



# preventing conflict and building peace



**nzaid**

...towards a safe and just world

New Zealand's International  
Aid & Development Agency

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## Introduction: Preventing conflict and building peace

This policy outlines the NZAID approach to preventing violent conflict and building peace. This policy is to help NZAID achieve its vision of a safe and just world free of poverty.

NZAID's operating principles contain priorities for policy development and decision-making in both conflict prevention and peace building.

NZAID will develop operational guidelines to implement this policy. Separate operational guidelines address NZAID's responses to complex emergencies and disaster relief.

The policy is consistent with NZAID's overarching Policy Statement, *Towards a Safe and Just World Free of Poverty*, and other cross-cutting NZAID policies including those on human rights, gender and the environment.

## Section 1 **Why have a conflict prevention and peace building policy?**

*"For the United Nations there is no higher goal, no deeper commitment and no greater ambition than preventing armed conflict. The prevention of conflict begins and ends with the promotion of human security and human development."*

*Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General*

### **Promoting peace and security**

Peace and security are fundamental to achieving the fulfilment of basic needs, and sustainable and equitable development. All people have a right to peace, which is the essential precondition for the enjoyment of human rights. This principle has been confirmed in a number of United Nations declarations that are supported by New Zealand. NZAID's view of security encompasses economic, food, health, personal, community and political security.

### **Eliminating poverty and conflict**

Poverty and conflict are inter-related. Violent conflict impacts disproportionately on civilian populations and in particular on women and children. The poor are often most vulnerable and conflict can hinder their efforts to escape poverty and prevent access to government services. Violent conflict and conflict-induced crises often wipe out hard-won development gains. Poverty and inequitable access to resources and services influence the likelihood of violent conflict.

*Most wars today take place within, rather than between, states and more often in developing than developed countries. Since the end of World War II, there have been at least 90 conflicts that can be classed as civil wars. Approximately 95 percent of all casualties in intra-state conflict are non-combatants. Refugee numbers have spiralled from two million in 1970 to over 13 million today. A further 23 million are displaced within their own countries.*

A number of the countries that NZAID works with are suffering the effects of violent conflict. Preventive measures are far less costly, in human and economic terms, than addressing conflicts through military intervention and post-conflict rehabilitation. For these reasons, NZAID has developed this policy on preventing violent conflict and building peace.

## Defining conflict

Conflict is inherent in all societies from the least developed to the most industrialised – the difference is in how it is managed. It occurs not only between states but also in households (eg. domestic violence), communities, and within states.

This policy relates to violent conflict, and the ways in which societies manage it. It is primarily focused on violent conflict with the potential to escalate across society and on the problem of intra-state war.

NZAID concurs with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee that terrorism is a form of violent conflict (see box). As a development agency we address terrorism through programmes aimed at conflict prevention and poverty reduction.

There is rarely a single cause of violent conflict, although it may be triggered by a single event. Rather, there are multiple causes rooted in economic, social and political structures. Ethnic, religious and cultural differences are regularly cited as causes for conflict, but these often mask deeper grievances and feelings of injustice. Those who stand to gain from mobilising violence may use these differences as triggers for conflict. This is particularly evident where there is competition for resources.

While recognising that the context of each conflict is different, the root causes of violent conflict, including terrorism, are often similar and linked to poverty, poor governance, inequality, lack of respect for human rights and environmental degradation.

*“Terrorism is a form of violent conflict and conflict prevention is an integral part of the quest to reduce poverty. Development cooperation cannot and should not target individual terrorists nor ‘combat’ their networks. Nor would development cooperation directly address all the ‘root causes’ of terrorism. They vary over time and may fall beyond the direct realm of Official Development Assistance (ODA). As the OECD-wide effort demonstrates, other parts of government are responsible for many pieces of this puzzle.”*  
*A Development Cooperation Lens on Terrorism Prevention, OECD DAC 2003*

## Building structural stability

*"Helping strengthen the capacity of a society to manage tensions and disputes without violence should form the cornerstone of all development cooperation strategies and programmes."*

*OECD DAC Guidelines*

Societies that have achieved structural stability and have functioning conflict resolution mechanisms and institutions that allow for people's participation are more likely to manage conflict constructively and non-violently, and provide for the security of their people. Initiatives that reduce poverty and inequality in health and education, improve human rights, provide economic opportunities and promote good governance all contribute to structural stability.

Representative political systems with free and fair electoral processes, transparent and accountable government, democratic oversight of security systems, and free and independent media, are components of structural stability. Legal systems (including traditional systems and adherence to international law) that protect the rights of women, men and children, and are upheld by a functioning police force and an independent, objective and capable judiciary, are also essential.

Development cooperation that promotes structural stability and therefore security is a long-term measure for preventing violent conflict and encouraging peace. Bolstering long-term structural stability is also recognised as a means of combating terrorism.

## Section 2      Role of development cooperation

Effective conflict prevention requires a well-integrated portfolio of measures including diplomatic, military (peacekeeping operations), development and other responses. Over the past decade, there has been increasing recognition of the role development cooperation can play in preventing conflict and building peace.

Building structural stability and addressing the root causes of conflict requires long-term development cooperation. This includes assistance in areas such as good governance, economic development, income generation, and health and education. These are core elements in NZAID's programmes.

### **Working in partnership**

Constructive efforts by donors at all stages of conflict can result in the alleviation of suffering and a more rapid return to normalcy. Donors work with different partners, both local and international, to prevent and resolve conflict and build peace.

The main partners are those within the country in question. As responsibility for the welfare of citizens lies primarily with national governments, development organisations assist them and civil society to meet the security needs of the population, protect human rights and promote long-term development.

Unfortunately, there may be instances where a national government consistently fails to protect its citizens. The authority of the international community to act in these circumstances is enshrined in Chapter Seven of the UN Charter<sup>1</sup>. For NZAID, the emphasis of its assistance may shift towards alternative delivery routes provided by international organisations and civil society. However, as soon as conditions permit, NZAID aims to work with the government to rebuild strategies, structures and systems to promote long-term, country-led recovery.

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<sup>1</sup>Chapter VII, Articles 39-51 provide for UN-mandated military action "to maintain or restore international peace and security" in certain circumstances.

Where international assistance is required, there are a number of different, internationally mandated organisations that can be called upon. For example, the International Red Cross movement and UN humanitarian agencies provide specialised assistance in both preventing and resolving conflict, and addressing its impact. This includes advocacy for international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions<sup>2</sup>, and the delivery of coordinated humanitarian relief and assistance.

International civil society organisations also have a critical role to play. They can help by working directly at the community level with affected populations, community based organisations and local non-government organisations (NGOs). In some cases particular skills have been developed by international NGOs in areas such as facilitation and mediation skills, mine awareness/clearance of unexploded ordnance and strengthening the capacity of local civil society.

### **Coordinating donors**

Coordination within governments, amongst bilateral and international donors, and with civil society organisations, is critical during humanitarian emergencies and during the transition from conflict to peace. Duplication or uncoordinated efforts can exacerbate suffering among affected communities and over-burden fragile coping mechanisms. Consequently, NZAID recognises the critical role provided by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) in providing coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies.

Conflict prevention organisations and networks also contribute significantly to efforts at conflict prevention and resolution, as well as coordination. Through these networks, donors and NGOs (international and local) can share their extensive research.

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<sup>2</sup> Four Geneva Conventions (1949) cover the protection and rights of different groups in times of war, specifically wounded and sick armed forces, prisoners of war and civilians. Two further Protocols (1977) extend protections to victims of wars against racist regimes and wars of self determination, as well as to victims of internal conflicts.



## Section 3      **Operating principles and approaches**

NZAID is guided by clear operating principles that are detailed in its overarching Policy Statement, *Towards a Safe and Just World Free of Poverty*. These principles are an integral part of this policy. There are some principles that have particular relevance to conflict prevention and peace building work:

### **Valuing human rights**

Violations of human rights characterise many conflicts. Building a culture of respect for human rights is necessary for reconciliation and lasting peace. NZAID seeks to protect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of men, women and children and minority groups; uphold the principles of international humanitarian law; and observe international human rights standards.

### **Encouraging participation**

NZAID recognises the importance of promoting dialogue and communication to avoid conflict and defuse tension. Conflict resolution needs the active involvement of all relevant groups within a society, not just combatants. That is why NZAID supports inclusive processes that enable the voices of all affected parties to be heard and involve them in processes of conflict resolution, peace building and reconciliation.

### **Supporting coordination**

NZAID supports greater coordination both within New Zealand and amongst other donors, international organisations and civil society working in areas affected by conflict. This ensures optimum use of resources, local ownership and control, and the best possible outcomes. Coordination between agencies and programmes is particularly important during the transition from humanitarian assistance to the provision of long-term development assistance.

NZAID recognises the importance of engagement with other New Zealand government agencies for coordination and coherence of policy and practice.

### **Addressing gender issues**

NZAID recognises that violent conflict affects men, women, youth and children differently, though all suffer. HIV/AIDS is a particularly significant problem associated with modern conflict, with a legacy that long outlasts the fighting.

NZAID also recognises the multiple and specific roles of women in peace building and conflict prevention. NZAID programming will seek to identify and address gender issues across all aspects of its peace building and conflict prevention work.

### **Being accountable**

NZAID's monitoring and evaluation frameworks give close consideration to how its policies and programmes are contributing towards preventing conflict and building peace. NZAID is ensuring that its expenditure on peace building and conflict prevention activities fits within DAC Guidelines for ODA<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has agreed guidelines to define what activities are eligible to be counted as Official Development Assistance (ODA).

## Section 4 NZAID focus

This section looks at NZAID's programming and policy work for preventing conflict and building peace. NZAID's long-term development commitment seeks to prevent conflict by helping its partners build structural stability in their societies.

At certain times, action is required to avoid or contain conflict through addressing triggering and exacerbating factors. Unfortunately, there will be other times when conflict breaks out and NZAID is required to respond with humanitarian assistance. It is critical to link this assistance to longer term, post conflict reconstruction. Throughout this process NZAID works closely with its national, regional and multilateral partners to ensure the best outcomes.

*Access to quality basic education for all children is an important step towards eliminating poverty. In Solomon Islands, while 60-70% of children enrol in primary school, only 40% complete it. In addition, civil conflict contributed to a rapid deterioration in the provision of education.*

*With NZAID's assistance, the Government was able to keep many schools open during the conflict. Over 2003-05, NZAID has committed NZ\$33 million to support the Solomon Islands national basic education programme. The goal is to assist the Government to achieve universal primary education and eliminate gender disparity across all levels of education by 2015.*

*It should also ensure that the benefits are shared equitably across Solomon Islands, alleviating some of the tensions caused by uneven development.*

### Focus: Preventing conflict

NZAID programmes focus on building long-term structural stability by promoting good governance and respect for human rights, improving basic social services and promoting economic development. Helping to create safe, just and inclusive societies is a prerequisite for poverty elimination.

NZAID ensures that all strategies and programmes consider the risks of conflict and are designed to prevent conflict and build peace. NZAID recognises that any intervention can sometimes have unintended consequences. NZAID's programmes follow the principle "first do no harm" and seek ways to provide positive support to peace processes.

NZAID supports partners' capacity to prevent and manage conflict constructively. This requires a shared understanding of the causes of conflict based on sound analysis, including the regional dimensions of conflict.

NZAID assists partners to address the root causes of conflict, so grievances are resolved before they intensify into violence – civil war, terrorism or other forms of violent conflict. It is sometimes necessary to target programmes to particular “at risk” sections of society in specific localities.

Conflict over scarce resources and land is an important issue, not least in the Pacific. Increasing urbanisation and migration are causing rapid social change and hardship, which can lead to competition between groups. NZAID is working with partners to address these issues.

## Focus: Supporting communities

*"It is very difficult to build a community up, but easy to break it down."  
Alice Aruhe'eta Pollard, Women for Peace Group, Solomon Islands*

NZAID assists partners to address grievances and support local capacities for conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, through the following means:

### Developing leadership

Communities with effective leadership are better placed to address and manage conflict before it escalates. NZAID explores ways to strengthen community, district and national leadership, so that conflict can be addressed in a timely and non-violent manner. Attention is given to supporting traditional leadership mechanisms that bring parties together to resolve conflict peacefully.

### Valuing women

While acknowledging that women, as well as men, can contribute to conflict, women often play a central role in creating and maintaining peace at the community level. Focusing on women solely as victims of violent conflict can detract from their roles as potential peacemakers. NZAID supports women's development as leaders and active participants in resolving conflict and building peace at all levels of society.

*In Bougainville, NZAID provides support to women's groups to facilitate women's involvement in the peace and reconstruction processes, and to support their efforts to re-build the trust that had eroded between neighbours and within communities during the conflict.*

*NZAID provided funding to these groups to enable them to provide trauma-counselling training and to enable Bougainville women to take an active part in the constitutional process and rebuilding of their country.*

Women often play a valuable role in educating children and young people in the mores and values of society. NZAID is looking at ways of tapping in to this experience, an example being peace education programmes.

*"Women are rarely at the tables where war is decided upon, or the tables where peace is negotiated."*

*Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM International Women's Day 8 March 2003*

### **Educating young people**

The involvement of young people, particularly young men, is a feature of many of today's conflicts. Young men and boys with few opportunities for employment or political expression and limited access to education are more easily mobilised by those seeking to incite conflict and violence for criminal, economic or political gain. NZAID's focus is on improving young people's basic and non-formal education, economic opportunities and ability to participate in decision-making.

### **Preventing HIV/AIDS**

International experience shows that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection increases during and after conflict. This is in part due to the movement of troops (including international peacekeeping forces) and civilians, and increased sexual violence. NZAID helps to mitigate this risk through HIV/AIDS education and other preventative measures.

### **Informing communities**

Independent and professional media are essential for providing reliable and impartial information to communities. Through the media and other fora NZAID supports peace and citizenship education, which is helping to build understanding between communities.

### **Strengthening law and justice**

Governments have a responsibility to protect their citizens, provide for their security and respect their human rights. This requires an independent, impartial and professional police force and judiciary that adhere to international human rights standards. NZAID is building on existing formal and informal law and justice practices to improve community safety and access to these mechanisms. It will also support policy and practice that enhance civilian oversight of the police and military.

## Focus: Addressing the triggers

Identification of early warning signs will provide the basis for early action and a flexible approach to programming. Where the potential for conflict is identified, NZAID will assist partners to address factors that might trigger or further escalate violence. NZAID aims to provide access to resources for peace building and conflict prevention, including within its Pacific programme.

Unfortunately, conflict prevention and resolution measures do not always succeed. Events that change political, economic and social relationships in a significant and rapid way can transform existing tensions into violent conflict. Sound analysis is critical for identifying potential triggers and the stakeholders involved.

*NZAID and other NZ Government agencies have played a central role in support of the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) that is restoring peace and the rule of law to the Solomon Islands.*

In such circumstances, shorter-term “operational prevention” measures are required to contain tensions and avoid the escalation of conflict. Important activities include supporting existing conflict resolution mechanisms, mediation, promoting dialogue, brokering peace talks and international diplomacy. Peacekeeping operations assist this process by providing the space for dialogue and maintaining the peace.

NZAID conflict resolution activities complement these third party mediation and diplomatic efforts by supporting local groups in efforts to mediate between factions and promote dialogue.

## Monitoring elections

Elections can be a time of heightened tensions and can provide the spark for conflict. Consequently, NZAID supports the deployment of election observers and monitors to ensure that elections are free, fair and inclusive, thereby reducing the risk of violence.

*"The Cambodian people were able to exercise their right to vote. I felt that the presence of international observers made a significant contribution to the smoothness and peacefulness of the election process." Sokha Mey, NZAID staff member and Cambodia Election Monitor. In July 2003, NZAID funded the participation of monitors for the elections in Cambodia.*

## **Encouraging disarmament**

The role of small arms and light weapons (both legally and illegally held) in fuelling and exacerbating conflict is well recognised. NZAID works with its partners, under agreed regional and international initiatives, to prevent and curb the flow of these weapons, and so reduce the impacts and duration of conflicts.

## **Focus: Providing immediate relief**

During and immediately following conflict and natural disasters, a community's ability to provide for basic needs is limited. Humanitarian agencies and human rights observers address the immediate needs of the victims of conflict, particularly refugees and internally displaced people. The scope for development cooperation is more limited at this stage, although relative peace in some regions may allow the continuation of programmes and support for local peace networks.

NZAID places priority on the delivery of humanitarian assistance by national and international specialised agencies that have the systems, capacity, responsiveness and comparative advantage to contribute most effectively to priority needs. NZAID works with UN humanitarian agencies, international organisations, NGOs, and domestic agencies that abide by international best practice in the delivery of effective humanitarian assistance.

Where natural disasters occur, NZAID provides humanitarian assistance through its Emergency and Disaster Relief (EMDR) programmes. NZAID guidelines address the particular difficulties of funding humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies. In addition, NZAID supports the guidelines developed by the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) on best practice in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. These emphasise the importance of the different roles of civilians and military working in conflict and transitional areas. Paramount is the need for humanitarian assistance to be seen as neutral, impartial and independent. There are significant risks involved when there is a blurring of responsibilities between these different actors. Because of this, NZAID is working with other government agencies to ensure the guidelines are implemented.

## Focus: Emerging from conflict

### Moving on

The interdependence of humanitarian assistance and development is recognised as critical in ensuring a smooth transition from conflict to the consolidation of peace, especially given that moving from conflict to peace is not a linear process. The early engagement of development organisations during the transition period is recognised as essential. NZAID supports efforts to ensure this seamless transition from humanitarian relief work to longer-term development activities.

*In 2003, NZAID established a Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Facility in Indonesia. This is a contestable fund offering \$2.4 million over three years. Funds are available to both local and international NGOs and are specifically targeted at conflict prevention and peace building. This includes humanitarian assistance dealing with the immediate effects of conflict on local populations, conflict management and reduction, and post conflict recovery.*

### Post-conflict reconstruction

Societies that have experienced conflict are more susceptible to future violence. Consequently, NZAID's responses in a post-conflict setting are a means of preventing future conflict and building lasting peace. Post-conflict reconstruction aims to rehabilitate a community, region or country following the cessation of major hostilities. Rehabilitation encompasses different spheres of life: governance, economic, social and cultural.

Reconciliation through the rebuilding of trust and dialogue, the restoration of stability in civilian governance and the administration of justice is every bit as important as efforts to rebuild physical and economic infrastructure. Traditional, non-violent methods of reconciliation can be useful in this regard. These activities help to ensure that conflict does not recur and some sense of normality is returned.



NZAID is working with governments and communities to:

- reintroduce and strengthen delivery of basic social services;
- restore community confidence in the state's ability to protect citizens and their rights;
- reintegrate conflict-affected groups such as former combatants, refugees and internally displaced people, in ways which are supportive of the recipient communities;
- address the after-effects of conflict, including support for processes of justice and reconciliation.

### **Disarming combatants**

Disarmament of combatants is a particularly important part of the process of building peace and security. NZAID works with others to support local, regional and international initiatives to peacefully disarm combatants, including child soldiers. This may be achieved through the provision of open and accessible information, education and communication, as well as by raising community awareness of the effects of small arms and light weapons, landmines and explosive remnants of war. NZAID supports community-led weapons collection programmes because weapons collection will only succeed where individuals and communities feel secure and have confidence in police, military and judicial systems. Hence, it is important to integrate weapons collection with law and justice initiatives.

*NZAID is supporting mine clearance, awareness and education programmes in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka and Mozambique. It works with organisations such as UNDP to strengthen the capacities of national organisations to address the issue of mine proliferation. NZAID also supports physical rehabilitation and income generation projects for mine victims.*

## **Focus: Working with others**

### **In New Zealand**

NZAID is only one of many agencies in the country with an interest in preventing conflict and building peace. For example, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), there are a number of divisions engaged on these issues. NZAID works closely with MFAT and other New Zealand Government agencies so that a development perspective is incorporated into New Zealand's overall approach to conflict prevention and building peace. This is particularly relevant when NZAID's core bilateral partners are involved, or where there are proposals for use of significant NZAID resources. NZAID will also contribute to the development and implementation of whole-of-government policies such as the Pacific Security Strategy.

There are times when New Zealand is invited to provide external assistance, such as peacekeeping, to one of NZAID's partners. New Zealand Defence Force and New Zealand Police provide active contributions across a range of peacekeeping and peace building assistance. NZAID has an important role in supporting New Zealand's wider efforts to build on local capacities and focus on long term solutions that build lasting peace and security.

NZAID also engages with relevant non-government organisations that are active in this area.

### **NZAID's regional and global partners**

NZAID works with MFAT to engage with regional and multilateral organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum and UN organisations with a view to developing and promoting international norms, policy and practice that underpin peace building objectives. This may include support for international agreements such as those that address small arms control, landmines, explosive remnants of war, people trafficking and child soldiers. These agreements are important components of global peace building and conflict prevention.

This work may also include support for concerted action at the regional and multilateral level to curb the misuse of economic and natural resources that can cause and prolong conflict. Coordinated approaches maximise the effectiveness of conflict prevention and peace building initiatives. NZAID builds strong partnerships with selected regional and multilateral organisations and NGOs. It will coordinate its efforts with the work of other donors to avoid duplication, minimise the burden on partners and maximise benefits.

## Glossary of Terms

### **Complex emergency**

A humanitarian crisis in a country region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires a multi-faceted international response.

### **Conflict prevention**

Both short-term and long-term measures, including development assistance programmes, aimed at reducing tensions and preventing the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict.

### **Conflict transformation**

Work that bridges the gap between short-term conflict resolution and humanitarian work and medium to long-term post-conflict reconstruction and development work.

### **Emergency relief**

Immediate assistance aimed at preserving and protecting the lives of the victims of crisis and violent conflict

### **Post-conflict reconstruction**

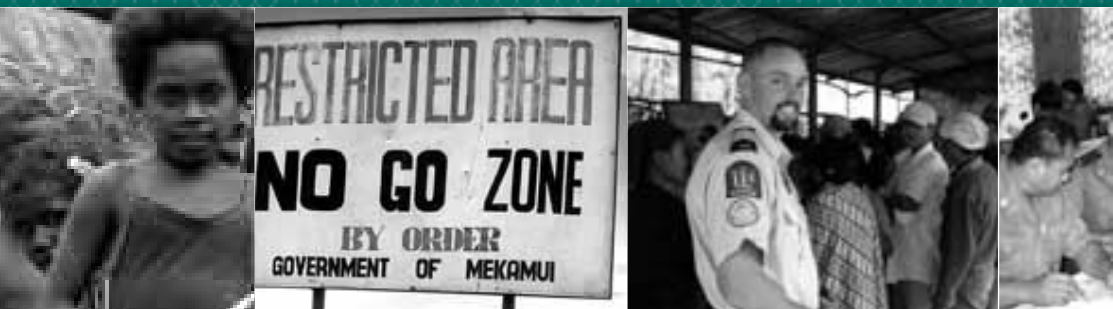
Efforts to rehabilitate a community, region or country following the cessation of major hostilities. It encompasses economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. These activities help to ensure that conflict does not break out again, and that some sense of normality can return to people's lives. Post-conflict reconstruction is another form of long-term conflict prevention.

### **Peace building**

Long-term support to, and establishment of, viable political, socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of addressing the root causes of conflicts. Peace building also includes other initiatives aimed at creating the necessary conditions for sustained peace and stability.

### **Structural stability**

Structural stability embraces the objectives of social peace, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and social and economic development, supported by dynamic and representative political institutions capable of managing change and resolving disputes without resorting to violent conflict.



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