a political framework in which civil society can manifest itself. At the same time, by identifying civil society actors as key partners in times of crisis and as contributors in the face of global dilemmas, the United Nations has, de facto, promoted the development of a more experienced civil society. While the UN still maintains its state membership, several trends have moved it in the direction of greater interaction with civil society. At the moment, no global issue can be addressed without reference to the work of millions of scholars, activists, and the representatives of thousands of non-governmental and civil society entities who are committed to those concerns. Large gatherings on different subjects -- from environment to development, from racism and gender to human rights -- have been shaping the public debate and frequently defining the very agenda of the international community, both at the state and non-state level.

A Civil Society Lead

Because of the still somewhat contentious nature of the relationship between civil society and the nation state, NGOs are challenged to take the lead in developing fora for to engage their own memberships and the governments that are there to serve them (at least in democratic societies) and with which they must cooperate on issues of national and civil security. These fora must be characterized by positive cooperation, practical action, and move toward building a momentum for prevention. They must be created through a process that can build on the positive outcomes of the earlier prevention debates, advance the debate and commitments a step further, and link actively with the international system, regional organisations, individual governments, and partners at the local level.

This programme is the first attempt to create such a process and forum for the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The UN is comprised of states, but these states may benefit from an open and inclusive dialogue with many civil society and actors to positively resolve issues of mutual concern. The UN has changed dramatically since its inception and the civil society movement is committed to making that change an even more significant feature of the international community's public system of governance, representation and accountability.

Interaction between Civil Society and the United Nations, Regional Organisations and Governments

Liaison and Coordination

In support of furthering this programme at the UN, an NGO-UN Interaction Working Group, based in New York, facilitates interface between the international initiative, the regional conferences and the UN. Members of the Working Group include the Center for International Conflict Resolution at Columbia University (CICR), Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), World Vision International, Initiatives of Change, and SaferWorld.

The core responsibilities of the NGO-UN Prevention Working Group are:

1. Liaison and facilitate communication regarding the initiative with relevant UN actors, Country Missions, and other NGOs and CSOs
 - A. Build support for initiative within the UN and among Member States
 - B. Organize regular briefings on progress of the initiative
 - C. Seek input from UN and Missions on the status of conflict prevention issues
 - D. Communicate UN and Member states views to regional conferences
2. Research and monitor activities on conflict prevention issues
 - A. Detail UN prevention efforts
 - B. Gather information on governments' view of prevention
 - C. Comprise database of prevention research and work
3. Explore funding opportunities
 - A. Seek funding from UN based sources
 - B. Research and apply for funding from US -based institutions and foundations
4. Prepare and coordinate the 2005 international conference

Communication

Conflict prevention and peace building are now firmly on the political agenda. The UN, G8, EU and even national governments voices their belief that much more could and should be done to reach a "Culture of Prevention". However, for the public at large, conflict prevention and peace building remain unknown issues. This makes it very difficult to raise public support to do more (and to invest more) to prevent violent conflicts. In this field, awareness raising is still a blank.

This programme will highlight the role of civil actors and aims to build an international network. This programme could therefore be a perfect vehicle for designing and implementing an international awareness campaign on Conflict Prevention and Peace Building for the general public.

However, before reaching out to the public, we first have to build up our own community within this programme. One of the crucial elements in building a community is communication. We have to show as often as possible to each other what is happening in the different regions and on the international level. To do it right, we need to develop a clear communication strategy.

The programme has a structure with many levels, both vertical: International Steering Group, international Secretariat, Regional Steering Groups, Regional Convenors, local organisations, and horizontal: content, research, agenda for the future, lobby, and so on. Besides this, there are more than one target groups we have to deal with: "Internally": Participating and interested organisations: international, regional, local; governmental and non-governmental, and "Externally": Policy makers & civil servants (lobby), Public at large (awareness raising).

Target matrix:

Target		Aims	Tools	Partners	Period
'Internal' communication	Participating organisations Interested organisations / persons Donors	Information sharing Building community Increase cooperation	Website with secured space, and databases with articles, reports etc Newsflashes Email list Brochure	TNU Regional Initiators	2004
'external' lobby & advocacy	Policy makers Civil servants Governments UN Agencies Regional Organisations	Growing interest in topics Better interaction / building bridges Increase of budget	Lobby documents / Agendas for the future Issue papers Publications (People Building Peace) PR Brochure	International Alert & Saferworld UN – NGO Working Group 'Friendly' governments	2005
'external' public	Public at large	Informing people about conflict prevention and peacebuilding Building support for field Increase funds	PR / campaign material: Brochures Posters (TV) documentaries Educational material	Fenton Communications Search for Common Ground Imagine Others	2005 onwards

Communication: the main challenges we face are:

Transparency: participating organisations should at any time be able to get a clear picture of the structure, process and state of affairs, and agreements / decisions by ISG / secretariat

Information sharing: interested organisations and persons should be able to find easily important information / brochures on the programme

Who is who and who is participating in what. With the growing amount of regions and interested organisations and persons, it is of crucial importance to have a good contact database.

Networking / coalition building: the IPM showed clearly the importance of group processes. In order to give legitimacy to the CSP, a broader group of organisations must feel connected to the CSP. A place (on the internet) where these people meet, could be helpful to create a sense of community feeling.

Sharing of experiences and lessons learned. One of the major tasks ahead is collecting the content for the CSP.

Communication— continued

Some tools:

Website:

The website will be the main communication tool (see below). Probably there will be more than one website, focusing on different target groups.

E-mail lists

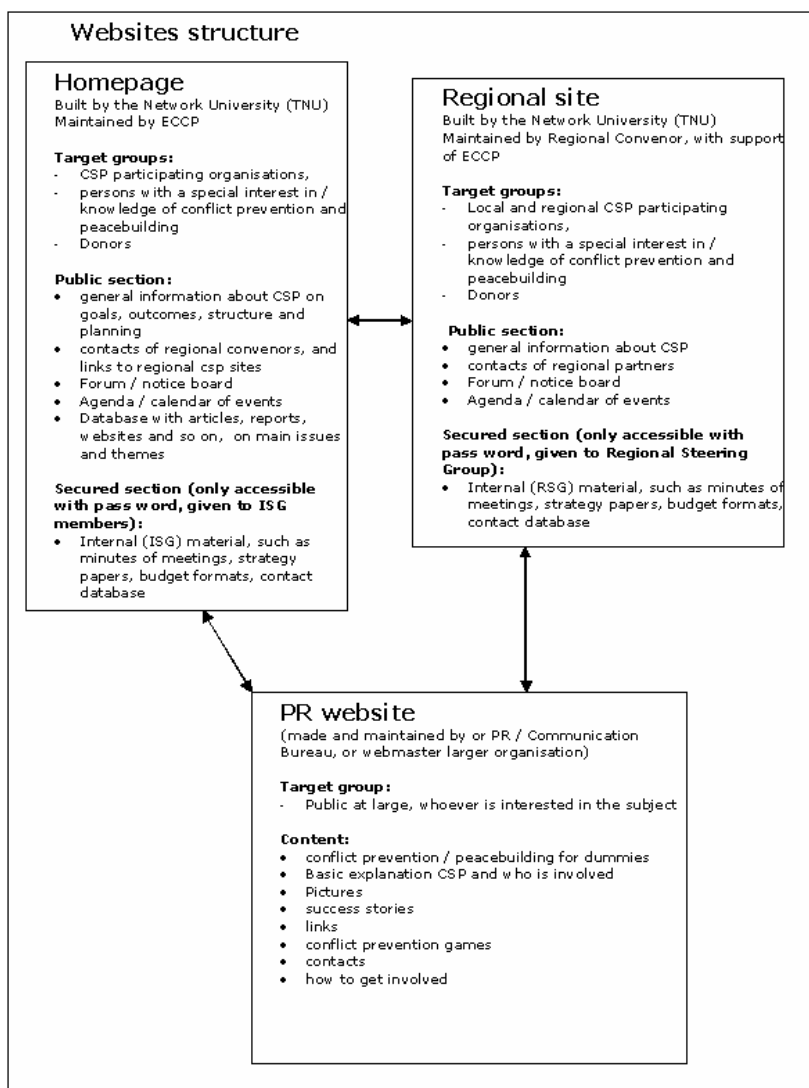
Especially for the representing / governing bodies (national focal points, regional steering groups, and international steering group) it is crucial to be continuously informed about discussions that took place in the different bodies and the decisions made there.

Newsflash:

The newsflash should serve as a more regular source of general information, to update all those persons and organisations involved in the programme on what is happening in the different regions and on the international level.

Conflict Prevention Newsletter

The Conflict Prevention Newsletter will have specials editions focussing on this programme. The number of contacts that receive the newsletter will be increased up to 5000.



Foreseen outcomes of the programme

- Regional conferences, held in regions (West Africa, East Africa, including Horn & Great Lakes, Southern Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Northeast and Southeast Asia, the Pacific, North America, Central America and Caribbean, South America, Arab World and Middle East, Northern and Western Europe, Western Commonwealth of Independent States (including Russian Federation, Belarus, and Ukraine), Balkans, and the Caucasus in 2004;
- As much as possible NGOs and civil society groups will be involved by asking their contributions at the start of the project and sending them a draft action-plan in 2004. Some 1500 NGOs at least world-wide will be invited for their contribution.
- Several Region Specific Agendas for the future and an International Agenda for the future, with hopefully a Security Council Resolution
- Publications: a world-wide collection of inspiring / successful stories of conflict prevention or peacebuilding efforts; a publication summarising background documents on all actors/sectors and issues, including the cases and recommendations; research and issue papers, and finally, the International Action Agenda.
- PR and Campaign material, including a flyer, posters, audio-visual material, website and e-mail newsletter, and printed specials in Conflict Prevention Newsletter of the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation.
- Material available in several languages.

Foreseen benefits of the programme

After all the workshops, seminars, national and regional conferences, the regional agendas, the book of case histories and the final international conference, the global conflict prevention community will have made significant progress in the following related areas:

Clarification

- of the role and responsibility of civil society actors in preventing armed conflict
- of the role and responsibility of civil society actors in building peace
- of the roles and competencies of the different sectors involved in conflict prevention
- of the value of civil society actors to governments seeking to prevent conflict
- of relations between civil society actors and the UN and its agencies
- of relations between conflict prevention NGO's and other related NGO's active in conflict areas
- of relations between civil society actors and governments

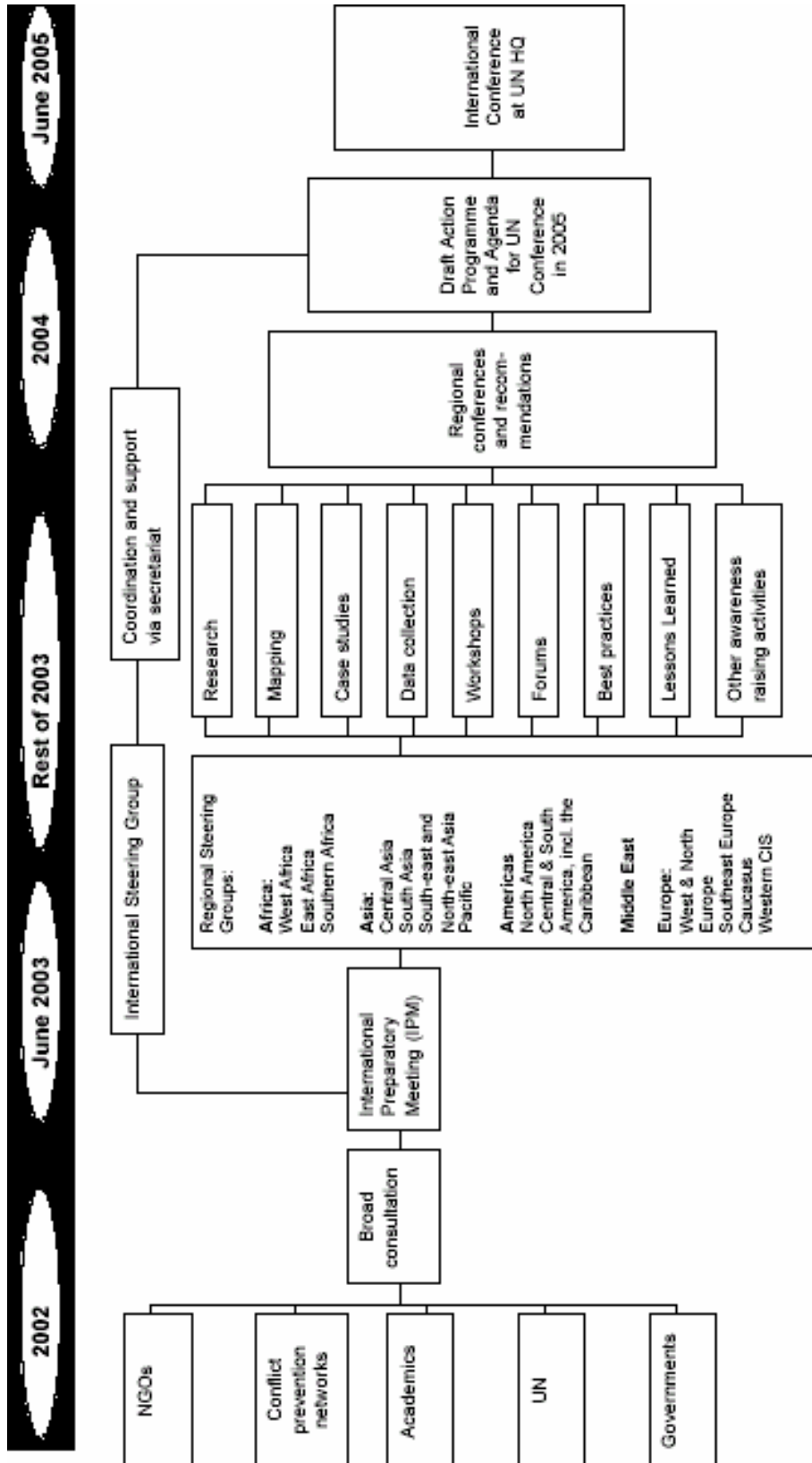
Effectiveness

- via the creation of mechanisms for interaction on peace and security between civil society actors, national governments, regional organisations and the UN and its agencies
- via reduction of duplication and competition between civil society actors
- via reduction of competition between civil society actors and governments
- via the development of conflict prevention networks at the local, national, regional and international levels
- via the development of the theoretical basis of conflict prevention methods
- via increased government acceptance of the unique value of civil society actors in preventing local and internal conflicts (e.g. early warning, reconciliation)

Promotion

- through increased UN awareness of the role of civil society actors in conflict prevention
- through increased government awareness of the role of civil society actors in conflict prevention
- through increased donor awareness of the crucial importance of sustained civil society involvement in conflict prevention
- through the raised profile of conflict prevention practitioners from the grassroots to the international level
- through increased public awareness of the potential of conflict prevention

Planning scheme of the programme



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