



Remarks made by Joao Boavida, Executive Director, Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (CEPAD)/Interpeace, at the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

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Joao Boavida, Executive Director, Centre of Studies for Peace and Development presenting the results of 'Fast Talk' PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Tickner

Ladies and gentlemen, my presentation today is based on the central observations that emerged from a rapid consultative process carried out by Interpeace, an international peacebuilding organization. The process called FAST TALK used email and phone conversations to collect the views of some **50 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** working on peacebuilding and statebuilding and **two-thirds** of the organizations come from the South.¹

¹ Organizations are from Africa (West Africa network, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Somali Region, Sudan, Gambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Burundi, and DRC); Asia (South East Asia network, Timor-Leste, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines); Latin America (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras); Middle East (Israel and Lebanon) and international Civil Society Organizations supporting peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts and local CSOs around the world. Out of the 145 organizations that were contacted, 49 were able to engage

This consultation process is the beginning of a dialogue with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). We welcome the opportunity to input into this first meeting of the International Dialogue with the report: Background Paper: Voices of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on peacebuilding and statebuilding [henceforth referred to as “the Civil Society Report”].²

We had good discussions yesterday on some aspects of the International Dialogue Synthesis Report as put forward by each of the 7 countries consulted.³

My 10-minute presentation will highlight where the central observations of the two reports (the Civil Society Report and the Synthesis Report) link up or not regarding some key issues.

But before I do so, I would like you to register and remember 3 key points:

1. PROCESS MATTERS (and so does context).

The main focus of the International Dialogue Synthesis Report and the country presentations have been on peacebuilding and statebuilding PRIORITIES, GOALS and WHAT needs to be done. What is equally important however, and that is often neglected is HOW the priorities, the goals and “the what” are translated into reality on the ground. **So it is not only the WHAT that is important but also the HOW (the PROCESS).**

2. Peacebuilding and statebuilding are complementary, but we should not overlook the potential tensions that can arise between the 2 processes.

Statebuilding by nature can be a conflict inducing process. In many post-conflict situations building a State that is the only source of wealth and resources can risk the State being instrumentalized by particular interest groups and can put statebuilding in conflict with peacebuilding.

3. Internal actors need to be drivers of both processes. However, there is a need to move beyond a government- centric approach to include the wider society in both processes to ensure legitimacy and a broader ownership.

As a **recommendation** in moving forward, the International Dialogue may consider: involving Civil Society in the Working Groups of the International Dialogue; having a Working Group focused on the HOW i.e. on PROCESS; and including Civil Society as an official member of the International Dialogue.

² The Civil Society Report is available at : www.oecd.org/pbsbdialogue or www.interpeace.org

³ The International Dialogue Synthesis Report highlights key findings from country consultations in Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor-Leste. It is available at: www.oecd.org/pbsbdialogue

1. Concepts and Definitions

The discussion with a select number of Civil Society Organizations began by looking at the OECD definitions and concepts of peacebuilding and statebuilding.⁴

On concepts and definitions, both Reports **recognize and retain the relevance of the defined goals of peacebuilding and statebuilding and WHAT** needs to be done.

However, the Civil Society Report would like to see **more attention in the definitions paid to conflict prevention, the root causes of conflict and reconciliation.**

The goals and the WHAT are often **described in a positive way**, but the HOW or the Process are often **conflictual** on the ground.

The Synthesis Report is largely focused on Statebuilding and how this is described is very technical with a government-centric approach.

2. Process Matters

Most often peacebuilding and statebuilding strategies **fail not because of their content**, goals or concepts, but **because of deficiencies in their process.**

Therefore, peacebuilding and statebuilding need to be understood as long-term, home-grown and multi-dimensional processes that require the long-term commitment of both national and international actors.

The two processes **do not follow a linear** path as there can be moments **of progress** and moments of **regress** and sometimes simultaneously in different spheres.

The process needs to be inclusive, participatory and representative to ensure broaden ownership of the process.

⁴ These definitions are: "Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development." Source: Conceptual basis for peacebuilding for the UN system adopted by the Secretary- General's Policy Committee in May 2007.

"Statebuilding is an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations. Positive statebuilding processes involve reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state."Source: OECD-DAC, Statebuilding in Situations of Fragility: Initial Findings, August 2008.

3. Context Matters

Although both Reports recognize that **different contexts present different peacebuilding and statebuilding scenarios** and what works for one situation may not for the other, the Civil Society Report stresses **that there is no generic recipes** or “one size fits all”.

Contextual adaptations are necessary and so is the need to understand the deeper historical experiences of state-formation (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences) and the specific nature and dynamics of the conflict in each country.

4. Priorities

The Synthesis Report has generated a list of priorities and recurring peacebuilding and statebuilding goals. While the Civil Society Report acknowledges the importance to have a list of priorities that emerged from the country consultations, the main point is this: **priorities as important as they are should be developed through flexible and responsive strategies that are in tune with domestic realities through wider and bottom-up community consultation at the country level for legitimacy and to broaden local ownership.** Any proposed solutions need to be adapted, contextualized and internalized by internal actors.

5. The interaction between peacebuilding and statebuilding (complementarity and tensions)

Both Reports also recognize that however distinct the two processes are, they are mutually reinforcing processes.

Statebuilding cannot take place in a social vacuum before trust is rebuilt and the social contract between the State and the wider community is renewed. By the same token, peacebuilding cannot take place in a State vacuum. Statebuilding is essential for the sustainability of peacebuilding and vice-versa.

Nevertheless the Civil Society Report acknowledges the potential for tensions to arise between the two processes.

Statebuilding by nature can be a conflict inducing process. **Statebuilding cannot start too early until peacebuilding has ensured some degree of political settlement and trust** between competing groups.

In situations where the **State** was a **party to the conflict, strengthening the State** will not necessarily contribute to peace.

International agendas and timeframes can also **contribute to tension** when **democracy, elections** and **power-sharing** are introduced **too quickly** in a situation where peace remains fragile or where the culture of democracy and participation are understood as “winner takes all”.

Quick fix is useful in humanitarian interventions, but **post-conflict statebuilding and peacebuilding** require **more than a technical quick fix and trade-offs** between short-term and long-term interventions can be quite risky when mismanaged.

6. Internal and External Actors

While both Reports recognize that **internal actors** need to be the **drivers** of the process, the Civil Society Report highlights that this **needs to move beyond the government-centric approach** to include the wider society to ensure an inclusive and participatory process.

However, the Civil Society Report also acknowledges that both **peacebuilding and statebuilding are political undertakings** which depend upon the political will and commitment of national governments.

CSOs are recognized as a key **intermediary** between the State and the population at large. **Although CSOs will not be able to play the intermediary role** if **CSOs are not linked to the base** with a real connection to the population at large.

7. International Dialogue

Most of the CSOs consulted were not aware of the International Dialogue process. They have expressed **interest in continuing** to be **engaged** in the process with a focus on engaging at the regional level through south-south exchanges.

As a **recommendation** in moving, the International Dialogue should consider: involving Civil Society in the Working Groups of the International Dialogue; having a Working Group focused on the HOW i.e. on PROCESS; and including Civil Society as an official member of the International Dialogue.

In conclusion, it is actually the difference in focus that makes the 2 Reports complementary.

THANK YOU

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