

Political Transitions in North Africa and beyond: What the Peacebuilding Community Can Contribute

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform

Geneva, Friday, 2 December 2011

International Environment House No.2

7-9 Chemin de Balexert, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva

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The 2011 Annual Meeting of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform investigates the potential contributions of the peacebuilding community to the political transitions in Africa and the Middle East. With many of these transitions entering into a consolidation phase after periods of rapid change, the question of managing long term transformation processes within states and societies is becoming ever more important. It is at this critical juncture where revolutions are translated into transformations that the peacebuilding community has an important – yet so far relatively neglected – contribution to make.

The Annual Meeting has the objective to better understand the tools and assistance required to accompany political transitions in Africa and the Middle East from a peacebuilding perspective. Overall, it focuses on the practical evidence of peacebuilding activities related to political transition processes to inform domestic and international efforts in this field.

Four specific themes will frame these deliberations: (1) State-society relations; (2) From political settlement to building peace; (3) Ensuring justice, reducing violence; and (4) International support for political transitions. While focusing mainly on North Africa, the Annual Meeting also explores lessons from the transitions in the rest of Africa, in the Middle East and beyond.

The Annual Meeting is one of the Platform's main events and is conceived to contribute to the networking of peacebuilding resources across sectors and institutions. It brings together a variety of actors from its membership including representatives from civil society, government, international organizations, and academia.

Programme

8.30 Registration and Café-Croissant

9.15 Welcome and introduction to the programme

Scott WEBER, General Director, Interpeace, Geneva

Kassym-Jomart TOKAYEV, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

Ralf Heckner, Deputy Head, Political Division III, United Nations and other International Organizations, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern

9.30 Panel 1: State-society relations

Strong state-society relations are generally recognised to be a fundamental ingredient for a lasting peace, security, and prosperity. But what are the tools which exist to build such relations? The panel investigates the entry points and practical tools for strengthening state-society relations, including strategies to strengthen the local ownership of change processes.

Moderator: **Keith KRAUSE**, Director, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Peacebuilding in the MENA region: Entry points to strengthen state-society relations

Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould MOHAMEDOU, Associate Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), and Visiting Professor at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Peacebuilding and societal transformation

Patrick HAENNI, Institut Religioscope, Fribourg

Locally-led peacebuilding: Strengthening local ownership

Scilla ELWORTHY, Founder of Peace Direct and the Oxford Research Group, London

Women as change makers in the Arab Spring

Inge RELPH, Director, Arab International Women's Forum, London

10.45 Coffee break

11.15 Panel 2: From political settlement to building peace

When political settlements are reached, they are usually the work of months – if not years – of negotiation and dialogue between various stakeholders. They do not materialize out of the blue but are hard work behind the scenes. This panel asks members of the mediation community: What are the lessons of uniting different stakeholders into collaborative and inclusive-enough coalitions for political transitions? What record exists about the performance of specific tools to strengthen such coalitions? And, what are the necessary steps to transform short term political settlements into processes that foster lasting transformations?

Moderator: **Bernardo AREVALO DE LEON**, Senior Advisor, Interpeace, Geneva

Lessons from negotiating political accommodation

Gerard McHUGH, President, Conflict Dynamics International, Boston

The role of unofficial intermediaries in political transitions

Andy CARL, Director, Conciliation Resources, London

Mediation support infrastructures: Lessons from the African Union

Pascal DA ROCHA, Deputy Director of the Mediation and Intervention Unit, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Durban

12.30 Buffet lunch

13.30 Panel 3: Ensuring justice, reducing violence

This panel explores the challenges of nurturing a *sustainable* peace in North Africa, and what strategies exist to address them. The panel focuses specifically on the challenge of ensuring justice and the reduction of armed violence, and explores the evidence of the performance of particular programmes and initiatives in this field.

Moderator: **David ATWOOD**, Associate Fellow, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Geneva

Transitional justice in Tunisia

Youssef MAHMOUD, Senior Adviser, International Peace Institute, New York

Evidence from armed violence reduction programming relevant for North Africa

Anna ALVAZZI DEL FRATE, Research Director, Small Arms Survey, Geneva

Local perspectives on justice and violence: Community evidence from Zimbabwe

Chiyedza NYAHUYE, Board Member, Envision Zimbabwe Women's Trust, Harare

14.45 Coffee break

15.15 Panel 4: International support for political transitions

International support can be a critical element in assisting political transitions to have positive long term effects. While most transition processes are driven by local stakeholders, international support is especially critical at the moment when the excitement of rapid change subsides, and issues such as job creation, dispute resolution, or institution building surpasses the capacities of local governments. This panel reviews the evidence of the multilateral peacebuilding tools available to the United Nations and regional organizations to strengthen political transitions in the MENA region.

Moderator: **Fred TANNER**, Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Geneva

The experience of peacebuilding tools of United Nations peacebuilding architecture

Henk-Jan BRINKMAN, Chief, Policy, Planning and Application Branch, Peacebuilding Support Office, United Nations, New York

Financing peacebuilding support: The African Development Bank

Cristina HOYOS, Fragile States Unit, African Development Bank, Tunis

Architectures for peace and political transitions

Gay ROSENBLUM-KUMAR, Senior Secretary, United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action, New York

16.30 Closing discussion and remarks

Jonathan WOOLLEY, Director, Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva

Achim WENNMANN, Executive Coordinator, Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, Geneva

17.00 Reception