Chapter Four: International Alert at the Crossroads - Summary of Findings and Recommendations

International Alert: An evolving mandate in a changing world

International Alert was established as a response to frustrations felt by its founders concerning how internal conflicts, particularly those which target ethnic minorities undermine efforts to protect human rights and deter economic and so development. Governments, it was felt, were not sufficiently concerned with this because they endorsed the principle of state sovereignty; human organisations like Amnesty International, were mainly concerned with individual rather than collectivities; and aid organisations were generally not preoccupied with human rights issues. The early concerns that led to the establishment of IA were, therefore, in large measure, related to massive human rights violations (including 'structural" violations) affecting ethnic minorities and producing serious conflicts in many different parts of the world.

Martin Ennals and the small group of colleagues who were involved in creation of IA gave themselves a difficult mandate. First, the violence which haunted countries as diverse as Sudan, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone, has multi origins inside and outside the countries, reflecting a complex configuration social, economic and political factors. Alongside the majority who seek political solutions to end violence, is often a significant minority (including international actors) who seek to sustain the conflict dynamics in different ways.

Second, it seems to be particularly difficult to manage or resolve conflicts where deep-rooted and sensitive identity-issues are at stake. The tendency on the part of those who dominate the status quo is to deny the essence of the problem and give it more palatable labels, which represent partial truth at best and distortions worst. When culture, religion and other factors are merged into a composite identity which is then projected to define the nation, the crisis becomes a zero-sum contest for the soul of nationhood. Under these circumstances, even diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict tend to shy away from the truth because it points the path to failure. And yet, it cannot be wished away and solutions based on half-truths are not likely to endure.
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Diplomatic or other intercession that seeks quick fixes in addressing such complex issues can only complicate the crisis. There is a tendency to look for aspects of a problem that lend themselves to relatively easy solutions and to postpone more difficult ones. While this is understandable, and perhaps even practical, it is probably the more difficult ones that eventually provoke people to violent confrontation making them determined to kill and risk being killed.

While a complex array of instruments has been developed internationally to manage inter-state conflicts, these have proved themselves extremely limited in the context of internal war. For those working in internal conflicts the obstacles are, therefore, formidable. They are at once analytic (both in terms of seeking an explanation of a particular conflict, and recognising that these explanations situate their actors politically), as well as being ethical, juridical and highly practical.

The main reason for addressing such intricate issues at the outset of this final chapter is related to our concerns pertaining to IA's current profile, priorities and problems. We have

noted in earlier chapters how the mandate and priorities of IA have evolved with changing circumstances. Among NGOs, IA was among the first to become engaged in conflict resolution and has been a leading advocate for claiming that NGOs have a number of advantages which can prove invaluable in conflict situations. As a consequence, IA has given increasing priority to more operational work, including attempts to bring parties in conflict together for negotiations.

There is general agreement that much of the organisation's growth, its high profile and capacity to raise funds and to network has been due to the creativity and the energy of IA's current SG. His skills and numerous contacts have led to innovative initiatives to be undertaken by the organisation. Paradoxically, these very strengths may be considered a source not only of the organisation's successes but also its problems, particularly in terms of management structure and style.

Following internal processes and the BDO review referred to in Chapter Two, some of these problems are now being addressed by IA. They can be conceptualised in different ways. In an internal memo, Special Envoy Ed Garcia writes about the need to "routinise charisma": How does one create structures and processes that are transparent, predictable and participatory without at the same time losing flexibility and the capacity to respond rapidly to fast-changing situations? How does one delegate authority and manage a fast-growing organisation as well as assess performance to ensure the high quality of work expected of an organisation like IA?

The BDO review pursued such questions and a number of recommendations were made mainly regarding management systems and procedures (see Chapter Two). Some good work is currently being done at IA to improve things in this area. This is positive.
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The BDO consultants, however, also argued that IA would have to develop a strategic plan based on clear organisational aims and objectives. If it is to flourish in an increasingly competitive environment, they argue that IA must focus work in which it can demonstrate competitive advantage.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, IA started a "strategic planning process" in *A* 1997, and has so far concentrated on getting management systems "right", and on some of the key issues that would seem to arise from this evaluation. By way of a summary, we will, therefore, pull together some main points as we see them and make a number of recommendations as we move along. At the end of this chapter, we will convey our opinions on the future role and profile of IA.

General Assessment

The picture we have drawn of IA, mainly in Chapter Two and Chapter Three contains both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, we regard main achievements to have been in the following two areas:

(i)   IA has, both through its numerous publications (most of them authored Kumar Rupesinghe and Ed Garcia) as well as its advocacy work, contributed to making conflict prevention and resolution issues an important sphere of action among governments, NGOs and NGOs. In the NGO community, IA has largely inspired the entry of NGOs into this area

of work.

(ii)   Through many of its field programmes (e.g. in Sri Lanka and Burundi) IA has successfully contributed to the development of local peace constituencies which are involved at different levels in creating spaces for dialogue building bridges and improving communication between conflicting parties (e.g. MP group in Colombo, CAP group and women's groups in Burundi Through such work, IA has actively supported those who seek non-vi solutions against powerful advocates of violence.

On the negative side, we would particularly like to make the following general assessment:

It has been noted that IA still lacks clear organisational aims and objectives. This is reflected in many areas of its work. Thus, e.g., while Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka are different countries with different problems and therefore, in need of different interventions, IA's approaches and programmes in those countries are so different that they appear almost to have been made by three Different organisations. For those who cooperate with the organisation or entrust their funds to it (i.e. the donors), the lack of a clear and transparent strategy has made IA seemingly unpredictable in terms of what it is doing and where it is going. This has been particularly highlighted by its involvement in Sierra Leone. Thus, e.g. on
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what grounds, with reference to what part of its mandate, did IA choose to engage in hostage release? How did it come about that IA was seen by many as a competitor to other agencies with clear mandates, either regarding hostage release (ICRC) or conflict management (UN)? These and other questions have justifiably been raised and they reflect, in our view, weaknesses pertaining to IA's current identity, profile, objectives and strategy.

In what follows, we will elaborate on some of the areas which we believe are important for the organisation to confront and articulate clearly when developing a strategic plan for the future. The evaluators have noted that IA has drawn up an agenda that will guide future planning and follow up to this evaluation, very much in line with the recommendations below.

The Importance of Analysis

Many actors who intervene in Africa and elsewhere are motivated by good intentions, but lack reliable and robust analysis. The challenge, therefore, is to engage in thorough analysis of specific conflicts and their causes before any final decision is made to engage in any particular conflict situation.

In the case of Burundi, we have seen the efforts which have gone into a continuous review of broad aspects of the political situation, and how the high quality of IA's analysis of evolving conditions in Burundi has earned wide respect and provides an important basis for IA's work in that country.

As stated in Chapter Three, we feel that the failure of IA to analyse objectively the dynamics of political conflict in Sierra Leone and in particular its own work, adversely affected its work relations and contributed to perceptions that IA was not working as a neutral party, but rather as a partial adviser and advocate of the RUF.

We do of course acknowledge that information is highly politicised in the environments in which IA works, and that there are risks of having written analyses which might be leaked and offend others, thus perhaps undermining IA's own efforts. Our point however is different. First, without a thorough, robust and impartial assessment of the origins, contours and deep causes of any particular conflict, it is impossible to identify key entry points for intervention and to reassess the situation as things develop.

Second, any analysis of a particular conflict must, following IA's new draft guidelines, include considerations relating to (a) the possible impact of intervention, (b) resource requirements, (c) possible risks involved, and (d) the fit between any particular intervention and IA's objectives and values. We take note of and recognise that IA is about to introduce this kind of pre involvement
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appraisal, and would like to underline that it must be done as a continuous internal process, independent on whether or not IA can or would want to publicise its analyses. Thus in the cases of both Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, we have, i.a., questioned IA's judgement regarding the political impact of certain interventions as well as the potential risks for a continued constructive engagement.

Finally, it goes without saying that analysis is equally important when it comes to more thematic areas of IA's work, such as advocacy and training. The impact and relevance of such work is only as good as the contents on which it is based.

Recommendation

Any decision to establish activities in a particular country affected by conflict must be preceded by a thorough and impartial analysis of the conflict and its causes. In addition, such analysis must be related to IA's objectives and core values, an assessment of impact of alternative activities, the risks involved and the resources required, in terms of both staff (and thereby also knowledge) and money. Sufficient funds, clearly allocated, should be earmarked for this purpose.

Ethical Issues and Principles

Generally, IA is faced with two levels of moral decision-making. The first level is strategic and concerns whether or not the organisation should be involved in a given situation. The second level is more tactical and concerns how IA and its staff should operate once they are involved. The challenge for an organisation like IA is to determine the proper limits of its moral responsibility, a "moral bottom line" which has to decide what is an acceptable trade-off between ends and means (see Chapter One). While such trade-offs may be extremely difficult to determine, we find that IA has paid insufficient attention to the problems involved.

Neutrality: Perhaps more than anything else, it was a perceived lack of clarity in terms of the basis on which IA was intervening, which served to adversely affect IA's credibility in Sierra Leone. IA consistently described its role in Sierra Leone as that of a neutral facilitator, yet its approach was more like that of an advisor to the RUF. Significantly, a number of key informants took the view that it would not have been inappropriate for IA to have played the

role of advisor to the RUF, because (a) they were obviously in need of advice, and (b) IA was seen to have potentially important resources which could have been used to act in this role. While it is unclear why IA did not publicly take the route of acting as an adviser to the RUF, what other actors found confusing, not to say harmful, was that IA consistently claimed that it was working as a neutral facilitator, when its actions appeared the opposite. In Burundi, it is our clear impression that IA is seen as being neutral, and that such perceptions provide the organisation with more space within which to operate.
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It is of concern to the evaluators that at present only a draft paper exists on neutrality although the Trustees asked for guidelines to be worked Out in November 1995. The paper does not fully reflect the international experience and literature on the issue nor does it provide working definitions of the terms used.

Dealing with the unlike-minded: IA still describes itself in its literature and letterhead as "the standing international forum on ethnic conflict, genocide and human rights'. It says that it is '... strictly bound to international standards of human rights and humanitarian law

As there are tensions between the role of neutral facilitator and that of advisor, so there are tensions between that of a human rights group and one concerned with conflict resolution. In particular, the conventional strategy of denouncement used by human rights agencies is frequently seen as incompatible with the strategies required for facilitation of negotiations.

The issue of working with the "unlike-minded", be they rebel groups or governments, is not one faced by IA alone: in Sierra Leone, the UN and Commonwealth Secretariat among others, have been engaging with successive regimes with known poor human rights records. In the case of IA, the tension between its human rights and conflict resolution mandates is problematic for the organisation's work in all three countries selected for case study analysis.

At a broad level, it seems unclear how IA interprets its human rights mandate. In Sierra Leone, we are aware that IA staff provided copies of Amnesty International's reports on Sierra Leone and copies of the Geneva Conventions to senior RUF officials and military commands. Such work is extremely important, and needs to be made very explicit when an organisation claims to represent a human rights perspective while simultaneously promoting the RUF as a "just cause". The legitimation of warring partners is a key dilemma. Not that it is itself bad. The question is how far this should extend, on what principles support is given and under what conditions it should be withdrawn.

Any actor in the field of conflict resolution in Burundi is faced with the same kind of difficulties. Many people in public life are in one way or another identified with the continued internal strife, some of them, being themselves instigators of extreme violence and killings. At the same time, they must also be part of any solution. At the moment, clear ethical guidelines do not exist regarding how IA staff should act in such situations.

Again, the main reason for bringing up such issues is not that we believe there are easy answers. Rather what has been seen as a lack of ethical framework at IA has not only (a) exposed the organisation to criticism, but also (b) constrained its operational capacity.
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Recommendations

IA should produce a code of conduct, including ethical guideline engagement in conflict situations. This should include a policy outline understanding of the principle of neutrality. It is advisable that IA consult with reputable international experts as part of this process.

IA should clarify its mandate on human rights, and in particular articulate the contradictions and complementarities between human rights and conflict resolution work.

Relations with International Organisations and other Actors

According to its latest "mission and values" statement (July 1997), IA will work to achieve its goals, i.a., by facilitating peace processes through collaboration others, by supporting local efforts and encouraging peace coalitions an track approaches (p.3.)

While in Burundi, IA has entered an active cooperation with the UN and other partners, including local organisations, the organisation failed to cooperate effectively with most international organisations and governments in Sierra Leone. In Sri Lanka, particularly following the largely negative press coverage activities there, there are worries that a close association with IA may be considered a possible liability.

In Sierra Leone. and given that IA set itself the objective of working closely with international and other bodies, it is alarming to find at times that the organisation was clearly seen by others as actively working against the spirit of these objectives, and that this contributed to the breakdown of trust between other bodies crucial for its work. As a strong advocate of multitrack diplomacy IA was seen to break with its own principles.

Based on our findings, IA was often not successful in achieving its objective partnership and coalition building. Admittedly, some failures are due to lack of funding which, e.g., has made it impossible to follow up on initiatives, meetings and conferences thereby disappointing potential partners who thought they about to be included in a major activity. Given the increasing competition for donor funds in the broad area of conflict resolution, we cannot exclude that others might also be in the wrong, making steady and long-term cooperation particularly difficult. However, our message is simple:

Recommendation

For a small NGO, it is important to act as a catalyst, facilitator and/or fund raiser in the implementation of well defined programmes of peace-building rather than
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keep projects for itself. Not only does multi-track diplomacy, for which IA has been a major advocate, require such cooperation, but peace building more generally is best done in partnerships - both local and international. IA's *role*, however, in such partnerships will depend on how it sees itself: as an *advocate* for effective conflict management by warring parties and the international conflict management system, or as a *participant* in the conflict management process. More on this below.

Management and Organisational Issues

Recommendations
In Chapter Two we have reviewed a limited number of issues related to the running of the

organisation. We take note of and recognise some of the good efforts being done to address weaknesses as identified in the BDO review. There are still a number of remaining issues which need to be tackled. We refer to our various recommendations in Chapter Two. We would, however, particularly like to emphasise the following points:

(i)   At present, the lack of clarity regarding priorities (geographical focus vs. dispersal of resources, thematic concentration areas, a.o.) means that "it is difficult for stakeholders to determine the "balance of intent" which the organisation is seeking to achieve" (BDO review p.17). This may impair the organisation's ability to attract funding and maximise the benefit derived from its scarce resources.

(ii)   A greater clarity of objectives will also improve internal communication and ensure that IA only implements those projects which will support the strategic objectives of the organisation. This ought to ensure a better follow-up of activities which have been started, which is currently a problem according to IA's own impact analysis.

(iii)   Given the fact that IA operates in an area where some of its activities are likely to become controversial and subject to allegations, like we have seen it in the case of Sierra Leone in particular, it is important that IA has a management style characterised by openness and a willingness to be self-critical if it is to defend its interests. In the conflict resolution area a preoccupation with being recognised and maintaining high profile, although understandable and legitimate to an extent, may undermine the capacity to operate in optimal ways.

(iv)   In order for IA to build up long-term programmes in partnership with other organisations, long-term commitments are important. Short-term programmes are unlikely to deliver sustainable results. It is therefore important that IA's
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fund-raising department continues its efforts to (a) broaden the funding base and (b) secure sufficient stability in terms of funding. Following the review it is important that IA engages with donors so as to reach a common understanding on its funding requirements in relation to its strategic plan objectives, including the issue of core vs. project/programme funding.

Training and Advocacy

Recommendations

Training. It is recommended (i) that IA should not involve itself in conflict resolution training on any large scale and (ii) that it be done in close cooperation with local and other partners. While training can be important in a peace building process, it should be part of a medium - or long-term strategy rather than activity of its own, i.e., be integrated into other, complementary programmes of IA. It should also be exclusively planned for each particular conflict in question and tailor-made to address the particular situation in a given country. This is in line with current thinking at IA's Resource Development and Training Department

Advocacy. There is currently less need for generic advocacy to promote policy changes regarding preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention an international organisations and Western governments. IA should concentrate working with targets in the development and operationalisation of prevention policies rather than raising the issues in general. In

particular, there would to be a need for advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice which are at the core of most internal conflicts in the world. Advocacy projects should be carefully planned and IA should seek in-depth and sustained cooperation with other institutions whenever this is possible.

NGOs and Conflict Management - the Future Directions of IA

As indicated above, there is concern at the moment with the current profile both among donors, in the aid community and among trustees. With its very growth a few years ago, the organisation developed into "many things". recently been engaged in a broad range of activities, including mediation, warning, establishing dialogues between warring parties, advocacy, training working with local NGOs, peace building programmes at the grassroot level so on.

In all these areas, there are many other organisations working, often in the countries and often with basically the same approaches and methodologies does IA differentiate itself from its competitors? In contexts where cooperation between different actors on different levels is required, what is the value added by IA's input?
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IA has recently started to raise such questions, i.a., in a submission to its Board of Trustees (IA's Mission and Values) on 26 July 1997. In this paper, which will be revised, it is proposed that IA's main "mission" is "to work to resolve violent conflicts within countries and regions and to promote the prevention of conflict". An attempt is also made to summarise IA's comparative advantage, basically referring to (a) its 12 years of accumulated experience, (b) IA being a "knowledge based" organisation, and (c) being strategically located with an outreach to both grass roots movements and political elites. This position enables IA to be a catalyst in initiating new actions, in mobilising contacts and providing insights into conflict situations. IA will therefore be a broker, and a facilitator, in bringing disparate groups together.

The paper goes on to spell out how IA will work to achieve its goals; by (i) creating spaces for dialogue; (ii) facilitating peace processes; (iii) building capacities and supporting local efforts; (iv) advocating, alerting, informing and catalysing early action and policy information; and (v) encouraging peace coalitions and multi-track approaches.

This is well as far as it goes. However, as argued throughout this report, we feel strongly that IA must establish greater clarity regarding the niche it intends to occupy in the broad area of conflict resolution. In that context, we would particularly like to make the following points:

a) If we go back to the discussion briefly introduced in Chapter One, one of the lessons we can learn from the humanitarian tragedies of Somalia, Rwanda and the Balkans is that long-term structural causes of conflict are not easily amenable to manipulation. While the seductiveness of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention seems obvious, the urge to take preventive action - to do something, anything - can lead to poorly thought out policies that lack strategic sense. To the extent that preventive diplomacy or conflict prevention are tools for conflict suppression, and to the extent they may be effective (which is often not the case), they may also have the effect of freezing a disadvantageous status quo and stifling political change. Preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention do not lessen difficult choices for leaders, nor do they necessarily lessen costs. For either of them to succeed, policy-makers

must spell out their interests, create priorities among cases and balance goals with resources. For preventive diplomacy to contribute to conflict resolution, therefore, its adherents must answer the question that has riddled peace studies and international relations alike for centuries: how to create conditions for peaceful political change.

(b)   In most cases, successful intervention would clearly seem to depend on the implementation of a comprehensive, multi-faceted process. A comprehensive approach often implies that more rather than less time will be needed -something that may frustrate "quick-fix" practitioners. In the absence of such
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a process, interventions are likely to be isolated, haphazard, oriented to' crisis-solving and mostly counter-productive.

Solutions are likely to be temporary unless they are based on all-inclusive policies that accommodate the aspirations and fears of all or most citizens of a country. Solutions that restore the rights of minorities or majorities (like in South Africa) previously excluded should not result in new groups being formed that in turn feel excluded. This will merely sow the seeds of future conflict and instability.

Political solutions that involve the active participation of civil society are likely to be more durable than agreements made between political elites only. Not only can such participation ensure that agreements have support of the broader population, it can also initiate options which political constraints prevent party-political leaders from introducing.

(c)   Conflict resolution is a complex business with very high stakes for all those involved, but particularly for those living in the conflict-affected country. At present the comparative advantages of government-funded NGOs in these environments are unclear. We do believe that many NGOs bring several special qualities to peace building, especially through their particular insights into different cultures, their relationships with local partners, and their understanding of the links between crisis management and long-term development. Developing an infrastructure that sustains peace building within a given conflict is of paramount importance. In looking at a situation of long-term conflict and war, agencies from outside the country, including NGOs, should recognise that there are many levels of activity, as well many actors and functions necessary for peace building. Most peace operations tend to rely on a top-down approach, in which elites make decisions that are supposed to be implemented throughout the rest of country. In many cases, however, relying solely on a top-down approach to peace building results in failure.

As a result of their focus on the middle and grassroots levels of societies in crisis, NGOs tend to be particularly effective at working with both country's mid-level officials and local populations. Because of the familiarity with the country and its decision makers, NGO representatives often have a keen understanding of the realities on the ground, allowing them to reach across their counterparts from other agencies into a web of indigenous officials and resources in order to build and maintain sustainable infrastructure that has a better chance of ameliorating not just the manifestations, but also the causes of conflict.
(End p 74)
(d)   We are of course also aware that individual mediators and NGOs have helped or even taken the lead regarding negotiations in some areas - for example, the Carter Centre in Haiti and the Comunita di Saint Egidio in Mozambique. We do believe that NGOs can perform a

number of potentially constructive roles in crisis situations, including intercession/good offices work and mediation to prevent violence. However, the Sierra Leonean case suggests that there will often be very limited space within which an NGO can operate at the highest level of political negotiations. IA maintains that in the Sierra Leonean case it has encountered powerful interests who have actively sought to undermine its work, and that it has evidence of this. What is at issue is not the truth or otherwise of these claims, but rather that such interests will almost invariably exist in such contexts. While governmental and inter-governmental organisations can counter these pressures by virtue of their legal status, NGOs are necessarily extremely vulnerable. Endeavours such as those by IA in Sierra Leone entail high risks, tend to become controversial and are also particularly demanding in terms of staff requirements, knowledge and administrative support. Generally, NGOs may not be able to sustain such efforts, particularly if they are not done in very close and transparent partnerships with other organisations, like the UN, other IGOs or governments. They also need to be widely accepted, have the necessary respect and support, and be seen to have very special, general and country-specific expertise and competence to offer. Also, the opportunity for playing such roles often arises by chance. We do not believe, therefore, that an NGO like IA should define mediation as its particular niche. Nor do we believe that NGOs alone can compensate for the failure of governmental and inter-governmental bodies to effectively confront the problem of internal war. Rather, the priority should be in improving the effectiveness and accountability of public diplomacy. The primary role of NGOs in these environments is more likely to be as scrutineers of these public processes and as advocates to increase their effectiveness rather than as participants in them.

Recommendations

Based on such considerations, we feel that IA should give priority to the following areas:

(a)   IA should strive to *create spaces for dialogue*, not primarily by facilitating negotiations but by helping to develop local peace constituencies at different levels (f.ex. MP project in Sri Lanka, CAP project and grassroot organisations in Burundi). In this area, IA should help empower such constituencies through the transfer of skills, knowledge and resources.
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(b)   IA should be engaged in *advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice*, i.e. flag its solidarity and human rights profile as part of its input into long-term processes for conflict management and resolution. In this work, projects and target groups should be carefully selected and IA should seek sustained and in-depth cooperation with other institutions whenever possible.

(c)   We would encourage *efforts towards geographic concentration*. Given that the origins and contours of intra-state conflict differ substantially from country to country, due to historical, cultural, political and regional factors, interventions in any country requires considerable competence. In this sense IA is not, at the moment, a "knowledge-based" organisation to the extent would wish to see it (see above). It makes sense, in our view, to concentrate efforts on a limited number of countries, within only a few sub-regions to build competence as well as strong, long-term partnership in the respective areas of work.
Issues for Donors

At present the total amount of official development assistance which is being allocated to conflict prevention and resolution work of the type practised by IA is unclear. However, there

appears to be an expansion in the funding available for such work with an increasing number of donors creating specialist budget and structures for this type of work.

Funding NGOs to work in these complex environments raises questions for donors who support them in terms of how such grants are to be managed. While this type of activity is typically funded from aid budgets, the content of these interventions lies very much in the domain of ministries of foreign affairs. While it was outside the remit of the evaluation to specifically review the mechanisms used by the donors funding this study in terms of the way in which information is shared and used across departments in this sphere, clearly the issue of coherence between aid and foreign policy domains is of significant importance in order ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to appraise, monitor and evaluate this type of programme. The issue of coherence raises a further question for donors regarding whether their support for such interventions is likely to conditional upon the NGOs they support necessarily following strategies which are consistent with the foreign policy of donor states. Either way there are risks. If NGOs act in a manner which conflicts with the foreign policy position of the funding state this can be embarrassing politically. However, demanding that NGOs toe a donor's foreign policy line is also not necessarily a desirable precedent to be setting. Clearly, donor involvement in this type of programme also raises. significant practical and ethical dilemmas which are worthy of further analysis and exchange of experience between different agencies.
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An additional set of issues confronts donors in terms of the criteria they should use to appraise the appropriateness of different project proposals, and to monitor and evaluate their performance. Unlike other aspects of development cooperation where consensus has been developing over several decades regarding what constitutes good practice, at present donors lack similar understanding of the conflict resolution sphere. Defining such good practice in relation to NGO-led conflict resolution work would need to be done as part of comprehensive review of the comparative advantages of multilateral, bilateral and NGO conflict resolution efforts.

In March 1997 the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD published the report of the Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development. This highlighted the important and growing role of official development assistance in conflict prevention and resolution. In light of the growing international interest in funding NGO projects specifically aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, and the complex political and administrative issues this raises for bilateral donors. it is proposed that Member States should encourage the DAC Secretariat to research and draft guidelines for Members in this area.

Further, in this context it is recommended that donors should commission system-wide evaluations of the international conflict resolution system, similar to that supported by the Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Genocide and Conflict in Rwanda. By reviewing the performance of different actors and parties to a particular conflict, greater accountability and transparency could be achieved in the sphere of conflict management. Further, it would help to define more clearly the comparative advantages of NGOs working in this sphere.
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