

“Promoting lasting solutions – Approaches to conflict resolution in the OSCE area”

Key Conclusions and Recommendations

Vienna, 16 September 2013

INTRODUCTION

The OSCE Security Days event on “Promoting lasting solutions – Approaches to conflict resolution in the OSCE area”, held on 16 September 2013 in Vienna, brought together some 200 representatives of OSCE participating States (pS), international and non-governmental organizations as well as think tanks and academic institutions. The conference’s theme had been identified by many pS as meriting further inquiry, including in the framework of the OSCE Security Days, an initiative started by the OSCE Secretary General in June 2012 to enhance interaction with non-governmental organizations, think tanks and academic institutions.

In his opening remarks, Secretary General Lamberto Zannier pointed in particular to the discussions on the implementation of Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on Elements of the Conflict Cycle, during which a number of pS had repeatedly asked that more attention be paid to conflict resolution and related co-operation with track-two initiatives. The Secretary General stated that conflict resolution facilitation was being carried out on a daily basis by a variety of OSCE actors on regional, national and local levels across the politico-military, economic and environmental as well as human dimensions. He further emphasized that it was the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security and its wide-spread membership that constituted the cornerstone of the Organization’s comparative advantage vis-à-vis other international stakeholders in providing regional security and stability.

The event’s keynote speaker, Dr. I. William Zartman, Professor Emeritus at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, elaborated on some conceptual issues as regards conflict resolution, with a specific view to moments of ripeness that could be utilized by third-party actors to promote peaceful solutions through negotiated settlements.

Contributions by panellists and interventions from the audience referred to many complexities and challenges. There was widespread agreement that the OSCE has the mandate and the toolbox to play a substantial role in conflict resolution. If equipped with the political will and support of its pS, the Organization is well capable of making its impact felt on the ground. At the same time, discussions among conference participants acknowledged the need for the OSCE to focus on its specific added-value, to constantly examine possible new instruments and to ensure that its efforts at conflict resolution remain relevant and are based on conflict sensitivity and situational awareness. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to increase the inclusion of women in conflict resolution and peace processes.

In addition to the opening remarks of the Secretary General and the keynote address, the conference was organized around four thematic panels, with a concluding statement delivered by Ambassador Adam Kobieracki, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC). The panels explored conceptual and practical approaches to conflict resolution, in particular with the aim to take stock of the OSCE’s current toolbox while looking into possible new methods and strategies. Best practices and challenges inherent to conflict resolution were explored, drawing from past and present experiences.

This report will summarize key conclusions and recommendations advanced during the conference and drawn from several sources: the Secretary General’s opening address and the keynote speech, the contributions made by panellists and moderators, comments from the audience, the closing statement as well as a Food-for-Thought Paper on conflict resolution produced by the CPC in advance of the conference. This report was prepared by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre/Operations Service, which organized the event.

KEY ISSUES

1) Generic Principles and Practices of Conflict Resolution

Key conclusions

- Conflict resolution involves long-term political processes, with periods of slow to no progress punctuated by shifts in positions, circumstances or contexts. While some types of conflicts can be sorted into broader categories due to certain common features, each conflict has to be seen in its particular environment. Conflicts are highly context sensitive. They can be rooted in a wide range of cross-dimensional factors from political, to economic, environmental, or social issues. As a result, there is no single normative or institutional framework that can provide practitioners with a right-or-wrong approach to identifying the perfect solution. Whenever possible, conflict resolution efforts should be built on localized approaches that recognize the uniqueness of the respective conflict setting. To that end, conflict resolution approaches by third-party actors must be based on the careful analysis of root and proximate conflict causes as well as key stakeholders.
- To be effective, conflict resolution tools should integrate state and non-state actors through multi-track approaches at the local, national, and regional levels. Local civil society organizations (CSOs) may have a better understanding of local context and can play a significant role in supporting national conflict resolution and reconciliation processes at the local level. Third-party actors might utilize the beneficial role that civil-society actors can play in the political process by leveraging gains made through localized conflict-resolution approaches and initiatives to open up the political dialogue between state actors. At the same time, it is important to recognize that some parts of civil society may pursue specific political agendas and could thus be part of the problem rather than the solution.
- Conflicting parties can solve a conflict, *inter alia*, by (potentially) reciprocal concessions, through compensation (in the form of trade-offs), or by construction/reframing. The last one is a problem-solving approach to redefine the issues at hand with the aim of transforming zero-sum gains into positive-sum gains. By fostering reframing, third-party actors can contribute to creating joint interests and to promoting the parties' awareness of them. Solutions imposed by external stakeholders are not desirable as it may result in the parties' lack of buy-in and local ownership of the process and its outcomes. This could lead to insufficient support for implementation or, even worse, to disengagement and opposition to the imposed solution. While imposition might work in the short-run, it is unlikely to last in the long-term.
- When dealing with gridlocks, conflict resolution may be facilitated by moments of ripeness, which are based on the perception of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) by conflicting parties. The stalemate induces pain, which is subjectively perceived by each side, and prevents conflicting parties from reaching their goals unilaterally. Consequently, they become cognizant that, in the long run, they are losing more than they are gaining. In such a scenario, conflict resolution can be further facilitated by the mutual perception of an alternative solution, which can be achieved through co-operation with the other side and with the assistance of third-party actors.
- Ripe moments can provide a starting point for negotiations, although they are in themselves insufficient for successful conflict resolution. In the absence of ripeness, third-party actors could play an active role in "ripening" the conflict by assisting parties with developing perceptions oriented towards a way out of the conflict. In that sense, the work

of diplomacy is to highlight to conflicting parties the objective losses and perceived hurt they stand to suffer, while pointing towards the possible gains of a co-operative solution. Third-party actors could also revert to the use of positive and/or negative incentives to foster ripening. If conflicting parties persist in their confrontational posture, the external stakeholders may fall back into the position of a potential future mediator, constantly reminding the parties of co-operative ways out of the stalemate and offering their assistance along the way.

- There is an inherent risk of deadlock when trying to apply a simple judicial decision to come to an agreement between conflicting parties in hopes of achieving sustainable solutions to conflict. This can lead to situations with few opportunities for conflict resolution processes and both sides insisting on the primacy of some principles above others. In such cases, diplomacy should assist conflicting parties to develop perceptions oriented towards the gains that could be achieved by relinquishing the “primacy of principles”, for example by pointing out economic and political gains that could be achieved through improvements in security.
- Protracted conflicts present a particular challenge, not only in terms of ripeness but also due to their severe consequences on the politico-security and socio-economic levels. As such, protracted conflicts prevent sustainable development, provide a fertile ground for long-term, low-intensity violence and hamper the establishment of effective mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution. In addition, they tend to have lasting effects on the collective memory of conflicting parties and conflict-affected societies, which render efforts aimed at co-operative solutions even more challenging. Protracted conflicts, without the immediate risk of a comprehensive violent escalation, can be specifically difficult to resolve since the relative stability may act as a disincentive and could reduce the willingness and appetite of conflicting parties to seek negotiated settlements. For external actors such self-sustainable stabilized security situations (5S) present a considerable dilemma. Consequently, any steps should be taken very carefully and with a view to the potentially positive as well as negative consequences they may entail.
- A crucial condition for successful peace processes is their inclusiveness related to the participation of all relevant stakeholders. In that context, third-party actors may have to overcome resistance by armed or violent conflicting parties who want to control the process by keeping other groups side-lined. Consequently, inclusiveness refers especially to non-violent stakeholders and other important “peace constituents”, including women’s groups, local peace councils or minority groups. These groups and their issues need to be empowered and effectively included in the process of conflict resolution in order to anchor peace from the ground up. A recent review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 shows that, although progress has been made in terms of reporting on conflict and women’s issues, there has been little to no increase of women’s participation in political, negotiation or mediation processes.
- Insurgents groups, organized crime networks and other non-state actors play an increasingly prominent role in the violent escalation and sustainment of conflict. Although there is considerable reluctance as regards the involvement of such actors in conflict resolution processes, one way or another – and increasingly through the use of social media and the internet – they may force their way to the negotiating table. At the same time, they may refuse to partake in a peaceful settlement and instead attempt to spoil the process from the outside. Consequently, the most important question is not whether to involve such actors at all, but rather how to effectively engage the ones that are needed to

move conflict resolution efforts forward, and how to mitigate any potentially negative impact from the ones who may wish to derail the process.

- One of the OSCE's most significant comparative advantages is its ability to get actively involved in conflict resolution processes on multiple levels through its network of field operations and the activities of its institutions and other executive structures. Field operations stand out in particular, as they may gain immediate and direct access to conflicting parties and possess a demonstrated capacity to contribute to multi-track conflict resolution approaches. In addition, field operations constitute the backbone of the OSCE's conflict analysis capability, as they keep the finger on the pulse of specific conflict settings, thereby providing the Organization with much-needed situational and localized awareness.

Key recommendations

- When taking part in conflict resolution efforts, OSCE actors should be mindful of the principle of local ownership, while promoting conflict sensitive approaches as part of an inclusive and comprehensive agenda. Particular attention has to be paid to the active participation of women in political, mediation and dialogue processes.
- The OSCE needs to ensure that its conflict resolution strategies take into account areas where non-violent stakeholders, civil-society actors and "peace constituents" (to include women, youth, and faith-based groups) might be able to contribute possible solutions through localized approaches. In addition, there needs to be space for the (potential) engagement and inclusion of spoilers or at least for the mitigation of any negative effects they might have on the peace process.
- OSCE field operations have a demonstrated capacity to implement projects and initiatives that link state and civil society through integrated multi-track approaches. This highlights the continuing need to capitalize on the presence of OSCE field operations as effective entry points for conflict resolution at the earliest sign of (re-)emerging localized conflicts.
- The OSCE should continue to consolidate its conflict analysis capacity. Heightened situational awareness and conflict sensitivity in the Organization's executive structures, most importantly in field operations, will enhance the OSCE's capacity to identify suitable entry-points for its contributions to peace processes.
- Entry-points should be leveraged to assist conflicting parties with finding mutually beneficial solutions and a forward looking approach focused on sustainable development, security and stability. This refers in particular to the resolution of protracted conflicts.
- The Organization's capacities at conflict resolution can be fostered through regular exchanges with the academia. The newly established 'OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions' could add important value to the work of the Organisation and could be aimed at ensuring that recognized approaches and state-of-the-art methodologies make their way from research and analysis into the policy and planning framework of the Organization. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, could also contribute to such efforts in line with its academic mandate and relevant research activities.
- The OSCE should focus on being a "learning organization", which capitalizes on its institutional memory. Training and capacity-building for staff and mission members should thus promote the transfer of knowledge and know-how from best practices guidelines into the work of OSCE practitioners.

2) The OSCE's Conflict Resolution Toolbox

Key conclusions

- The OSCE's conflict resolution toolbox is closely related to its mechanisms and instruments for conflict prevention as well as crisis management. Most importantly, the Organization aims at preventing and resolving conflicts before they escalate into violence. If conflicts have already turned violent, strategies will be applied to avert any further escalation or prevent a relapse into violence. Efforts at crisis management or secondary conflict prevention must thus create the space for long-term conflict resolution processes.
- The work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is an excellent example of the nexus between conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Essentially, the HCNM is a conflict prevention instrument, tasked to provide early warning and early action as soon as conflicts involving national minorities (re-)emerge. These functions are predominantly being carried out by means of preventive and quiet diplomacy, including dialogue facilitation. Consequently, the HCNM addresses immediate tensions and emerging crisis situations, while at the same time supporting sustained and long-term conflict resolution. The work of the HCNM demonstrates the normative and persuasive power of the OSCE in terms of its principles and commitments and how to promote their implementation by means of preventive and quiet diplomacy.
- In addition to the HCNM, the OSCE features a wide range of other actors, who engage in dialogue facilitation as well as in mediation activities, as required. This includes, *inter alia*, the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO), his/her special representatives and personal envoys, the Secretary General, the Director of the CPC or heads of field operations. Mediation activities are more often than not carried out behind closed doors and are thus less visible to the public. At the same time, the OSCE's contributions to mediating solutions to existing protracted conflicts retain a high degree of public interest.
- Mediation is one of the most efficient methods to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. It constitutes an increasingly important instrument in the OSCE's conflict resolution toolbox. This is in line with resolution 65/283 of the UN General Assembly on "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution", which recognizes the specific role and contribution of regional organizations in mediation. The OSCE is a key partner for the UN in the field of mediation, and this partnership is fostered and cultivated through frequent meetings, joint events, staff exchanges as well as regular co-operation on methodologies, best practices and lessons learned.
- Mediation is a specialized activity, which requires specific training, expertise and know-how. Consequently, any third-party actor engaging in mediation efforts should be equipped with a solid understanding of how mediation and conflict resolution work. Furthermore, external mediators require a sound analysis and assessment of the conflict and a process plan that captures the root and proximate causes and includes all relevant stakeholders. Equipped with such conflict sensitivity, they will then be able to make the distinction between positions put forward by conflicting parties, such as in public statements or at the negotiating table, and the interests behind those positions. Focusing on positions can be misleading, whereas analysing and leveraging interests can pave the way to conflict resolution through reframing the issues at hand. In addition, external mediators need to be aware that some issues are treated by parties as non-negotiable in order to integrate any such issues in their process plan.

- Mediation is aimed at facilitating trust and co-operative behaviour between conflicting parties, allowing them to arrive at a co-operative solution. The same accounts for confidence-building measures (CBMs), which can be important tools in the run-up to negotiated settlements and during the implementation thereof. Third-party actors can play a useful role in this regard and the OSCE has a solid track record in terms of promoting CBMs in all three dimensions and across the OSCE area.
- Guarantees are an additional instrument that can be used to reinforce trust between conflicting parties. Although guarantees are often only thought of in military contexts, there are also guarantees that are not related to military security. This refers, for instance, to guarantees given by conflicting parties in support of a peace agreement. There are also external guarantees, which can be understood as legal obligations or political commitments of third-party actors concerning specific actions to be taken in certain circumstances. External, as well as internal, guarantees are given to enhance co-operation between conflicting parties and to promote their compliance with agreed solutions. In order for external guarantees to work, third-party actors need to be accepted and trusted by conflicting parties. This implies strict neutrality and impartiality. In addition, external guarantors have to be willing to allocate resources and to adhere to their commitments in a sustained manner.

Key recommendations

- With a view to the successful work of the HCNM, best practices and lessons learned in preventive and quiet diplomacy should be captured and utilized by other executive structures to the extent possible.
- Due to the recognized effectiveness of mediation as a tool for conflict resolution facilitation, the OSCE should continue to enhance its related capabilities, *inter alia*, through strengthening and institutionalizing its co-operation with the UN and other international and regional organizations.
- The OSCE should continue its strong support for locally owned mediation processes and multi-track initiatives linking civil society with state structures and empowering local actors in peace processes. This could include, among others, capacity building efforts and “train the trainers” activities.
- The OSCE should continue to build on its past performance and leverage lessons learned and best practices as regards the facilitation and implementation of CBMs. This should also include further work on promoting the contribution of the OSCE to confidence- and security building measures (CSBMs) in arms control and arms reduction as important contributions to conflict resolution.
- The OSCE could explore ways of how to best contribute to the implementation of guarantees in support of peace processes. Relevant activities could include: (a) promoting communication and the exchange of information between conflicting parties; (b) facilitating dialogue and mediating in disputes in case of (alleged) non-compliance; and (c) contributing to fact finding and verification in case of (alleged) non-compliance.

3) The OSCE and Multilateral Peace Operations

Key conclusions

- Multilateral peacekeeping efforts have contributed to reducing relapses into violence in many of the world's past and current conflicts. They are particularly effective in intrastate conflicts such as civil wars. In that regard, peacekeeping serves a stabilizing function by stopping the violence and preparing the ground for conflict resolution, including through creating and underpinning a safe environment.
- Within the international arena, peacekeeping increasingly encompasses a range of military and civilian activities, which are viewed by some under the wider label of peace operations. The OSCE's involvement has both an institutional underpinning – the 1992 Helsinki Document sets the authority for OSCE engagement in peacekeeping – and a solid track-record of practical application. The Organization has extensive experience since the early 1990s in a variety of peacekeeping activities in the broader sense: for instance the deployment of civilian and military monitors to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 1992; the deployment of civilian border monitors on the Georgian border with Russian Federation from 1999 until 2005; or the deployment of civilian police advisors as part of the Community Security Initiative (CSI) in Kyrgyzstan since 2010.
- Furthermore, the OSCE has worked alongside the peacekeeping operations of other regional and multilateral organizations and other countries both in South-Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union. While the OSCE has so far never mandated a classic military peacekeeping operation, such a possibility was discussed related to the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict in 2000 and 2003. Moreover, the OSCE's High Level Planning Group, established in 1994, remains mandated to make recommendations to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on developing a plan for the establishment and operation of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force for the area of the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.
- The OSCE has the necessary authority, enough experience and sufficient capacities to contribute to civilian peacekeeping and multilateral peace operations. However, in order to capitalize and expand on its past experience, it also needs the political willingness of all OSCE participating States to make efficient use of the Organization's capacities. Notwithstanding the OSCE's authority to deploy military peacekeeping operations and without excluding that possibility in the future, either in a leading role or by providing the mandate or co-ordinating framework for peacekeeping by others, other international organizations (e.g. NATO, EU, CSTO) have comparative advantages in the form of significant military capabilities. With a view to this and with the aim to avoid a duplication of efforts and structures, it seems thus highly unlikely – at least in the near term – that a need would arise for an OSCE-helmeted military peacekeeping force.
- Civilian peacekeeping is the area in which the OSCE can provide the most added value and from which its comparative advantage is derived. In that respect, OSCE civilian capabilities include capacity-building and reform assistance in, *inter alia*, good governance and democratisation, environmental protection, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, protection of ethnic minorities as well as the democratic control of armed forces and the control and reduction of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition.

Key recommendations

- The OSCE should focus on civilian contributions to multilateral peace operations. When choosing its role and deciding about its contributions, the Organisation should focus on its strengths and comparative advantages, consisting of its comprehensive approach to security, its normative *acquis*, its network of field operations, institutions and units of the Secretariat working collaboratively on capacity-building and reform assistance.
- A compendium of past and current OSCE experiences in peacekeeping should be compiled. This could help a common understanding to be reached and would be useful in preparatory training for people going into the field. Furthermore, awareness of the context in which peacekeeping efforts take place is critical. Such knowledge is a part of the skills needed by any peacekeeper and should be part of pre-deployment training activities.
- When required, the OSCE could consider undertaking one of the following peacekeeping tasks, according to the conflict setting and with the requisite mandate:
 - Civilian and/or military observation and monitoring missions;
 - Civilian and/or military inspection and verification and/or demilitarization missions;
 - Confidence-building measures of all kinds;
 - Liaison and facilitation of Track II and NGO conflict resolution efforts;
 - Liaison and participation in civilian and military peacekeeping operations;
 - Collaborative peace operations with other international organizations.
- The OSCE should continue to work closely with other international organizations, in particular if its civilian activities are being carried out alongside military peacekeeping forces. The OSCE could also look at how to strengthen interaction with its Partners for Co-operation in terms of co-ordinated/joint contributions to multilateral peacekeeping.
- Joint peace operations require pre-planning and anticipation by all, with solutions being found to overcome the inevitable problems of political sensitivities. Jointly deciding on an exit strategy as well as on complimentary short and long term objectives could thus be warranted before the launch of an operation.
- If deployed alongside each other, military and civilian components should agree on when to hand over which tasks from the former to the latter and then on to the host country. In that regard, while local ownership is a key to success so too is exercising due responsibility by the host country at national, regional and local levels.

4) Sustainable Peacebuilding and Infrastructures for Peace (I4P)

Key conclusions

- Sustainable peacebuilding contributes to the process of conflict resolution. In that regard, national and international efforts have to focus on meeting the most immediate needs of people. Another key objective is the restoration of state legitimacy and effectiveness, as peacebuilding usually starts after a partial or complete breakdown of the political and social order, for instance due to an armed conflict or other forms of protracted violence.
- In order to engage conflict-affected societies for reconciliation and re-build their commitment to peace, there is a need for credibility based on mutual respect, tolerance for different interests, readiness to compromise and the commitment to resolve conflicts in

non-violent ways. Moreover, peacebuilding requires resilience against backlashes and spoiling. This is best achieved through the inclusion of as many stakeholders as possible at multiple levels. Last but not least, peacebuilding needs reliability, centred on a vision of peace that is broadly shared and supported by international, national and local efforts.

- The establishment and promotion of infrastructures for peace, to include, *inter alia*, national peace commissions, national and local institutions for mediation and dispute settlement, national and local early warning networks, local peace committees, truth and reconciliation commissions as well as community-based conflict prevention initiatives, are particularly useful for sustainable peacebuilding. Local ownership is an essential condition for the creation of effective I4P. Hence, external actors need to ensure that their efforts at promoting I4P take into account local needs as well as already existing local initiatives, which could be supported and further enhanced.
- One of the essential benefits of I4P infrastructures is their ability to provide space and entry points for the inclusion of civil-society groups and stakeholders (e.g. women, youth) in national and sub-national conflict prevention/resolution processes. Consequently, I4P facilitate much-needed co-operation between the state and civil society, thereby connecting top-down and bottom-up approaches to peacebuilding and fulfilling the demand for institutionalized mechanisms of peaceful conflict resolution. The establishment of designated I4P units in selected ministries or government agencies could help link governmental efforts at peacebuilding while providing civil society actors with direct counterparts and interlocutors on the state level.
- Early warning and early response systems can be especially important contributions to I4P, if such systems are set up to bridge the gap between community-based initiatives and state structures. This is specifically critical since I4P structures might be able to respond to (re-emerging) localized conflicts at their earliest sign and more rapidly than national structures may be able to mobilize.
- Reconciliation initiatives are an important contribution to I4P and sustainable peacebuilding. Like any other activities aimed at conflict resolution, efforts at reconciliation need to take place with a view to the specific context of any given conflict. As such, they can be implemented on the political as well as on the societal and interpersonal level, with the aim of coming to terms with legacies of the past while progressively focusing on the future. The key building blocks for reconciliation include trust, justice and reparation. If applied in support of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, reconciliation activities are inherently about learning how to remember and change rather than to forgive and forget.

Key recommendations

- In order to allow for a more systematic approach to I4P by OSCE field operations, institutions and other executive structures, the CPC could conduct a mapping of I4P that are already supported by the Organization or would merit assistance. In the absence of relevant I4P, the OSCE could liaise with local stakeholders in order to identify and develop joint projects for their establishment and implementation.
- Whenever considering the establishment of new I4P, the OSCE should follow a people-centred approach, taking into account particular needs on the ground. Assistance should thus be based on the principle of “do no harm”, respect the principle of local ownership and provide support ensuring sustainable and localized-solutions.

- The OSCE can play a supporting role in strengthening the relationship and co-operation between state and civil society actors involved in I4P through, *inter alia*, knowledge-transfer and capacity-building aimed at the strengthening of capacities of relevant ministries and government agencies as well as civil-society organizations.
- In addition, the OSCE should focus on co-ordination and co-operation with international and local partners to ensure coherent and consistent support to I4P driven by the principle of local ownership. To that end, external actors might establish regular exchanges of information on activities, good practices and lessons learned. This may even lead them towards integrated or joint efforts based on each organization's particular strengths and comparative advantages.
- The OSCE has been active in the area of reconciliation for a long time, for example through its work in the areas of good governance, democratization and rule of law. In light of this, the Organization could leverage lessons learned, in particular in order to strengthen its support for initiatives that move beyond 'negative peace' and are aimed at establishing positive peacebuilding mechanisms within conflict-affected communities.
- The main focus should be on mechanisms to better integrate reconciliation into the OSCE's programmatic planning and project activities on the ground. A reference guide on past and present reconciliation activities in the OSCE is already in the making in the CPC and the Secretariat will continue to engage participating States on the issue of reconciliation in relevant fora.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The conference provided an extremely useful exchange of views on conflict resolution as a long-term, comprehensive and multi-track process, which is not concluded with the signing of a peace agreement. Participants looked at conflict resolution from a variety of different perspectives, drawing from a wide range of diverse but complementary experiences.

Contributions by the keynote speaker, panellists and moderators as well as interventions from the audience showed broad agreement that conflict resolution is complex and involves numerous stakeholders on multiple levels. There is no standardized recipe for successful conflict resolution, and each conflict setting has to be approached with a view to its specific context. External contributions to conflict resolution and peacebuilding have to take account of this and are most effective when based on conflict sensitivity, local ownership and inclusiveness.

This highlights that any OSCE efforts at sustainable non-violent conflict resolution require a well-resourced toolbox as well as the creativity to develop and apply new tools and instruments. Conflict resolution can hardly ever be achieved overnight, and if the OSCE engages in peace processes, it has to be prepared for sustained and long-term engagement with flexible methods and strategies as well as through multi-track approaches.

There is the unremitting need to promote non-violent approaches to conflict resolution in the OSCE area whenever and wherever possible, in particular with a view to efforts at solving existing protracted conflicts. This also requires that the Organization's participating States summon the political will and courage to authorize executive structures to make full use of the toolbox while fulfilling the OSCE's core mandate as regards regional security and stability.