

***‘Infrastructures for Peace’*: Latest Developments**

1. What is an Infrastructure for Peace?

An *Infrastructure for Peace* engages all the main stakeholders in the country (from civil society to government level) to adopt a co-operative, problem solving approach to conflict based on negotiation and non-violence. Institutional mechanisms, appropriate to the culture of each country, are put in place to manage this approach at a local, regional and national level. These structures are often based on National, District and Local Peace Councils, comprising highly respected and experienced individuals capable of bridging political divides and transforming conflicts.

2. Meeting at the Ghana High Commission, 15th June 2011

The High Commission of Ghana to the United Kingdom (UK) hosted a meeting on *Infrastructures for Peace* in cooperation with the *Global Peace Building Strategy*¹ of the World Peace Partnership. The morning session was a closed round table meeting chaired by the High Commissioner and attended by the Minister for the Interior of Ghana, the National Coordinator of the Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management of Kenya, Ambassadors for Kyrgyzstan and Guinea-Conakry, the Undersecretary/Executive Director of Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process of the Philippines, delegates from South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Colombia and senior officials of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-BCPR).

The public session in the afternoon was attended by further governments including Costa Rica, as well as leading peace building NGOs (local and international). In both sessions it was agreed:

- to establish a Steering Group of countries that will enhance the process of establishing Infrastructures for Peace internationally in which governments and local groups cooperate, in close collaboration with UN, international and local peacebuilding NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and networks in peacebuilding . Ghana, Kenya, South Sudan, Kyrgyzstan and UNDP-BCPR joined this Group directly.
- to hold two follow up experience-sharing conferences as a form of reaching out to other governments interested in creating Infrastructures for Peace.

The Minister for the Interior of Ghana, H.E. Dr. Benjamin Kunbour, gave a background to the conflict in the northern part of Ghana revolving around chieftaincy, land, religion, and material base of conflict. These challenges over the years resulted in the setting up of a de facto Peace Council in charge of managing the conflict through early warning systems. Even though this Peace Council bought stability in Ghana, the need for building an architecture for peace became apparent. In the Minister’s words: “We believe maintaining peace is our most important challenge.” This led to the development of the *National Peace Council Bill*, adopted by the Parliament of Ghana in March 2011.

The National Coordinator of National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC) of Kenya, Mr. Samuel Maina, described the clan conflicts in the northern parts of Kenya that led to the establishment of local peace and development community councils, noting

¹ The *Global Peace Building Strategy* is composed of seven programmes to systemically deal with violent conflict. One of these programme Objectives is to support ten governments to build national Infrastructures for Peace by 2016.

the lead role played by women (the Wajir model). After the 2007-08 Post Election Violence, the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation process chaired by Kofi Annan led to the establishment of hybrid District Peace Committees in all of Kenya's districts. The Hybrid constitutes of local/grassroots, national, and international peacebuilding networks involved in using both traditional and national methods of conflict prevention following the Wajir model. The *National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management* was then published by the Office of the President in September 2009.

In both Ghana and Kenya, these peace structures have already contributed to the prevention or reduction of violence, especially during the recent Ghana election and Kenya constitutional referendum.

Dr. Chetan Kumar, Senior Conflict Prevention Advisor, and Head of the Conflict Prevention Group with UNDP-BCPR, stressed that conflict prevention works on the ground through the cooperation of governments, CSOs and relevant stakeholders encompassing all National, Regional, and Local levels in specific countries. Dr. Kumar also emphasised that an Infrastructure for Peace is directly proportional to the development of a country, highlighting several success stories:

- in mid 2008-09, the Investment Promotion Council of Ghana announced a **90% increase in investments** due to the National Peace Council role in ensuring peaceful elections in 2008 and a smooth transfer of power through discreet meetings with stakeholders that defused considerable tension;
- Kenya's Chamber of Commerce estimated the cost of the 2007-08 post election violence at **US\$ 3.6 billion** while government /civil society cooperation during the 2010 constitutional referendum cost only **US\$ 6 million**;
- Kyrgyzstan established 7 Oblast Advisory Committees and Local Authority Advisory Committees at the district levels bringing together government and civil society representatives leading to the implementation of the successful constitutional referendum. This in turn led the economy of the country to **grow by 4.5% per annum**.

Dr. Kumar insisted on the importance of these stories, to convince business leaders, development partners and other stakeholders of the relevance of Infrastructures for Peace.

3. Specific Results:

- The setting up of an Infrastructure for Peace could become a **gold standard for inward direct investment** in a country and also a donor-country-conditionality.
- The High Commissioner for Ghana will discuss with the President of Ghana Professor John Atta Mills the potential **of hosting a conference in Accra in early 2012** to bring together governments, local and foreign investors, the UN, INGOs and NGOs, CSOs, and networks involved in peacebuilding and conflict management.
- The government of Kenya will be asked to **host a follow up to the Accra conference**.
- All countries represented expressed enthusiasm for follow up on Infrastructures for Peace through outreach and experience sharing.

The benefits and linkages between development and Infrastructures for Peace were highlighted

throughout the conference. UNDP, in close cooperation with the Department for Political affairs (DPA) of the UN, is currently supporting efforts to establish such infrastructures in approximately thirty countries including Togo, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Tunisia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste.

4. Prospective partnerships

The proposal of the **World Peace Partnership/ Global Peace Building Strategy** for a *multi-stakeholder dialogue on 'Infrastructures for Peace'* was supported by the meeting. This will see the establishment of a Steering Group comprising of both northern and southern governments, in close collaboration with UN, INGOs and NGOs, and local and international peacebuilding and conflict prevention networks.

The process of building 'Infrastructures for Peace' has been enhanced substantively in a number of countries by **the work of the UNDP-BCPR**, and the Joint Programme of BCPR and DPA (Department of Political Affairs of the UN) on '**Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention**'.

Regional organisations and local NGOs have played a key role and made a priceless contribution to the development of Infrastructures for Peace. The need for closer collaboration with them is crucial.

Development partners like the United Kingdom (UK) **Department for International Development** (DFID), the British **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** (FCO), and **the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Conflict Issues** (APPG) have also shown interest in supporting conflict prevention through Infrastructures for Peace. A parliamentary paper is due for discussion in the UK Parliament for a global strategy on conflict prevention overseas.

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