

**Summary of the KOFF event**  
on the  
**World Development Report 2011**  
and the  
**Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development**  
**Implications for Swiss actors**

September 29, 2011, 14.15 – 17.00h  
at swisspeace, Sonnenbergstrasse 17, Berne.

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**Participants:** 18 people representing governmental and non-governmental organizations working in the fields of peace, development and security.

**Facilitation:** Ursula Keller (KOFF)

**Minutes<sup>1</sup>:** Stefan Bächtold (KOFF)

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#### **Executive Summary**

The summary of the key messages of the WDR 2011 at the KOFF event highlights that the topics of security, development and peacebuilding are closely linked. The importance of being engaged in fragile and conflict-affected situations is emphasized in the report, together with the need for specific approaches to programming in such contexts. Key message of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence is the need to adopt a broader perspective on violence, which is not restricted to conflict contexts. Therefore, a "violence sensitivity" lens should be integrated into programming in all sorts of contexts. The Geneva Declaration is currently at an important turning point, as the political instrument has to be operationalized in order to become effective. Therefore, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Review Conference will focus on the implementation of the Geneva Declaration.

In the discussion, it was emphasized that although both documents do not contain fundamentally new aspects, they are relevant in pointing out that the areas of security, peace and development are intrinsically linked and need to be addressed together – and not separately, as it is often happening in practice. Both documents are brought forward by influential actors and have as such a potential to impact on the security, peace and development community. They are also an important base for NGOs to hold their governments accountable to their commitments. Furthermore, the event encouraged a more active participation of Swiss NGOs in the processes related to the Geneva Declaration; not least because they have a lot of relevant experience of working in fragile, conflict-affected and violence-prone contexts. Entry points for such a participation would be the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Conference on 31 October and 1 November 2011; also the transfer of information about the existence and work of the regional networks of the Geneva Declaration to local partner organizations could serve as an entry. Finally, open dialogue and exchange of experiences among organizations working in fragile and conflict-affected situations, e.g. in the form of joint assessments, are seen as crucial to improve programming.

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<sup>1</sup> This summary does not claim to do justice to the complex field of peacebuilding, the input statements of the guests, nor the subsequent debate. It is meant to reflect the main issues of this roundtable.

## 1. Introduction

Ursula Keller welcomes the participants and quickly explains the mandate of KOFF to bring together non-state and state actors in the peacebuilding field. Two things have led to the organization of today's event: The publication of the World Development Report 2011 (WDR) and the attention it received since, as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Review Conference on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (GD), which will be held in Geneva on 31 October and 1 November 2011. These are now brought together in an event to discuss these recent developments in the international policy field aiming to show key issues of the current debate, with an emphasis on possible contributions of civil society actors.

The event will be structured as follows: Ségolène Adam (SDC) will present the WDR 2011; Sidonia Gabriel (KOFF) will share reflections on the WDR 2011 from a civil society perspective; Luigi De Martino (Geneva Declaration Secretariat) will present the GD; and Armin Rieser (SDC) will reflect on the GD from the perspective of the SDC. The following debate will be opened by an input from David Atwood (QUNO).

## 2. Input: WDR 2011 (Ségolène Adam, SDC)

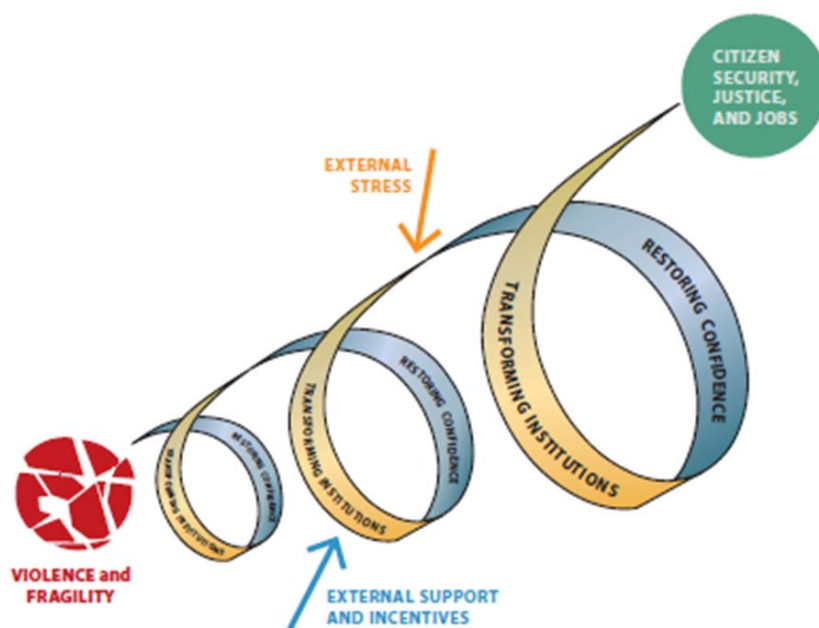
The WDR 2011 emphasizes the importance of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS) for development work. Various actors in the field of development and peacebuilding have contributed to the report to draw a comprehensive document representing the current state of the art. For SDC, the report is primarily important to have an anchor point for a common understanding among various actors of the different concepts.

Important key messages of the report are

- the deep impact of armed conflict on development, which exceeds the effect of other crises, e.g. natural disasters;
- the important role of transnational/external stresses in conflict contexts;
- the need for different approaches in FCAS to break recurring cycles of violence.

Besides a focus on the strengthening of institutions and restoring confidence in order to provide security, justice and jobs, this involves a shift away from linear approaches to a more cyclical understanding of conflict transformation. Experience has shown that successful post-conflict societies needed timespans of 20-30 years to become peaceful again. To move forward these societies to quickly bears the danger of a relapse into conflict. This understanding of conflict transformation (as illustrated by the graph below) has a range of implications for our work:

- Coordination and joint planning processes have to be strengthened. It is impossible to respond to all needs in FCAS, so prioritization has to be agreed upon by all actors, including bilateral, multilateral, and civil society actors.
- Funding volatility has to be addressed, and the way we assess risks has to be changed. Essential would be the question: "What is the risk of not engaging in this specific context?"
- Human resources management has to be adapted to train staff to deal with complexity beyond technical solutions.



Source: WDR team.

### 3. Input: Reflections on the WDR 2011 (Sidonia Gabriel, KOFF)

Strong points of the WDR 2011 are that it is taking into account the asymmetrical relations between donors and local societies, and the complexity of FCAS. It establishes a link from the theoretical to the implementation level via concepts like confidence building, etc., and has been prepared by a very influential actor, the World Bank (WB).

On the other hand, the message to provide justice, security, and jobs sounds like a toolkit, and bears the risk that it is implemented in such a way, ignoring the needs and the complexity of specific FCAS. Proper and in-depth analyses of conflict and context have to precede interventions, and these processes cannot be bypassed to save time and money. Conflict sensitive project management is crucial, and an understanding of the link between projects and specific intervention contexts has to be established in order to avoid unintended negative impacts.

Another point is the demand of quick results to build trust. Quick results are important, but they need to be linked to a long-term vision. It is not clear where this vision is supposed to come from, whether it is defined by the international community or by the local population. Moreover, reasons for violence are imbalanced social and political power relations; they cannot be addressed with technical solutions only. It is questionable whether the international aid architecture is ready for the shift to engage more in FCAS. Are organizations willing to take higher risks? Are they willing to invest more resources, staff, and time in necessary thorough conflict analysis and to foster coordination among security, humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors?

Swiss organizations work in such fragile and conflict affected contexts. There is a lot of expertise in areas as transitional justice, etc. Therefore, Swiss actors must contribute to the promotion of a broader understanding of complex contexts, and to object to the perception of such contexts as situations where one should apply standard approaches.

#### *Discussion*

The discussion highlighted the following aspects:

- Switzerland does have assets in certain thematic areas, e.g. the ability to facilitate dialogue with actors at all levels, which is not so common for international actors. This is mostly achieved due to a long-term presence in some countries.
- Although the WDR 2011 is written from a donor's perspective, i.e. in reaction to the failing of many development programs and to make practice more effective, it is deemed very valuable by NGOs. There was consensus that there is nothing path-breaking in the report, but that it is more than useful for the legitimacy of one's programming to have an actor like the WB laying out specifics and problems, but also the

importance of FCAS. E.g., having arguments like those in favor of longer-term engagement supported by a comprehensive report compiling different perspectives and published by the WB helps NGOs to strengthen their position. Nevertheless, it is not clear how long the momentum of the report will last; the next WDR report is in the making.

- There is also an aspect to the report concerning the implications for the practice of international actors in FCAS. While the WDR is also used by the WB as a justification to act in a more political way in FCAS and to overcome a strictly technical vision of development, it is far from clear how the conclusions of the report will be implemented, as many involve larger structural adjustments in the international aid architecture.
- Several tracks to enhance the implementation of the recommendations drawn in the report have been identified:
  - Donors: long reform processes are needed to adapt their methods and approaches to develop, especially to do collaboratively with other actors. Efforts are made by OECD DAC in terms of guidance, but now work should focus on the implementation of elaborated principles. The upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid effectiveness (HLF4)<sup>2</sup> in Nov-Dec 2011 has a pivotal role in these processes.
  - Conflict affected countries: The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding is deemed a valuable contribution, as it involves international actors AND countries in which such interventions take place. The Monrovia Roadmap<sup>3</sup> outlines key elements of this dialogue
  - UN and WB: Changes in the approaches of the UN and the WB are considered to be crucial. Their own transformation processes are on the way, but it seems complicated to bring together their development, humanitarian, and security actors and to have changes approved by member states. The Report of the Secretary General from 2009 (A/63/881–S/2009/304) provides a roadmap for these processes; and implications for the WB group are outlined in the Operationalization Report<sup>4</sup>

#### **4. Input: The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence (Luigi de Martino, Geneva Declaration Secretariat)**

The GD is a high-level diplomatic initiative launched in 2006. It comes out of the same discussions which have led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With the MDGs, questions of disarmament were pushed back, and the problem of armed violence was tried to be controlled via measures to control the proliferation of arms. The demand side, i.e. the reasons for the use of arms was less addressed. Thus, the GD wants to achieve a measurable reduction of the burden of armed violence until 2015.

This does not only relate to conflict contexts, as a significant share of armed violence occurs outside of conflict contexts. Hence, the GD demands to include a security perspective in development work and to bring together actors from different fields like development, peacebuilding, etc. By 2011, 109 states have endorsed the declaration. Nevertheless, the GD is primarily a political instrument, and the implementation is difficult.

Thus, the Secretariat of the GD works in 3 ways: On an advocacy track, which aims at keeping armed violence on the international policy agenda. Activities here are interventions in various political fora, like the summit of the Francophonie, or the organization of the review conferences on the GD. On a research track, evidence on armed violence is collected and published. This research has mostly confirmed arguments brought forward in the WDR 2011, emphasizing the importance of criminal violence occurring in and outside of conflict contexts. Another topic covered through research is the measuring and monitoring of armed violence. Furthermore, there is a program track, although the GD is not a funding or implementing institution. This track is about serving practitioners and

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/>

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/24/48345560.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> See:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/EXTLICUS/0,,contentMDK:22980043~menuPK:8150742~pagePK:64171531~piPK:64171507~theSitePK:511778,00.html>.

policy makers on the ground. Recently, projects dealing with armed violence have been mapped, in order to identify lessons learned and promising practices.

Armed Violence is easy to recognize, but difficult to define. It constitutes a complex phenomenon, leading to consequences on various levels (individual, family, community, society, etc.). Realistically speaking, the proliferation of arms cannot be banned; thus we need to deal with the demand for arms. Central questions are thus how can armed violence be controlled, and how can it be prevented? Promising ways (shown by the mapping mentioned above) involve dealing with the symptoms and the causes of armed violence, engaging simultaneously on several levels of society.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Conference of the GD will take place soon, with the main aim to assess progress made so far. 150 states are invited, 80 NGOs, 15, international organizations, and organizations of the private sector. The event has two aspects: on the one hand, the endorsement of the outcome document will take place, and on the other, discussion among practitioners are planned to take place. This should enable to learn from concrete examples on the ground. Successful strategies in dealing with armed violence in specific contexts are needed; we do have already enough guidelines. Tools and concepts should now be tested in the field. The idea is to develop practical tools that enlarge the concept of conflict sensitivity in the direction of "violence sensitivity", and which are applicable beyond conflict contexts. Good data is needed on what works in terms of solutions and in which contexts, in order to mainstream the issue of armed violence into the daily work of organizations.

#### **5. Input: Comments on the GD from an SDC perspective (Armin Rieser, SDC)**

From the vantage point of research and advocacy, the diplomatic initiative of the GD was very successful. The adoption of the GD by 109 states to date lays out the foundations for a broader outreach. But the implementation of the concepts of the GD lags behind; it takes a long time until actors adopt new things. The upcoming review conference should help to move from advocating for a violence-sensitive lens in programming to the actual implementation of such a lens in the concrete work (next conference 2015).

The mapping of activities and projects (see above) shows that a lot of things are already done. But because armed violence reduction (AVR) is often not explicitly stated in the objectives, the extent of activities in this regard is hard to assess. It is simpler for some organizations having the concept of AVR explicitly in their objectives (e.g. the PD IV), but for organizations like the SDC, it is more difficult to tell what exactly they do in this regard. Nevertheless, activities of organizations like the SDC, the DDS, or the FOM are important for AVR, even if it is not explicitly stated in their mandate. This also hampers the assessment of the impact of different strategies, as the objectives are not designed to take AVR into account.

To conceptualize AVR, to develop measuring and monitoring systems, and to subsequently implement these tools thus constitutes a major challenge. This goes together with promoting a better understanding of AVR at all levels. This is assumed to be easier in FCAS, as the momentum of the WDR 2011 can be used, but will remain more challenging in non-FCAS.

#### **6. Discussion:**

*Input David Atwood*

As civilians account for the majority of the victims of armed violence, it comes natural that civil society has to be involved in the processes around the GD. But to engage civil society is challenging, as the GD has been initiated as a political top-down process, which makes the reconciliation with grass-roots approaches difficult. Civil society organizations (CSO) are engaged in a vast range of relevant programs, although they do not necessarily know of the GD. The crucial question is thus how to reach out to these organizations.

Therefore, the main focus of the upcoming conference is on practice. The mapping exercise (mentioned above) about different types of programming was conducted and regional meetings in different parts of the world with CSO presenting evidence from their programming took place. For this conference, CSOs have been identified all

over the world; it will be used to bring this project to the next level by aiming at a working network of CSOs from different parts of the world.

CSOs have to contribute more to the political process of the GD; it is up to them to hold their governments accountable to their commitments. Therefore, the GD is now at a critical point: if the engagement of CSOs is not maintained and enforced, the initiative will fail – despite its success to put armed violence on the international agenda.

The *subsequent debate* highlighted the following aspects:

- Until now, there was not much response of the CSOs to the GD conference.<sup>5</sup> This is seen as a result of the top-down design of the GD as a diplomatic initiative, in which CSOs did not perceive their contribution as relevant. It is not clear whether CSOs were thought to have a role in the GD. On the other hand, the CSOs are on the ground with their programs in contexts where they do matter a lot for AVR. The GD could be a forum to voice their opinion. Especially the participation of European CSOs is considered to be important to balance the discourse mainly dominated by Anglo-Saxon organizations.
- The GD serves as a platform linking the CSOs on the ground and the states, which have committed themselves to the GD. CSO buy-in is needed to keep the topic on the international agenda, and to foster the transfer of what has been successful through different levels. The promotion of integrating a violence-lens into programming can only be successful with the involvement of CSOs.
- There is consensus that the role of coordination of different actors involved in contexts where AVR matters is pivotal. While there has been a lot of discussion of the 3C approaches, momentum is still lacking for coordination. Potential is seen to re-create this momentum with the GD, also in order to strengthen local ownership.
- The focus on FCAS supported by the WDR 2011, and emphasized in the new strategy of the SDC offers manifold entry points for NGOs to get engaged in FCAS. It is important to stay engaged in contexts, also in difficult times. New methodologies of assessment in conflict contexts equally emphasize the role of the involvement of different actors in FCAS; joint assessments and conflict analyses and the corresponding trainings are pivotal in order to achieve a common understanding of the situation and an awareness of others' activities. The focus here should lay on learning and the exchange of experiences, therefore transparent dialogue among donors and implementing organizations is crucial. This also applies to the reporting of success: The SDC thinks that the "value for money" approach to measuring success is not feasible (and sometimes even counterproductive) in FCAS.
- But NGOs should not be perceived as "consultants" carrying the risk of programming in FCAS alone; partnership is essential. Problems should be addressed openly, so support can be provided in difficult situations. Risk management is one of the major problems, security roundtables are a good starting point to deal with such contexts.
- Swiss organizations do have assets in the intervention in FCAS: credibility of a small neutral country, no colonial past. Furthermore, a small footprint strategy building capacity with a small number of staff on the ground has proven successful in the past.
- From the CSO side, there are reservations to be involved in states' initiatives like the GD. Especially considering e.g. Switzerland's incoherence to act as a peacebuilding and development actor on the one hand, and exporting arms on the other. More coherence should be achieved here, also with regards to other policy fields like trade. As it is up to the NGOs to hold state actors accountable, to close affiliations with state actors do not always seem appropriate.

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<sup>5</sup> Registering is still possible, details on [www.genevadeclaration.org](http://www.genevadeclaration.org)

UK summarizes the practical steps which have been identified during the debate, and emphasizes the potential role of KOFF in these processes. Joint assessments of conflict contexts adopting a whole of system approach have been on the agenda for the context of Sudan, but has not been implemented so far. Assuming its function as a link between state and non-state actors, KOFF could also provide for joint security/ risk management roundtables, or transmit information about networks and regional workshops to partners. She closes the session mentioning that many practical entry points have emerged during this exchange, which will have to be followed up; and that feedback and propositions are most welcome during this process.

SB, 04 October 2011