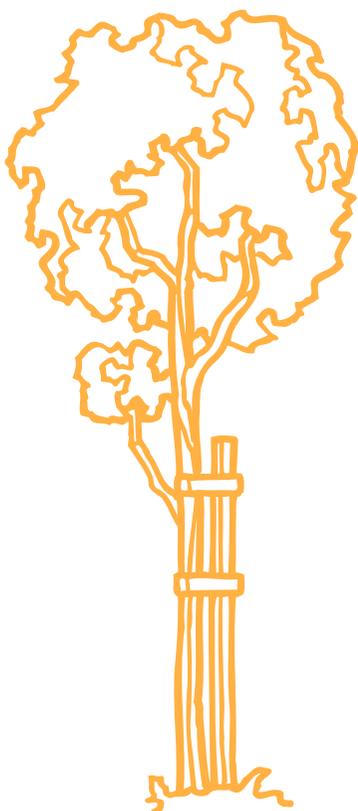


Preventing Violent Conflict

– Swedish Policy for the 21st Century

Government Communication 2000/01:2



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden

Preventing Violent Conflict

– *Swedish Policy for the 21st Century*

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Brief summary of the Communication

In this Communication the Government presents an account of Swedish and international efforts to promote the prevention of armed conflicts. It starts with a presentation of the Government's main tasks and priorities for Sweden's conflict prevention efforts. A description of an integrated approach to conflict prevention is followed by a presentation of the instruments that can be used for preventive purposes. The Communication accounts for developments in the international arena and the measures taken by Sweden to prevent violent conflicts. Several examples of successful preventive operations are presented, followed by a discussion of experiences, challenges and opportunities. The Communication ends with a review of the Government's priorities for the immediate future.

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1 Preventing violent conflict

Contributing to the prevention and control of armed conflicts has for many years been an important feature of Sweden's foreign and security policy. Participation in UN forces and other peace-support units, as well as international mediation and negotiation missions, have been a central element of Sweden's policy of solidarity and peace. However, our efforts like the efforts of the broader international community – have focused on military and, to some extent, civilian crisis management. Preventing violent conflict at an early stage has never been a priority for the international community, despite recognition of the fact that it is better to prevent a conflict than to be forced to try to control it and, when that fails, to deal with the consequences.

In recent years, however, the preconditions for conflict prevention have changed. Potential violent conflicts are no longer, as used to be the case, seen in the perspective of the cold war and the subsequent major risks of escalation and proliferation. Consequently, the international community can now to a larger extent seek to prevent armed conflicts by concentrating more on the unique character of each conflict and less on relations between great powers. On the other hand, the diminished risk of a major conflict may also reduce the incentives for conflict prevention.

International attention has focused increasingly on the importance of preventing violent conflicts. The human and material costs of armed conflicts are more apparent today when the majority of conflicts are internal or at least lack a global dimension. The fact that they often rapidly attract media attention around the world reinforces this trend. At the same time, the focus of politics and international law has shifted from national security and sovereignty to human security, human rights and democracy. Preventing conflict thus means addressing factors of a more multifaceted character than the ones causing international conflict. Poverty and glaring prosperity gaps, ethnic and religious persecution and political oppression are now more common causes of conflicts than before.

The international community in a broad sense – states, international and non-governmental organisations, and other actors – must adopt a conflict prevention approach or what may be called a conflict prevention culture.

Only then will it be possible to prioritise conflict prevention, in particular in the form of long-term measures in situations where the risk of violence is not acute. It is also of utmost importance to establish a system for detecting early warning signals of potential armed conflicts of various kinds and informing the international community.

Conflict prevention is a priority area in Sweden's foreign policy, and a conflict prevention approach must be integrated into Sweden's international actions. This is a natural development of Sweden's traditional policy of promoting peace and solidarity, one expression of which is our commitment to development co-operation. Sweden can and should argue forcefully and constructively for the gradual integration of conflict prevention into the policies of international organisations and into intergovernmental co-operation. Our strong commitment to the UN and our active contribution to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy offer special opportunities in this connection.

The purpose of this Communication is to inform the Swedish Parliament about the Government's implementation of the Swedish action programme *Preventing Violent Conflict* (Ministry Publication Series 1999:24). The Government also describes the main long-term tasks and its priorities for the immediate future, and the Communication provides a factual basis for intensified Swedish support to the prevention of violent conflicts.

2 Main tasks and priorities for Sweden's conflict prevention efforts

Failure to prevent outbreaks of violence, war and genocide, for example in Rwanda and East Timor, has led to enormous losses of human lives, lifelong physical and mental injuries both to the victims and the perpetrators, and devastated social structures and networks. The economic costs in the countries concerned in terms of the loss of social capital, the destruction of material assets and economic stagnation are of the order of tens of billions of dollars. In addition, there are the costs of diplomatic crisis management, civilian and military peace operations, refugees and reconstruction. The annual costs to the international community of military and civilian measures in former Yugoslavia alone are estimated at not less than USD 7 billion. The cost to the international community of managing the peace is considerably lower than carrying the cost of war and violence.

We in Sweden share the responsibility for global peace and stability together with the governments and citizens of other countries. By intensifying our efforts in the UN and its specialised agencies, the international financial institutions and other multilateral co-operation organisations we can, through forward planning and early action, increase the chances of averting the threat of imminent conflicts and establishing peaceful conflict management processes instead. As a member of the EU we have unique opportunities for contributing to the effectiveness of the strategies and practical implementation of conflict prevention which involves all Member States. By acting in the EU we can also strengthen the UN and the international multilateral framework and take early preventive action in response to signs of potential violence and war. Violations of human rights are an obvious warning signal. Within the framework of support for democratisation and international co-operation there are long-term instruments that can be applied at an early stage to bring about a peaceful development.

There are many examples of situations where we have failed to prevent conflicts, and where the international community found it necessary to engage in crisis management, whether military or non-military. There are also

examples of cases where international action has failed to result in concrete and effective measures. Usually, international action has only been taken in response to armed conflict, in the form of efforts aiming at reconciliation and reconstruction. There are, however, also examples of successful conflict prevention, often as a result of diplomatic action, economic development programmes and support for measures to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. It cannot be proved conclusively that such measures led to a peaceful development. Nevertheless, there is evidence that threatening situations have given way to constructive co-operation and political and military tensions have been resolved. Examples of such operations in Central and South Eastern Europe, the Baltic states and Central America are given in a later chapter.

The focus of traditional security policy has shifted in the last decade. While the focus used to be on threats to military security, it has gradually been recognised that international security and regional stability must also be based on respect for human rights and democratic governance. Economic and social development promoted by international trade and investment, measures to promote gender equality, combat environmental degradation and combat crime and corruption are also key factors. This extended concept of security is part and parcel of a holistic approach, which focuses on the security of both the state and the individual. Human security is a precondition for the social stability that is crucial to regional and international peace and security. Effective conflict prevention must be based on a holistic approach in which economic and social development, the establishment of democratic institutions and governance, as well as measures to ensure security and judicial and military measures, are integral parts of a whole. Gender equality should be taken into account in connection with all such measures.

In many cases, the key elements of Sweden's foreign policy and international co-operation already have a direct or indirect preventive effect. The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy has a similar effect. Promoting the development of democracy, strengthening respect for international law and the rights of minorities and women, and creating the conditions for regional integration and economic co-operation, can help both to reduce structural risk factors and address the direct factors that trigger conflicts. The challenge today is to integrate the conflict prevention aspect into existing activities in a more purposeful manner and to raise awareness of the preventive effect of various measures. In many respects, strengthening Sweden's conflict preven-

tion policy is a question of using existing instruments for partly new and specifically preventive purposes.

The Government already allocates substantial resources for measures to prevent violent conflict. In 2000, almost USD10 million was allocated for conflict prevention out of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' budget. In 1999, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) allocated a total of appr. USD19 million for dialogue and security-promoting activities with a specifically preventive dimension. These can be regarded as indicative allocations for activities in this field in coming years. It is more difficult to make an accurate assessment of the long term conflict prevention measures. Much of our development co-operation has a distinct conflict prevention profile. By further strengthening the conflict prevention dimension of development co-operation, the Government is contributing to even more appropriate use of these funds.

Five important tasks can be identified for Sweden's long-term efforts to prevent violent conflicts.

Main tasks for Sweden's long-term conflict prevention efforts

- Strengthening respect for human rights and Sweden's capacity in its foreign policy, in the EU and in international organisations to respond earlier and more effectively to indications of human rights violations, which are often the first warning signal of imminent violent conflict.
- Enhancing the capacity of Sweden, the EU and the international community, by strengthening democracy and the principles of the rule of law, to create peaceful processes for managing conflicts and preventing the use of arms.
- Strengthening our contribution to equitable global economic and social development by identifying and combating structural risk factors, such as widening prosperity gaps, poverty, inequality and an uneven distribution of economic resources.
- Strengthening international economic co-operation, inter alia, in the form of trade and investment, in order to contribute to increased integration and mutual dependence.
- Advocating regional and subregional integration as a way of building common security.

Within the framework of these main tasks there are several priorities for future practical activities designed to prevent violent conflicts. Twenty of these priorities are mentioned here. There is a more detailed presentation of these and other priorities in chapter 10.

The Government's priorities for the near future

- To further integrate the conflict prevention dimension into the planning and delivery of Sweden's development co-operation. The cost to the international community of managing peace is considerably lower than carrying the cost of war and violence.
- To contribute actively to establishing a more explicit gender equality perspective in conflict prevention, in particular by taking gender equality issues into account in analysing measures and in dialogues with our partners.
- To strengthen the Government's co-operation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as a means of improving conflict prevention efforts.
- To strengthen the UN's conflict prevention capacity by helping to establish a group of friends of the Secretary-General, promote the establishment of a permanent fact-finding mechanism and contribute to the UN Trust Fund for Preventive Action.
- To support the introduction, in the EU, the UN, the OSCE and other international organisations, of regular reviews of potential risks of violent conflict and reports on appropriate preventive measures.
- To promote co-operation between the EU, the UN and the OSCE through regular consultations and exchanges of information and knowledge.
- To stimulate the development of a conflict prevention policy in the EU and urge that a conflict prevention programme be presented in the EU-summit in Göteborg in June 2001.
- To cooperate with the European Commission in efforts to intensify the EU's support for democracy and election monitoring as a preventive instrument.

- To advocate the establishment within the framework of a Stability Pact of a regional reconciliation institute in the Balkans as a contribution to stable peace and reconstruction in the region.
- To promote the Alexandria Institute as a meeting-place for co-operation and understanding between different cultures.
- To promote long-term building of African capacity for conflict prevention in co-operation with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional co-operation organisations for Southern and West Africa (the Southern African Development Community – SADC – and the Economic Community of West African States – ECOWAS) and the Horn of Africa (the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development – IGAD).
- To combat more effectively the economic interests of groups and individuals in connection with violent conflicts, such as the illicit trade in small arms, gold and diamonds, inter alia, by helping to strengthen international co-operation on stricter control of unpolished diamonds.
- To promote further disarmament and non-proliferation, inter alia by supporting a higher EU profile, e.g. when it comes to a continued elaboration of joint actions and common positions.
- To promote continued international co-operation in order to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation and destabilising accumulations of small arms, in particular at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, by supporting various regional and national projects such as the ECOWAS Moratorium and continued support for the work of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in this area.
- To promote the continued development of confidence-building measures, inter alia in the form of open reporting on military capabilities and exchanges of personnel in connection with military training.
- To improve the sanctions instrument in order , inter alia, to ensure improved compliance and precision and to prevent adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population.
- To make greater prosperity in the long term appear more attractive than the transient gains achieved by the use of violence and to develop the potential of trade and investment as instruments of conflict prevention, inter alia by collaborating with the business community.

- To elaborate a strategy for bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent violent conflicts being triggered by water scarcity.
- To strengthen co-operation with the research community by establishing a forum for regular meetings between scientists and policy-makers.
- To develop a training course for coordinated action in Swedish and international conflict prevention operations involving various participants.

3 Preventing violent conflict: a route towards achieving foreign policy objectives

To an increasing extent, the objectives of Sweden's foreign policy are formulated in terms of the conditions of the individual person. The general goal is to protect the right of the individual, regardless of sex, race, religion or nationality, to life, health and the freedom to develop in accordance with his or her individual personality. Greater respect for human rights is a key aspect of Swedish policy and flagrant violations of fundamental rights and freedoms are no longer considered the internal affairs of states. Today's broad security concept focuses on the individual, and the promotion of human security is a key objective. Human security has to do with the individual person's need for and right to physical security and health, access to the material necessities of life, the right to adequate social and economic conditions and, not least, respect for his or her privacy and freedom.

To achieve this, Sweden's foreign policy aims to contribute, at the international level, to peace and security and to integration, co-operation and sustainable and gender-equal political, economic and ecological development. At the regional and subregional level, integration and co-operation between neighbouring countries is an increasingly successful way of establishing a stable peace that is conducive to the development of democracy and economic growth. The strengthening of a democratic system and a democratic culture are, together with respect for human rights and opportunities for social and economic development for both women and men, primary objectives at the national level.

Sweden has, on its own and together with others, successfully pursued a policy that is consistent with these general objectives, in particular by promoting democratic reforms, supporting women's rights, strengthening the protection of the rights of minorities, supporting disarmament and gender-equal and sustainable ecological, social and economic development based on

recognition of the various potentials and experiences of women and men. Sweden has a long tradition of conflict management and other peace-support measures, both at the bilateral level and within the framework of various international and regional organisations.

The challenge for Sweden and the international community as a whole is to shift the focus from belated management of large-scale armed conflicts to attempts to prevent the escalation of antagonisms into violence. The appalling events in places like Rwanda, Chechnya and East Timor underscore the need to improve the methods and strategies used to promote the security of individuals and international peace.

Preventing violent conflict is a way of saving lives and public resources. Identifying and addressing the underlying risk factors and causes of conflict, mitigating the effects of the conflicts that do break out, and preventing violence, promotes the security and development of the individual. Conflict prevention is a complementary, resource-efficient and cooperative strategy for achieving the fundamental objectives of Sweden's foreign policy. The fact that we emphasise the importance of early conflict prevention does not mean that we do not also need to be well-prepared to take measures in cases where a situation nevertheless escalates into an armed confrontation.

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which was inspired by the same ideas as those on which the European Union is based, illustrates the importance of relating conflict prevention measures to overall objectives. In order to prevent new outbreaks of armed conflict, the Stability Pact aims to integrate the region into the structures of European co-operation, strengthen regional co-operation and contribute to political and economic reforms.

3.1 What is conflict prevention?

Conflicts are a natural and inevitable part of normal political life in all societies, including democracies, and they often drive progress. The challenge for conflict prevention is to ensure that conflicts are managed in such a way as to avoid violence and human suffering. Preventing violent conflict also creates opportunities for using political and economic resources for the development of society and institution-building instead of war or other destructive activities. In other words, the purpose of conflict prevention is to canalise or transform conflicts, i.e. contradictions within a society, in a constructive manner by

peaceful procedures and structures, and make sure that they do not lead to armed violence. Democracy is the best system we know of for the peaceful management of conflicts.

Conflict prevention is a central and integrated part of Sweden's efforts to promote peace and security. Prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict management, are three methods of managing conflict; a generic term for all these methods is thus conflict management. Successful conflict prevention means effective conflict management that saves both human and material assets. Most conflict prevention measures that are taken today are, however, large-scale and costly civil and military crisis management operations that are undertaken after the outbreak of an armed conflict. Post-conflict management, i.e. the action taken after the termination of acts of violence on a large scale, is just as resource-consuming. These measures may involve a wide range of activities, such as support for social, institutional and economic reconstruction, the stabilising presence of military troops or measures designed to achieve political reconciliation. Taking such measures is necessary to prevent armed conflicts breaking out again. Countries that have recently been involved in violent conflict run a great risk of relapse. At present, such cases account for more than half of all ongoing armed conflicts.

To some extent, these three phases of conflict management may overlap, and in practice it is not always possible or desirable to make a clear-cut distinction between them. Attempts at mediation and fact-finding missions that are set up before the outbreak of an armed conflict may, for example, have a role during a subsequent war, and civilian police who have acted during the acute phase of an armed conflict are often needed even more when the acute phase is over. In the same way, measures to build up a functioning democratic system and economic infrastructure after the conclusion of a peace agreement help to prevent the resurgence of new conflicts.

Conflict management thus includes a wide range of potential measures designed to deal with problems of a military, humanitarian, socio-economic and political and institutional nature in various stages of a conflict. In order to promote integrated action and obtain a clear picture of what the prevention of violent conflict involves, it is important to understand the need for all these different measures. The term 'conflict prevention' must also be clearly defined in order to be manageable in an operational context.

In the Swedish Action Plan, conflict prevention is defined as measures which:

- are taken before a conflict or dispute escalates into acts of violence,
- are taken in order to prevent an ongoing violent conflict from spreading to other areas,
- prevent the resurgence of violence after the parties have reached a peace agreement, an armistice etc.

For the measures that are taken to be defined as conflict prevention in the operational sense, they must be clearly linked to a concrete risk situation. Otherwise they go beyond the bounds of conflict prevention as defined in this Communication.

4 An integrated approach

The focus of traditional security policy has shifted in the last decade. While the focus used to be on threats to military security, it has gradually been recognised that international security and regional stability must also be based on democratic governance, respect for human rights, gender equality, economic and social development, and the strengthening of international co-operation, in particular through trade and investment, and measures to combat crime and environmental degradation. Human security is a precondition for social stability, which in turn promotes regional and international peace and security. Effective and appropriate prevention can only be achieved if all these areas are integrated and a combination of economic, political, legal and military instruments is applied.

An integrated approach to the prevention of violent conflicts occupies a central place in the Government's policy. Coordinating and combining instruments from different policy areas is only possible through collaboration within and between ministries and public authorities, research institutions, other non-governmental organisations and the business community. This multidisciplinary method strengthens the capacity for pursuing conflict prevention and may encourage similar methods in the international arena.

4.1 Development co-operation

Sweden's integrated development co-operation fulfils a key preventive function by combating poverty and strengthening important societal functions. This addresses the root causes of destabilisation and armed conflict. Measures designed to promote social and economic development, strengthen a democratic culture and the respect for human rights, support political institutions and the establishment of an efficient central government administration and machinery of justice, help to highlight and combat many of the structural factors that can cause armed conflicts.

In the context of development co-operation, gender equality is both an end in itself and a means of delivering more effective co-operation. The grow-

ing feminisation of poverty, i.e. the fact that those who suffer most from poverty are increasingly women, combined with stereotype ideas about the different roles of women and men, constitutes a real obstacle to sustainable social development. The situation of women and girls is therefore a structural social problem which, in the long run, exacerbates poverty and prosperity gaps.

Through their presence in unstable areas, development co-operation organisations can perform an important function by drawing attention to violations of human rights. Humanitarian actors can also fulfil a role as neutral intermediaries in a dialogue between potential parties to a conflict, a role that must not, however, jeopardise the impartiality that is a prerequisite for humanitarian action.

Effective development co-operation contributes to a favourable evolution of peace and security, but to qualify as conflict prevention, there must be a specific link between such co-operation and a nascent conflict situation. The purpose of the measures must be to help to reduce the risk of an outbreak of armed conflict. The measures may be both structural and direct. Support for a multi-annual project, e.g. for the purpose of increasing the water supply or empowering women, or targeted aid, e.g. to an independent radio channel, can both have preventive effects and reduce the risk of a situation developing into an armed confrontation. Measures aimed at preventing refugee flows or facilitating the reintegration of refugees also fulfil an important conflict prevention function.

Development co-operation must be supported by a profound understanding of local power structures and the public distribution of resources. Otherwise there is a risk that it will inadvertently deepen or increase the risk of conflict. Rapid social or economic development can also cause instability in the short term. It is therefore important to integrate the preventive dimension into long-term development co-operation that is not directly related to a potential conflict situation.

4.2 International law

Today, when armed conflicts are often intra-national, the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states must to an increasing extent be weighed against universal fundamental human rights principles and, in particular, the protection of civilians in violent conflicts.

Like many other countries, Sweden maintains that respect for national sovereignty must not be an obstacle to action in intra-national conflicts which is necessary in order to inhibit humanitarian disasters and flagrant violations of human rights. Earlier action by the international community aimed at averting threats to human security in a certain state and preventing conflict is, however, sometimes also viewed as an infringement of a state's sovereignty. But sovereignty is not absolute. This does not necessarily mean that states must accept any initiatives from the outside, but it does mean that states must accept greater external interest in their internal situation. Taking early co-operative action to prevent violent conflict can help to avoid the need for intervention at a later stage. This central aspect of conflict prevention highlights the need for the external parties involved to behave in an impartial manner.

International law has a marked conflict prevention dimension. Armed conflicts are often preceded, or even directly caused, by flagrant violations of the population's rights. Respect for the rules laid down in international human rights law is therefore an important factor in preventing violent conflict. International co-operation today is largely concerned with promoting the adoption of and compliance with international norms. The mere fact of membership of an international organisation such as the Council of Europe, which requires its members to respect and observe human rights, may have a preventive effect. A country's commitment to peaceful dispute settlement, for example by arbitration or through the International Court of Justice, may also have a preventive effect. Several potential boundary disputes, such as that between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1986 and between Chad and Libya in 1994, were solved by such international legal mechanisms. The political price for using violence is much higher if a country has undertaken to accept dispute settlement proceedings, and a ruling by a court can help to save face.

Respect for humanitarian law in armed conflicts helps to protect civilians and facilitates humanitarian actions, something which may prevent the conflict from spreading to other areas and escalating further. Women and children often suffer most in armed conflicts, and it is therefore important to strengthen the protection of these groups and combat all forms of discrimination and abuse of them. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women plays a particularly important role in this connection.

Long-term measures to strengthen a culture of respect for international law, in particular through educational measures and political dialogue, have a structural conflict prevention function.

4.3 Democracy and security

As a result of the shift of perspective in recent years, security and development policy, which for long have been regarded as separate fields of activity, are now becoming ever more closely linked. At the same time, increasing importance is attached to the political dimension of development co-operation and the need for measures to promote democratisation in developing countries.

The democracy promotion aspect of Sweden's development co-operation is based on a broad definition of democracy that was presented in the Communication *Democracy and Human Rights in Sweden's Development Co-operation* (Comm. 1997/98:76). This Communication makes it clear that democracy consists not merely of formally democratic institutions, but also of a democratic culture and respect for human rights. Thus the typical features of a stable and genuine democracy are not only free and fair elections, but also consensus, power-sharing, legal certainty, a commitment to gender equality and an institutionalised structure for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

There is a strong and indisputable link between democracy and conflict prevention. Participation, representation and legitimacy are key concepts both in a sound democratisation process and in the management of internal conflicts. Democracy gives individuals more control over their lives, which in the long run strengthens the security of both the individual and the state. This link between security and democracy is evident in situations where an internal conflict risks developing into a civil war. In countries that do not have a democratic system, internal crises often have ethnic or religious undertones even though the real causes are social, economic or political differences. A democratic system facilitates the settlement of social differences by peaceful means and through institutionalised channels.

A democratic culture also affects the relations between the players at the international level. States that are not democracies – still the majority of the world's countries – tend to revert to a pattern: not only internal but also external conflicts are used as a platform for the leaders' continued hold on power.

Sweden's support for democracy is primarily long-term and is designed to promote the gradual establishment of democratic institutions, a democratic culture, gender equality and human rights. It is closely related to efforts in other areas, for example equitable social and economic development and pro-environment measures. The world over, women take less part in political

decision-making than men. A sustainable democracy must be based on institutions where all the citizens – both women and men – are involved and take an active part.

For measures to promote democracy to be recognised as conflict prevention measures in the operational sense, as defined in this Communication, there must be a clear link to a concrete risk of armed conflict. However, the conflict prevention dimension should also be integrated into other programmes and measures designed to develop democracy. Rapid societal changes can reveal differences which, if they are not suitably dealt with, are liable to develop into an armed conflict. Support for democratisation must therefore be designed on the basis of analyses of the power structures and interests of the actors involved. Support for elections, for example, must be prepared very carefully and be part of a political process in which long-term measures to promote democratisation are implemented both before and after the elections. An election system that is not well-adapted to local conditions or is inappropriate may be unfair to certain groups, and this in turn involves the risk of frustration and a predisposition for conflict.

4.4 Economic and social development

Tolerable social and economic conditions are an important, albeit not sufficient factor for political stability. For people who are economically marginalised, poverty tends to mean the absence of human security, at the same time as the factors associated with poverty – lack of rights, power and participation – also trigger and sustain conflicts. Economic development can also be held back by discrimination on the grounds of gender. The increasing globalisation of the world economy and the development of new information technology create opportunities for increased prosperity for nations, groups and individuals, but also the risk of wider gaps that may generate conflicts. It is therefore important to combat poverty and increase the opportunities for participation in economic development.

Scarce resources and uneven distribution are potential causes of conflict which, alone or combined with other structural risk factors or catalytic events, can lead to armed conflicts within and between states. In several parts of the world, water scarcity is at the center of regional politics. In e.g. the Middle East the situation is critical. Expert assistance and economic support

for the development of new technical solutions, educational measures that lead to a more economical use of water, and measures to ensure equitable distribution of resources, are necessary measures to prevent water scarcity from being a contributing cause to armed conflict. Such measures may, *inter alia*, be facilitated within the framework of bilateral and multilateral development co-operation and by the World Bank's loan conditions.

4.5 Economic integration and trade

It has long been recognised that economic integration as well as technical co-operation at the regional and subregional level can have a preventive effect. Recognition of this fact was the rationale for the establishment of the organisations now known as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the European Union. We know that collaboration creates mutual dependence and increases mutual confidence between the potential parties to a conflict. Trade and specialisation increase the opportunities for development and mutual dependence between potential or former enemies. The importance of maintaining trade flows and making sure that the productive parts of the economy remain intact, means that armed force is not seen as an effective or sensible means for settling disputes.

Economic growth, which is promoted by economic integration, is a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for eliminating potential structural causes of conflicts such as increasing poverty and economic inequality. There is a need to raise awareness of the fact that economic co-operation and development can contribute to peaceful development.

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe is one example of how economic measures can be combined with democratic development and military security. China's relations with South Korea and Taiwan provide concrete examples of how economic relations promote stability and security. The development of the European Union is perhaps the best example of all of how economic integration and an integrated approach can lead to peace and economic development. By the same token, the enlargement of the EU is very important for the states which have applied to join the Union, as it focuses attention on the very essence of the co-operation process in which conflict prevention plays a prominent part.

Armed conflicts create opportunities for a kind of economy that does not

normally thrive in peacetime and which obstructs conflict management efforts including efforts to prevent a violent conflict from starting or flaring up once again.

The trade in arms, drugs and diamonds, trafficking in human beings, embezzlement, forced labour, the payment of “protection”, ethnic cleansing of resource-rich areas, the control by individual groups of state property, systematic plundering and theft can cause violent conflicts to start, spread or continue. Knowledge of the economic and private interests of the actors involved is therefore necessary if an armed conflict is to be effectively prevented or otherwise managed.

Both structural development assistance, aimed at an equitable distribution of economic progress, and direct measures such as sanctions against the illicit trade in diamonds or the freezing of leaders’ ill-gotten gains must be taken in order to deal with these interests. Efforts must be made within the framework of development co-operation to prevent conflicts instigated by individuals with economic interests linked to unlawful activities. Conflict prevention measures must create incentives for peace if they are to be successful.

These problems are particularly prominent in weak states and in situations where economic crisis, great economic and social inequality or deposits of valuable raw materials are prominent features. They are also noticeable in transition countries, where privatisation calls for open and effective procedures.

5 Instruments and measures used for the prevention of violent conflict

In order to act early to prevent violent conflict from breaking out, we must use existing instruments for partly new purposes. Many of the instruments that are used today both within development co-operation, international law, and trade and economic co-operation, and also in crisis management and peace-keeping operations, can be further refined so as to be even more effective in the context of conflict prevention. There is also a need to develop new methods for collecting and analysing information to make it possible to respond at an early stage to signs of a nascent conflict and to set up new institutional mechanisms.

In conflict prevention measures, the instruments which are used and combined can stem from different policy areas. A coherent strategy must be adopted and the measures taken at various stages of a conflict must be prepared on the basis of well-defined objectives. The short- and long-term results that are aimed for, both in the conflict area itself and at the national, regional and international levels, must be clearly described.

The EU's joint actions are an example of how a number of instruments, such as political statements, trade agreements, civilian observers and support for reform are combined for the purpose of implementing a common strategy in order to avert the risk of armed conflict. We can also see examples of how various instruments are combined within the framework of measures implemented by the United Nations. By implementing programmes to ensure supplies of basic necessities, deploying a preventive military force, and imposing political sanctions, conflicts can be prevented from spreading. The OSCE can, through a combination of field missions, election monitoring, and visits by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, contribute to preventing a violent conflict from flaring up once again. Every conflict situation is unique. Preventive action requires the use of a combination of different instruments, often by several parties working together, in a way that must be appropriate to the situation in hand. A clear picture of the many instruments, together with a critical evaluation of their

effectiveness, is necessary before a decision is made as to which instruments are most appropriate in a specific situation.

In a conflict situation it is important that genuine changes for the better originate within the society involved. Attempts to force a model on the parties that does not enjoy local support may be counterproductive and help to trigger an armed conflict rather than prevent it. The risk of unintentional results can be decreased by acquiring a sound knowledge of actual conditions and carrying out accurate risk assessments that analyse the effects of possible measures. Another useful method is to investigate and analyse the economic or political special interests of the parties involved. Armed conflicts are often started by parties who believe that they have something to gain in political or economic terms. A preventive strategy must address such political and economic incentives.

The instruments for conflict prevention can be divided into two main categories. Structural prevention instruments address the factors that are liable to generate conflicts in the long term, while direct prevention instruments address the factors that may lead to violent conflict in the short term. In most situations it will be necessary to combine both structural and direct instruments.

These instruments can also be divided into four broad policy areas: the socio-economic, the political-institutional, the diplomatic, and the policy area relating to stability and physical security. Dividing the instruments into these four broad and many-faceted policy areas i.a. helps to clarify the roles of the various actors involved in conflict prevention.

5.1 Structural conflict prevention instruments

Many of the structural prevention instruments in the *socio-economic* policy area are ones that are used in connection with development co-operation. Measures which strengthen the protection of social and economic human rights, support reform and the development of various sectors of society such as social welfare, health care, and a viable industrial sector that creates jobs, measures which provide technical assistance for the development of agriculture, and which support improved education for both girls and boys, are examples of such instruments. They also include support for projects that promote sustainable development through wise and equitable resource manage-

ment, measures to promote opportunities for women to participate in the economic system, and measures to repatriate refugees. These are long-term measures that strengthen the society socially and economically, which may have a stabilising effect in situations where there is a tangible risk of an armed conflict breaking out.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other international financial institutions can play an important preventive role by means of instruments such as bilateral and multilateral co-operation agreements, the formulation of loan conditions and trade-promoting measures. The framework conditions imposed by the WTO can promote economic exchanges between potential adversaries in a conflict. The EU has a large array of instruments in the form of trade, partnership and co-operation agreements.

There is a wide range of preventive instruments in the *political-institutional* policy area, which all contribute to strengthening capacity for peaceful conflict management. Support for the establishment of democratic institutions and for conducting democratic elections, educational measures to strengthen respect for and compliance with international law and human rights, support which creates improved conditions for the establishment of political parties and NGOs, and support for reform of government administrations, are instruments that strengthen political institutions and processes. Judicial and law enforcement structures can be strengthened, for example, by seminars on the role of the police in a state governed by law or support for a functioning judiciary in order to restore confidence in the legal system. Setting up truth commissions and supporting the establishment of international tribunals for war criminals may contribute to reconciliation, which in turn reduces the risk of violent conflicts breaking out once again. Training for journalists, support for local initiatives calculated to combat prejudice and myths, as well as support for independent media, are other important instruments. Consideration should also be given to supporting research into the causes of conflicts and measures to strengthen civil society.

Diplomacy in the form of sustained political dialogue with the leaders in a potential crisis area helps to prevent conflict. By establishing dialogue procedures at various levels and in various structures, channels can be created through which to influence the parties when there are early signs of destabilisation. The purpose of political contacts may also be to promote other long-term preventive measures, for example by demanding specific changes, expressing support for national reform programmes or emphasising

the importance of controlling structural risk factors. Strengthening regional organisations and networks that deepen contacts between societies and are involved in security issues serve an important purpose. Diplomatic relations can make it possible to engage in discussions on increased control over weapons, including within the framework of existing agreements and security- and confidence-building instruments. An international presence in areas where there is a risk of conflict, such as the OSCE's missions in the former Soviet Union, is an example of the application of a long-term diplomatic instrument.

NGOs and individuals, such as parliamentarians, politicians, academics, journalists and representatives of churches, play an important part within the framework of "unofficial" diplomacy. By maintaining informal contacts between potential or former enemies, prominent individuals and representatives of civil society can in the long run achieve a better negotiating climate or pave the way for a sudden breakthrough on political issues, such as has been the case in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the area of *stability and physical security* there is a large number of instruments for preventing violent conflict. A key element here is reform of the security sector, which includes civilian control of the military and the police, and a strong link between the judiciary and security. The formulation of a recruitment policy designed to achieve a representative composition of the armed forces, reintegration of soldiers, seminars on the role of the military in peacetime, the drafting of task descriptions and the establishment of a division of responsibilities between various actors, are instruments that can be used in order to establish a functioning security sector under democratic control. Programmes for the collection and destruction of small arms and support for the implementation of and compliance with international arms control mechanisms are other important instruments.

Confidence-building measures can have a stabilising and long-term preventive effect by reducing distrust between various population groups and the armed forces of opposing parties. In the military realm this may include reciprocal measures calculated to increase transparency, such as open reporting of resources, advance notification of major military exercises and exchanges of personnel in connection with military training. Confidence-building measures may be designed to increase the parties' mutual knowledge and understanding about each other's interests, cultures and expectations.

5.2 Direct conflict prevention instruments

In the *socio-economic* policy area there are instruments such as targeted economic and financial sanctions. For instance, freezing political leaders' assets abroad and suspending negotiations on trade agreements can be used as direct preventive measures. Development co-operation with poor countries is by nature a long-term commitment, but it may be necessary in certain situations to suspend or cut back assistance where a government pursues a policy that is liable to lead to armed conflict. Short-term assistance of various kinds, such as disaster relief, can also be an effective means of preventing conflicts.

In the *political-institutional* policy area, support for the media and judicial bodies may fulfil an important preventive function even in an acute phase where there is an imminent risk of violence breaking out. Measures to restrain hate propaganda can help to prevent an escalation of violence. Election monitoring, measures to enable the implementation of parliamentary elections, and direct measures designed to strengthen the ability of the local police and judiciary to control a surge in violence and crime, may prevent destabilisation in the context of an acute threat to peace.

Preventive diplomacy and political action includes a large number of instruments, such as mediation, negotiations, political statements, consultations, peace conferences, special envoys, informal diplomacy, high-level visits and fact-finding missions. Military non-aggression undertakings, hotlines and promises to refrain from aggressive statements are other important direct diplomatic instruments.

Where destabilisation persists, preventive diplomacy may use more imperative measures, such as public condemnations, the withdrawal of recognition, political boycotts, travel restrictions and the suspension of co-operation agreements. Military deterrence, for example threats to use force and impose arms embargoes, may also have a preventive effect.

Unarmed observers or armed preventive forces are examples of direct instruments in the policy area of *stability and physical security*. The preventive deployment of forces, as in Macedonia, can help to reduce the risk of a conflict spilling over into other areas or flaring up once again. Military and civilian observers can help to stabilise a situation by monitoring compliance with peace agreements, controlling weapon flows, reporting troop movements and contributing to respect for human rights. One example of the use of civilian observers was the OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) dur-

ing the mounting crisis in 1998 in the province of Kosovo in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Civilian police is another instrument that can be used in a concrete risk situation in order to help limit the use of violence. By ensuring an equitable distribution of necessities following a disaster and thus preventing conflicts about food supplies, health care and housing, emergency services and humanitarian aid also have a preventive effect.

Post-conflict management can take the form of e.g. civilian administration in an area that has undergone a phase of armed confrontation. The purpose is often to help reduce the risk of a resumption of violence, but also to prevent a violent conflict breaking out in earnest. Effective civilian administration is one aspect of efforts to achieve normalisation and depends on effective coordination also with international military peace-keeping forces. This is essential in order to achieve coordinated action on matters relating to development and security. To ensure optimum use of the military resources, e.g. in connection with planning, identification of needs, and coordination, there is a need for improved coordination between civilian and military measures at the central, regional and local levels.

5.3 Instruments and objectives

By combining various conflict prevention measures it is possible to combat threats against the security of the individual and to pave the way for a more hopeful situation that offers individuals better opportunities. For example, EU-financed human rights education for the local police, an international presence of civilian observers from the Organisation of American States (OAS) or preventive deployment of armed UN forces, can help to improve the physical security of persons belonging to a vulnerable ethnic minority. Individuals' health and access to material necessities can be promoted by economic and technical support from the World Bank for measures to ensure access to clean water. Humanitarian aid channelled through the UN World Food Programme helps to secure food supplies and thus prevent armed struggles for resources or large refugee flows that can destabilise the country or the region.

Membership of regional organisations and international trade structures, such as the WTO, and Sida's programmes for the development of a function-

ing industrial sector that generate growth and jobs, are examples of measures that promote the social and economic welfare of women and men. A similar purpose is served by constructive advice from the OSCE's Commissioner on National Minorities on how to reform the education system so as to provide education for an ethnic minority in its own language.

The establishment and use of institutions and processes for peaceful settlement of disputes, such as the conflict management mechanism of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), promote the development of a democratic society in which citizens' opportunities for political participation and the right to privacy are protected. Grants to NGOs which organise international training for judges and prosecutors, regional exchanges between parliamentarians, and knowledge transfer about how to construct a country's constitution, are other examples of cooperative measures which promote the development of democracy and respect for human rights and thus foster the individual's opportunities and freedoms.

The combination of instruments from various policy areas and fields of activity is thus the key. It is also important to understand how to use the instruments in and adapt them to various phases of a conflict. Civilian police, for example, can be used in many situations and can perform different tasks in different phases. In an acute phase, open antagonisms between population groups could be monitored and handled in such a way as to prevent them taking up arms. At a more early stage of conflict, a small group of civilian police might be sent to train the local police in dispute settlement. During a period following a peace agreement, an especially composed group could contribute to restoring confidence in a discredited judicial system that has ceased to function.

6 What action is being taken by international and regional organisations to prevent violent conflicts?

Many like-minded states, international and non-governmental organisations, political leaders and other committed persons, representatives of the media and business, as well as members of civil society in general, contribute by their perseverance and long-term planning to prevent violent conflicts. There are several signs that conflict prevention and the need for early action are being generally recognised in the international arena.

The UN Secretary-General has highlighted the issue of conflict prevention in a number of speeches, and in his latest reports to the General Assembly. In November 1999 the Security Council issued a statement about its role in conflict prevention and in July 2000 an open debate was held on this subject. In the last few years, the United Nations has set up a number of mechanisms in order to improve its capacity for effective and integrated action in response to signs of potential conflicts. In the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat there is a forum that holds monthly meetings to analyse potential risk situations and options when it comes to preventing the outbreak of an armed conflict. In addition to this forum there is a framework for collaboration between different components of the UN system, which contributes to in-depth analyses of specific situations from various angles.

The European Councils in Cologne in June 1999 and Helsinki in December 1999 gave high priority to conflict prevention. Work is now in progress to strengthen the EU's conflict prevention and crisis management capacities, with the use of both civilian and military measures. Sweden plays a leading role here, not least when it comes to developing the EU's capacity for civilian crisis management. The capacity developed by the EU in this area will also be of great significance for the conflict prevention efforts undertaken by the EU, the UN and the OSCE.

At the European Council in Feira in June 2000, the Commission and the High Representative were entrusted with the task of drafting proposals, to be presented in time for the European Council in Nice in December 2000, on effective ways and means of strengthening the EU's capacity for preventing violent conflict. The objective is to establish a more integrated policy for conflict prevention, which includes all the relevant EU policy areas and institutions. The Swedish Government is taking measures to prepare an important step towards an EU policy on conflict prevention at the summit in Göteborg in June 2001.

The EU's role in preventing violent conflict is also manifested in the framework of its development co-operation and the enlargement process. Development co-operation is an expression of a global commitment to democracy, peace and security. The enlargement process and collaboration with neighbouring countries to the south and east of the EU are part of a calculated policy to promote conflict prevention and peace in regions near Europe.

The EU's co-operation on the Mediterranean – the Barcelona Process – also has a conflict prevention and confidence-building dimension. The Europe-Mediterranean partnership was established in Barcelona in 1995 by the foreign ministers of the 15 EU Member States and 12 countries in the Mediterranean region, as well as the Palestinian authority. The Barcelona Declaration is the basis of the partnership and consists of three chapters. The first chapter deals with political dialogue, security policy, the promotion of democratic institutions and respect for human rights. The second chapter concerns economic and financial co-operation and support to the partner countries with a view to establishing a free trade area in the region by the year 2010. The third chapter deals with cultural, social and human exchanges and a dialogue between cultures. The Barcelona Process is not linked to the Middle East peace process; it is a parallel process. Conflict prevention is also a component of the EU's common strategy for the Mediterranean, which was adopted by the European Council in Feira in June this year.

The Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries (in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) emphasises the importance of strengthening regional and subregional capacity for conflict prevention, in particular by resolutely addressing the underlying causes of conflict and taking other necessary measures to prevent conflicts from starting, spreading or flaring up again.

The OSCE's broad security concept, which includes both military-politi-

cal aspects and issues relating to democracy, human rights, the economy and the environment, has made a major contribution to the development of the organisation and its conflict prevention capacity. The broad membership of the organisation has also provided a firm foundation for its operations. The OSCE Charter for European Security, which was signed at the summit in Istanbul in November 1999, emphasises that the prevention of violent conflicts is one of the organisation's main tasks. A decisive factor for the success of the OSCE is that all Member States recognise and comply with its common norms. With the help of its main instruments, i.e. its chairmanship, the Commissioner on National Minorities and its extensive field activities with offices in about 20 countries, the OSCE performs a major conflict prevention task. It also fulfils an important function in the field of military policy, in particular through its code of conduct for democratic control of armed forces and their respect for human rights and humanitarian law.

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe fulfils a conflict prevention function through its efforts to prevent the emergence of new violent conflicts in the region. The purpose of its various working tables – for security and law, economic co-operation, and democracy and institution-building – is to create, in an integrated fashion, a common perspective for peace and development.

The co-operation that has evolved in the Baltic Sea and Barents Sea regions in the 1990s also has a distinct conflict prevention profile. The arrangements for dialogue and co-operation on issues related to a broad concept of security help to establish good relations and closer communications within and between states, in the same way as within the framework of Nordic co-operation.

Nato has recently assumed an explicit preventive role. The working party for co-operation on peace-keeping within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) will present a paper at the ministerial conference in December 2000 on the Council's role in conflict prevention. A seminar was held in Slovenia in October 2000 within the framework of efforts to identify conflict prevention instruments and the capacity of both the EAPC and the Partnership for Peace (PFP).

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD has set up a working party to draft policy guidelines for the growing role of development assistance in conflict situations. This work, which is led by Sweden, is focusing in the autumn of 2000 on strengthening the conflict prevention and security dimension of development assistance. It also deals with the effects of development assistance on the various phases of a conflict. Consultations,

which can also relate to conflict prevention, have taken place in Africa and Latin America.

At meetings of foreign ministers in Berlin in December 1999 and Miyazaki in July 2000 the G8 countries emphasised the importance of the international community continuing to pursue the issue of conflict prevention. The conclusions of the Okinawa summit of the G8 countries' heads of state and government in July 2000 stated that a global conflict prevention culture should be promoted, in particular, by stricter control of the trade in small arms and diamonds, measures to combat structural risk factors through economic development, a larger role for civilian police and action to eliminate the use of child soldiers.

At its summit in Cairo in 1993, the OAU set up a mechanism for the purpose of contributing to the prevention, management and settlement of armed conflicts. This mechanism consists, inter alia, of a division within the OAU Secretariat. The emphasis is on preventive measures, but the mechanism also has a role in acute conflict situations. This mechanism has great development potential. At present, a process is under way to reform the OAU and increase the capacity and effectiveness of the conflict management centre. The OAU summit in Lomé in July 2000 adopted a declaration to hold a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA). Conferences are to be held every two years to deal with political and economic issues in an integrated context.

The OAS also has a certain conflict prevention role, e.g. through the Inter-American Commission and the Court for Human Rights. The organisation has mediated in connection with several boundary disputes, for example those between Ecuador and Peru and the dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras about territorial waters. It has also been engaged in mine clearance in co-operation with the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB). After the presidential election in Peru in May 2000, the OAS was assigned the task of monitoring democratic development in the country. The OAS has presented 29 recommendations to the Peruvian Government and stationed a permanent representative in Peru.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) have discussed preventive diplomacy on several occasions, as well as confidence-building measures, norm development, improved channels of communication and the potential role of the president of the organisation in conflict prevention.

The World Bank attaches increasing importance to the connection between development co-operation and conflict prevention. The Bank now pays more attention to political factors than before, and in April 1997 it adopted a strategy for its role in post-conflict management and reconstruction. The strategy emphasises in particular the reconstruction of political institutions, social and physical infrastructure and measures to rehabilitate various social groups for a life without violent conflict.

Ever since the GATT was founded in 1948, it and its successor the WTO have promoted trade and created greater opportunities for development and mutual dependence. The Organisation has, for example, reduced the incentives for destructive behaviour and thus fulfilled a significant conflict prevention function.

7 What measures has Sweden taken to prevent violent conflicts?

Sweden has embarked on the task of developing and advocating prevention of violent conflict as a necessary strategy for international peace and security, and is committed to further strengthening the capacity of the international community for preventive action. It is pursuing these efforts through bilateral contacts, in multilateral forums such as the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the WTO, at seminars and conferences, in contacts with the research community and meetings with NGOs and enterprises. Sweden's work in this field is guided by the key general objectives and special measures that were identified in the action programme. The following presentation contains some examples of Sweden's measures in recent years. They relate to the five main objectives set forth in the action programme.

7.1 Promoting a global conflict prevention culture

The aim of promoting a culture of conflict prevention is to strengthen the will, capacity and preparedness of the international community to act in time to prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts. Sweden's policy is to raise awareness of the rationale for conflict prevention, help to strengthen political will and establish routines for conflict prevention.

A series of meetings with governments and academics, initiated and financed by Sweden, was arranged in the spring of 2000 together with the UN Secretariat and the International Peace Academy, a policy research and development organisation based in New York. The purpose was to improve the UN system's capacity for preventing violent conflict. A summary of Sweden's action programme has been distributed to all the UN Member States in all the UN official languages.

The Swedish action programme has also been presented to the EU Member States and institutions. Exchanges of ideas are an important component of the efforts to develop and strengthen the EU's conflict prevention capacity

and to develop a coherent EU policy in this area. Sweden's ideas on conflict prevention have also met with an encouraging response in the OSCE and the EAPC.

In June 2000, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), arranged an international seminar on the theme "Preventing violent conflicts – the search for political will, strategies and effective instruments". The purpose was to go from words to deeds and identify concrete contributions to strengthen the global capacity for preventive action. The seminar was attended by representatives of international and non-governmental organisations, the business community, the research community and the media, as well as leading policy-makers, and was a contribution to the shaping of an integrated approach to collaboration between various players. The seminar resulted in the "Krusenberg conclusions", which will prove useful in future international conflict prevention efforts.

7.2 Identifying structural risk factors

More knowledge and a better understanding of structural risk factors are required if efforts to prevent armed conflicts are to be effective and successful. Economic stagnation, an uneven distribution of resources both between population groups and between men and women, social injustice, undemocratic governance, systematic discrimination on the grounds of sex, weak social structures, suppression of the rights of minorities, the destabilising effects of refugee flows, ethnic antagonisms, religious and cultural intolerance, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms are all examples of causes of conflicts that need to be analysed. Focusing on these risk factors increases the possibility of early action to address the underlying causes of armed conflicts.

Within the framework of international development co-operation Sweden has made an effective contribution to improving our knowledge about these risk factors and our capacity for analysing and addressing them. This is consistent with the thrust of international efforts in this field, the purpose of which is to determine and address the underlying causes of conflicts.

Violent conflicts are often caused by groups that attempt, at the expense of others, to increase the water resources available to them and to secure their

own supply. Conflicts within societies can start as a result of competition for scarce resources between different groups of water users. Structural adjustment measures designed to save water may also lead to social strain and unrest. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has initiated a process for the analysis of this issue and development of Sweden's policy in this area.

Other scarcities can also cause or contribute to the outbreak of violent confrontation. Within the framework of a co-operation agreement with Göteborg University, Sida has commissioned a study on the relationship between poverty and conflicts. The report will be presented this autumn.

Efforts to prevent a violent conflict breaking out or flaring up again are often impeded by individuals or groups with particular economic interests who stand to gain from a state of conflict. The Government supports a research project at Oxford University on the economic dimensions of conflicts. The findings of this research, which is investigating the economic behaviour of various parties to conflicts, are useful for the purposes of conflict prevention.

The circulation and accumulation of large quantities of small arms is also a cause of conflicts and destabilisation. This is perhaps most noticeable in Africa. Therefore, since 1998 Sweden has supported ECOWAS and its Member States' moratorium on the trade in and manufacture of small arms. Sweden's grant of USD 1 million is channelled through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is engaged in implementing the moratorium in the region and extending it to other parts of Africa. At the national level and also through the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, Sweden also supports other projects relating to small arms, such as the collection and destruction of weapons in Cambodia and the training of police and customs officers and destruction of weapons in South Ossetia.

In 1966, Sweden's long-standing commitment to conflict prevention resulted in the establishment of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and support for its research on the structural causes of armed conflicts. Since 1997 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has supported SIPRI's development of a database of information on export controls. The database contains information on national export control systems in Europe and has great potential for risk analysis that is relevant to conflict prevention. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also supported SIPRI's fact-finding project on weapons flows for the purpose of evaluating the effects of small arms on conflicts.

7.3 Developing the international system of norms and strengthening its application

An important component of long-term conflict prevention is global recognition of and respect for human rights, democracy and the recognised norms laid down by international law, as well as the rules for international trade and economic co-operation. The international system of norms also includes common values, visions and rules designed to promote long-term conflict prevention. In recent years Sweden has substantially increased its support to efforts to strengthen democracy and human rights, in particular in states and regions where there is a risk of armed conflict. These efforts are pursued by Sweden within the framework of bilateral and multilateral development co-operation and through the EU.

Together with 18 other states, Sweden supports International IDEA (the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), which is based in Stockholm. IDEA is engaged in promoting various aspects of democracy and democratisation, such as support for electoral processes both at the national and international levels. It has, for example, developed ideas about the significance of democratic methods in all approaches to managing potential and ongoing violent conflicts. It has organised regional working conferences and advised the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Kosovo, the OSCE in Croatia and the UN Secretariat. IDEA has also produced a practical manual, "Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook for Negotiators", and arranged a number of regional seminars. Its activity plan includes further study of the connection between democratic political systems and structural conflict prevention measures.

Through Sida Sweden is helping a number of countries to build up a market economy, public institutions and democratic systems ruled by law. All these projects are to be based on a thorough and coherent gender perspective. A large part of the support for democratic processes is channelled through NGOs or independent institutions in the countries concerned. Sweden also supports organisations that protect the rights of women and children. Sida has also given support to the NGO International Alert's project on women and peace-building and to a number of other initiatives whose purpose is to analyse the role of women in peace agreements.

Sweden promotes the strengthening of democracy and economic development through political dialogue and development co-operation. Support for

the judicial system in Nicaragua and for the ombudsman for human rights in Guatemala and El Salvador are examples of this policy. Within the framework of its development co-operation Sweden supports various initiatives in Cuba whose aim is to pave the way for an opening up of the economic and political system and to promote democratic reforms and respect for human rights.

The conflict prevention dimension occupies an increasingly prominent position in Sida's work on behalf of human rights, democracy and poverty alleviation. In 1998 Sida presented a strategy for conflict prevention and management within the framework of humanitarian aid that is now designated the "conflict management and peace-building strategy". Sida is currently evaluating its support for a number of projects that promote dialogue.

The focus of international co-operation today has shifted from the framing of normative rules, most of which are now in place, to measures to promote countries' adherence to and compliance with these rules. An essential element of conflict prevention is to strengthen respect for the extensive framework of rules that has been negotiated by the UN and regional organisations since the Second World War. These lay a common foundation of values in the area of human rights and form the basis of democratic governance, the principles of a state governed by the rule of law, and a gender-equal and humanistic view of mankind.

An important task for Sweden and other countries is, bilaterally and within the framework of various organisations, to support the concrete recommendations presented by various expert bodies such as the Committee for Children's Rights (UNICEF) and the European Court of Justice. Sweden supports the UN's human rights field operations and urges that the six human rights committees should be given sufficient resources to monitor compliance with the UN conventions covered by their mandate. Sweden vigorously supports the Article 90 Commission, which is engaged in the monitoring of humanitarian law, and in 1998 organised the Commission's first exercise. Sweden also urges that dispute settlement clauses should be included in international treaties in order to promote the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. In February this year an international Nordic expert seminar was arranged on Fundamental Standards of Humanity, which have the purpose of improving compliance with international law.

Sweden urges that the trade rules adopted by the WTO should have a deliberate and positive effect on international peace and security, in particular

by promoting sustainable development, creating equitable conditions for international trade and economic co-operation, developing peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms and contributing to democratic development among the members of the organisation.

7.4 Strengthening the international framework and its conflict prevention instruments

One condition for prudent and successful conflict prevention is that optimum use be made of the available diplomatic, political, economic, international law and military resources. We must therefore emphasise the importance of strengthening knowledge, improving methods for capacity building and preventive diplomacy, and develop conflict prevention strategies, action programmes and instruments. Developing the UN's role and its potential in the area of conflict prevention is an important feature of this work. Better coordination and division of labour between the UN system, the EU, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Western European Union (WEU), Nato and its co-operation bodies Partnership for Peace (PFP) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the international trade and financial institutions, development assistance organisations and other regional organisations will help to develop new and improved co-operation structures for more effective conflict prevention.

During the period 1997-99 Sweden contributed USD 300,000 per year to the UN Staff College in Turin and its conflict prevention programme. The purpose of the course is to raise awareness among UN personnel of the causes of conflicts, how potential conflicts can be identified and how information about such potential conflicts should be communicated to the rest of the UN system in order to promote more integrated action within the UN.

Sweden is also allocating USD 75,000 to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and its project on the debriefing of the Secretary-General's special representatives and envoys. The aim is to produce a manual of methods for the UN's special envoys and thus render their activities more effective.

Together with like-minded states, Sweden supports the idea of regular regional reviews within the UN Security Council of potential conflict areas. These reviews would strengthen the UN's and the Security Council's prepared-

ness for response to early warning signals and would help to establish routines for a conflict prevention approach in the organisation. Some reviews, for example with respect to Africa, have in fact recently taken place.

Sweden will continue its forceful efforts to promote the development of the doctrine on sanctions. In future, sanctions should be as effective as possible and targeted at the persons responsible. During a debate in the Security Council in April this year Sweden presented concrete views on arms embargoes, targeted sanctions, humanitarian exemptions and monitoring of compliance with sanction regimes. As a sequel to the debate in the Security Council a working party was set up in November to present recommendations for improved sanction instruments. Sweden will continue to contribute to this debate.

In connection with the UN review conference on the Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in association with the organisation Woman to Woman, arranged a seminar in New York in June this year. During the seminar an analysis was presented of the Dayton Accords from the point of view of gender equality.

Sweden has played a key role in the efforts to strengthen the EU's capacity for conflict prevention both by placing the issue on the agenda and by making significant contributions to debates and decisions. Sweden was the initiator of the report on the strengthening of the EU's conflict prevention capacity that will be presented by the European Commission and the High Representative prior to the summit in Nice. Sweden also took part in the drafting of the EU's common position on the prevention of conflicts in Africa, and in 1999 it initiated a study and discussion on the alarming developments in Zimbabwe. The Government has decided to increase Sweden's contribution to the EU's monitoring mission in the Western Balkans, the purpose of which is to prevent a resurgence of widespread violent conflict in the region.

One concrete conflict prevention action is the secondment of 50 Swedish experts to the OSCE's field missions, e.g. in Southeastern Europe and in the Caucasus. Sweden has also helped to reduce inter-ethnic tensions by seconding police officers to the UN and the OSCE in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, among other countries.

In December 1999 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute arranged a symposium in Lund on the OSCE's conflict prevention efforts, the purpose of which was to inform other regional organisations of the experiences gained from the work of the Commissioner

on National Minorities and the field missions, the broad security perspective and the integrated conflict management perspective.

In March this year the Ministry for Foreign Affairs arranged two seminars in Stockholm, one with representatives of South Korea and one with representatives of North Korea, in each case with representatives of the Nordic countries. The discussions focused on the experiences of the work of the OSCE and its relevance to the Korean peninsula. It was hoped that the seminars would contribute to a better climate in the talks between North and South Korea. The joint declaration presented at the summit between the South and North Korean leaders in June this year contained several of the elements that were dealt with at the seminars.

In Africa, Sweden provides instructors for courses in peace support and civilian and military personnel for the UN missions. Together with the other Nordic countries, Sweden operates an extensive programme for the training of foreign military and police officers. Sweden also supports various kinds of regional and subregional co-operation in order to create better conditions, through integration and collaboration, for stability and peace and for preventing conflicts. Sweden has allocated USD 120,000 to the OAU during the period 1999-2001 to support organisational reforms designed to increase its capacity and effectiveness.

Another subregional organisation that has received substantial support from Sweden and the other Nordic countries is the Southern African Development Community (SADC), whose agenda includes economic, security, defence and environmental issues, as well as foreign policy. Today, this support is mainly channelled through Sida's regional grants and focuses on human rights, democracy, administration, water problems and HIV/Aids. Sweden takes an active part in the dialogue and co-operation between the EU and the SADC, and substantial international, including Swedish, support was paid out last year for the regional peace-support exercise "Blue Crane". Sweden also contributes instructors to the SADC's regional centre for training in peace support in Zimbabwe.

In 1998 Sweden decided to contribute USD 100,000 to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace fund to support its initiative on behalf of efforts for peace and reconciliation in Somalia and Sudan. Half of the Swedish grant was allocated to the peace process in Sudan and a newly established negotiation secretariat in Nairobi. Sweden has also given support to the Life and Peace Institute for conflict prevention training for the

IGAD Secretariat and officials at the respective ministries for foreign affairs in the IGAD's Member States.

Sweden has been a permanent observer to the OAS for several years. Through the OAS Sida has contributed to the funding of several projects aimed at reconciliation at the local level, including projects in Nicaragua and Guatemala. Sida has also financed mine clearance operations in Nicaragua and Honduras.

Increasing attention is being paid to the role of civilian police and other forms of conflict management, and Sweden has contributed USD 20,000 towards a SIPRI project on international police operations. One of the aims of the project is to investigate regional organisational capacity and collaboration on police matters.

7.5 Strengthening Sweden's capacity for conflict prevention measures

If Sweden's efforts to promote a conflict prevention approach are to gain a hearing in international forums, coordinated input will be required from a large number of parties. It is therefore essential that an understanding of the importance of conflict prevention characterises the activities of the ministries and agencies concerned, e.g. the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, the Swedish Agency for Civil Emergency Planning, the Swedish Migration Board, the Swedish Armed Forces, the National Police Board, as well as NGOs and the research community. The great potential capacity of the business community should also be engaged.

Training, improved methods of communication, coordination and improved data acquisition and analysis are helping to further strengthen Sweden's capacity for implementing various conflict prevention measures in collaboration with national and international bodies. Resources must be allocated to enable Sweden to achieve its high ambitions for an active role in conflict prevention.

A secretariat for conflict prevention has been set up within the Policy and Planning Unit at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and a steering committee has been appointed for policy development within conflict prevention. A working party has been set up for capacity-building in Africa in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. Several other cross-organisation

working parties have been set up in the Ministry's departments and in other ministries and agencies for the purpose of developing and deepening work on the specific measures presented in the action programme. The Ministry has started its operational activities by implementing some of these measures, e.g. by organising international seminars, pursuing the issue of conflict prevention in the EU and the UN, analysing the connection between democracy and security, promoting exchanges of experience between the OSCE and other regional organisations, and commissioning a study on water scarcity as a cause of conflicts.

The Parliamentary Commission on Sweden's Policy on Global Development, which is to present its report by 31 October 2001, will, according to its terms of reference, take the conflict prevention dimension into account in its work.

The Council for Peace and Security Promoting Activities – a body that includes representatives of the Government, agencies, the research community and voluntary organisations – has contributed to our collective thinking on conflict prevention. Contacts with researchers and scientific institutions that are engaged in relevant research on conflict prevention have been strengthened, for example by Sida's close co-operation with a number of Swedish research institutions.

In 1998 Sida set up a network for conflict management which has given a number of lectures aimed at enhancing the staff's knowledge of these issues. An in-house course in conflict management will start in the autumn in collaboration with Swedish universities.

The Swedish Action Plan has been circulated to Swedish NGOs that are engaged in conflict prevention and peace support activities. Sida has made a grant to the Forum for Peace Service for a study of the popular movements' current contribution to and potential and future strategies for conflict management, peace-building and the prevention of violence. In order to enhance know-how, capacity and interest in the field of conflict prevention among Swedish peace and development co-operation organisations, Sida has allocated USD 100,000 for 2000 and 2001 to the Christian Council of Sweden and the Forum for Peace Service for the education and training in a culture of peace and non-violence that they provide. One of the aims of this project is to promote coordination and collaboration between various Swedish organisations, institutions and public authorities.

8 Examples of successful conflict prevention

One major problem associated with conflict prevention is to present cases in which the measures taken have been successful. It is not easy to prove that a conflict did not break out thanks to conflict prevention measures. Moreover, a violent conflict may be dormant but flare up again at a later stage. Nevertheless, the difficulties of demonstrating the success of preventive action should not be exaggerated. There are a number of situations where we can see clearly that the measures taken in all probability prevented antagonisms escalating into violent conflicts or a resurgence of large-scale violence.

8.1 Hungary and Slovakia

The defusing of the tensions between Hungary and Slovakia is one example of successful conflict prevention. The conflict centred on two complex issues: the Hungarian minority of 600,000 in Slovakia and a dam construction project on the Danube that had been planned since the 1970s. These two issues were interlinked.

The EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE became aware of the tense situation in the latter half of 1992. In its review of Slovakia's application for membership of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council pointed out a number of shortcomings where respect for the rights of minorities was concerned, and the OSCE's Commissioner on National Minorities recommended shortly afterwards that an expert panel should monitor relations between Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians for a period of two years. Slovakia's application for membership of the Council of Europe was accepted one year later, subject to a number of conditions relating to human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. A monitoring committee was set up to monitor compliance with the fundamental principles of the Council and present future recommendations.

Furthermore, a series of roundtable talks on bilateral disputes took place within the framework of the stability pact that was set up on the initiative of

the then French Prime Minister Balladur. After the EU had explained the importance of resolving bilateral issues, including minority issues, within the framework of the process of accession to the EU, the pact rapidly persuaded the parties to sign an agreement on neighbourly relations between Hungary and Slovakia. Some of the OSCE's and the Council of Europe's recommendations have not yet been implemented, but the Slovak government has co-operated with the Commissioner on National Minorities in several matters, including the question of a language law.

The dispute about the Gabčíkovo-Nagymáros dam project near the border between Hungary and Slovakia necessitated international preventive measures after bilateral diplomatic efforts had failed. The Hungarian Prime Minister Antal tried to draw the OSCE's attention to the seriousness of the situation, but it took some time before these warning signals led to action. However, the EU's mediation succeeded and dampened the crisis. Agreement was reached on postponing the construction of the dam, giving access to an international expert committee and referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice, and this defused the crisis. Both Hungary and Slovakia were, moreover, participants in the EU's Phare Programme, which made it potentially even more costly for them to oppose the solution that was presented and facilitated by the EU.

The conflict prevention process in Slovakia and Hungary shows the importance of economic and political incentives, especially where they have to do with membership of the EU, Nato and the Council of Europe. This example illustrates the importance of finding new solutions and combining monitoring commissions, recommendations from the Commissioner on National Minorities and the involvement of the International Court of Justice with concrete co-operation agreements on economic and political issues.

8.2 Macedonia (FYROM)

The operation mounted by the international community in Macedonia is often mentioned as a successful example – at least so far – of conflict prevention. In December 1992 the UN Security Council, for the first time in the history of the UN, was given a mandate to deploy troops – the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) – for purely preventive purposes. The original purpose was to provide deterrents against violation of

Macedonia's recognised boundaries, but in time the mandate was extended to include instruments for managing internal tensions between the Macedonian majority and the Albanian minority and promoting civilian development. When the time came to extend the mandate in February 1999, however, China vetoed the proposal, claiming that UNPREDEP had accomplished its original task. The real reason for China's veto was that Macedonia had recognised Taiwan. As a result of the veto, UNPREDEP was obliged to phase out its activities in Macedonia.

A OSCE mission with a similar purpose was set up in 1992, although its activities focused mainly on human rights, democratisation and the monitoring of inter-ethnic relations. The mission, acting in co-operation with the OSCE Commissioner on National Minorities, had the important task of giving early warning signals. The National Minorities Commissioner took steps to reduce tensions between Macedonians and the Albanian minority by promoting dialogue between the groups and greater participation for the minority, and by proposing solutions on matters that are particularly sensitive to the groups involved, for example higher education in Albanian.

The Council of Europe has also contributed to conflict prevention by means of projects of limited duration calculated to mitigate inter-ethnic tensions. A trade and co-operation agreement with the EU has created new opportunities for mutual co-operation and political dialogue with special emphasis on inter-ethnic reconciliation and the protection of human rights. The adoption of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe contributes to stabilising the larger region, including Macedonia, through a process of integration. The provision of active assistance to Macedonia in its aspirations to join the WTO is another important component of the conflict prevention activities.

Under the Human Evacuation Programme set up by the UNHCR, almost 100,000 people from the massive refugee movement from Kosovo to Macedonia in 1999 were transferred to countries outside the region. One of the aims of this operation was to prevent acute ethnic tensions in Macedonia. Sweden took part in the programme by giving persons in need of protection asylum in Sweden and seconding staff from the Swedish Immigration Board (now renamed the Swedish Migration Board) to the UNHCR.

This example demonstrates how non-military and military instruments can be successfully combined in order to prevent violent conflicts. The trade and co-operation agreement with the EU, moreover, created an economic incentive to try to deal with the tense situation by peaceful means.

The measures that have been undertaken so far have been successful in averting a conflict between Slavs and Albanians in Macedonia. However, the situation in the region is still unstable and there is still a risk of outbreaks of violence that could affect Macedonia.

8.3 Estonia

Another example of successful conflict prevention is Estonia. During the process that led to Estonia's independence in 1991 there was a strong reaction against the Russification to which the country had been subjected after the Second World War. Between 1989 and 1993 a number of laws were adopted on citizenship, the right to vote, education and opportunities for cultural self-determination. However, some population groups, Russians in particular, felt alienated. The situation was characterised by tension between Tallinn and Moscow, not least as a result of threatening statements from Russia. Naturally, the presence of Russian troops in the country was also a cause of considerable concern.

The presence of the OSCE fulfilled an important monitoring, early warning and reporting function, and the OSCE mission's regular contacts with representatives of the Russian-speaking population contributed to a peaceful outcome. The OSCE Commissioner for National Minorities had repeated talks with the ethnic Russian leaders in northeastern Estonia in order to convince them of the importance of integration and respect for the Estonian constitution. The Commissioner referred frequently to international norms and also gave concrete recommendations to the Estonian Government on ways and means of improving the situation of the minorities. The EU also played an important part and used the ongoing negotiations on a free trade agreement and Estonia's participation in the PHARE Programme as a means of promoting a successful outcome.

During the period following Estonia's independence, the Estonian Government has made great efforts with regard to the legal and social situation of the Russian-speaking population. Over the years, the OSCE has given substantial support to the Government's efforts in this connection. Estonia fulfils all the EU's political criteria for membership and has acted on practically all the recommendations made by the OSCE mission and the National Minorities Commissioner.

The close co-operation between the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the

EU was an important factor for the progress made in Estonia. The possibility of integration into the structure of European co-operation helped Estonia to accept the OSCE's involvement. Another factor favouring a positive development was the international organisations' good relations with the Estonian government, and in particular with the President. From an economic point of view, Estonia's free trade agreements with Sweden and the EU and its early accession to the WTO helped to establish stable external conditions for the recovery and development of the Estonian economy.

The operation in Estonia demonstrates the value of coordination between different parties, the advantages of good relations with the parties to the potential conflict and the importance of combining various instruments, such as silent diplomacy, international norms, the mechanisms of international law and economic incentives.

8.4 Central America

The peace-building and conflict prevention activities of i.a. the UN and Sweden in Central America represent another successful example of conflict prevention, chiefly intended to prevent violent conflicts from flaring up again. The operations undertaken in Central America included the deployment of UN observer forces, election monitoring, reconciliation efforts, the disarming of soldiers, the repatriation of about 200,000 refugees, and the strengthening of the judicial system and democracy.

In Nicaragua in 1992, shortly after the transfer of power from the Sandinists to Violeta Chamorro's government, antagonisms arose among the political elite that threatened to trigger a constitutional crisis between the executive and Parliament. The situation in the country was unstable. A Support Group was formed on the initiative of Sweden and the UNDP representative in Managua, with the UNDP office in Managua functioning as a technical secretariat and representative of the UN. The aim was to prevent a more serious conflict by making long-term development assistance to the country subject to the condition that the political elite presented a united front on fundamental issues. At the same time, support was offered to help in achieving this unity. The method proved successful, unbureaucratic and cost-effective.

The measures taken in Central America demonstrate the need of and opportunities for linking conflict prevention to development assistance and the importance of co-operation with NGOs and other sectors of civil society.

9 In the light of experience: challenges and opportunities

Experience shows that in many cases the international community has succeeded in preventing violent conflicts. In addition to the examples mentioned above, there are naturally many other, sometimes little publicised, cases of successful prevention. But there are also grounds for criticising and analysing shortcomings in a number of other cases. The UN reports on Rwanda and Srebrenica and the human suffering we have witnessed in Chechnya, East Timor and Liberia, for example, provide evidence of tragic failures to prevent violent conflicts.

The conflict prevention activities of the international community have so far been of an ad hoc nature and not always the result of far-sighted decisions about when, where and how measures should be taken. Often there has been a lack of clearly defined objectives and policy options. The definition of objectives, and their pursuit, must be improved. The political will and capacity to act early and in a consistent and coordinated manner in connection with potential crises must be improved. There is a need for better understanding of the relationship between direct and structural conflict prevention measures and of how the integrated approach can be promoted and improved.

9.1 Political will

Preventing violent conflicts is primarily the responsibility of the parties to the conflict. Only if the parties make no attempt or fail to avoid conflict, and need or request assistance, is there any need for external initiatives. It often takes time for the international community to prepare an initiative, and this delay is often regarded as evidence of a lack of political will.

One fundamental problem is the lack of focus on the part of the international community on particular trouble spots in various parts of the world. Often there is insufficient analysis of the causes of conflicts and of the possibility of influencing the course of events in time. Even though conflict pre-

vention measures are less costly than measures to impose peace after hostilities have broken out, they nevertheless entail political and economic costs. Although we have witnessed time and again the disastrous consequences of letting international action wait until images of mutilated civilians appear on our television screens, it is often only in this acute phase that resources and support for an intervention can be mobilised.

The results of preventive efforts in terms of lives and material assets saved may be difficult to demonstrate both to the political opposition and to public opinion. A conflict that never materialised does not make the headlines and seldom gives those who take the necessary measures any immediate reward.

There is keen competition for a place on the international agenda, and certain potential conflict areas are neglected by influential states whose behaviour is sometimes determined by short-term national interests. Certain states' lack of interest or reluctance to take action can make it more difficult for smaller countries to make their voices heard, for example in international organisations. Long-drawn-out decision-making processes, which may be interpreted as inability to take action, weaken the credibility of international organisations and their capacity to prevent conflicts.

Identifying a state or region as a potential risk area at an early stage of a conflict can be politically sensitive and may be interpreted as failure to respect that state's sovereignty and responsibility for solving its internal problems. The scope for deciding to take preventive measures is therefore limited by the tendency to confuse prevention and intervention. But in fact, even if effective prevention to some extent must combine soft measures such as diplomatic consultation and economic support for education with more forceful measures, prevention is a cooperative strategy. Earlier action makes it possible to use supportive, cooperative measures, carrots rather than sticks.

There may also be a psychological explanation for the lack of political will to act at an earlier stage of a potential conflict. There is a deep-rooted tendency to put off dealing with problems until they become acute. A turbulent situation that is liable to develop into a violent conflict is usually regarded as a remote or even hypothetical threat, which from the decision-maker's point of view may not justify risky and costly measures. It is also not unusual for some conflicts to be regarded as such hopeless cases that they deserve neither attention nor concrete action is no point in paying any attention or taking any action; the "investment" in prevention appears too uncertain.

The political will of national and international leaders to decide on

measures to prevent a conflict can be strengthened in several complementary ways. As mentioned before, the difficulty of demonstrating the success of conflict prevention must not be exaggerated. The problem is, rather, to draw the attention of both politicians and other decision-makers, as well as the public, to the successful examples that do exist and to make them understand the consequences that were probably avoided as a result of the measures taken.

Preventive measures must appear justifiable in the eyes of the public and the media. The public interest demands that taxes be used for constructive preventive measures rather than costlier crisis management.

If information about conflict prevention and successful conflict prevention operations is disseminated, in future public demand may grow for decision-makers to take preventive action. Examples of a preventive thinking in areas such as health care, traffic planning and crime prevention can be used to demonstrate the need and the obvious advantages of taking action before the consequences become too serious.

Specific reasons must also be given for preventing conflicts. Violent conflicts cost huge sums. Preparations for the use of force, and the destruction of human life, social structures, cultures, values, mutual understanding and other manifestations of normal life that is caused by war, consume enormous resources, as also do the reconstruction and normalisation of society when the conflict is over. The annual cost of the military and civilian operations undertaken by the world community in ex-Yugoslavia is estimated at about USD 7 billion. An international system for estimating the cost of nascent and ongoing violent conflicts would provide governments with a good argument for early action. This would increase the credibility of concerted conflict prevention measures.

The incentives for conflict prevention become more apparent if prevention is compared with the other strategies that are available. Although conflict prevention obviously entails both economic and political costs, they are not as great as the costs of the large-scale crisis management operations that international organisations are compelled to launch when public attention is focused on dying civilians or forcibly recruited child soldiers. The failure to take early action often indeed results in growing political and humanitarian demands by states and regional and international organisations for action at a later stage.

The private sector and the business community represent an under-

utilised resource when it comes to mobilising political will. Trade and investment thrive in an environment characterised by stability and predictability, democratic governance and respect for human rights. Closer co-operation between governments, international organisations and NGOs and the business community can help to make conflict prevention measures more successful. Collective development of methods for dealing with impending conflict situations can increase the effectiveness of both structural prevention measures and measures taken in concrete risk situations.

There is also a need to emphasise the value of conflict prevention as a co-operative strategy for promoting human security and international peace. It is true that effective conflict prevention often combines co-operative and compelling measures, carrots and sticks. Measures taken to support the development of democracy so as to ensure that it promotes the integration of ethnic groups, to enable talks between parties in the potential conflict situation, or to impose targeted financial sanctions on a leader who instigates systematic ethnic cleansing are, however, much less mandatory than the use of military force to enforce peace.

Conflict prevention could become a normal and uncontroversial element of international co-operation if it were based on appropriate mechanisms and institutions applied by countries and organisations. Conducting regular reviews of potential conflict areas should be a standard procedure in international and regional organisations. States or regions would then not need to feel that they had been singled out as risk areas, and decisions to take preventive action would not be so politically sensitive, particularly if measures are cooperative in nature.

Despite all the good arguments in favour of early prevention, it is still a vision that has not yet been realised in most parts of the world. There is widespread support for conflict prevention in principle, but given all the wars and armed conflicts currently in progress it seems to be difficult to mobilise resources and energy in response to the mere possibility of an outbreak of violence.

We must accept that it will take time for conflict prevention to become an obvious and natural strategy for promoting human security and that the promotion of conflict prevention does not mean that the international community cannot or should not also play a role at a later stage. Nevertheless, it is high time to allocate resources to conflict prevention, both at the national level and within international organisations. One method might be to set up

and maintain funds in international organisations which can be used to finance preventive measures in accordance with well-defined decision-making criteria and directives. Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom have already pooled existing allocations in a special conflict prevention fund.

To ensure the effective use of resources, the preventive dimension must also be accorded greater recognition in the context of development co-operation. The general lack of resources and the heavy workload are further arguments in favour of preventive thinking, given that today's situation is untenable in the long run.

Political leadership will be needed to strengthen international capacity and the will to take conflict prevention measures. Together with other players, a nucleus of committed governments could play a key role in establishing norms and principles for conflict prevention. It is important to try to formulate common objectives focusing on the survival and development of the individual and to agree on certain fundamental principles for efforts to achieve these objectives. A crucial task is to explain both the possibility and the advantages of letting early warning signals lead to early action.

9.2 Political capability: information acquisition, analysis and evaluation

The political will to take decisions on conflict prevention requires knowledge about how a coherent and effective effort can be designed. Successful prevention depends not only on signs of a potential violent conflict being registered, but also on their being analysed and leading to concrete options for action.

An accurate and credible analysis can only be made where information is available from a variety of sources on developments in risk areas. Free media can be one important provider of objective information and analysis, but we have also seen examples of the media helping to spread rumours, disinformation and propaganda. NGOs operating in the region are another important source of information. There now exist a number of international networks and systems for early warning and modern technology has brought increased possibilities for disseminating information. Regular regional reviews of potential risk areas, monitoring of respect for human rights, and identification and analysis of causes of conflicts will provide further input. Information about potential trouble spots and conflict risks is also provided in

other forums. The reports to the UN Commission for Human Rights, for instance, contain valuable information that can and should be used for the purposes of conflict prevention.

Preventive measures must be preceded by comprehensive analysis including studies of the interests and values of the parties involved, identification of the fundamental causes of the conflict and a clear-cut risk assessment. A number of concrete options could be presented on the basis of a clear understanding of how conflict prevention instruments should be used and combined in a given situation. The analysis must also identify the phase of a potential conflict that is most appropriate for preventive action and should be complemented by an assessment of the cost of the alternative, i.e. the outbreak of hostilities. Designing an effective conflict prevention operation not only necessitates decisions about the nature of the operation but also an awareness of potential implementation problems and of how the operation should be concluded.

Careful analyses of warning signals also make it possible to distinguish the situations where the risk of violent conflict is greatest and the need for international action most acute. It is also important to systematically evaluate the action taken, whether successful or unsuccessful, in order to reliably identify the most effective instruments and strategies.

9.3 Division of labour and co-ordination

The examples of conflict prevention that were referred to in chapter 8 show that successful operations are often multilateral. No single institution today possesses all the capacity and know-how needed for effective measures. A variety of players fulfil important functions in connection with conflict prevention. The need for coordination and integration of various measures becomes greater the closer to the acute phase they need to be taken, and is also called for by the great complexity of conflicts.

Successful conflict prevention calls for collaboration, even in cases where one entity must in practice assume a leading role to ensure that the measures will be effective. There is today often a lack of information and coordination between the parties involved, especially when it comes to long-term operations. This problem is perhaps just as serious as the lack of information about the conflict itself.

In various forums, including the UN, Sweden seeks to join forces with the countries that wish to strengthen conflict prevention as a central element of international efforts to promote peace and security. We do so because we wish to create political scope and support for a shift towards a conflict prevention approach.

The UN Charter lays down that states have a legal responsibility to settle their disputes by peaceful means, while the Security Council bears the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the Charter provides for close co-operation between the UN and regional arrangements. This means that responsibility is shared; both states and the UN and regional organisations bear the burden of responsibility for preventing violent conflicts in and between countries.

An effective division of labour does not necessarily have to focus on the organisational aspect, but could focus on the potential conflict and its specific problems. An operation must involve players that have access to all the necessary instruments. It is of course important that the international community should speak with one voice on matters relating to a conflict in a country or a region, but all actors do not necessarily have to participate in all of the efforts. Given the general shortage of resources, this is in any case not possible.

One feasible model for the division of labour between various levels could be based on the subsidiarity principle. The initiative for preventive measures should be taken by the local parties since the main responsibility for preventing escalation into armed confrontation rests on the parties to the dispute. If these efforts prove inadequate, there should be preparedness and capacity for involvement among the regional actors, and only after that would the UN become involved. Involvement by a regional player would not, however, exclude the possibility of involvement by other regional organisations or the UN. It is also possible for regional organisations such as the EU to act together with the UN out of area.

Such a division of labour would have both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it would ease the load on the UN, but on the other the UN would not be called upon until a late stage of the conflict, which by then would have become more difficult to manage. There is also a risk in regional organisations that certain powerful states will play too large a role, and one that is not always impartial. Consequently, the UN system, and in particular the Security Council, must have access to continuous information about, and must be in touch with, the conflict prevention processes being managed by

subregional or regional organisations. If the situation demanded, the UN could always become involved at an early stage.

It is important to establish models for a horizontal division of labour and coordination between organisations at various levels. Local discussions between the parties could be facilitated if a body such as an NGO assumed the role of mediator. At the regional level neighbouring countries and individuals could complement the actions of the regional organisation, and UN measures might require support from other international actors such as individual countries, the International Financial Institutions, or the EU.

The precise nature of co-operation in each individual case will vary; each conflict has its own background and its own dynamics. The parties and the conditions vary, as does the willingness of the international community to become involved. All conflicts are different and must be analysed in their own right. There are therefore no ready-made models for the implementation of conflict prevention efforts.

10 Priorities for the future

Preventing violent conflicts is and will continue to be a priority foreign policy issue and a key feature of our international involvement in various forums and regions.

Generally speaking, preventive action is less costly than crisis management and reconstruction. Effective conflict prevention depends on a clear link between knowledge and insights about the facts on the one hand and concrete policy-making on the other. Effective preventive measures require coordination between various sectors and efforts on the part of both national and international entities. Prevention should focus on agreed and well-defined objectives.

The five main objectives set forth in the Action Plan will continue to guide Sweden's policy. In order to strengthen Sweden's and the international community's capacity for taking preventive action, these overall objectives should be linked to specific policy proposals to a greater extent than has hitherto been the case.

10.1 Priorities relating to Sweden's capacity

Much of the work carried out at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other ministries and agencies already relates to conflict prevention, crisis management and reconstruction. There is substantial collaboration between different policy areas and new problem areas. Attention has focused and consultations have taken place, for example, on the trade in small arms and exports of defence equipment. Project co-operation with other national organisations is enhancing the Ministry's capacity for effective administration of conflict prevention activities.

10.1.1 Development co-operation

In recent years the Government's ambition has been to integrate a conflict prevention dimension into Country Strategy Processes. The guidelines issued to Sida regarding its support for regional co-operation, which were adopted

by the Government in February 1999, state that the purpose of support in the security sector should be to prevent and manage conflicts. Analyses of potential causes of conflict in the partner countries will continue to be important as a means of making it possible at an early stage to address structural factors that are liable to lead to violent conflicts. Increasing importance will thus be attached to applying a conflict prevention approach in development co-operation as a whole.

The ongoing parliamentary inquiry on Sweden's Policy on Global Development is also dealing with conflict prevention.

10.1.2 Training

It is important that the experience and expertise acquired by Swedish diplomats and military and other personnel in the course of their work in international preventive diplomacy and crisis management is collected and circulated within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and also to other relevant ministries and agencies and to other players.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is to initiate a training programme aimed at enhancing our capacity for conflict prevention. The programme should involve the relevant ministries and agencies and include exchanges with e.g. NGOs. The purpose of the programme should be to enhance our ability to identify structural and direct causes of conflicts, understand transformation processes in societies and potential conflict processes, and improve coordination and exchanges of information. The ability to present concrete options for action on the basis of analysis of information received from various actors should be further developed.

It is important that the training is designed to meet the needs of the target group in question. The programme should focus on workshops in which practical examples and exercises are used to develop the participants' knowledge of conflict analysis, the value of the various instruments for conflict prevention, and the planning and implementation of actions. Recent research should also be included in the course, as well as the experience acquired by popular movements and the business community in this area.

Lessons should be learned both from in-house programmes and the activities of other bodies. The training course designed jointly by Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on human rights, democracy and the rights of the child is a useful source of inspiration, as is Sida's internal conflict prevention training. The work being done by the Commission on Coordination of Civil-

ian and Military Training for International Operations is another important source of knowledge in developing relevant training programmes. The UN Staff College in Turin provides training for the UN's field staff which could be useful as a basis for preparing Swedish training programmes in conflict prevention.

10.1.3 A forum for contacts with the research community

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs promotes collaboration between the Government Offices and those sectors of the research community – primarily in Sweden but also in other countries – that have expertise that is relevant to the Government's work on preventing violent conflicts. Closer collaboration in this field should make it easier for the Government to keep abreast of new research in a broad range of academic disciplines related to conflict prevention issues and people's motives and behaviour in conflict situations. An intensified dialogue with researchers would help to strengthen the Government's knowledge base and create better conditions for international conflict prevention efforts.

A Forum is therefore being set up, in accordance with the proposals set forth in the action programme, for regular consultations between researchers and people involved in prevention efforts in practice. By way of preparation for this venture, consultations are in progress with Swedish universities and other research institutions aimed at informing the Government Offices about recent research. These consultations have met with positive reactions. Many researchers would like to see increased exchanges with policy-makers, not least since this would make it possible for them to contribute knowledge about the causes of conflicts and conflict prevention methods that are relevant to policy-making.

10.1.4 Integrated use of resources

The integration of Swedish thinking and action on conflict prevention will require strategic use of the funds allocated to this purpose. One possible procedure would be to refine the present arrangements for funding decisions so as to meet the need for an integrated perspective and shorten processing times. The Directors-General, backed up by representatives of the relevant Ministry departments and of other ministries, will constitute a key forum for joint drafting of conflict prevention measures.

There will be a need to allocate resources speedily and effectively for

analysis and evaluation of concrete risk situations, fact-finding missions and reports from any potential risk area, and also for “track two” initiatives such as informal and unofficial mediation and negotiations at the local or regional level. Funds will also be needed to finance relevant studies. This should lead to a more strategically coherent and uniform policy on conflict prevention.

10.1.5 Internal work in the Government Offices

To a greater extent than previously, the conflict prevention dimension should be integrated into the day-to-day activities of the operational departments. This will call for new skills, changes of attitude and the development of new methods. The departments also have a special administrative responsibility for the priority measures set forth in the action programme and can identify new measures and challenges in this area. A considerable degree of collaboration will be necessary between the various operational departments, ministries and agencies.

The steering committee for the monitoring and evaluation of the action programme for conflict prevention should be transformed into a Consultation Group consisting of representatives of departments at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and of other ministries and agencies such as Sida. The purpose of this group should be to integrate conflict prevention into the activities of the relevant ministries and agencies and to promote concerted and coordinated action. The Group should also consider proposals for research assignments, particularly assignments of a cross-sectoral nature.

The ten or so cross-department non-permanent project groups engaged in various areas in the implementation of the action programme should report on their activities to this consultation group. Each project group is headed by the department that is most closely involved in the issues dealt with by that particular group.

10.1.6 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida are studying the question of project grants for the promotion of a conflict prevention culture in civil society. Swedish and international NGOs have launched a project that includes the drafting of policy documents, the organisation of seminars and analyses of previous experience of conflict prevention. These seminars will be held during Sweden’s EU presidency.

The Government is following with great interest the progress of the in-

quiry on popular movements' contribution to, potential for and future strategies with respect to conflict management, peace-building and the prevention of violence.

Sida is engaged in discussions with the popular movement network Forum for Peace Service, on ways of integrating the conflict dimension into the development co-operation delivered by NGOs.

The Government will in the near future:

- place even greater emphasis on the conflict prevention approach in connection with development co-operation;
- initiate a Swedish education programme on conflict prevention;
- strengthen co-operation with the research community by setting up a forum for regular meetings between researchers and policy-makers;
- establish better consultation and decision-making arrangements that will lead to more strategic use of funds for conflict prevention;
- develop better-integrated methods for the Government's work on conflict prevention;
- strengthen collaboration with NGOs.

10.2 Priorities in the UN system

The lack of adequate coordination between various sectors of the UN system and between these and the international financial institutions reduces the scope for effective conflict prevention. Sweden will continue to contribute to the development and strengthening of collaboration and coordination between the various parts of the UN system, between the UN and regional and subregional organisations, and between the UN, NGOs and the business community. A group of Friends of the Secretary-General is being formed with Sweden in a key role. In order to further strengthen the UN's capacity for early action, a permanent fact-finding mechanism should be established.

The Government intends to review the development potential of the UN framework for coordination, which is a forum for exchanges of information,

evaluation of risks and identification of preventive measures. Coordination within this framework includes 10 institutions in the UN system, but it can also extend to Member States. The purpose of the framework is to identify at an early stage potential crises that may necessitate preventive measures or peace operations. At the moment, 12 countries have been identified as priority potential conflict areas. The framework is in line with Sweden's ideas about the need to make UN policy more pro-active.

Sweden will take an active part in the evaluation of the report from the Panel for Peace-Keeping Operations, the Brahimi Report, which deals with shortcomings in the existing systems. One of our objectives will be to strengthen a conflict prevention approach in this area, in particular as regards post-conflict management.

10.2.1 Economic contributions to the UN Trust Fund for Preventive Action and the UN Staff College in Turin

The Government has decided to contribute USD 400,000 to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action that was set up on Norway's initiative in 1996. The fund is managed by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), which now has greater scope for manoeuvre and has been able to take a number of initiatives and implement measures beyond the constraints of its regular budget. The Fund's resources have also been used to hire staff and set up an international secretariat which, for example, assisted and facilitated the peace talks in Arusha that were part of the Burundian peace process. The Fund helped to finance an international fact-finding mission to Algeria to report on the situation in the country to the UN Secretary-General, who later published the report.

Continued support to the UN Staff College programme for conflict prevention is currently being considered.

10.2.2 Support for the International Peace Academy

The Government will give support to the International Peace Academy in New York in the amount of USD 150,000 during the period 2000-01. The Academy is an independent institution, although it cooperates closely with the UN system. The grant will, among other things, facilitate evaluation of the projects financed by Sweden that were mentioned in chapter 7, which have to do with strengthening the UN's capacity for effective and integrated conflict prevention measures.

The Government will in the near future:

- contribute to the establishment of a Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for UN conflict prevention policy;
- promote the establishment of a standing fact-finding mechanism;
- take an active part in evaluation of the report on peace-keeping operations, the Brahimi Report;
- provide economic support to the UN Trust Fund for Preventive Action, the UN Staff College and the International Peace Academy.

10.3 Priorities in the EU

The Government will prioritise conflict prevention prior to and during Sweden's presidency and make every effort to develop a coherent EU policy in this area. The overall objective is to mainstream conflict prevention into all the EU's policies. A coherent EU policy is consistent with the vision that led to the establishment of the European Union, its historical conflict prevention role, all the Member States' strong interest in the issue and the emerging common norms on early preventive action.

The EU has a large potential array of conflict prevention instruments within its three pillars. These should be used to strengthen the EU's role in preventing armed conflicts.

The Government will continue to take an active part in the preparation of recommendations on the EU's future conflict prevention role, which will be presented at the summit in Nice in December 2000. It proposes to present a conflict prevention programme at the European Council in Göteborg in June 2001. Regular reviews of potential conflict areas should become a routine procedure in the EU, and the Council Secretariat should be instructed to present regular reports on potential conflicts and measures for the consideration of the Council.

Efforts are also being made in the EU, in association with the emphasis on the prevention of armed conflicts, to expand its civilian and military crisis management capacity. Sweden will continue to play a leading role in these efforts.

New guidelines are now being drafted for the Community's development co-operation. Within the framework of this process Sweden calls for greater coherence between development policy and the policy on conflict prevention.

The Government contributes actively to the Commission's work on democracy and election issues. During Sweden's presidency the Commission, in association with e.g. International IDEA, is to arrange a seminar on ways and means of further developing the EU's efforts to promote democracy and election monitoring, including such efforts aimed at conflict prevention.

The work of the EU's High-level Group on Asylum and Migration also has a conflict prevention dimension. Action plans relating to general matters, development assistance and migration have now been adopted for Somalia, Iraq, Albania and the neighbouring area, and other countries. Sweden will actively promote further development of these efforts, which, like Sweden's policy, are based on an integrated approach to migration issues.

The EU is preparing for active participation in the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is to take place in mid 2001. As President of the EU Sweden will coordinate the preparations for the conference.

The Government will in the near future:

- work for regular reviews by the EU, the UN and other international structures and organisations of potential risk areas, and reports on appropriate preventive measures;
- promote co-operation with the EU, the UN and the OSCE through regular consultations and exchanges of information and knowledge;
- continue to play a leading role in the development of a conflict prevention policy in the EU and seek to ensure that a programme for conflict prevention is presented at the summit in Göteborg in June 2001;
- seek to increase the consistency of development policy and conflict prevention in the Union;
- cooperate with the Commission on the development of the EU's efforts to promote democracy and election monitoring as conflict prevention measures;
- take an active part in the development of civilian and military crisis management;
- contribute to developing the conflict prevention dimension of the EU's asylum and migration policy.

10.4 Priorities in the OSCE

The Government will be a driving force in developing the conflict prevention role of the OSCE. It will seek to strengthen the role of the EU as a player in the OSCE and promote co-operation between the EU and the OSCE, including co-operation on the development of the OSCE's preparedness for civilian deployments. The OSCE's co-operation with other international organisations within the framework of the platform adopted in Istanbul in 1999 should be developed, especially in the field, and the key role of the human dimension (human rights, democracy and the principles of a state governed by the rule of law) in conflict prevention efforts should be further strengthened. The OSCE's rapid operational development makes it increasingly necessary to be able to second personnel speedily to the OSCE's field activities and to strengthen the organisation's secretariat. Measures should be taken to disseminate the OSCE's conflict prevention experience to other regional organisations and to the UN.

10.4.1 *A reconciliation institute in the Balkans*

Within the context of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe the Government is i.a. pursuing the possibility of establishing a regional reconciliation institute in the Balkans. The purpose of the institute would be to contribute to long-term post-conflict management and reconstruction efforts aiming at building a stable peace in the region.

A reconciliation institute could function as a network hub, a think-tank and a meeting-place promoting the exchange of opinions between different views, cultures and religions. By bringing together Government officials, moulders of public opinion, journalists, researchers, teachers and other representatives of the education system and civil society, the institute would also function as a hub in a network between people from different walks of life in and outside the region. The institute could also contribute to the public debate by discussing matters of relevance to future political, economic, social and cultural development. The relations between the region and the rest of the world, in particular the EU, are still a central component of the process. Ultimately, the institute might help to reconcile differences and restore confidence between states and peoples, thus contributing to lasting stability, peace and reconciliation in the region as a whole.

The Government will in the near future:

- act as a driving force in developing the conflict prevention role of the OSCE;
- disseminate experience of the work of the OSCE to other international and regional organisations;
- take steps to speed up the secondment of personnel to the OSCE's field activities;
- promote the establishment of a reconciliation institute in the Balkans.

10.5 Regional priorities

The Government has identified a number of priorities for co-operation with various regional and subregional organisations and with other countries.

10.5.1 Priorities in Africa

The Government is prepared to continue to support the building of regional and subregional capacity in various ways that are relevant to the prevention and management of violent conflicts, including peace-keeping. This is natural in view of the large number of violent conflicts in Africa. Sweden wishes to develop long-term co-operation with the OAU. The OAU, sometimes in co-operation with subregional organisations and the UN system, must be able to play the key role in conflict prevention and management that befits the organisation and which the situation in Africa requires. At the subregional level Sweden should continue to support the SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD in order to build their capacity for conflict prevention and crisis management.

A working party for Swedish support to the building of capacity in Africa for conflict prevention and crisis management has recently been set up. This working party includes representatives of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence, as well as Sida, and will act in accordance with the principles of a regional perspective, long-term commitments and effective donor coordination. It will produce a survey of the rather extensive ongoing Swedish operations in the area. It is also expected to submit proposals on policy in this area, also in reference to the UN's normative framework, developments in the DAC, the EU's common position on conflicts in Africa, and the ideas pre-

sented in the Swedish Government's communication to Parliament entitled *Africa on the Move. Revitalising Swedish Policy towards Africa for the 21st Century* (Comm. 1997/98:122).

The Government has initiated a Nordic dialogue with countries in Africa on conflict prevention and crisis management. A meeting will take place in December between the Nordic countries and a number of African states for the purpose of discussing a deeper co-operation on peace and security in Africa.

10.5.2 Priorities in the Middle East

The EU's co-operation on the Mediterranean – the so called Barcelona Process – should continue to be a priority issue. This applies in particular to social and cultural matters that are relevant both to Sweden's and the EU's international relations and to the question of how the millions of immigrants, most of them Muslims, who have settled in EU Member States should be integrated into our societies without friction. The third meeting of foreign ministers within the framework of the Barcelona Process, which took place in Stuttgart on 15-16 April 1999, confirmed that a peace and stability agenda will be drafted for the Mediterranean and that economic and trade co-operation plays a crucial role in the Process.

The Swedish institute that has been established in Alexandria will serve as a meeting-place between Europe and the region and will promote a dialogue on political, economic, social and cultural affairs of mutual interest. The institute was inaugurated in October 2000.

10.5.3 Priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean

Sweden's relations in Latin America and the Caribbean can be managed through the OAS, the EU and on a bilateral basis with the different countries themselves. Sweden accords priority to the situation in Colombia. However, Sweden and/or the EU can only play an active part in the Colombian peace process in response to an explicit request from all the parties involved in the conflict. No such request has been made. There are, nonetheless, many ways of supporting the peace process. One option is to make Sweden available as a meeting-place for the parties to the conflict. Such an offer was made in February this year, when a high-level delegation from the Colombian Government and the guerrilla group Colombia's Revolutionary Army, FARC, took part in a seminar on economic and social affairs in Sweden.

In view of the risk in several Latin American countries of internal conflicts developing or authoritarian governments coming to power, Sweden will accord priority to Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba and Central America, in the context of the conflict prevention dimension of development co-operation, in particular support for democratisation. At present a new strategy for development co-operation with Central America and the Caribbean is being elaborated. Prior to its upcoming presidency of the EU, Sweden will give highest priority to Colombia and Cuba.

10.5.4 Priorities in Asia

Sweden has a special interest and a long history of involvement in the Korean question and is the only country in the world that has three official representations in the Korean peninsula: its embassies in Pyongyang and Seoul and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission Delegation in Panmunjom. Recently, Sweden has been involved in confidence-building activities in the Peninsula by visiting the region and holding two Nordic seminars with South Korea and North Korea, respectively, in Stockholm in March this year. Sweden will continue to support the encouraging inter-Korean process that was launched after the historic summit between the two Korean leaders in Pyongyang in June. Korea will be a priority issue during Sweden's presidency of the EU.

Sweden is also contributing to efforts to promote reconciliation between groups of East Timorese following the country's independence from Indonesia, for example by supporting the work being done at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.

The Government will in the near future:

- develop the long-term co-operation with the OAU;
- continue to support regional and subregional organisations such as the SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD;
- deepen Sweden's support for African capacity-building in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management, in particular through the working party recently set up for this purpose;
- actively support the Barcelona Process and the elaboration of a peace and security charter for the Mediterranean;

- promote the Alexandria Institute as a meeting-place for co-operation and understanding between different cultures;
- contribute forcefully to conflict prevention, reconciliation and reconstruction in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- emphasise the conflict prevention dimension in a new strategy for development co-operation with Central America and the Caribbean;
- continue its long-term commitment to a solution of the Korean conflict.

10.6 Thematic priorities

It is important to improve our understanding how conflict prevention is related to development co-operation, the development of democracy, as well as economic co-operation and integration. Further study of the connection between democracy and security is one important task, and the effort to increase our knowledge about the economic interests underlying conflict situations is another. Establishing the connection between trade and conflict prevention is a third priority task, and a fourth is the role of competition for water resources as a cause of conflicts.

10.6.1 *Economic agendas*

In order to improve our understanding of the economic causes of and incentives for armed conflicts, the Government supports the International Peace Academy's project on economic agendas and conflicts. The purpose of the project is to study and analyse how the scarcity of resources, the trade in diamonds and weapons, and other economic interests affect the possibility of preventing violent conflicts from breaking out or spreading. Sweden is also committed to strengthening international co-operation on the control of unpolished diamonds, which are often used to finance the arms purchases of the parties to conflicts. The design of financial and economic sanctions is another area being studied. The opportunities and limitations associated with sanctions are currently being analysed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a view to increasing the compliance with and precision of sanctions and preventing adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population.

10.6.2 Trade and conflict prevention

The Government will continue to facilitate rapid results that are beneficial to both parties in negotiations on free trade agreements that can help to prevent conflicts. It is important that such agreements also result in the liberalisation of sectors such as the trade in agricultural products, textiles and clothes. Within the framework of EU's common external trade policy, the Government intends to urge that the EU, acting through various support arrangements, should actively and constructively help to make the process leading to membership of the WTO as smooth and short as possible for countries that would benefit from membership from the point of view of conflict prevention.

A working group under the Minister of Trade has been instructed to draft an integrated Swedish globalisation policy. The purpose is to strengthen the role of politics in the globalised economy in order to enhance the favourable effects of globalisation while counteracting the negative effects both in Sweden and the rest of the world.

The National Board of Trade has presented a study of the connections between trade and conflict prevention. A project group consisting of representatives of ministries, agencies and other interested parties will be set up in order to further improve our understanding of these connections and frame a Swedish policy in this area. Its main tasks should be to establish a conflict prevention dimension in the EU's trade policy and to strengthen co-operation with the business community.

10.6.3 Water scarcity as a cause of conflicts

Scarcity of water and other natural resources increasingly represents a potential underlying or triggering cause of violent conflict. On the basis of a recent preliminary study, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will develop a Swedish strategy to explain how and in what forums we can pursue a water-related conflict prevention policy. A detailed and accurate survey of water scarcity as a cause of conflict must be based on a study of technical, biological, socio-economic and political aspects. The strategy will be to consider various co-operation arrangements between parties that share water resources and to analyse how development co-operation can be designed to prevent and manage water-related conflicts.

The Government will in the near future:

- improve our understanding of the link between democracy and security;
- support efforts and research directed at combating the economic agendas of individuals in violent conflicts, for example in the form of illicit trade in diamonds and small arms;
- contribute to strengthening international co-operation on more stringent control of unpolished diamonds;
- take measures to set up a working party to analyse the connection between trade and conflict prevention, including measures to strengthen collaboration with the business community and introduce a conflict prevention dimension in the EU's trade policy;
- improve the use of sanctions as an instrument by ensuring better compliance and precision and preventing adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population;
- develop a strategy to explain how and in what forums Sweden can pursue a water policy which promotes conflict prevention.

Appendix 1

Sweden's conflict prevention efforts

Throughout the 1990s conflict prevention has been a high-profile issue in Sweden's foreign policy and an integral part of its security, development co-operation and trade policies. The 1994 Statement of Government Policy declared that Sweden's conflict prevention activities would be intensified. A study of Sweden's participation in international military peace-promoting operations (Ministry Publication Series 1995:24) concluded that the emphasis in future should be on preventing conflicts.

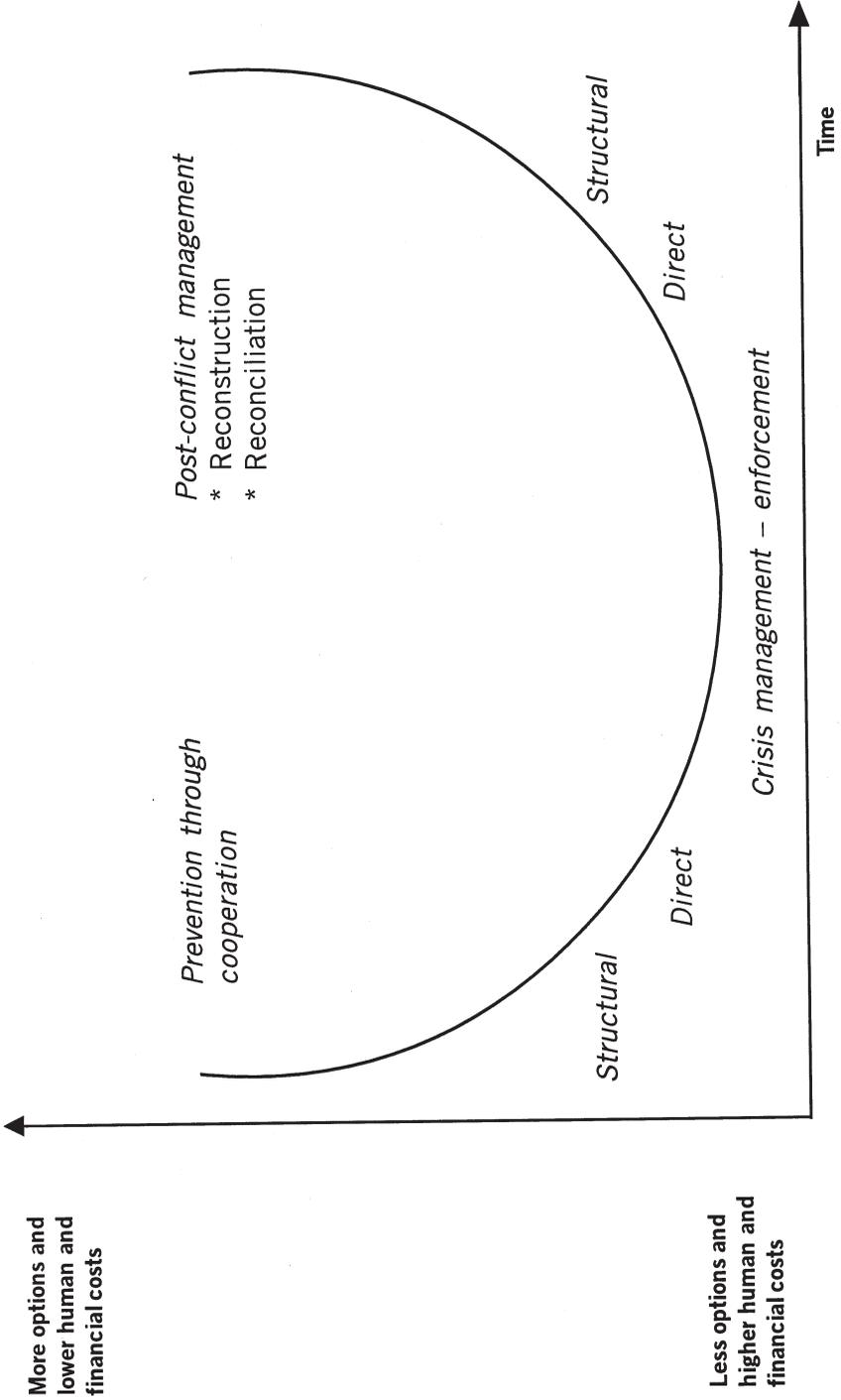
Conflict prevention was also a prominent feature of the 1997, 1998 and 1999 Foreign Policy Declarations, which emphasised the importance of Sweden improving its capacity to work together with other governmental and non-governmental players to prevent violent conflicts. Two studies, *Conflict Prevention – A Study* (Ministry Publication Series 1997:18) and its sequel *Preventing Violent Conflicts, A Swedish Action Plan* (Ministry Publication Series 1999:24) were published in connection with the policy of intensifying efforts to prevent violent conflicts. Conflict prevention also plays a prominent role in the Government Communication *Human Rights in Sweden's Foreign Policy* (Comm. 1997/98:89) and *Africa on the Move. Revitalising Swedish Policy towards Africa for the 21st Century* (Comm. 1997/98:122).

In 1998 Sida presented the study *A Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Management in Connection with Humanitarian Aid*. Sida's action programme *Justice and Peace*, the Government Communication *Democracy and Human Rights in Sweden's Development Co-operation* (Comm. 1997/98:76) and *The Humanitarian Dimension – the Humanitarian Imperative in Political Crises* (1997/98) also deal with the conflict prevention dimension.

The experiences described in these studies and the conclusions drawn provide valuable documentation, which has been taken into account in this Communication from the Government.

The Process of Building Peace

Behavioural Change – Conflict Transformation



Change through:

Actors:

Instruments within
four policy areas:

Vision and values

Clear Objectives

Capabilities

Options for Action

Governments
(local, regional, national)

International, regional and sub-
regional organisations
(UN, OSCE, OAU, IFI:s etc)

Civil Society

NGO:s

Business

Political and Institutional
Development

Social and Economic
Development

Political and Diplomatic
Efforts

Stability and
Physical Security

ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS. This opening premise from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the basis for the Swedish Government's international efforts. The use of violence to resolve conflicts leads to violations of these rights. The enormous human and material costs associated with armed conflicts between states and between different groups within states are becoming increasingly apparent to us. Early action with the purpose of channelling conflicts towards peaceful, democratic procedures and thereby preventing armed violence is therefore becoming increasingly important.

With this report to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament), the Swedish Government seeks to provide information about its efforts to follow up the Swedish Action Plan "Preventing Armed Conflict" (Ministry Publications Series 1999:24), which was presented in May 1999. The report gives an account of current thinking in the field of conflict prevention, describes international cooperation, and highlights key tasks in a longer perspective as well as priorities for the immediate future. It serves as a basis for expanded Swedish efforts for the prevention of armed conflicts together with other governments, Swedish and international organisations, and concerned parties in the global civil society as well as the research and business communities.

The document can be downloaded at: www.utrikes.regeringen.se, or ordered from the Secretariat for Conflict Prevention at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, tel: +46-8-405 1000.



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