

TAKING OFF!
Project Update 2
(July 2001)

BACKGROUND

The Secretary-General's new *Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict* (June 2001) emphasizes that "primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments and other local actors". This Africa region-wide project, entitled Conflict Management Capacity-Building, is based on this premise and builds, as well, on the recommendations of the Third African Governance Forum (AGF III) for improving skills in conflict management. It seeks to assist Governments and civil society partners in sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen their capacities for anticipating, containing and managing conflict situations by imparting skills to: analyse conflicts and develop strategic responses; work effectively in conflict environments; and enrich development policies and practices with conflict resolution tools and techniques. To achieve this, the project has collaborated over the past year with a group of African and international conflict transformation specialists in developing intensive, participatory workshops that address the following subjects:

- 1) conflict analysis and early response development;
- 2) skills development for conflict transformation;
- 3) conflict-sensitive approaches to development; and
- 4) governance and conflict management.

The project design critique meeting, held in Kampala in February 2001, helped the four design teams refine the course content and training methodology for each thematic training module. We are now preparing to pilot the training workshops in order to test materials developed in this Department of Economic and Social Affairs/UNDP project. The aim of the pilots is to further improve the course material and evaluate their effectiveness in developing skills that enhance national capacity for managing conflict. This will lead to the project's ultimate goal of having such skills training offered by local institutions in different parts of the continent.

READY TO PILOT

The project is now ready to test the training material developed in the four thematic areas in different settings. It is hoped that long-term, on-going partnerships can be established to transfer the courses, enhance the training skills of local institutions, and tailor the materials to countries' specific needs.

UNDP country offices (COs) in sub-Saharan Africa have responded enthusiastically to the piloting of the four training modules. Several workshops are scheduled for August through October. Descriptions of each thematic workshop are available on the web site.

In the pilot phase, DESA will cover the cost of bringing the trainers who developed the material to deliver the first pilot workshops. UNDP country offices will provide in-country costs. Local host institutions are asked to provide logistical support and to make their training facilities available.

They will work with the UNDP CO to: identify appropriate participants (from Government, civil society, UNDP and bilateral development staff); organize the training site; and involve relevant faculty who may be potential trainers for future workshops. All parties -- the participants, host institutions, UNDP country offices, regional organizations, NGOs and involved agencies -- will participate in improving the course content, refining the training materials, and developing strategies for moving the institutionalization process forward in their respective settings.

NEW PARTNERS

Once inputs from the pilots are integrated, the training workshops and course material will be available to a wider audience. New partners, such as regional organizations, bilateral development agencies, training institutes and other interested groups, are welcome to collaborate with the project team and use the training materials and workshops to meet the needs of their staff and clients.

In addition, it is hoped that international agencies and other partners will support the next institution-building phase of the project. This will permit the UN to collaborate with local institutions, such as public administration and management institutes, universities and local NGOs, to transfer the material and have the workshops become part of the institution's regular course curriculum, available on a regular basis to national and international officials and their civil society partners.

We welcome an exploration of such collaboration with local institutions and development/aid agencies. Please feel free to share this information with individuals and institutions working on these subjects and interested in cooperating in this initiative. We hope to start with a consortium of committed organizations in three to four sub-Saharan countries in the near future and plan for further expansion in a later phase. We are also considering replicating this model of designing training with teams of local specialists, and then installing them at local institutions in other parts of the world in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Interested parties are invited to contact UN Headquarters in New York at tel. 212-963-8381 or by e-mail at: rosenblum-kumar@un.org.