The UN Security Council and Conflict Prevention: A Primer

Introduction

At a recent conference on conflict prevention attended by over fifty UN member states, a UN official remarked, "we are living in a conflict prevention moment."[1] In recent years, there has been a surge of interest and activity related to conflict prevention in the UN system, at the regional level and among member states. While the UN has made great strides in refining peacekeeping doctrine and strategy, it has also made significant progress in its political response and preventive activities in recent times.[2] In 2007, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) established a mediation support unit "to plan and support mediation efforts in the field."[3] In late 2008, DPA also secured member-state support to create forty-nine additional posts; it now has approximately 270 staff members. While this was less than half of the number of new posts requested by the department, it did help desk officers to more substantially engage on conflict prevention and good-offices work in their portfolio countries.[4] The UN Office in West Africa (UNOWA) has played a critical preventive role in recent crises in Mauritania and Guinea. A UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) was also established in March 2011 to "assist member States and sub-regional organizations in consolidating peace and preventing future conflicts."[5] In recent years, the African Union (AU) has been an influential mediator in high-profile cases, notably in Kenya (2008) and Sudan (2010–2011). Among the UN membership, especially among African member states, statements calling for the need to strengthen conflict-prevention tools are now consistently voiced. The Security Council, which now holds monthly "horizon scanning" sessions to discuss emerging and ongoing crises, appears to be a part of this trend.

This report investigates the UN Security Council's resurgent interest in and activity related to conflict prevention. The Security Council has traditionally been reactive to crises, rather than proactive in forestalling them. Its resolutions have tended to focus largely on peacekeeping responses to crises rather

1 International Peace Institute Annual New York Seminar, "Conflict Prevention: Toward More Effective Multilateral Strategies," Thayer Hotel, West Point, New York, May 4-6, 2011. For more information, see the forthcoming meeting note by Christoph Mikulaschek and Paul Romita, "Conflict Prevention: Toward More Effective Multilateral Strategies," New York: International Peace Institute (2011).

2 Interview with UN official, New York, May 17, 2011.

3 UN Department of Political Affairs, "Mediation Support," available at www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/mediation_support .

4 Interview with UN Department of Political Affairs official, New York, May 17, 2011.

5 UNOCA, "United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa," available at www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/undpa/shared/undpa/pdf/UNOCA%20Press%20Kit.pdf . UNOCA is DPA's third regional office. The first one, UNOWA, was established in January 2002; the second one, the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) was established in December 2007.

than preventive measures as outlined in Chapter VI of the UN Charter.[6] However, as this report demonstrates, there has been a considerable amount of activity in recent years in the council intensifying its preventive work, as well as its focus on postconflict peacebuilding to prevent relapse into violence.

This report seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is conflict prevention, and what is its relationship to the work of the Security Council?
- What elements of the UN Charter undergird the council's conflict-prevention activities?
- What is the historical background of the council's conflict-prevention work?
- What are its recent activities in this area?
- Why has the council been focusing its attention on prevention at this particular moment?
- What are some of the challenges to the prevention work of the UN in general and the council in particular?
- What are some ideas for improving the council's work on conflict prevention?

Some key findings of the report include the following:

- The council has consistently taken a comprehensive view of conflict prevention, emphasizing that there are many interconnected elements to effective prevention strategies, including (but not limited to) early-warning mechanisms, mediation, disarmament, postconflict peacebuilding, and longer-term development.
- The council has also consistently been aware that it is one small part of the prevention puzzle. In its resolutions and presidential statements, it has underscored that prevention also requires the engagement of national actors, regional and subregional organizations, various parts of the UN system, and other multilateral actors.
- The council appears to have developed a renewed interest in conflict-prevention-related issues in

recent times. Its monthly "horizon scanning" briefings with DPA, which explore threats to peace and security at both country-specific and thematic levels, are a testament to this. While counterterrorism and small arms have long been on its agenda, it is also beginning to focus with greater regularity on other "systemic issues" such as drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Finally, as part of a strategy to prevent conflict relapse, it has in recent years focused significant time and energy on postconflict peacebuilding.

- Many factors account for the council's current interest in conflict prevention, including, most notably, the perceived overstretch and high financial cost of UN peacekeeping operations and the human and material toll of warfare. In many ways, this renewed interest mirrors the council's earlier engagement with the topic in the late 1990s and early 2000s after some high-profile failures of UN peacekeeping missions in the 1990s.
- At the country-specific level, the council has done much conflict-prevention work since August 2007 under the agenda item "peace and security in Africa." This has enabled the council to pass resolutions and issue presidential statements on emerging crises, without taking the more politically sensitive step of placing these situations on the council's agenda in a country-specific context.[7]
- While the council has invested considerable time and energy in conflict prevention and achieved some successes over the years, these efforts are hindered by the council's formal working methods and the political inequalities inherent in its design.[8] More substantive interactive discussion could be useful in generating enhanced conflict-prevention strategies. At the same time, it is a reality of international politics that the veto-wielding permanent members have the ability to determine whether the council will respond to emerging crises.[9]

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6 Colin Keating, "Non-Paper for Opening Plenary Meeting, Prevention of Conflict," June 3, 2008, in *IPI Blue Paper* No. 7, Conflict Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 2009, pp. 31-39.

7 Point made to author by a UN Secretariat official in the Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD), July 6, 2011.

8 These factors could be a criticism of the council's work in general, but are worth noting in the context of conflict prevention because they are at times hindrances to effective action in crisis situations.

9 The permanent members can veto resolutions on all but procedural issues.

What is Conflict Prevention, and What is its Relationship to the Security Council?

Conflict prevention is multifaceted. It consists of efforts to prevent violent conflicts from breaking out, or from escalating, or from returning after the fact.[10] Indeed, preventing conflict-relapse is a principal focus of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and overlaps with efforts at conflict management.[11]

Distinctions are often made between *operational* prevention and *structural* prevention. More recently, the phrase *systemic prevention* has also entered the discourse.

- *Operational prevention* describes the wide range of instruments used to prevent the proximate outbreak of violent conflict or limit its escalation. It includes tools such as early-warning mechanisms, preventive diplomacy, arms embargoes, sanctions, short-term missions,[12] and preventive troop deployments.[13]

- *Structural prevention* addresses underlying political and/or socioeconomic factors that could lead to intrastate or interstate conflict over the long term.[14]

- *Systemic prevention* attempts to address global risks that can contribute to conflict and that also transcend particular states—e.g., climate pressures, illegal financial flows, and transnational organized crime.[15]

The Security Council is engaged in all three types of prevention. While it is perhaps best known for its role in operational prevention, the council is also becoming increasingly involved in both structural prevention and systemic prevention. For example, with respect to structural prevention, the council has, in recent years, focused extensively on postconflict peacebuilding, which seeks to develop strategies to avoid a relapse into violent conflict. There is indeed a growing interest among council members in ensuring that the peace operations the council mandates provide a strong foundation upon which longer-term socioeconomic development can take hold.[16] Furthermore, the council is also increasingly focusing on the security implications of cross-border challenges—so-called systemic threats—such as organized crime and drug trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and climate change.

It should be stated at the outset that this report focuses primarily on the council's burgeoning interest in conflict prevention with only a limited focus on peacekeeping operations. There are two reasons for this more narrow focus: first, the broader definition of conflict prevention is expansive to the point of diluting the conceptual clarity of the term. Theoretically, nearly everything the Security Council does could arguably constitute a form of conflict prevention if peacekeeping is a key part of the definition, given the council's focus on peacekeeping in both country-specific cases and as a thematic issue. More importantly, with the exception of preventive deployment (used only once in the UN's history),[17] council members often view peacekeeping as a tool discrete from preventive action; in fact, as will be discussed in this report, the high material and human costs of peacekeeping are often cited as rationales for enhanced investment in conflict prevention.

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10 As noted in the 2011 World Development Report, "90% of conflicts initiated in the 21st century were in countries that had already had a civil war." World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC, 2011), p. 57.

11 Elizabeth M. Cousens, "Conflict Prevention," in *The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, edited by David M. Malone (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004), pp. 105-107.

12 Ibid., p. 105. Cousens distinguishes between visiting and negotiating missions conducted by the Security Council members and fact-finding missions authorized by it.

13 For a discussion of operational prevention, see Carnegie Corporation of New York, "Final Report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict," pp. 39-67.

14 For a discussion of structural prevention, see ibid., pp. 69-102.

15 Thanks to a presenter who defined "systemic prevention" at the International Peace Institute's annual New York Seminar on the theme of conflict prevention, West Point, New York, May 5, 2011. See also United Nations Secretary-General, *Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict*, UN Doc. A/60/891, July 18, 2006.

16 See, for example, Security Council debates (and resultant presidential statements) on "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Institution Building," UN Doc. S/PV.6472 and Resumption 1 and UN Doc. S/PRST/2011/4 (January 21, 2011), and on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: the Interdependence Between Security and Development," UN Doc. S/PV.6479 and Resumption 1 and UN Doc. S/PRST/2011/4 (February 11, 2011).

17 United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (March 31, 1995–February 28, 1999).

What Elements of the UN Charter Undergird the Council's Conflict-Prevention Activities?

The animating vision behind the establishment of the United Nations was "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," an oft-cited and pithy phrase from the Preamble of the UN Charter that captured the lofty aspirations of a world emerging from the bloodiest conflict in human history, one which claimed more than 50 million lives. As the United Nations organ entrusted with the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council's role in conflict prevention is critical among UN entities. While the council has broadened its interpretation of "threats to international peace and security" to include several intrastate conflicts, its conflict-prevention efforts are firmly rooted in the UN Charter. In addition to the famous line from the Preamble, conflict-prevention language also features prominently in the Charter in Chapter I, "Purposes and Principles," Chapter VI, "Pacific Settlement of Disputes," Chapter VII, "Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression," and Chapter VIII, "Regional Arrangements." For example,

- Chapter I, Article 1:1 notes that one of the main purposes of the organization is "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and…to bring about by peaceful means…adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace."

- Chapter VI, Article 33:2 states, "The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute" through means enumerated in Article 33:1, including "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice."

- Chapter VI, Article 34 states, "The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security."

- Chapter VI, Article 36:1 notes, "The Security Council may, at any stage of a dispute of the nature referred in Article 33 [one which has the potential to undermine international peace and security] or of a situation of like nature, recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment."

- Chapter VII, Article 40 states, "In order to prevent an aggravation of the situation, the Security Council may…call upon the parties concerned to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable."

- Chapter VIII, Article 52:2 states, "The Members of the United Nations…shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through…regional arrangements or by…regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council."

- Chapter VIII, Article 52:3 indicates, "The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through…regional arrangements or by…regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council."

- Chapter VIII, Article 54 states, "The Security Council shall at all times be kept fully informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation under regional arrangements or by regional agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security."

What is the Historical Background of the Council's Conflict-Prevention Work?

During the Cold War, the Security Council was largely crippled by big-power politics and its conflict-prevention efforts were marginal. In the immediate post-Cold War era, without the gridlock of veto-wielding superpowers consistently blocking council action, there was a renewed sense of optimism about the UN's potential to maintain global peace and security. On January 31, 1992, the

Security Council held its first debate at the head-of-state level. Participants expressed the optimism of a new era. The presidential statement issued at the end of the meeting captured the mood: "This meeting takes place at a time of momentous change. The ending of the Cold War has raised hopes for a safer, more equitable and more human world."[18] In the presidential statement, the council requested that the Secretary-General prepare a report on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. It also suggested that "the Secretary-General's analysis and recommendations could cover the role of the United Nations in identifying potential crises and areas of instability as well as the contribution to be made by regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter in helping the work of the Council."[19]

In the ensuing report, *An Agenda for Peace*, released in June 1992, the Secretary-General delineated what, in his view, were the elements of preventive diplomacy, including confidence building, fact finding, early warning, preventive deployment, and the use of demilitarized zones. He also introduced into the mainstream of UN discourse the term "post-conflict peace-building," which he described as "comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people."[20] He added that: "the concept of peace-building as the construction of a new environment should be viewed as the counterpart of preventive diplomacy, which seeks to avoid the breakdown of peaceful conditions."[21] This perspective, envisioning preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding as two sides of the same coin and important instruments in preventing conflict (re)occurrence, has become a consistent theme in Security Council presidential statements and resolutions over the years.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, the euphoria that greeted the early post-Cold War period had largely evaporated; expectations that a Security Council unhindered by the gridlock of opposing superpowers could solve the world's peace and security challenges went largely unfulfilled. By 1996, fourteen of Africa's fifty-three countries were engulfed in violent conflict.[22] The trauma of failures to prevent massacres in Rwanda and Srebrenica, which occurred under the UN's watch, became an indelible stain on the organization's reputation. There was a profound sense of disappointment with the council's performance in both cases.

Accordingly, when the council held its first ministerial debate on Africa in September 1997 under the US presidency, conflict prevention and resolution were very much on the minds of many of the participants. In the presidential statement that resulted from the debate, council members stated that they were "gravely concerned by the number and intensity of armed conflicts on the continent" and they requested a report from the Secretary-General "regarding the sources of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent and address these conflicts, and how to lay the foundation for durable peace and economic growth following their resolution."[23]

The resulting Secretary-General's report, released in April 1998, entitled *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*, was broad in scope, offering a variety of suggestions to enhance the UN's conflict prevention architecture that ranged from curtailing the proliferation of small arms and refining sanctions to helping to build the capacity of regional and subregional organizations and fostering integrated peacebuilding strategies. The report also emphasized the importance of good governance and development as key factors in promoting sustainable peace. At the request of the council, the report was also submitted to the General Assembly because of the council's recognition that it was only one piece of a broader network of actors within and outside the UN system that ideally works together to prevent conflict.

By 2000, conflict prevention had become a recurring issue at the thematic level on the council's

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18 UN Security Council, "Note by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/23500, January 31, 1992.

19 Ibid.

20 United Nations Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, UN Doc. A/47/277–S/24111, June 17, 1992, para. 55.

21 Ibid., para. 57.

22 United Nations Secretary-General, *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*, UN Doc. A/52/871–S/1998/318, April 13, 1998, p. 3.

23 UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/1997/46, September 25, 1997.

agenda. Council debates on the topic were held in November 1999 and July 2000. Both resulted in substantive presidential statements that shared much of the same language, stressing "the importance of a coordinated international response to economic, social, cultural [and] humanitarian problems"[24] and recognizing that "early warning, preventive deployment, preventive disarmament and post-conflict peacebuilding are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy."[25] The statements recognized the importance of cooperation with regional organizations, and underscored the usefulness of Security Council missions in helping to prevent conflict. The threat to peace and security posed by the illicit trade in small arms was also a prominent theme of both statements. Development assistance was emphasized as part of a broad conflict-prevention strategy in both documents.

The 2000 presidential statement invited the Secretary-General to submit a report on conflict prevention. The resulting June 2001 report, *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, was the first comprehensive report produced by a Secretary-General on the topic. In the report, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed his desire "to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention."[26] The report distinguished between *operational prevention*, measures taken in the midst of an immediate crisis, and *structural prevention*, longer-term efforts that strive to address the potential root causes of conflict (e.g., socioeconomic inequality, ethnic discrimination, lack of participatory politics, human rights abuses, etc.). It stated that conflict-prevention strategies should include both types of prevention, employing "a comprehensive approach that encompasses both short-term and long-term political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, developmental, institutional and other measures taken by the international community, in cooperation with national and regional actors."[27] The report highlighted the relationship between development

and sustainable peace. It offered a total of twenty-nine recommendations for different parts of the UN system (including the Security Council), member states, NGOs, and the donor community to help promote conflict prevention.

Over the years, some of the report's recommendations for the Security Council have become an important part of the council's work. The report's call to integrate peacebuilding elements into the mandates of UN peacekeeping missions has become standard fare. Likewise, as recommended by the report, mandates for UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions include disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration elements, as appropriate. Indeed, these recommendations were incorporated into Security Council Resolution 1366, which was adopted in August 2001 after the council considered the Secretary-General's report. The Secretary-General's report also recommended the council "consider…an ad-hoc working group" on prevention. Several months later, in March 2002, the council established the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa through a presidential statement that was issued in the aftermath of a debate on the thematic issue, "situation in Africa."[28] However, the working group has not managed "to discuss [country-specific] prevention cases on a continuing basis,"[29] as envisioned by the report.

At the thematic level, the council's engagement with conflict prevention as a collective body in the three years leading up to the 2005 World Summit was minimal. There were no debates in the council on "the prevention of armed conflict" as a distinct topic during this period, while debates on related subjects (e.g., "pacific settlement of disputes" and "post-conflict national reconciliation") were quite modest. The council held one debate and issued a presidential statement on the "pacific settlement of disputes" in May 2003, as well as one debate on "post-conflict national reconciliation" in January 2004, which also resulted in a presidential

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24 See UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/1999/34, November 30, 1999 and UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2000/25, July 20, 2000.

25 Ibid.

26 United Nations Secretary-General, *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, UN Doc. A/55/985-S/2001/574, June 7, 2001, p. 1.

27 Ibid., p. 36.

28 See UN Security Council, "The Situation in Africa," UN Doc. S/PV.4465, January 31, 2002, and UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2002/2, January 31, 2002.

29 See United Nations Secretary-General, *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, p. 12.

statement.[30] It is striking to contrast the council's limited focus on conflict prevention during this period with its enormous engagement with issues such as counterterrorism and the Middle East (under the agenda item, "Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question"). In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the council held thirty-four meetings on terrorism between 2002 and 2004. In the same two-year period, the council held fifty-eight meetings on the "Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question"; this volume of meetings on this one agenda item was largely in reaction to the heightened violence between Israel and the Palestinians in the midst of the Second Intifada.

Nonetheless, within the context of a Security Council subsidiary body—the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa—some progress was made on preventive issues between 2002 and 2004.[31] Through letters to the broader council, the working group made sensible recommendations with respect to the responsibilities of "groups of friends" and the appointment of personnel to leadership positions in the UN. For example, it suggested that groups of friends are most effective in supporting the council when their responsibilities are clearly delineated and when they focus on the implementation of agreements that have already been made.[32] Likewise, the working group noted that Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) should be appointed based on their managerial skills and should work closely with counterparts in regional and subregional organizations.[33] In June 2003, the working group played an important role in planning the joint ECOSOC–Security Council trip to Guinea-Bissau. It later collaborated with the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau and ECOSOC's Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to develop an Emergency Economic Management Fund for the country.[34] Much of the focus on Guinea-Bissau can

be explained by the fact that fellow-lusophone country Angola chaired the working group in 2003-2004.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, certain patterns had emerged in the council's decisions on conflict prevention at the thematic level. These continuities, which continue to the current day, mirrored the thinking of Secretary-General Annan, reflected in his April 1998 report on *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa* and his June 2001 report on the *Prevention of Armed Conflict*. First, in keeping with a core premise of the 2001 report, the council has consistently recognized that conflict prevention requires the engagement of many different actors; conflict prevention should involve the entire UN system, while also drawing on the comparative advantages of other national, regional, and international actors. Second, council members have also repeatedly noted the importance of strengthening the capacity of regional arrangements in addressing emerging and ongoing crises, which is referred to in the 1998 and 2001 reports. Third, there has been a long-standing appreciation of the value of postconflict peacebuilding in preventing conflict recurrence and of the importance of development as key factors in promoting sustainable peace, as argued in both the 1998 and 2001 reports.

Council decisions on conflict prevention were also consistent with trends occurring within the wider debate on the issue. By 2005, the importance of development as a conflict-prevention tool had become accepted wisdom across the UN system and the development community at large.[35] For example, prevention elements had been integrated into UN planning documents, such as common country assessments and development assistance frameworks.[36] By the mid-2000s, in line with the council's emphasis on the centrality of regional organizations to conflict prevention, the African Union had established conflict-prevention

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30 The council debated the "pacific settlement of disputes" (UN Doc. S/PV.4753) and issued a presidential statement (UN Doc. S/PRST/2003/5) on the topic on May 13, 2003. The council debated "post-conflict national reconciliation: role of the UN" (UN Doc. S/PV.4903) and issued a presidential statement (UN Doc. S/PRST/2004/2) on the topic on January 26, 2004.

31 During this period the working group was chaired by Mauritius (March 2002–December 2002) and Angola (January 2003–December 2004).

32 See UN Doc. S/2002/979, August 29, 2002.

33 See UN Doc. S/2002/1352, December 12, 2002.

34 These early activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa are recounted in Security Council Report, "Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa," *Update Report* No. 3, August 24, 2007, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.3198353/k.730B/Update_Report_No_3_Conflict_Prevention_and_Resolution_in_Africa_br_24_August_2007.htm .

35 Cousens, "Conflict Prevention," p. 105.

36 Ibid.

mechanisms as part of its peace and security architecture, including, most notably, the continental early-warning system and the AU Panel of the Wise, a group of five eminent African figures representing each region of the continent and responsible for supporting "the efforts of the Peace and Security Council and those of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, especially in the area of Conflict Prevention."[37] The establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), created to assist in the recovery of postconflict countries, was also one of the key outcomes of the 2005 World Summit. The PBC's creation was very much in line with the council's emphasis on postconflict peacebuilding as an important strategy in preventing conflict relapse.

In the *2005 World Summit Outcome* document, world leaders stated their "commitment to promote a culture of prevention of armed conflict as a means of effectively addressing the interconnected security and development challenges faced by peoples throughout the world, as well as to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations for the prevention of armed conflict."[38] Nonetheless, lingering concerns about conflict prevention among many developing countries, which had colored the General Assembly debate on the so-called Brahimi report in 2000,[39] once again came to a head at the summit in the discussions about the creation of the PBC. Many developing countries were wary of giving the PBC a prevention mandate, as had been recommended by the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change in its December 2004 report, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*.[40]

Ultimately, the PBC was only given a mandate to assist in postconflict cases. There was concern that conflict prevention could be used as a pretext for strong countries to intervene in the domestic affairs of less powerful countries in pursuit of naked political and economic gain. By repeatedly affirming its "commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States" in several documents on conflict prevention between 1999 and 2005, the Security Council demonstrated sensitivity to these concerns, although it had limited traction in addressing them.[41]

While the Security Council passed a resolution on conflict prevention with a focus on Africa (Resolution 1625) during the 2005 World Summit, progress on its implementation has been uneven. Although the Secretary-General's January 2008 report on the implementation of Resolution 1625 was generally upbeat, he conceded that "despite the increased recognition of the utility and effective-ness of preventive measures, a considerable gap remains between rhetoric and reality…the overriding challenge for the international community remains the development of more effective strategies for preventing conflict."[42] This assessment of the implementation of Resolution 1625 is as valid today as it was in January 2008. It is promising, for example, that the UN Office in West Africa (UNOWA) has been quite effective in mediating conflicts in West Africa in recent years. On the other hand, notably little headway has been made on the resolution's recommendation that "African states and the international community…fully cooperate in developing the capacities of African regional and subregional organizations to deploy both civilian and military assets quickly when needed."[43] In particular, progress has been slow in developing the African Union's ten-year capacity-building program and its standby force.

One of the more notable outcomes of the 2005 World Summit was the agreement of member states to strengthen the Secretary-General's good-offices capacities, including those relating to mediation. In

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37 African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*, Article 11:1, adopted at the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Durban, July 9, 2002.

38 United Nations, *2005 World Summit Outcome*, UN Doc. A/60/L.1, September15, 2005, para. 74.

39 United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/55/305–S/2000/809, August 21, 2000.

40 See UN Doc. A/59/565.

41 The phrase occurs in UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/1999/34, November 30, 1999; UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2000/25 July 20, 2000, and UN Security Council Resolution 1366 (August 30, 2001), UN Doc. S/RES/1366. Similar language is also incorporated into UN Security Council Resolution 1625 (September 14, 2005) on the Security Council's role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa, UN Doc. S/RES/1625.

42 See United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1625 (2005) on Conflict Prevention, particularly in Africa," UN Doc. S/2008/18, January 14, 2008.

43 Ibid.

2007, the Mediation Support Unit was established in the Department of Political Affairs. A growing appreciation among UN member states for the value of mediation as a peacemaking tool was likewise becoming apparent. It may be that successful, high-level mediation efforts in recent years in Kenya, Guinea, and elsewhere also created a bridge toward enhanced acceptance by the UN membership of the broader and more politically-charged issue of conflict prevention.[44]

What are the Council's Recent Activities in Conflict Prevention?

PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA ON THE AGENDA

In many ways, 2008 marked a seminal year for the council in its shift toward a renewed interest in conflict prevention. The council was able to focus on a series of emerging crises in Africa under the agenda heading "peace and security in Africa,"[45] avoiding the political challenges of putting these situations on the agenda in country-specific contexts. Using this approach, the council welcomed the African Union's mediation to the post-election crisis in Kenya and urged the parties to "foster reconciliation…and to engage fully in finding a sustainable political solution" to the crisis,[46] called for a ceasefire between Ethiopia and Eritrea and diplomatic means to resolve their dispute,[47] and condemned the coup in Mauritania.[48] Although there was no outcome to its deliberations because of divisions within it, the council also discussed the post-election crisis in Zimbabwe in 2008 under the rubric of "peace and security in Africa."

Over the past two and a half years, this trend continued, and it appears to have become engrained in council practice today. For example, in the context of "peace and security in Africa," the council urged Djibouti and Eritrea to "resolve their

border dispute peacefully" in January 2009,[49] and placed sanctions on Eritrea for its involvement in Somalia in December 2009.[50] Even the recent crisis in Libya was dealt with by the council under the agenda item "peace and security in Africa," prior to the debate resulting in the passing of Resolution 1973, which authorized "all means necessary" to protect civilians.[51] At that point, "the situation in Libya" became a formal agenda item.

JULY 2010 DEBATE ON PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

In July 2010, under the Nigerian presidency, the council held a debate on preventive diplomacy. In the presidential statement issued at the debate, the council, inter alia:

- recalled that "early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, mediation, practical disarmament measures and post-conflict peacebuilding are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy";

- reaffirmed "the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and reiterate[d] its call to increase the equal participation, representation and full involvement of women in preventive diplomacy";

- recognized "the importance of a comprehensive strategy comprising operational and structural measures for prevention of armed conflict, and encourage[d] the development of measures to address the root-causes of conflicts in order to ensure sustainable peace";

- acknowledged "the potential benefits and efficiencies that could be achieved through an integrated approach to preventive diplomacy efforts similar to the approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding methods, which underscores the inter-relationship between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities"; and

- underlined "the importance of continually

44 Interview with UN official, New York, May 17, 2011.
45 This became an agenda item in August 2007.
46 UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2008/4, February 6, 2008.
47 UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2008/20, June 12, 2008.
48 UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2008/30, August 19, 2008.
49 UN Security Council Resolution 1862 (January 14, 2009), UN Doc. S/RES/1862.
50 UN Security Council Resolution 1907 (December 23, 2009), UN Doc. S/RES/1907.
51 UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (March 17, 2011), UN Doc. S/RES/1973.

engaging the potential and existing capacities and capabilities of the UN Secretariat, regional and sub-regional organizations as well as national governments in preventive diplomacy efforts including mediation, and welcome[d] the promotion of regional approaches to the peaceful settlements of disputes."[52]

The presidential statement did not break new ground, but it substantively reiterated many of the key messages on conflict prevention that the council had made in years past.[53] It also requested that the Secretary-General produce a report on preventive diplomacy within twelve months to "make recommendations on how best to optimize the use of preventive diplomacy tools within the United Nations system and in co-operation with regional and sub-regional organizations and other actors."[54]

The Secretary-General's Report on Preventive Diplomacy and the September 2011 High-Level Meeting

The UN's first-ever report specifically on preventive diplomacy, entitled *Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results*,[55] was released in September 2011. The report provides several substantive recommendations for enhancing the international community's preventive diplomacy efforts. It calls for

- more frequent and informal discussions among the UN, regional organizations, and other partners to determine when "threshold moments" for the outbreak of violence may occur;

- the expansion in the number of skilled mediators and envoys and enhanced training of staff supporting them;

- financial resources for prevention, specifically for

rapid-response capacities, to be provided in a more consistent and timely manner;

- an enhanced focus on supporting national conflict-prevention capacities; and

- stronger partnerships between the UN, regional and subregional organizations, member states, and other actors working on conflict prevention.

The Secretary-General's report was discussed during a high-level meeting of the Security Council on September 22, 2011, during Lebanon's presidency. Several heads of state and foreign ministers participated in the meeting. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed the council as well. In the presidential statement[56] that resulted from the debate, the council, inter alia:

- invoked the responsibility to protect by reaffirming the responsibility of states to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity;

- reaffirmed that the UN should, as appropriate, strive to support national governments' conflict-prevention efforts;

- encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the consolidation and coherence of conflict-prevention efforts within the UN system;

- noted that the council will strive to continue to strengthen its relationship with the UN's regional offices;

- highlighted the role of civil society and women in preventive-diplomacy efforts;

- called for more consistent and timely financial support for preventive diplomacy; and

- reiterated the importance of more consistent sharing of information among the UN, regional, and subregional organizations in order to strengthen conflict-prevention capacities.

As in past presidential statements (and resolutions) on conflict prevention, the council also emphasized that conflict-prevention strategies should be holistic in nature, encompassing the various conflict-cycle phases and including "early

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52 UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2010/14, July 16, 2010.

53 See, for example, UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/1999/34, November 30, 1999; UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2000/25, July 20, 2000; UN Security Council Resolution 1366 (August 30, 2001) UN Doc. S/RES/1366; UN Security Council Resolution 1625 (September 14, 2005), UN Doc. S/RES/1625; and UN Security Council, "Statement of the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2007/31, August28, 2007.

54 UN Security Council, "Statement of the President," July 16, 2010.

55 United Nations Secretary-General, *Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results*, UN Doc. S/2011/552, August 26, 2011.

56 UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2011/18, September 22, 2011.

warning, preventive deployment, mediation, peacekeeping, practical disarmament, accountability measures as well as post-conflict peacebuilding…[as] interdependent, complementary, and non-sequential" elements of such a strategy.[57]

HORIZON-SCANNING SESSIONS

Since the UK's presidency of the council in November 2010, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) has also conducted "horizon scanning" briefings in the council every month, except December 2010, when the US held the council presidency. The idea for such briefings was floated by the UK during the council's July 2010 debate on preventive diplomacy. Other participants in that debate, including France, Japan (then on the council), and non-council member Australia, also expressed interest in such briefings. The horizon-scanning briefings are closed consultations in which DPA presents thematic and country-specific issues of concern vis-à-vis threats to international peace and security, including some that are already on the council agenda and others that are not. The fact that council presidents have consistently collaborated with DPA to put these sessions on the monthly agenda demonstrates the interest among the broader council in taking up conflict prevention in a substantive way.

Early on, council presidents exhibited considerable control over the topics put on the agenda for the monthly horizon-scanning sessions. In recent months, however, council members have accorded the DPA more flexibility in determining the topics placed on the agenda for these sessions. Some of the topics that appear to have been discussed during these briefings over the past few months include Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Madagascar, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

The horizon-scanning briefings remain a work in progress. They are meant to be interactive and spontaneous in order to promote strategic thinking and dialogue. While some members suggest that they are somewhat stilted, the briefings are a step in the right direction. They represent a fresh approach to the council's working methods in comparison with the recent past. However, they are not innovative; in fact, during the 1990s, it was common for the council to receive daily briefings from the DPA.[58]

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN AFRICA

In early 2011, South Africa, the current chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa expressed a desire to pursue an ambitious agenda for the working group.[59] As of early October, the working group had met on five occasions in 2011. These meetings focused on the following topics: "Enhancing the role of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Resolution in Africa" (March 31st); "UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council Cooperation" (May 3rd); "Early Warning Tools and Indicators to Assess the Risk of Election-Related Violence in Africa" (July 13th); and "The Root Causes of Conflict in Africa: New and Emerging Challenges to Peace and Security" (September 28th).[60] Two additional meetings are planned for the remainder of the year. These will likely focus on the relationship between peace and justice in Africa and lessons learned from African countries emerging from conflict.[61]

The working group's meeting on "UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council Cooperation" on May 3rd was significant in that representatives of the fifteen AU Peace and Security Council members' missions to the UN were invited to enter into dialogue with UN Security Council members in the context of the working group. This working-group session helped to prepare the groundwork for the annual meeting between the two councils, which was held this year in Addis Ababa. The Addis Ababa convening resulted in a very substantive meeting and communiqué

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57 Ibid.

58 Security Council Report, "Conflict Prevention: Horizon Scanning," *November 2010 Forecast*, October 29, 2010, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.6355203/k.97F7/November_2010brConflict_Prevention_Horizon_Scanning.htm .

59 Chairs of the working group generally serve for one or two years. When South Africa was last on the Security Council in 2007-2008, it chaired the working group in 2008.

60 Information based on an interview with Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) official, August and October, 2011. The initial meeting of the working group in 2011, held on March 11th, was a discussion of the proposed activities of the working group for the year.

61 SCAD official, August 5, 2011.

between the two councils—focusing on Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan—perhaps in part because of the preparatory discussions that occurred in the working group.[62] It is also possible that the practice of an interactive discussion between the two councils in the context of the working group may become instituted on an annual basis.[63]

SYSTEMIC PREVENTION

In recent years, there has also been a growing interest in the council in addressing so-called systemic prevention, which focuses on risks that transcend borders, potentially leading to or exacerbating conflict. In the UN context, the notion of systemic prevention was highlighted in the Secretary-General's July 2006 Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, which argued that conflict-prevention strategies should address such transnational risks to "bolster the chances of peace."[64] In August 2007, the council issued a presidential statement during a debate on the "role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa," which cited the Secretary-General's progress report, noting that systemic prevention—along with structural and operational prevention—should be part of a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy.[65]

While issues such as terrorism and small arms have consistently been on the council's agenda, other systemic challenges such as drug trafficking and organized crime, HIV/AIDS, and climate change are making their way with increased frequency onto the council's program of work in recent times. Council decisions with respect to drug trafficking and related organized crime were

made in several country-specific cases in 2008 and 2009, including Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau, and Haiti.[66] In December 2009, when Burkina Faso held the monthly presidency, the Security Council also held an open debate on drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime that resulted in a presidential statement, which included strong prevention language. In the statement, the council, inter alia:

• "note[d] with concern the serious threats posed in some cases by drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime to international security";

• "invite[d] the Secretary-General to consider mainstreaming the issue of drug trafficking as a factor in conflict prevention strategies, conflict analysis, integrated missions' assessment and planning and peacebuilding support"; and

• "call[ed] on the Secretary-General to provide, as appropriate, more information on drug trafficking and related issues where it risks threatening or exacerbating an existing threat to international peace and security."[67]

On June 7, 2011, the council debated HIV/AIDS as a thematic issue for the first time since July 2005.[68] In the resolution passed during the debate, only the second the council has passed on the topic,[69] the council recognized that "HIV poses one of the most formidable challenges to the development, progress and stability of societies and requires an exceptional and comprehensive global response."[70] It encouraged the Secretary-General to "consider HIV-related needs of people living with, affected by, and vulnerable to HIV, including women and girls, in his activities pertinent to the

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62 For a discussion of the 2011 meeting between the two councils, see Security Council Report, "Visit of Security Council Delegation to Africa," *Update Report* No. 1, June 3, 2011, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.7502747/k.48FB/Update_Report_No_1brVisit_of_Security_ Council_Delegation_to_Africabr3_June_2011.htm .

63 SCAD official, August 5, 2011.

64 United Nations Secretary-General, *Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict*, UN Doc. A/60/891, July 18, 2006, p. 5.

65 See UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2007/31, August 28, 2007. The relevant passage reads: "The Security Council supports the comprehensive and global approach recommended by the Secretary-General in this report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891), namely: structural prevention, to address the root causes of conflict; operational prevention, to ensure the effective operation of early warning mechanisms, mediation, humanitarian access and response, the protection of civilians and targeted sanctions in the face of immediate crises; and systemic prevention, to prevent existing conflict from spilling over into other states."

66 Security Council Report, "Emerging Security Threats in West Africa," *Special Research Report* No. 1, May 2, 2011. On Afghanistan, see UN Security Council Resolution 1817 (June 11, 2008), UN Doc. S/RES/1817 and UN Security Council Resolution 1890 (October 8, 2009), S/RES/1890; on Guinea-Bissau, see UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2009/29, November 5, 2009; and on Haiti, see UN Security Council Resolution 1892 (October 13, 2009), UN Doc. S/RES/1892.

67 UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2009/32, December 8, 2009.

68 See UN Security Council, "The Maintenance of International Peace and Security: HIV/AIDS and International Peacekeeping Operations," UN Doc. S/PV.5228, July 18, 2005.

69 The first Security Council resolution on HIV/AIDS was UN Security Council Resolution 1308 (July 17, 2000), UN Doc. S/RES/1308.

70 UN Security Council Resolution 1983 (June 7, 2011), UN Doc. S/RES/1983.

prevention and resolution of conflict."[71] The resolution furthermore encouraged UN peacekeeping missions to incorporate activities to counteract the negative impact of HIV in mandated tasks related to aiding national institutions, security-sector reform, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.[72]

Upon entering the council, Germany and Portugal expressed their determination to highlight climate change as a threat to international peace and security during their two-year tenures (2011-2012). Arguments can be made that factors related to climate change—desertification, food shortage, and population displacement—spark conflict. On July 20, 2011, in its role as council president, Germany organized a thematic debate on the threat posed to international peace and security by climate change. This marked only the second time the council has debated climate change, the first time being more than four years ago. There were strong divisions within the council about whether the body is the appropriate venue to discuss the issue, just as there were in 2007, when the council last debated climate change.[73] Several council members in the July 2011 debate—Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Gabon, Germany, Lebanon, Portugal, the UK, and the US—emphasized a conflict-prevention role for the council in addressing the security threats posed by climate change. However, China, India, and Russia expressed the view that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was the appropriate venue for discussions on climate change, and that the issue should not be on the council's agenda. During the debate, Russia and

India also stated the opinion that the evidence linking climate change to potential security threats has not been scientifically substantiated.[74]

In spite of these divisions within the council, the members did manage to agree on a presidential statement in the aftermath of the debate.[75] Some of the statement's language indicated that, in the UN, climate change is primarily dealt with outside the council. The statement reaffirmed the UNFCCC's key role in addressing climate change,[76] and recognized "the responsibility for sustainable development issues, including climate change, conferred upon the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council." On the other hand, it did note that climate change could, over the longer term, "aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security" and that "contextual analysis and…information on…possible security implications of climate change is important, when such issues are drivers of conflict…or endanger the…consolidation of peace."[77] The statement requested that the Secretary-General ensure his reporting "contains such contextual information."[78]

Portugal will hold the council presidency in November 2011, the only time it will serve as president during its 2011-2012 tenure on the council. At the time of going to press, it appeared that Portugal was planning to hold an open debate in November on emerging challenges to international peace and security, focusing on transborder threats such as climate change, drug trafficking, population movements, and HIV/AIDS. A presidential statement is a possible outcome of the debate.

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71 Ibid.

72 Ibid. For a description of the position of various council members on this issue, see, Security Council Report, "HIV/AIDS," *June 2011 Forecast*, May 31, 2011, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.7497341/k.B5B9/June_2011brHIVAIDS.htm .

73 In June 2007, the council held an open debate on climate change during the UK monthly presidency, representing the first time it discussed the topic. During the debate, the topic was received tepidly at best. While several member states thought it was a good idea to hold the debate, council members China, Russia, and South Africa explicitly stated that the Security Council was not the appropriate venue to discuss climate change. There was no outcome (resolution, presidential statement, or press statement) to the meeting.

74 See UN Security Council, "Maintenance of Peace and Security: Impact of Climate Change," UN Doc. S/PV.6587, July 20, 2011. The Indian representative noted "sweeping generalizations about climate change leading to droughts, floods, changes in weather patterns, water and food scarcity, and violent conflicts are, however, yet to be fully tested against empirical and scientific analyses." The Russian representative, referring to a General Assembly report on the potential security implications of climate change (UN Doc. A/64/350), stated, "the report…does not contain serious arguments to support the position of those states advocating that this issue be placed on the Council's agenda. The report refers only to hypothetical impacts of climate change on security and is not able to precisely predict them. It fails to provide empirical data establishing any correlation between these phenomena."

75 See UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2011/15, July 20, 2011.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

POSTCONFLICT PEACEBUILDING

The council has historically viewed peacebuilding as an important element of a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy.[79] There has been an enhanced focus on peacebuilding in the UN system since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, a body overseen by the General Assembly and the Security Council. There are currently six countries on the PBCs agenda (Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone). The Security Council mandates integrated missions[80] in Burundi (BINUB), the Central African Republic (BINUCA), Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), South Sudan (UNMISS), and Timor Leste (UNMIT). As previously noted, it also consistently integrates peacebuilding elements into mandates for peacekeeping operations. Since 2009, the Security Council has held seven thematic debates on postconflict peacebuilding.[81]

Why Has the Council Been Focusing Its Attention on Conflict Prevention at This Particular Moment?

The current interest in conflict prevention in the council is shared by a wide array of permanent and elected members from all regions. African countries on the council—including current members Gabon, Nigeria, South Africa, and recent member Uganda (2009–2010)—have been particularly strong advocates of the need for the council to enhance its focus on prevention. Strong interest in conflict prevention has also been expressed by Lebanon and Brazil. Lebanon hosted an open debate on "intercultural dialogue for peace and security"[82] during its presidency in May 2010, in which its then Prime Minister Saad Hariri noted that "the best way to address and pre-empt [violence, terrorism, and intimidation] is to deal with their root causes through preventive diplomacy."[83] France, the US, and the UK, the last of which initiated the horizon-scanning sessions, have been supportive of the council's focus on prevention as well.[84]

There are several reasons that council members provide for the current interest in pursuing strengthened conflict-prevention strategies in the Security Council, as well as more broadly throughout the UN system. First, the most straightforward explanation is the devastating impact of conflict, both in terms of the loss of human life and its material devastation. Second, the high cost of UN peace operations at a time of financial crisis has fueled a resurgent desire to prevent conflicts from breaking out or escalating, so that the need to expend precious human and financial resources in these operations is minimized. Third, on a related note, there is a growing recognition on the council of overstretch of UN peace operations and a palpable sense of exhaustion with having to manage so many complicated missions at the same time. Finally, as the council seeks to strengthen UN peacekeeping, its members have, by and large, also become increasingly aware that other tools need to be developed in order for it to more effectively fulfill its Charter responsibility for international peace and security. Conflict prevention and the related thematic issues of conflict mediation and peacebuilding are among these tools.

HUMAN AND MATERIAL TOLL OF CONFLICT

Several members of the council (and of the United Nations more broadly) note the human and material cost of war as the rationale for increased

79 See, for example, the following UN Security Council presidential statements: UN Doc. S/PRST/1999/34 (November 30, 1999), S/PRST/2000/25 (July 20, 2000), and S/PRST/2010/14 (July 16, 2010), and UN Security Council Resolution 1366 (August 30, 2001), UN Doc. S/RES/1366.

80 According to Espen Barth Eide, Anja Therese Kaspersen, Randolph Kent, and Karen von Hippel, *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations*, Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group, May 2005, p. 14, an integrated mission is defined as "an instrument with which the UN seeks to help countries in the transition from war to lasting peace, or address a similarly complex situation that requires a system-wide UN response, through subsuming various actors and approaches within an overall political-strategic crisis management framework."

81 See the following UN Security Council meetings: UN Doc. S/PV.6165 and S/PV.6165 Resumption 1 (July 22, 2009); S/PV.6224 (November 25, 2009); S/PV.6299 and S/PV.6299 Resumption 1 (April 16, 2010); S/PV.6396 and S/PV.6396 Resumption 1 (October 13, 2010); S/PV.6472 and S.PV.6472 Resumption 1 (January 21, 2011); S/PV.6503 (March 23, 2011); and S/PV.6533 (May 12, 2011).

82 UN Security Council, "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Security," S/PV.6322, May 26, 2010.

83 Ibid.

84 This description of the dynamics among council members with regard to conflict prevention draws from Security Council Report, "Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Prevention," *Update Report* No. 1, July 14, 2010, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.6136161/k.672D/Update_Report_No_1brPreventive_Diplomacy_and_Conflict_Preventionbr14_July_2010.htm .

investment in preventive action.[85] The dangers of peacekeeping operations have also been recognized as an additional argument for conflict prevention.[86] This is understandable considering that the deaths suffered among UN peacekeepers between 2008 and 2010 (420) are the highest for any three-year period since 1993–1995 (540).[87]

HIGH FINANCIAL COST OF PEACEKEEPING

The high financial cost of peacekeeping has led to increased reflection on the utility of other mechanisms for promoting peace and stability.[88] Although the budget for peacekeeping is determined in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, it directly impacts the budgetary considerations of council members (and all other member states) through assessed contributions, especially from permanent council members such as France, the UK, and the US, and elected-member Germany, which collectively foot the bill for more than 50 percent of UN peacekeeping.[89] There is widespread understanding on the council that conflict prevention, among its many other benefits, is more cost-effective than conflict management. This is an especially important consideration since the global financial crisis that struck in 2008 continues to have a negative impact on most of the world's economies.

Council diplomats from both Global North and South have consistently noted the challenges of funding UN (and non-UN) peacekeeping operations as a rationale for more investment in conflict prevention, an argument that was made by a significant number of council (and non-council)

members during the July 2010 open debate on preventive diplomacy.[90] Developing countries, including some on the council, would prefer if resources that now have to be expended on conflict management could be redirected to development programs that promote sustainable peace.[91] Particularly in the African context, lack of capacity for peacekeeping operations is a recurring challenge that spurs interest in conflict prevention.

THE OVERSTRETCH OF PEACEKEEPING

Related to its financial expense, there is also a perceived overstretch of peacekeeping, another motivation for the council's interest in conflict prevention. Some council diplomats express a tangible weariness, almost exhaustion, at having to manage the political and operational demands of several complex peacekeeping missions at once.[92] In 2010, more personnel served in UN peacekeeping operations than ever before. The general trend in UN peacekeeping during the past decade has been toward increased mission size and complexity.[93] Council diplomats, especially among the elected membership with smaller missions, argue that they have trouble keeping up with the pace of activity.[94]

The burdens placed on the council's workload by peacekeeping and other related conflict-management issues could ostensibly be alleviated by a greater emphasis on conflict prevention. This sentiment was a major theme of the council debate on peacekeeping in January 2009, hosted by France and the UK.[95] It also featured more recently in several member-state comments in the council debate on preventive diplomacy in July 2010.[96]

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85 See the UN Security Council debate, "Optimizing the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa," UN Doc. S/PV.6360 and Resumption 1, July 16, 2010. See, for example, statements by Canada, France, Gambia, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and South Africa.

86 Ibid, see statement by South Africa.

87 See DPKO Website, "Fatalities by Year," as of May 31, 2011, available at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/fatalities/documents/StatsByYear_1.pdf .

88 The approved budget for UN peacekeeping operations from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 was roughly $7.06 billion. While this represents a decrease from the last two annually approved budgets, it is still significantly higher than during the mid-2000s. For example, for the period July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005, the assessed budget for UN peacekeeping was approximately $3.87 billion. See, United Nations Peacekeeping, "Peacekeeping Fact Sheet," available at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml .

89 For information on assessed contributions for UN peacekeeping, see United Nations Peacekeeping, "Financing Peacekeeping," available at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml .

90 UN Security Council, "Optimizing the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools." See, for example, statements by the African Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina-Faso, Egypt, France, Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United Kingdom.

91 Interview with Security Council diplomat, June 27, 2011.

92 Interview with Security Council diplomat, May 20, 2011.

93 Ibid. It should also be noted that peacekeeping (whether in a country-specific or general context) is only one conflict-management issue that the council focuses on. Among others are women, peace, and security; children and armed conflict; and protection of civilians in armed conflict.

94 Paul Romita, Naureen Chowdury-Fink, and Till Papenfuss, "What Impact? The E10 and the 2011 Security Council," International Peace Institute, March 2011, pp. 2-3, available at www.ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/ipi_e_pub_e10_and_sc.pdf .

95 UN Security Council, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," UN Doc. S/PV.6075, January 23, 2009. See the statements of Burkina-Faso, the Czech Republic, Mexico (also then a council member), Pakistan, Uruguay, and the African Union.

96 UN Security Council, "Optimizing the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools" and Resumption 1, July 16, 2010. See statements by China and elected-members Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina-Faso, and Nigeria.

At a retreat for incoming members of the Security Council in late 2008, a diplomat serving on the council underscored the importance of conflict prevention by noting that former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who had recently been appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as a special envoy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had been a peacekeeper in the first UN peacekeeping mission (ONUC) in the Congo in the early 1960s.[97] The point was clear: peacekeeping is not a panacea, and its limitations demand a stronger focus on strengthening conflict-prevention strategies; after nearly fifty years, and in spite of significant international interventions, including two of the UN's largest and most complex peacekeeping missions—ONUC (July 1960–June 1964) and MONUC/MONUSCO (November 1999–present)—the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was still in dire straits, plagued by weak governance and violence in the eastern part of the country.

ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Although peacekeeping is one of the UN's great innovations and has done a great deal of good over the years, there is a recognition among many council members of its shortcomings, a palpable pessimism of what it can achieve, especially when not effectively integrated with other tools at the UN's disposal. As one Security Council diplomat noted, "It is difficult to [deploy] and manage a peacekeeping mission, and not all peacekeeping missions get results."[98] No doubt, there has been disillusionment with peacekeeping missions in such places as the DRC and Darfur, which have had mixed results at best over the years. The withdrawal of host-country consent for peace operations in Chad and Ethiopia-Eritrea in recent years—as well as the challenges of maintaining consent in the DRC and Sudan—may have also contributed to this malaise.

While the council has sought to strengthen peacekeeping, it has also strived to refine other instruments to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict. Conflict prevention is one of these instruments. Since 2008, in addition to numerous debates

on peacekeeping, the council has also held, at the thematic level, two debates on conflict mediation, two debates on preventive diplomacy, and nine debates on postconflict peacebuilding. As in the past, the council today continues to emphasize the complementarities among different elements of conflict prevention, as well as between conflict prevention and other tools. For example, in the presidential statement the council issued in July 2010 during the debate on preventive diplomacy, council members recalled that "early warning, preventive deployment, mediation, practical disarmament measures and post-conflict peacebuilding are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy."[99] This sentiment was expressed by several member states in the debate preceding the council's adoption of the statement.[100] It has been a consistent message over the years in the council's statements on conflict prevention, which may be given enhanced impetus as a thematic issue given the current challenges facing UN peacekeeping.

What Are Some of the Challenges to the Prevention Work of the UN in General and the Council More Specifically?

Key challenges to conflict prevention remain. Many states in the Global South have traditionally been concerned that conflict prevention could be abused as a pretext for the strong to violate the sovereignty of the weak. Although it appears that these concerns have been somewhat muted over the past couple of years, the manner in which recent operations in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire unfolded has to some degree once again aroused them. With respect to Libya, some council members have expressed concern that what was initially presented as an intervention solely designed to protect civilians morphed into an effort at regime change. Ironically, the Libya operation may have ultimately

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97   UN Doc. S/2010/177, p. 7.
98   Interview with Security Council diplomat, May 20, 2011.
99   UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2010/14, July 16, 2010.
100 UN Security Council, "Optimizing the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools." See statements by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, and Lebanon.

harmed the human-protection norms it was meant to support, as it has exposed the challenges of upholding those norms through military force. Similarly, the participation of the French military in the ousting of Laurent Gbagbo in April has also risked raising concerns about neo-colonialism.

Concerns about violations of sovereignty thus persist, as do suspicions about the underlying motivations behind the use of military power for ostensibly humanitarian purposes, and perceptions that, even when well-intentioned, the application of force can potentially have troubling and unpredictable consequences. Indeed, distaste with the way the NATO military campaign in Libya unfolded—particularly among Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa—has made it difficult for the council to mount an effective response to the current violence in Syria. This was evident most recently on October 4th when China and Russia, permanent council members traditionally wary of interference in the domestic affairs of other states, both vetoed a US-European-backed draft resolution condemning the Syrian regime.

It is also unclear how much financial support donor countries on the council, as well as countries among the broader UN membership, will provide for conflict-prevention initiatives moving forward. Peacekeeping may be much more expensive than conflict prevention, but even policymakers who support conflict prevention in theory understand that it is a hard sell to domestic constituents, especially in tough economic times. Indeed, it is difficult to illustrate conflict prevention's tangible impact and prove a counterfactual—namely, that conflict did not occur because of specific preventive measures taken.[101]

Several diplomats interviewed for this report expressed limited satisfaction with what has been achieved and what ultimately can be achieved in the Security Council with respect to conflict prevention, arguing that the recent attention on the issue has been more rhetorical than substantive. The criticisms of the council's conflict-prevention activities reflect a broader pessimism about the

impact of the council's structural inequalities and formalistic working methods, which could very well relate to the entirety of its work more generally.[102] The first criticism, which comes from many of the elected members, is that regardless of how well the council identifies emerging threats to peace and security, the veto-wielding permanent members can use the threat of the veto to guide the form and substance of the council's response and, if so inclined, can block action altogether.[103] Second, it is frequently argued that the culture of formality that pervades the council's working methods stifles meaningful dialogue and interaction. The horizon-scanning sessions with DPA represent a vast improvement over the formality of other closed consultations, but some council members still claim that they are not interactive enough, with diplomats unwilling or unable to engage in meaningful dialogue without authorization from their respective capitals. This squashes creative, collaborative, strategic thinking that could benefit all UN member states. A third criticism of the council's conflict-prevention activities pertains to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.[104] While the working group has been a useful mechanism over the years, and South Africa has been an active chair in 2011, some council members nonetheless believe that the working group could be playing a more influential role in the council's broader conflict-prevention work.

What Are Some Ideas for Improving the Council's Work on Conflict Prevention?

While there may be validity to these criticisms, there are nonetheless instances in which the council plays a meaningful conflict-prevention role, especially when interests coincide and when compromises are made. While progress has been uneven, the council has demonstrated the ability to develop innovative and useful strategies to

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101 An excellent analysis of the tensions described here are discussed in Colin Keating, "Non-Paper for Opening Plenary Meeting, Prevention of Conflict," June 3, 2008, in *IPI Blue Paper* No. 7, Conflict Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 2009, pp. 31-39.
102 Conversations with Security Council diplomat, New York, May 13, 16, and 20, 2011.
103 Ibid.
104 Conversations with Security Council diplomats, New York, May 13 and 16, 2011.

strengthen its working methods over the years to address emerging and ongoing crises. It is also clear that council members by and large understand that the council's traditionally heavy focus on conflict-management issues is not ideal, and that greater effort could be made to deal with potential threats to peace and security more proactively. (The council briefing on October 19ᵗʰ on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is an example of the body attempting to address an emerging threat to peace and security at an early stage.[105]) In spite of the inherent structural and cultural impediments to the council's work, some possible options for the council's conflict-prevention activities moving forward might offer some food for thought.

A SYSTEM OF REGIONAL RAPPORTEURS

Dr. Bertrand Ramcharan, former deputy high commissioner for human rights, has noted that

> a case can be made for a system of regional rapporteurs inside the council. A regional rapporteur, one for each of the five political regions of the United Nations, coming from…a non-permanent member on the council, could be briefed by the Secretary-General and the relevant regional organizations, could gather information from reliable sources, and could share his or her thoughts with council members, say quarterly, at closed council sessions.[106]

This is a very sensible idea. However, in addition to having these briefings on a quarterly basis, it would also be important to hold them on an as-needed basis, depending on the volatility of the situation under analysis. In this way, the council would be able to receive information early on regarding an impending or ongoing crisis. Of course, the quality of information provided to the council may, in part, depend on the quality of the regional *rapporteurs* and the amount of time they are willing and able to invest in the endeavor. The major drawback to this concept is that *rapporteurs* who come from the region they are covering might not be objective in their analysis, while *rapporteurs*

that are responsible for a region that is distant from their home country may lack nuanced local knowledge. Nonetheless, the use of regional *rapporteurs* is an idea that merits attention.

MORE CREATIVE THINKING ABOUT THE FORMAT AND SUBSTANCE OF THE HORIZON-SCANNING BRIEFINGS

It might be worth considering broadening the horizon-scanning sessions to include not only DPA briefings, but also briefings from other parts of the system, as is often done in other consultations and open meetings of the council. On an as-needed basis, and depending on the particular case, the briefings could offer additional perspectives and information from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and other UN bodies, especially when they have field presences in places where DPA does not.[107] Additionally, greater efforts could be made to make use of videoconferencing more frequently, which could allow high-level UN officials in the country or countries being discussed to join the discussions from the field. The key is to provide quality information that would otherwise not be available, thus addressing the complaint that is sometimes voiced in private that the horizon-scanning sessions often provide information that is already publicly accessible.[108]

A STRENGTHENED WORKING GROUP ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN AFRICA

Security Council Report, the New York-based think tank that covers the council's work, made several promising suggestions for strengthening the relationship between the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and the African Union's Peace and Security Council in its May 2011 report, "Working Together For Peace and Security in Africa: The Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council." Several of these recommendations could play an important role in strengthening the working group's approach to conflict prevention. The recommendations made

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105 Security Council Report, "Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea," *October 2011 Forecast*, September 30, 2011, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.7751803/k.A99F/October_2011brPiracy_in_the_Gulf_of_Guinea.htm .

106 Bertrand G. Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy at the UN* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 75.

107 Conversation with Security Council diplomat, New York, May 13, 2011.

108 Meetings with Security Council diplomats, May 13 and 16, 2011.

in the report were, inter alia: to have the working group focus on country-specific cases that appear at risk of conflict (in keeping with a similar recommendation made in the Secretary-General's 2001 report on conflict prevention); to have the chair of the working group make an annual trip to Addis Ababa to gain an enhanced understanding of the AU's work on conflict prevention and other key issues; and to invite the permanent representatives to the UN of the countries on the African Peace and Security Council to apprise the working group of their views on situations unfolding on the continent.[109] In addition to these suggestions, the working group could serve as a forum for discussion and reflection on emerging systemic threats that affect the continent, such as transnational organized crime and related drug trafficking, small arms trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and climate change. In turn, such discussions could enrich the broader council's understanding of and engagement with these issues.

In addressing such systemic challenges—as well as emerging crises in country-specific contexts—it might be helpful to have interactive discussions in the working group that include the simultaneous participation of the representatives of regional, subregional, multinational, and national actors in Africa. For example, a discussion of potential security threats in West Africa could include the participation of representatives of UNOWA, the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and countries in the region. In this way, the working group could serve as a forum in which these various actors discuss strategies for enhancing coordination and coherence in their preventive activities.[110]

ENGAGING THE G7+ IN DIALOGUE[111]

The g7+ is "an independent and autonomous forum of fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions that have united to form one collective voice on the global stage."[112] In existence only since

2010, the g7+ strives to promote south-south and north-south collaborations that result in more effective policies in fragile and postconflict states. During the June 2011 meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Monrovia, Liberia, the g7+ agreed on five peacebuilding and statebuilding objectives to help conflict-affected and fragile states to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and prevent or reduce conflict, including (1) promoting inclusive politics, (2) strengthening security, (3) enhancing justice, (4) creating jobs, and (5) improving the management of resources and the equitable delivery of services.[113] The g7+, currently chaired by the finance minister of Timor-Leste, Emilia Pires, has thus far focused largely on development issues, especially strategies to improve aid effectiveness in fragile and postconflict states. However, as evident from the five objectives outlined in Monrovia, it hopes to influence the debate on peacebuilding and statebuilding in a holistic way that links development to security, justice, and political matters.

Most of the seventeen members of the g7+—Afghanistan, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Southern Sudan, and Timor-Leste—are on the Security Council's agenda.[114] Consequently, it may be useful for the council to engage in dialogue with representatives of the g7+ to explore ways in which the council can be useful in preventing conflict and promoting sustainable peace in these countries. These discussions could take place in an open debate of the council. Alternatively, African members of the g7+ could convey their ideas on supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding in conflict-affected and fragile states in the context of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. Engaging with the g7+ would certainly be consistent with the Security Council's growing appreciation of the

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109 Security Council Report, "Working Together for Peace and Security in Africa: The Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council," *Special Research Report* No. 2, May 10, 2011, p. 32, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Research%20Report%20Working%20Together%20for%20Peace%20and%20Security%20in%20Africa%2010%20May%202011.pdf .

110 This suggestion was recommended to the author by an IPI Senior Advisor in the Africa program, August 4, 2011.

111 This idea was suggested by an IPI Senior Advisor, August 11, 2011.

112 International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, "About the g7+," available at www.oecd.org/document/50/0,3746,en_21571361_43407692_46108466_1_1_1_1,00.html .

113 See g7+ and International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, "The Monrovia Roadmap on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding," Final Draft, July 2011, available at www.pbsbdialogue.org .

114 The other members of the g7+ are the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands. See g7+, "Member States," available at www.g7plus.org/members/ .

connections between security and development in building peace, as recognized by the presidential statement the council issued in the aftermath of its February 2011 debate on "the interdependence between peace and security" under the Brazilian presidency of the council.[115]

MORE "INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES" THAT INCLUDE COUNTRIES AT RISK OF CONFLICT

The "interactive dialogue" is a very useful innovation in the working methods of the council. It allows a party or parties to a conflict to meet with council members outside the council chambers, mostly in cases in which the country or countries are not formally on the agenda of the council. One notable early example of its usage occurred in June 2009, when the permanent representative of Sri Lanka was invited for a discussion on the humanitarian and political implications of the Sri Lankan government's military defeat of the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eealem (LTTE). The use of this format could be a constructive way of defusing tensions within and between countries in the midst of an emerging crisis, by providing an informal setting to discuss the issues at hand without arousing sovereignty concerns by placing the relevant country or countries on the council's formal agenda. In the July 2010 Security Council debate on preventive diplomacy, the representative of Japan (then a council member) advocated for greater use of the interactive dialogue option as a preventive diplomacy tool.

The interactive dialogue format was recently used on July 21, 2011, with Eritrea arguing unsuccessfully in favor of the removal of sanctions. This interactive dialogue came in the aftermath of the release of the most recent report of the Somalia Monitoring Group, which discusses Eritrean support in Somalia for anti-government forces.[116] Using this format, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda—all members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)—were allowed to take part in the meeting as well.

STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL DPA OFFICES

The council could hold an open debate encouraging capacity building of the DPA regional offices and highlighting potential strategies for strengthening them. This debate would ideally result in a presidential statement or resolution that underscores the council's perspective and perhaps requests a report from the Secretary-General on recommendations for strengthening these offices. The UN Office in West Africa (UNOWA) and the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA) in Ashgabat, Kyrgyzstan, have demonstrated their effectiveness in recent years as important regional mechanisms for conflict prevention. The UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCI) in Libreville, Gabon, is still finding its way as it was only established in March 2011, but like UNOWA and UNRCCA, it has a strong conflict-prevention mandate.

Conclusion

Within the Security Council, throughout the broader UN system, and among other multilateral and bilateral actors, there has been a resurgent interest in conflict prevention in recent years. In the Security Council, this interest has been manifested by DPA's horizon-scanning sessions, its focus on postconflict peacebuilding, and the engagement of the council with a number of systemic threats to peace and security. It is too early to tell whether this is a passing moment, sparked primarily by the cost and overstretch of UN peacekeeping, or whether the current level of interest and activity will be sustained over time.

The council's considerable recent engagement in conflict-prevention issues is an encouraging development that should be continued, even if it adds to the council's already heavy agenda in the short and medium term. Developing more effective conflict-prevention strategies to be employed before violent conflict explodes, escalates, or reignites would have a dual benefit. Its immediate

115 See UN Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council," UN Doc. S/PRST/2011/4, February 11, 2011.
116 Security Council Report, "August 2011 Status Update," section on Eritrea, available at
     www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.7634805/k.128B/August_2011brStatus_Update.htm .

impact would be to prevent or minimize the potential bloodshed from the particular violence deferred. Over time, it could also help to ensure that the council's workload doesn't spin out of control, so that the number and complexity of conflict-management issues it deals with does not become completely unmanageable.

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