

Reconciliation as Framework for Preventing Conflict and Sustaining Peace

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CLI	Collective Leadership Institute
CPPF	Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum
CPMRT	Conflict Prevention Management Resolution and Transformation, Zimbabwe
DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
GAT	Cyprus Gender Advisory Team
GNU	Government of National Unity
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MWAGCD	Zimbabwean Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development
NCIC	Kenya National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NSC	Kenya National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management
NOREF	Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre
ONHRI	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
PBSO	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
REMHI	Recovery of Historical Memory Project, Guatemala
SSRC	Social Science Research Council, USA
SARB	South African Reconciliation Barometer
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WiPSU	Women in Political Support Unit, Zimbabwe

Reconciliation Framework for Preventing Conflict and Sustaining Peace¹

1. Executive Summary

This policy document discusses the contours of reconciliation as a framework for achieving sustainable peace. Drawing on experiences from the African continent over the past two decades, the paper outlines a future-oriented, justice-focused, gendered, locally-owned and comprehensive approach to reconciliation as a critical ingredient in various processes that form part of the post-conflict reconstruction and development agenda. These processes include conflict prevention, peace-making, negotiation, transitional justice and inclusive development.

Reconciliation is a contested and controversial term, but also one that continues to feature at many different levels globally. It features at community level, in national transitional justice processes, in legislation providing for processes and institutions of national unity and in visionary documents setting out a desired future. It is, for better and worse, a concept that will continue to shape peace-making for the foreseeable future. It is therefore necessary, urgent even, to conceptualise reconciliation in context-specific yet consistent and responsible ways, as well as ways in which it can be supported programmatically.

There is a need both to focus and expand the parameters through which we contemplate, plan and design reconciliation engagements. Focused on building just relationships between erstwhile enemies, the concept of reconciliation developed here is fundamentally future-orientated (although not to the exclusion of dealing with crimes of the past), justice-oriented (though not to the exclusion of providing for accommodation, negotiation and compromise between enemies), gendered (though not to the exclusion of other identities), locally-owned (though not to exclusion of international engagement) and comprehensive, that is multi-agency, multi-levelled, and multi-phased (though not to the exclusion of a clear, focused understanding of reconciliation across these areas of engagement).

The value of reconciliation as a potential framework for large-scale societal transition—in addition to its core focus on restoring just relations—is precisely that, in our view, it provides an important link between processes designed on the one hand to settle conflict, and those designed on the other hand to create a new, inclusive and prosperous future. Reconciliation provides this link by emphasising the fundamental importance, across the various processes, of restoring just relationships as a basis for an inclusive and fair peace. For this reason too, reconciliation provides guidance on how to sequence and integrate various elements of political transition, including mechanisms, processes and institutional arrangements commonly associated with transitional justice (truth seeking exercises, criminal trials, reparations, institutional reform, memorialisation, education, lustration and vetting) into a larger, more comprehensive political and societal agenda.

In seeking to overcome oppression or violent conflict, reconciliation is fundamentally future-oriented. This orientation does not exclude dealing with the past. Indeed, dealing with the past may in fact be essential in order to achieve the desired future. Yet it is achieving a shared future, and not settling old scores, that fundamentally

¹ The document was compiled by Dr Tim Murithi and Dr Fanie du Toit on invitation of Dr Ozonnia Ojielo, Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

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The document is a Framing Paper based on a draft paper presented by Dr. Murithi at the UNDP “Experts Consultation to Critically Review Reconciliation as a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding” which was held from 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa. This Framing Paper has been developed by Drs Du Toit and Murithi drawing upon the original presentation, on the authors’ individual research, inputs from the participants at the Consultation and a broad range of additional sources acknowledged in the bibliography.

informs and sustains reconciliation. Such a transformative approach is forward-looking and predicated on rebuilding relationships in deeply divided societies as part of a social reconstruction process, with a view to constructing a new future society which overcomes the violence of a previous dispensation in sustainable ways.

Reconciliation also fosters just, inclusive and fair societies. It does not paper over the injustices of the past, but instead fundamentally challenges unjust, violent and oppressive relationships. As Desmond Tutu remarked at the conclusion of South Africa's TRC, "reconciliation is never cosy". It can be no other, for if enemies are to learn to live together peacefully, that peace has to be just. Justice is written into reconciliation's DNA, so to speak. The paper argues therefore that the stand-off between those advocating for transitional justice and those who prioritise reconciliation, is both artificial and misconceived. This false distinction is overcome in the concept of reconciliation proposed here—a concept that builds on experiences and insights generated mainly on the African continent over the past two decades since the post-genocide reconstruction of Rwanda and the post-apartheid transformation of South Africa began. Many experiences and insights have emerged about reconciliation, both positive and negative, from these and other cases, like Mozambique, Namibia, Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Tunisia, Mali, Cote d' Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and others.

Rebuilding inclusive and fair societies after war and oppression require a special emphasis on gender, not least because of gender violence's well-documented, and often central, role in fostering conflict. Much has been written about gender violence in conflict, and mainstreaming gender within transitional justice now forms a prominent part of the field's innovative thrust. We are proposing a gendered approach to reconciliation to which gender is not incidental or optional, but indeed central. If reconciliation is the restoration of just relations, and if gender relations are typically a primary site of violence during war or oppression, then reconciliation is not possible without gender justice. Without overcoming gender violence, and moreover laying the foundations of a gender-just society, reconciliation cannot be said to have occurred.

Moreover, reconciliation as understood here is locally-owned and driven. It is primarily and most effectively managed by those who have to live with its consequences. Although no reconciliation process plays off in a vacuum, and even as the international community often supports and encourages reconciliation processes to meet national human rights standards and requirements, such processes ought to be led and managed by those directly involved in the conflict and who have a direct stake in its peaceful resolution. This, in our view, greatly enhances the chances of reconciliation to make a lasting and transformative impact.

A further objective here is to make explicit the need for a comprehensive approach to reconciliation, one in which the scope of programmatic entry points is broadened so that a range of stakeholders can contribute towards achieving integrated and coordinated multiple interventions, at different levels, in ways that link short-term objectives to longer term goals, and different levels of society to one another. Reconciliation is both about transforming the relationships between people and groups in society, as well as between society and the state. This document argues that inter-agency coordination is necessary at the very outset of reconciliation engagement processes. Amongst many other issues this includes the possibility of developing a pedagogy for reconciliation informed by context specific approaches to transformation. It also requires developing the capacity to evaluate and improve the impact of reconciliation processes over the medium to long term.

In addition to the cases already mentioned, this document also draws on insights generated by the United Nations Development Programme's *E-Consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism* compiled in March 2014.² In addition, it draws upon the insights and recommendation generated by the UNDP Experts Consultation to *Critically Review Reconciliation as a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding* which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 4 September 2014.

This consultation identified a number of lessons learned and key practices which, have been developed into policy recommendations at the end of this document, with a view to identifying entry points to inform future

² United Nations Development Programme, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network, March 2014.

engagement with dialogue and reconciliation initiatives. A comprehensive analysis of local practices and experiences is beyond the scope of this document, however, a selection of illustrations will be drawn upon and highlighted to support its arguments.

2. Contesting Reconciliation

The term 'reconciliation' remains contested and controversial. On 21 October 2013, the United Nations Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action (the Framework Team) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF) convened a meeting, in New York, to discuss the issue of reconciliation. The meeting acknowledged that the 'term "reconciliation" has caused some confusion and misunderstanding' and that the concept 'conflates both a process and a desired end-state'.³

It is not uncommon for social actors across entrenched divides to view reconciliation from different, even opposing perspectives. Depending on where one is located, the concept could attain a very different meaning. For example, in South Africa there are differing opinions as to the function of reconciliation. The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) which conducts an annual qualitative perception survey representative of the South African population at large for the past decade has found that those (white citizens) who benefited from apartheid, do not consider redress as a necessary prerequisite to constructing a new society. For example, in responding to the statement that '*reconciliation is impossible if those who were disadvantaged under apartheid continue to be poor*', only 28.5% of white South Africans agree with this statement, compared to 57.7 % of black South Africans who agree with the statement.⁴ This suggests that almost two-thirds of white South Africans believe that reconciliation can be achieved even if those who were disadvantaged under apartheid continue to be poor. For the majority of victims of apartheid on the other hand, reconciliation ought to focus on redress of socio-economic injustices of the past.⁵ This example illustrates some of the difficulties when seeking to develop a common understanding of reconciliation from opposing perspectives.

Apart from social location, concrete demands in post-conflict and post-authoritarian societies also produce different perspectives on reconciliation. Some practitioners tend to emphasise the primacy of national processes of institutional reform or governments of national unity for example, whereas others emphasise the in-depth work of interpersonal reconciliation, whereas still others take community healing as their point of departure. An example of the latter is Rwanda's *Gacaca* court system which was able to process more than a million cases related to the 1994 genocide, all in the name of reconciliation. Debates about procedural inconsistencies and purported politicization of the *Gacaca* courts aside, the initiative represented a powerful reminder of the importance of reconciliation at community level after mass violence associated typically with those international crimes identified in the Rome Statute as the most egregious, namely genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Reconciliation is also framed differently between those who focus, not on different levels of society or on different demands after conflict, but on a particular phase of transition rather than another. Reconciliation within a peace-making framework for example may differ from reconciliation as it is conceptualised with reference to transitional justice, national dialogue and negotiations, or indeed with reference to ongoing social transformation of society after political transition is achieved.

³United Nations Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and the Social Science Research Council, Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, *Reconciliation: Connecting Dealing with the Past to Including People in the Future*, Meeting Summary Note, 21 October 2013, p.1.

⁴Kim Wale, (ed), 'Confronting Exclusion: A Time for Radical Reconciliation', *South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2013 Report*, (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2013), www.ijr.org.za, accessed July 2014, p.37.

⁵Wale, 'Confronting Exclusion: A Time for Radical Reconciliation', *South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2013 Report*, p.38.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) and Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) convened a workshop, in Accra, Ghana, to discuss issues related to the programming of reconciliation processes in societies. The workshop noted that ‘reconciliation efforts need to address issues at both the local and political levels and these efforts need to run concurrently to each other so that synergies are created between the different levels’.⁶ Similarly, the Framework Team meeting concluded that reconciliation ‘can and needs to happen locally, regionally and nationally’ and ‘requires rebuilding, or in some cases building relationships across society and between society and the state’.⁷ We agree that reconciliation ought to be predicated on enabling stakeholders at different levels of a society to work collaboratively, through multiple forms of interventions, to promote transformation, sustainable peace and prevent the recurrence of violent conflict. Furthermore, an inclusive approach to reconciliation requires the simultaneous engagement with national, communal and interpersonal processes of societal transformation.

Another factor that influences differing understandings of reconciliation is found in larger theoretical debates. Internationally there exists a significant corpus of book length studies aiming to conceptualize reconciliation within socio-political and psycho-political contexts.⁸ These theories can be organized as various “types”.⁹ These widely varying academic perspectives on reconciliation may be perplexing, confusing even. It may also be seen as one of the strengths of the concept. Even if perspectives continue to vary radically, the opportunity to debate a shared concept such as reconciliation “from different angles” may in fact be precisely what is needed to open possibilities for dialogue, negotiation and ultimately peaceful co-existence where none such opportunities existed before.

3. Re-thinking Reconciliation¹⁰

Given the wide use of the term reconciliation in many dozens of conflict zones globally, but also the contestation between perceptions on different sides of a particular conflict, or in different phases of transition or indeed at

⁶UN Peacebuilding Support Office, NOREF and KAIPTC, *Building Just Societies: Reconciliation in Transitional Settings*, Workshop Report, 5 and 6 June 2012, Accra, Ghana, p.3

⁷UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSR CPPF, p.1.

⁸Karin Brounéus, (2008). *Rethinking reconciliation: concepts, methods, and an empirical study of truth telling and psychological health in Rwanda*. Uppsala, Uppsala University; NirEisikovits. (2010). *Sympathizing with the enemy: reconciliation, transitional justice, negotiation*. Dordrecht, MartinusNijhoff Publishers; Luc Huyse&Mark Salter. (2008). *Traditional justice and reconciliation after violent conflict: learning from African experiences*. Stockholm, International IDEA; Jean-Paul Lederach. (2005). *The moral imagination: the art and soul of building peace*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; Jean-Paul Lederach. (1997). *Building peace: sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press; Colleen Murphy. (2012). *A moral theory of political reconciliation*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Daniel Philpott. (2012). *Just and unjust peace: an ethic of political reconciliation*. New York, Oxford University Press; Andrew Rigby. (2001). *Justice and reconciliation: after the violence*. Boulder, Colo, L. Rienner; Andrew Schaap. (2005). *Political reconciliation*. London, Routledge; Donald W. Shriver (1997). *An ethic for enemies: forgiveness in politics*. New York, Oxford University Press; Desmond Tutu. (1999). *No future without forgiveness*. New York, Doubleday; Ernesto Verdeja. (2009). *Unchopping a tree: reconciliation in the aftermath of political violence*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press; Charles Villa-Vicencio. (2009). *Walk with us and listen: political reconciliation in Africa*. Washington, D.C, Georgetown University Press.

⁹Fanie du Toit, *Reconciliation as Interdependence—Political transitions that work*, forthcoming.

¹⁰ The UNDP Expert Consultation of September 2014, identified a number of key concerns and dimensions that should guide a re-thinking of reconciliation. These include:

- i) **Inter-generationality** – which emphasis the centrality of viewing reconciliation processes as transcending generations.¹⁰
- ii) **Context-sensitivity and specificity** – which recognises that there is no template for reconciliation, and therefore the importance of being relevant to the specific historical, political and socio-economic conditions of particular countries,
- iii) **Coordination, cohesion and cooperation** – to emphasise the importance of inter-agency commitment and collaboration in reconciliation programming with local actors;
- iv) **Accountability and the pursuit of non-recurrence** – ensuring that reconciliation reinforces and consolidates other accountability processes, as a practical means of avoiding the relapse of violence and tension;
- v) **Collective ownership and local design** – which emphasises the importance of an inclusive approach that engages with identifying, building on and nurturing existing local initiatives, based on local needs and in response to local conditions and capacities, some of which can be scaled up for greater impact; this requires the design of reconciliation processes flexible enough to adapt to any negotiated changes;
- vi) **Transparency and incremental achievements** – which emphasise the need for openness as a means to achieving progressive intermediate goals towards reconciliation.

different levels of society, it may be fruitful to allow for a broad yet focused conceptualisation drawing on creative ways to accommodate different processes, perspectives and conditions which, at a minimum, would lay the foundation for rebuilding relationships on a more inclusive and fair basis going forward. Along similar lines, the Framework Team meeting noted that, reconciliation ‘needs to change attitudes and beliefs through building trust that has been broken’.¹¹

Consequently, despite its contested nature, reconciliation should, as a minimum requirement, seek to repair, restore and reconstruct deeply divided societies.¹² For the purposes of this document, we highlight five key features of reconciliation that would apply not only across different contexts, but also at different levels and times within a given process—offering a measure of cohesiveness and direction to the various processes constituting a comprehensive movement from violent conflict through national dialogue, transitional justice and institutional reform towards sustainable peace.

a. Future-Orientated

Reconciliation is often framed as a retroactive process primarily aimed at addressing a violent past. By contrast, this paper proposes that reconciliation be thought of as primarily future-oriented and forward-looking. In societies where the past dominates every aspect of society, it takes special resolve and wisdom to articulate and pursue, let alone realise, a new future. And often only after the future is settled, can the past be dealt with, that is to say, once a society knows where it is going, it is more likely to be able to face its past in ways that overcome that past rather than repeat it.

Reconciliation is therefore about transforming relationships between people and groups in society as well as between society and the state, *towards a future goal* based on political, social and economic inclusivity and fairness. It is in achieving this goal, that the most important prerequisite for justice is met, namely non-recurrence of conflict. Avoiding a relapse into violent conflict by rebuilding relationships in a fundamentally more just manner is arguably reconciliation’s single most important aim.

Moreover, the process of addressing the underlying causes of violence and the damaged relationships between people or groups, as well as rebuilding the relationship between people and the state and its institutions reduces the likelihood that grievances will resurface to undermine stability in the future. Consequently, as a means to expand its remit, reconciliation should be embedded in a *preventive* discourse which would reframe the function of reconciliation beyond the *remedial* approach, which has dominated the accountability discourse.

Along these lines, the framework meeting too noted that reconciliation needs to lay ‘the ground work for the future’ and that ‘it is a visionary notion’.¹³ The meeting emphasised that one of the elements that are core to reconciliation is the need for stakeholders to articulate ‘a common forward-looking vision’.¹⁴ It is therefore useful to re-frame dealing with a vision of the future as being essential to reconciliation. Conversely, reconciliation processes should be conducted with a view to envisioning, defining and constructing a common future.¹⁵ An inclusive reconciliation process is therefore forward-looking in the sense that it implicitly suggests and proposes a new vision for relationships within society and the state, as well as contributing to a deeper process of social transformation

More specifically, this approach would expand the parameters of the discourse of reconciliation, beyond merely the accountability discourse, towards a transformative approach predicated on envisioning a new future. In other words, inclusive reconciliation is in essence about recognizing the inherent interdependence and interconnection

¹¹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.1; see also John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 1997).

¹²See Tim Murithi, *The Ethics of Peacebuilding*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); HizkiasAssefa, ‘Reconciliation’, in L. Reychler and T. Paffenholz (eds), *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001); David Bloomfield, T. Barnes and L. Huyse, *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2003).

¹³ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.1.

¹⁴ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

¹⁵Fanie Du Toit, *Reconciliation as interdependence*.

between people, which will be progressively re-established in the future in more just ways. Through the interventions to progressively re-establish the interdependence and interconnectivity between people, this enhances the quality of peacebuilding and prevents the recourse to violent confrontation. In practical terms, reconciliation is predicated on actualizing and acting upon the commonality that unites us all as human beings. By extension, one can then argue convincingly for the necessity to 'invest' in inclusive reconciliation due to recognition of our common humanity and its appeal to solidarity with others in times of need.

Addressing and dealing with a violent past is therefore not an exercise embarked on for its own sake. It is taken up because of the value dealing with the past has for reaching a desired, more comprehensively just future. A violent past is often the most important obstacle to reaching the future, and must therefore be dealt with. Otherwise resentment, revenge and renewed hostilities often prevent sustainable peace. At the same time without a shared agreement on where society is headed, exercises meant to lay a difficult past to rest often derail.

Processes such as truth-telling and reparations are therefore most successfully pursued in wake of comprehensive peace and constitutional agreements which provide a clear vision of a desired, shared future. Moreover, establishing accountability and/or punishment for the wrongs of the past also promotes an inclusive future in so far as they prevent reoccurrence and a sense of satisfaction amongst victims, and are therefore seen as building blocks for a new future. Yet, these two are best pursued once society has some measure of agreement on what a more just and inclusive future will look like.

b. Justice-focused

Apart from the tension between a desired future and a difficult past, reconciliation processes also need to navigate perceived tensions between justice and peace. Often times reconciliation is situated as in opposition to the accountability discourse.¹⁶ Largely due to tensions and unintended consequences created by an over-reliance on TRC's as "silver bullets" to achieve peace, reconciliation is often criticised for falling short on delivering on justice and accountability.¹⁷ To the extent that it is perceived to feed impunity through secret amnesty-deals and forgive-and-forget exercises, reconciliation processes are viewed as being elite driven deal-making processes that seek to exempt leaders from being held to account. Indeed, when reconciliation does equate to impunity, it imposes an undue and unconscionable burden on victims of past abuses both to forgo their right to justice and their right to redress and reparation for damages suffered.

At the same time, mediators often remark that those sitting around the peace table hardly ever arrive with clean hands. More likely those leaders, essential as they are to make peace—have blood on their hands. And yet it is often impossible to persuade warring groups to lay down their arms unless their leaders are represented at the table, regardless of whether these are leaders of established nations where the rule of law apply or rebel leaders accused of gross violations of human rights. This presents a major dilemma to those concerned, not only with reconciliation, but with forward-looking, inclusive and fair reconciliation.

Impunity—the absence of accountability—for egregious human rights violations is neither acceptable nor a sufficient base on which to construct a reconciliation process. At the same time, fighting impunity ought not be

¹⁶ In particular, there has been a tendency within the field and practice to treat Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) as the primary vehicle through which reconciliation mechanisms have been conceived and implemented. For example, this is evident in terms of the frequency with which the South African model is referenced as a prospective approach to initiating and advancing the cause of reconciliation within societies and the state.¹⁶ There are political limitations and mandate constraints in shaping how TRC's as institutional mechanisms can contribute towards rebuilding relationships in the aftermath of conflict or in post-authoritarian societies. This is due to the fact that TRC's are the product of particular contextual factors relating to the nature of the conflict within societies and levels of mistrust among the political formations. An extended discussion of TRC's is not the scope or purpose of this document and there is expansive literature and analysis on their functionality elsewhere. For additional analysis on TRC's see, Charles Villa-Vicencio, 'What a Truth Commission Can and Cannot Achieve', in Charles Villa-Vicencio and Fanie Du Toit, (eds), *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: 10 Years On*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2006).

¹⁷ UNDP, 'Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development', Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.7.

equated to judicial justice alone. Alternative forms of accountability, including stringent, individual and consistently-applied notions of conditional amnesty as well as a variety of traditional practises and rituals, may indeed provide ways to proceed whilst avoiding the risk of alienating potential negotiating partners by insisting on prosecution for all crimes, or on the other hand drawing a blanket of denial and impunity over past crimes. Importantly though, is that these measures be applied consistently, fairly and inclusively, and that some measure of satisfaction is achieved for victim communities.

In essence, reconciliation reminds those in conflict of their comprehensive interdependence, and therefore that restored relations ought to be reciprocal, just and fair. Reconciliation is not about restoring skewed and unjust relations, but fundamentally more reciprocal and fair ones. Therefore, it is our view that there can be no reconciliation without justice. Conversely, there can also be no justice without a fundamentally future-oriented reconciliation where erstwhile enemies cooperate politically and economically and learn to live together in peace.

This paper argues therefore as indeed the UNDP Expert Consultation noted, that ‘human rights and justice are not mutually exclusive to reconciliation’. Rather they complement one another, are mutually-dependent and both integral to processes of societal transformation. Without reconciliation in the sense of rebuilding relationships destroyed or harmed by the past, justice for victims and society at large are most unlikely ever to materialise. Without achieving some (credible) measure of justice for past wrongs encouraging the move towards a more fair and inclusive future, the new dispensation, along with its re-constituted relations, is unlikely to prove sustainable. The consultation thus recommended that the achievement as outcomes of reconciliation of ‘socio-economic and cultural rights must be seen as equal to civil and political rights’.¹⁸

This means that political transition understood as the handover of political power coupled with the requisite institutional reform processes to enable a peaceful power shift, as such can never complete a reconciliation agenda. That would leave reconciliation’s promise of comprehensive justice (political, social and economic) unfulfilled. Of essence therefore, pursuing social justice furthered through inclusive growth, lies at the heart of reconciliation. In this way, a process that seeks some measure of limited agreement between fighting groups, proceeds through processes of negotiating a new dispensation on the basis of which a difficult past is dealt with, needs to find its completion in social transformation and inclusive development. Reconciliation thus conceived as the glue that binds all these processes together and shows how they align to achieve the objective of a more inclusive and fair society.

c. Gendered

Given that gender constructions determine how women and men are supposed to engage with post-conflict and post-authoritarian contexts, it is vitally important to ensure that reconciliation interventions are gender inclusive, gender focused and gender transformative. Within this larger agenda, a more specific challenge remains how to ensure that reconciliation processes respond to the needs and experiences of women and girls. It is at the same time important not to reinforce gender stereotypes or suggest that women’s participation and leadership on reconciliation issues *as such* are enough to address gender justice. There is a need to articulate a gendered approach to reconciliation which engages with men and masculinity too. In addition, the UNDP Expert Consultation observed that the conflation of ‘gender-based violence as being equal to sexual violence, is a distortion’ that needs to be proactively interrogated. In particular, it is necessary to develop ‘a deeper understanding of the impact of violations in conflicts on society’ and strategies for a gendered approach to redress and reconciliation.¹⁹ Such a gendered approach to reconciliation remains a challenge, and its comprehensive treatment is beyond the scope of this document.

In framing reconciliation as the transformation of relationships however, it becomes necessary to focus on the existing power relations between men and women in war-affected and authoritarian and indeed also post-war

¹⁸UNDP, ‘Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development’, Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.9.

¹⁹UNDP, ‘Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development’, Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.14.

and post-authoritarian contexts. This would require a sharp focus on masculinity and how it is has traditionally 'performed' in the context of war or post-war. Inclusive reconciliation processes would need to strive to reconfigure the asymmetrical power relationships between men and women, and open spaces in which masculinity, in particular, can be performed differently. This would include confronting the challenge of redefining masculine and feminine roles in the aftermath of conflict and during reconciliation processes.

It is also necessary to confront and address the barriers that exist in ensuring that the voices of women and girls from across society inform the shape, direction and texture of national reconciliation processes. As the UNDP E-consultation observes 'it is critical to ensure women's participation in national reconciliation processes, as well as associated programming efforts'.²⁰ In Cyprus, UNDP was requested by the political party formations to design a civic forum which could bring all sectors of society into the process of reconciliation, which would have the spin-off effect of creating a climate to advance negotiations on deeper and more substantive issues. As noted by the E-Consultation, the UNDP utilized the entry point provided by 'UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to better position women in the peace-making efforts, including providing funds to the Cyprus Gender Advisory Team (GAT) which worked with the UN Good Offices Mission to address women's concerns directly to the leaders of the communities in the country'.²¹ In terms of influencing legislation, 'in Liberia, Parliament in passing the TRC Act ensured that the Act made provisions for gender-based issues'.²² Whereas in Zimbabwe, for example, there were 'deliberate efforts to strengthen women's capacities in peace and reconciliation efforts'. In particular, women parliamentarians were capacitated on Conflict Prevention Management Resolution and Transformation (CPMRT), through a targeted training for fifteen members of the Zimbabwe Women Parliamentary Caucus. Additional initiatives supported by the UNDP worked with the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), the Women in Political Support Unit (WiPSU), and the Zimbabwean Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MWAGCD).

Reconciliation-sensitive development can address structural gender inequality through ensuring that women and men have the autonomy and are empowered to ensure their own food supply, medical care, income, and access to land, credit, training and markets. This ideally should be achieved through a combination of national legislation and local development initiatives, opening up a range of entry points for concrete reconciliation initiatives to address and overcome gender justice.

A gendered approach to reconciliation would need also to address 'the tensions between cultural sensitivities and the rights and involvement of women in reconciliation processes'.²³ This is likely to be a common challenge facing future reconciliation initiatives, given the prevalence of patriarchy around the world, not least in more traditional societies. In order to confront this challenge, sustained dialogue with political and cultural leaders can counter potential reluctance to include women as equal stakeholders in the transformation of society. Ultimately, a comprehensive treatment of these issues is beyond the scope of this document, which suggests that additional research and analysis is required to further articulate how a gendered approach to societal transformation can be advanced by stakeholders in the interests of achieving and sustaining inclusive reconciliation.

d. Locally-owned

If reconciliation is defined as restoring just relations after war or oppression, then it stands to reason that it would be impossible to achieve without those at either end of the relationship that needs restoring, taking ownership and assuming full responsibility for the process. Possibilities for reconciliation may be fostered, conditions for it created and the idea mooted by external agencies, but the actual process, by our definition, rests in the hands of those who are in need of its realisation—those erstwhile enemies now seeking a new future together.

²⁰UNDP, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, p.5.

²¹ UNDP, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, p.8.

²²UNDP, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, p.6.

²³UN Peacebuilding Support Office, NOREF and KAIPTC, *Building Just Societies: Reconciliation in Transitional Settings*, p.14.

There is therefore considerably more reason to ensure full participation of local leadership at peace talks than merely stopping the fighting. Ensuring local ownership from the onset is equally crucial for making a peace that is likely to last. Opposing political leaders often attest to a growing sense of “being in this together” as political talks progress, and “having to make it work” since there is no alternative other than returning to violence. It is our view that such local ownership, direction and leadership are indispensable qualities of durable reconciliation.

Reconciliation ought to be owned and shaped locally or risk becoming no process at all. At the same time enforced peace has its role, precisely when local will to make peace is lacking, but this cannot be viewed as reconciliation.

This emphasis on local ownership has an important additional benefit. It provides for a seamless rationale to deepen and widen local ownership beyond the immediate political elite seeking a peace deal, to include structures and communities at all levels of society. Local leaders should therefore drive the reconciliation processes by adopting a posture that embraces the efforts of communal and interpersonal reconciliation engagements, predicated on a commitment to participatory democracy. However, in situations where such leadership is unwilling, or unable, to ensure this linkage between the national, communal and interpersonal, then external actors can play this function of intermediary, until and up to the point at which the state can take over the process in an inclusive manner. To reinforce, this point the Framework meeting proposed that ‘the UN could link up with local initiatives and help bring them to scale nationally where appropriate’.²⁴

During South Africa’s transition from apartheid for example, a succession of reconciliation platforms gradually both deepened and widened local ownership to include civics, labour unions, faith communities, NGO’s, business and cultural organisations, all making an input on the ultimate shape of the Constitutional agreement (on what the future ought to look like) and on how the country would deal with its troubled past (within the confines of a peace deal that provided for some form of amnesty).

e. Comprehensive

A main consideration is that it is necessary to disaggregate the notion, and expand the parameters of the discourse, of reconciliation to include a range of processes. Concretely, this includes viewing TRC’s as only one part of reconciliation processes, among a broad range of possible interventions. Reconciliation processes therefore need to go well beyond the scope of what is possible within the constraints of a TRC.²⁵

Reframing reconciliation along these lines provides stakeholders and their partners with the conceptual clarity to target their preventive interventions more effectively. Reconciliation as future-oriented process provides a framework for multi-actor and multi-level operational engagement that can be demarcated with intermediary short-term objectives in the lead up to the longer term aspirational goal of achieving reconciliation.

The Framework Team meeting suggested that ‘where there is a national vision or process for reconciliation, it needs to be integrated with reconciliation mechanisms underway at the grassroots and community level’.²⁶ So national reconciliation processes should build on, integrate with, and even be led by what is happening at a grassroots and community level. For example, Liberia has articulated a reconciliation roadmap with a range of thematic components which needs to be supported by the international community. It is worthwhile to develop a database of successful practices and experiences which can be utilized to inform ongoing and future efforts to implement reconciliation engagements. The important caveat is that each situation is different and therefore the specific context should always serve as the primary factors in the planning and implementation of reconciliation interventions.

²⁴ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

²⁵ George Wachira, Prisca Kamungi and Kalie Sillah, *Stretching the Truth: The Uncertain Promise of TRCs in Africa’s Transitional Justice*, (Nairobi: NPI-Africa, 2014).

²⁶ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

In the following section we spell out more concretely what is meant by a comprehensive approach to reconciliation.

4. Towards a Reconciliation Agenda: from Conflict Resolution to Inclusive Development

Reconciliation is not the only way to frame the inter-linked, uneven and cyclical processes of transition from violent conflict towards an inclusive and fair society. Various other models and concepts exist, such as enforced peace, co-existence, military victory or segregation. There are however strong arguments for framing political transition as reconciliation conceived along the lines presented above. These include consideration about how reconciliation provides the bridge between conflict resolution and sustainable development. The Framework Team meeting, of 21 October 2013, noted that reconciliation is 'very practical' in its overall objective of rebuilding and building relationships.²⁷ The meeting observed that 'the challenge is to have a greater understanding of the repertoire of tools, techniques, and approaches so that the UN can respond more quickly and energetically to various situations'.²⁸ It further suggested that 'even at the height of conflict, options to promote reconciliation exist and the UN could be more creative to identify entry points particularly at the local level'.²⁹ For example, 'the UN Special Representatives of the Secretary-General should listen to civil society and other non-state actors to ensure general buy-in' and jointly determine the most effective entry points for intervention.³⁰ By broadening the scope of programmatic entry points for reconciliation, and through outlining the tactical and practical linkages between interventions, deliberate efforts have to be undertaken to strategize and develop customized interventions at the different levels of engagement with reconciliation. This suggests that a degree of stakeholder as well as inter-agency coordination and collaboration is necessary at the very outset of the engagement with in-country reconciliation processes.

The programmatic interventions need to be framed with reference to issues relating to relationship transformation, trust building and legitimacy, and the connections between these issues and the deeper forms of social transformation on which they are dependent. Given the diverse contexts in which reconciliation is applied it is necessary to adopt a degree of flexibility and a posture of willingness to learn and understand the local context, prior to efficiently engaging with practical and relevant interventions. This point will be further elaborated below in the section on pedagogy.

The process flow for implementing inclusive reconciliation cannot and should not be applied in a dogmatic fashion as each situation is contextually different. The requirements of reconciliation in terms of constructing a new future society, requires an initial step to visualize this new society and then actualize it through programmatic interventions, at different levels with multiple actors. A typical process flow to ensure inclusive reconciliation could utilize the multi-stakeholder dialogue model to generate buy-in and ownership of interventions relating to: i) knowledge generation and transfer; ii) policy analysis and formulation; iii) skills and capacity development; iv) implementation of dialogue processes. This list is by no means exhaustive, and seeks to provide only a preliminary trajectory of a prospective process flow.

In terms of concrete programmatic entry points an emphasis should be placed on institutional capacity building focusing on issues relating to: i) leadership for reconciliation; ii) management, structures and systems to coordinate reconciliation engagements; iii) resources to support initiatives; iv) national, communal and interpersonal dialogue processes.

a. A Theory of Change

A theory of change for reconciliation processes sets out to explain what ought to be expected, realistically, to be achieved. Perhaps promising forgiveness and emotional closure to entire population is to overpromise, but to offer merely a hike in civic trust in the wake of entrenched conflict may be to under-promise or to expect too

²⁷ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.1.

²⁸ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

²⁹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

³⁰ UN Peacebuilding Support Office, NOREF and KAIPTC, *Building Just Societies: Reconciliation in Transitional Settings*, p.23.

little of reconciliation. So the first question concerns appropriate outcomes. The second question within a theory of change concerns the methodology, the “how” of reconciliation. How in fact does reconciliation, properly understood and implemented, contribute to societal change, not least in the context of protracted and entrenched conflict? Additionally, which insights in this regard are to be regarded as strictly context-specific and what in fact can be carried over between contexts? The aim is to establish a development pathway which shows how reconciliation is the glue that links multiple factors which lead to violence and conflict. And that without this glue sustainable peace is not possible. Reconciliation highlights the importance of rebuilding relationships at all levels of society thereby acknowledging the fundamental interdependence between individuals, groups and societies across historic divisions. With this working description and the preceding questions in mind, a preliminary set of statements can be made:

- Reconciliation creates *possibilities* for healing, forgiveness and closure, in short for a future no longer dominated or determined by a violent past. It does this by bringing enemies into contact with one another and promoting peaceful cooperation, deepened mutual understanding, joint problem-solving and the establishment of a shared framework for what a desired future would look like. At the same time reconciliation as outlined does *not promise* forgiveness or healing as certain outcomes—instead, more modestly, it seeks to provide the basis for these outcomes to occur should conditions favour them.
- Reconciliation provides important conditions for establishing and building the rule of law as the basis for a more just society. It does so by creating space—even where law and order have broken down, or where deep differences exist about what the rule of law should look like—where enemies can debate and articulate the ground rules of a new, fair and inclusive society.
- Reconciliation is itself an early object lesson in democratic participation, especially with reference to articulating and endorsing what a shared vision of an inclusive and fair society would look like. It provides spaces for political participation, democratic contestation and difficult dialogues about the root causes of the conflict. As such it prepares a society divided and used to exclusion at different levels for participative democracy.
- Reconciliation also reminds those in charge of political transition that if the process is not owned by those who have to live with its consequences, it is unlikely to succeed. After all, if reconciliation is about restoring relationships, it is only those within these relationship that can achieve the desired change. Reconciliation therefore assumes higher levels of ownership and commitment than enforced peace or segregation thereby drawing erstwhile enemies into a process that acknowledges their agency and leadership in shaping a new dispensation, not only amongst the elite, but indeed across all levels of society. In this regard, within a genuine reconciliation agenda, political power ought to reside alongside with, and accommodate, civic influence.
- The reconciliation agenda emphasises that the various dimensions and processes comprising political transition and peacebuilding ought to be inter-linked and integrated allowing them to build on, feed off and mutually support one another. The Framework Team meeting argued that ‘questions of timing and sequencing should not be assumed but thought through carefully’.³¹ As discussed above the sequencing of reconciliation engagements therefore has to be determined on a contextual basis.
- Reconciliation, with its inherent promise of more just relations, therefore do not rest with a political or institutional reform, but insists on societal transformation shaped by the ideals of inclusivity and fairness.

Key to the theory of change as described above, is that two outcomes are critical to reconciliation processes; first an enhanced adherence to, and legitimacy of, the so-called “social contract” on the basis of which the citizens grant the government the right to rule over them (the vertical dimension); and second a deepening of social cohesion to facilitate the integration of those groups who previously had been engaged in violent conflict politically, economically and socially (the horizontal dimension).

b. A Multi-Level Approach

³¹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

For the purpose of this document, the different levels of engagement with reconciliation interventions are understood as including the national, communal and interpersonal dimensions.

- i) At a national level, inclusive reconciliation requires all political actors to acknowledge and accept their political interdependence, and their shared interest in legitimate state institutions.
- ii) At a communal level, inclusive reconciliation requires different groups to accept that all groups are part of society and equally worthy of sharing in the benefits and resources of the state.
- iii) At an inter-personal level, inclusive reconciliation requires engagement with fellow members of society to understand the divisions of the past and ways to reconcile individual, communal and ideological differences in a way that begins the journey towards improving relationships through promoting fairness, equality and building trust.

On all levels, inclusive reconciliation can only be consolidated if there is a genuine commitment to working towards promoting the socio-economic well-being of all members of society, through processes and programmes coordinated by the state and its institutions.

We can also consider the horizontal and vertical linkages of national, communal and interpersonal levels of reconciliation engagements.

National Political Reconciliation

National political and policy-level reconciliation interventions need to focus on addressing the issue of 'the distribution of power and the nature of existing checks and balances'.³² The UNDP Expert Consultation observed that power asymmetries could derail reconciliation processes. In particular, there is tendency for 'elites to drive reconciliation processes when civics cede their inherent power'.³³ The Consultation also conceded that 'deal-making in reconciliation processes is unavoidable', the primary challenge becomes one of progressively realizing human rights and justice once the deal has been made.³⁴ Specifically, this challenge requires ensuring the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, legislature, constitution and other institutions of the state.

The impact of the international system and the global economy on national reconciliation processes is a dimension that is often overlooked, in terms of how they impact on societal transformation. Countries also have to navigate their relationship with geo-political forces and a macro-economic framework which they cannot influence effectively as societies emerging from conflict or authoritarianism. Consequently, this undermines the extent to which countries can restructure their internal economies in a way that proactively facilitates reconciliation. This has been illustrated in a number of countries which have emerged from conflict, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Timor Leste, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, but which have been ideologically subject to the same strictures of economics of liberalization. Liberalization places an undue emphasis on structuring the economy to maximize foreign direct investment and the adoption of fiscal policies that permit the free flow of capital in and out of the country, this is often at the expense of a reduction of social spending.

A key challenge therefore relates to how to constrain power and the influence of capital so that it does not undermine reconciliation processes, particularly in a globalized context in which external actors might seek to extract an advantage from war-affected countries. The UNDP Expert Consultation suggested that one approach would be to 'create alternative competing sources of power' and mobilization.³⁵

Specifically, alternative sources of power can be situated domestically by placing an emphasis on leveraging the comparative advantage that countries emerging from conflict possess in terms of developing their agri-business

³²UN PBSO, NOREF, KAIPTC, Workshop Report, p.11.

³³UNDP, 'Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development', Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.10.

³⁴UNDP, 'Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development', Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.10.

³⁵UNDP, 'Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development', Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.10.

industries to exploit the global opportunities that are available to maximize trade. In addition, countries emerging from conflict can place an emphasis on the beneficiation of natural resources, notably minerals, can ensure the diversification of their economic revenue to decrease an over-reliance on exporting raw materials and only importing manufactured products once they have processed externally. These strategies will generate the income that countries require to finance their reconciliation processes and consequently generate an alternate source of economic power which will ultimately serve the interests of promoting societal transformation, so long as corruption does not siphon these resources from the basic needs of national communities.

A fundamental challenge for national reconciliation processes is to adopt an approach which ensures that marginalized groups are included in the political system. If political actors fail to acknowledge their adversaries as genuine or legitimate interlocutors and partners in the wider political project, then the prospects for promoting inclusive reconciliation are diminished, and the prospects for violent confrontation increase. In this regard, it is important to emphasise the entry point provided to promote reconciliation through the establishment of a new inclusive political dispensation, including a new constitutional framework for accommodating the diverse interests within society.³⁶ At this level, international partners can provide support in situations where there is a break down in relationships between the national political actors.

Community-level Reconciliation

In Sierra Leone, the use of a form of dialogue or ‘story-telling’ empowered ‘people to take the lead in documenting and telling their stories around the traditional bonfire ceremonies or “FambulTok”’.³⁷ This ‘story-telling’ process was subsequently reinforced by cleansing ceremonies which created spaces for deeper processes of reconciliation to continue. Specifically, ‘perpetrators sought forgiveness first, and then activities that would help to “re-knit” the social fabric were undertaken, including repairing the houses or tilling the fields of the perpetrator’s victim’s family’.³⁸ In addition, this local process enabled the emergence of ‘peace mothers’ who continue to drive reconciliation-sensitive development projects through micro-enterprises. Given the fact that dialogue is essential to the reconciliation process, this tradition-based approach provides insights on how local cultural practices can enable efforts to rebuild divisions within society. Furthermore, the category of ‘peace mothers’ in Sierra Leone, also highlights the importance of local champions of reconciliation processes and the positive impact they can have in their local contexts. In addition, this category of ‘peace mothers’ also reinforces the need to improve our understanding of experiences with implementing a gendered approach to reconciliation. As the Framework meeting discussed how in the Sierra Leonean case, ‘the agency of local actors was a priority, they asked the questions, they decided the responses and they allocated the resources’.³⁹

In Guatemala, the Recovery of Historical Memory (REMHI) Project was a church-led initiative to implement its own version of a truth and reconciliation process, and convened a series of engagements, even prior to the official launch of the country’s Historical Clarification Commission. This provides an example of how civil society-led processes can contribute towards framing the reconciliation agenda.⁴⁰ Both the Sierra Leone and Guatemala experiences also provide insights into entry points at which international partners, in coordination with national actors, can support communal level reconciliation.

Inter-personal Reconciliation

The Framework Team meeting proposed that one of the elements that are core to reconciliation is the need for stakeholders to engage in an ‘active process to address stereotype and prejudices’.⁴¹ The UNDP Expert Consultation emphasised that ‘people will remember their collective histories and experiences’, and that it is necessary for individuals to contribute towards memorialization as a means to contributing towards the narrative

³⁶ UNDP, ‘Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development’, Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.5.

³⁷ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

³⁸ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

³⁹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

⁴⁰ UN Peacebuilding Support Office, NOREF and KAIPTC, *Building Just Societies: Reconciliation in Transitional Settings*, p.3.

⁴¹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

of a new future society.⁴² This engagement can take place at an interpersonal level, given the high degree of individual commitment that is required to address subjective prejudices. More often than not individuals would need assistance in terms of knowledge on how to undertake these processes of inter-subjective interaction and dialogue, which is where national level engagements, with inter-agency support, can cascade downwards in terms of their formal and technical support for these interpersonal initiatives. Specifically, national resources can be utilised to provide the necessary training and capacity development for individuals so that they can have an improved understanding of how they can facilitate inter-personal reconciliation process, through dialogue forums and healing workshops.

Linking Horizontal and Vertical Relations—from Social Contract to Social Cohesion

Reconciliation has traditionally been understood as the rebuilding of relationships and the restoration of trust in deeply divided societies. As the UNDP Expert Consultation suggested, ‘this requires working on issues such as beliefs, suffering, truth, forgiveness and mercy’.⁴³ The Expert Consultation also emphasised the importance of applying a ‘relational lens’ to all aspects of addressing conflict. This work is generally understood as engaging the horizontal aspect of the people-to-people reconciliation process. This horizontal linkage is, however, just one distinct form of relationship building. For the purposes of this document, the important point is that the horizontal linkages in reconciliation processes are vital to the extent that they draw in stakeholders from across society.

In addition, there is a vertical aspect to reconciliation which can be understood as a process of rebuilding of state institutions which are tasked with promoting the reconstruction of societal relationships. This vertical aspect of reconciliation, in effect, also seeks to rebuild, or construct, the relationship between people and state institutions. Typically, in situations of war, or authoritarian rule, people lose their trust in state institutions, which undermines and damages the relationship between them. The recent public health crisis unleashed by the ebola epidemic in West Africa, notably Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, is a case in point. The unpreparedness of the governments in this region to address the epidemic did not generate confidence among the general population. Specifically, the public did not trust the messages that were being issued by their governments, and there is anecdotal evidence that there was a suspicion that state institutions were trying to manipulate the awareness of the issues at stake. As a net result of these levels of suspicion the governments of the region were not able to work effectively with communities to manage the high level of deaths that resulted, and potentially reduce the ebola contagion. An outcome of this level of suspicion was the heavy impact on the economic activity of these countries and the devastation of communities in the form of lost household income due to the death of primary income providers, in what remains a public health disaster for the region. Consequently, as the UNDP Expert Consultation observed ‘building strong institutions is an important element of social transformation, especially where weak, ineffective or repressive states are part of the dynamics that gave rise to escalated conflict, violence and the need for reconciliation.’⁴⁴ Applying the relational lens to this vertical approach is therefore another, often under-emphasised, distinct form of promotion of reconciliation through the rebuilding of political and institutional processes. The vertical linkages of reconciliation engagements are vital in the sense that they restore legitimacy of state institutions in the eyes of the people. As will be discussed later in this document, state institutions can and should serve as platforms for promoting reconciliation. Ultimately, the discourse on reconciliation should persist long after a conflict has abated and even beyond the immediate efforts to implement post-conflict programmes, to become embedded in society as a normal way of orienting and governing the country.

⁴²UNDP, ‘Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development’, Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.12.

⁴³UNDP, ‘Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development’, Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.11.

⁴⁴Richard Smith, ‘Additions to the Workshop Summary Report’, UNDP Experts Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.3.

Challenges in Linking the Different Levels

The UNDP E-Consultation recommends the need to 'establish a platform for transparent political and public dialogue and networking among parliament and relevant government bodies *at all levels* and other relevant stakeholders of the reconciliation process'.⁴⁵ The E-Consultation further recommends the need to 'establish a framework for reconciliation that is clearly defined and accepted by all'. It further argues that this framework should be predicated on two dimensions: firstly, it should frame 'reconciliation as building social infrastructure for conflict transformation' through which people can work on their relationships; and secondly, it should frame 'reconciliation as building citizenship' which should enable citizens to trust one another as citizens again, as well as empower them to have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Concretely, building social infrastructure for conflict transformation requires the establishment of localized institutions which can manage tensions between community members, through the promotion of negotiation, mediation and collective problem-solving. For example, the use of the tradition-based gacaca courts in Rwanda is illustrative of how social infrastructure can be utilised to address conflict. Similarly, during its transition South Africa established peace committees that were tasked with managing tensions at the grassroots level. In terms of building citizenship this requires raising awareness among the population about the national constitution which frames the rights, responsibilities and duties of all citizens. Practically this requires mainstreaming civic education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, as well as developing practical programmes to reach out to the adult population which may not have had prior access to the means to engage with the provisions of a constitution. There are on going efforts to mainstream civic education in Kenya and Zimbabwe through the national ministries of education. The building of citizenship also requires empowering the wider society with the knowledge of how to advocate and litigate for their rights by utilising the provisions within the constitution. This was evident in post-war countries such as Northern Ireland where an active citizenry was informed of its rights, and where engagement with state institutions is part and parcel of the effort to promote societal transformation.

Furthermore, such a framework for reconciliation would include also identifying areas of change within the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural dimensions of society, and at the different levels of engagement. A South African example of this is evident at an interpersonal level in the interaction between Linda Biehl who is on a reconciliation journey with "Ntobeko Peni and Easy Nofemela - two of the four men, who in August 1993, stabbed and stoned her daughter, Amy, to death".⁴⁶ Biehl's daughter was 26 years old when she was murdered in Gugulethu, her killers, Peni and Nofemela, were convicted and sentenced to 18 years in prison. They applied for amnesty and Linda and "her husband, Peter, supported their application – the four had their convictions over-turned and were freed in 1998".⁴⁷ Biehl subsequently developed a social relationship with Peni and Nofemela who work with her in the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust, which works in a range of community projects in South Africa. Biehl's argument is that the reason why she is making the effort to reconcile with her daughter's murderers is because, in addition to it being a personally held belief, she is upholding her daughter's legacy "of peace, restorative justice and harmony".⁴⁸ Biehl's personal journey is indicative of the potential for change, notably at the interpersonal level, as part of a long-term transition towards reconciliation.

The challenge becomes one of responding to this demand for the process of inclusive reconciliation to be undertaken simultaneously and operationalized on different levels of engagement. National reconciliation is a function of communal and interpersonal reconciliation and the converse also applies. Therefore, these different levels of engaging with reconciliation are not in tension with each other, rather they are complementary arenas for transformative change. However, the levels can rely on different approaches, methods and outcomes to advance the cause of social transformation. The approach for example adopted by Biehl can be drawn upon and

⁴⁵UNDP, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, p.10.

⁴⁶Sue Gear, "My Daughter's killers are like my Children", *City Press*, 28 December 2014, p.10.

⁴⁷ Gear, "My Daughter's killers are like my Children", p.10.

⁴⁸ Gear, "My Daughter's killers are like my Children", p.10.

replicated between communities. However, the precise methodology would need to be catered to the communal setting rather than an inter-personal one.

A coordinated and complementary relationship between these levels of engaging with reconciliation cannot be assumed. Consequently, strategies need to be developed to enable practical strategic and programmatic interventions by a broad range of domestic and international actors. It is necessary to outline the tactical and practical linkages between interventions at the different levels of engagement with reconciliation.

The challenge is that bottom-up reconciliation processes need to be scaled up to impact on national reconciliation processes. Simultaneously top-down processes need to cascade downwards to support local processes. Specifically, national reconciliation processes need to translate into local level responses that meet the needs of people, in particular women and girls. Such an approach would in effect be integrating bottom-up and top-down processes, and ensuring that the principles of inclusivity and participation inform approaches at all levels.

Central to the process of strategizing and developing how the different levels of engagement with reconciliation can establish and sustain connectivity, is identifying the modalities for how they can reinforce each other and maximize the impact of their interventions to achieve the desired outcomes. In other words, the challenge is one of ensuring that reconciliation engagements can be undertaken by customized interventions that are appropriate for the different levels and which cumulatively contribute towards inclusive reconciliation. Reconciliation processes should in practice foster the connections between different levels of engagement, because they are oriented towards a common purpose of building relationships and constructing a new and future vision for the society and state.

There are instances in which the state and its institutions are unresponsive to communal and interpersonal reconciliation initiatives. Similarly, there are instances in which people within a society are unresponsive to the initiatives of the state. In this instance, the inability to establish the linkage between the national, communal and local processes will undermine efforts to promote inclusive reconciliation. In such a context, there would be an important role for international and other external actors to work with state institutions to emphasise the importance of this vertical linkage. Specifically, external actors can technically support initiatives which forge and consolidate vertical linkages, for example, through supporting problem-solving multi-stakeholder dialogues that convene state institutions, with communal groups and individuals to address a specific issue relating to reconciliation.

Multi-level Engagement: A Case Study

According to the E-consultation on reconciliation, the 'UNDP has supported efforts to establish and operationalize formal bodies mandated to advance national reconciliation efforts'.⁴⁹ In particular, operating 'at both national and sub-national levels, UNDP's engagement with reconciliation processes can range from high-level technical support to local-level activities that serve to advance reconciliation processes, either through supporting the implementation of recommendations emanating from reconciliation processes, or through other complementary activities'.⁵⁰

Kenya's experiences with conflict prevention are instructive for the establishment of prospective multi-stakeholder dialogues for engaging with reconciliation. In 2001, the Kenyan government established a National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC), ostensibly 'to coordinate the work of peace actors and institutions to ensure the promotion of peace generally'.⁵¹ In 2010, the NSC partnered with the Kenya National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), civil society and the UNDP to create the Uwaino Platform for Peace.⁵² which 'developed a range of strategies for preventing violence during the referendum:

⁴⁹UNDP, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, p.4.

⁵⁰UNDP, *E-consultation on a Critical Review of Reconciliation as Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Mechanism*, p.4.

⁵¹Aeneas Chuma and Ozonnia Ojielo, 'Building a Standing National Capacity for Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Kenya, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol.7, No.3, 2012, p.26.

⁵²Uwaino Platform for Peace, *Conflict Prevention Strategy for the 2010 Referendum*, (Nairobi: Uwaino, 2010).

media campaigns and broadcasts; peace campaign rallies and public meetings; a free mobile text-messaging service using crowd-sourcing and other tools; monitoring media reports; planning meetings with security agencies; and training district peace committees and CSOs to engage in early response'.⁵³ In an analysis of the Uwaino's work, Aeneas Chuma and Ozonnia Ojielo noted that Uwaino undertook '364 interventions in communities, all of which contributed significantly in ensuring that not a single case of violence occurred during the referendum'.⁵⁴

The initial success of the Uwaino platform in preventing violence provides important insights that can be replicated when it comes to promoting reconciliation interventions. In particular, even though Uwaino was not a pre-designed multi-stakeholder dialogue framework, it does provide some insights into how multiple actors worked to prevent violence. Its achievements provide some useful insights into how to potentially link multiple actors working at different levels on issues such as reconciliation. It is worthwhile to note that institution-building in and of itself is not sufficient to advance the reconciliation agenda, it is necessary to also ensure that the institutions are led by empowered enablers of reconciliation which is vital to ensuring public confidence and legitimacy. The Uwaino model also provides us with insights in terms of the need to ensure that national multi-level engagements contribute towards forging a partnership among all of the necessary state, security and societal actors and institutions that are necessary to achieve the ultimate objective of reconciliation.

c. A Multi-Phased Approach

The Framework Team meeting, of 21 October 2013, observed that reconciliation 'is a process and not just a product, and it is also a long-term process that does not end, being part of a continuous societal transformation'.⁵⁵ The UNDP Expert Consultation, of September 2014, noted that 'reconciliation outcomes are more of milestones achieved progressively' and that 'seizing reconciliation moments is a key' strategy for programming.⁵⁶

An illustration of a reconciliation moment was a meeting that took place in February 2015 in Northern Ireland, when four former members of the British army met with four members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). This "meeting was intended to start a process of reconciliation among men who had once been the most implacable of enemies".⁵⁷ In this meeting, the men spoke to each other frankly about the "reasons why they had taken up arms, the consequences of their decisions and their hopes of making a contribution to lasting peace".⁵⁸ Even though former IRA members have met former police and prison officers, there have not been as many encounters with the British military, "since the 1998 Good Friday agreement, which brought to an end 30 years of violence that had claimed more than 3,700 lives".⁵⁹ Both groups of men acknowledge "that it was important that they should 'rehumanise' the people who had once been their enemies".

This encounter constitutes a 'reconciliation moment' even though it does not achieve radical transformation, it sets into motion processes that will contribute to such an outcome, and potentially serve as a model for Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the world.

⁵³Uwaino Platform for Peace, *Conflict Prevention Strategy for the 2010 Referendum*, p.5.

⁵⁴Chuma and Ojielo, 'Building a Standing National Capacity for Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Kenya', p.28.

⁵⁵ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

⁵⁶UNDP, 'Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development', Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.2.

⁵⁷ Ian Cobain, 'Road to Reconciliation: Ex-IRA Members and British Soldiers come Face to Face', *The Guardian*, 4 March 2015, p.1.

⁵⁸ Cobain, 'Road to Reconciliation: Ex-IRA Members and British Soldiers come Face to Face', p.1.

⁵⁹ Cobain, 'Road to Reconciliation: Ex-IRA Members and British Soldiers come Face to Face', p.1.

In addition, the Consultation concluded that reconciliation processes are non-linear and are constantly being re-negotiated by the affected stakeholders. A brief consideration of reconciliation as process and outcome would therefore be useful.

At the outset, it is evident that the initiation of reconciliation as a process has to begin with the initial acknowledgement of their interdependence by individuals, communities and the state actors.⁶⁰ In the absence of such an acknowledgement of interdependence, it would be a bridge too far to make a reference to an ongoing reconciliation process. Interdependence in this instance should also be predicated on a commitment to democratic inclusivity, in terms of the inclusion of individuals and groups, in genuine participation in the processes of deliberation and contestation about the nature of the society that should be constructed. An extended discussion of the nexus between democracy and reconciliation is beyond the scope of this document.

In practical policy terms, dialogue is the vehicle through which this interdependence becomes articulated. Therefore, tracking the nature, quality and authenticity of dialogue processes can function as an indication of the trajectory towards inclusive reconciliation. Superficial dialogue can lead to the hardening of positions and the alienation of people from the process, which would be retrogressive and would undermine reconciliation. On the other hand, genuine dialogue in turn becomes the means through which the divisions created by the past can be confronted and innovative ways can be found to navigate through these differences, and ultimately transcend the divisions which would lay the foundation for a transforming society. Genuine dialogue can also contribute towards generating the collective buy-in and commitment towards improving the livelihood of all members of society.

Reconciliation and National Dialogue Processes

According to the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI), multi-stakeholder dialogues are ‘often the right path to take to ensure that solutions are based on different perspectives’.⁶¹ Stakeholders are understood as ‘people or institutions that have an interest in a particular course of development, or a particular decision, either as individuals or as representatives of a group’.⁶² In addition, the notion of stakeholders ‘includes people who influence a decision, who are key players in implementation, or who are affected by the development’.⁶³ For the CLI, multi-stakeholder dialogues ‘are guided conversations that ensure that people with different viewpoints and sometimes contradictory interests exchange world views’.⁶⁴ Multi-stakeholder dialogues are ‘structured conversations’ which ‘improve planning and decision-making, solve problems, contribute to finding innovative solutions, or to designing and implementing joint interventions for change’.⁶⁵ Multi-stakeholder dialogues ‘are a vital stepping stone in achieving a common goal, and are therefore embedded in a short-term or long-term societal or global change process’. In an ideal situation, multi-stakeholder dialogues ‘lead to a practical outcome that could not have been achieved otherwise and that can more easily be implemented because all stakeholders involved experience a higher degree of ownership’.⁶⁶

Given that reconciliation is about promoting societal change and transformation it can benefit from the use of multi-stakeholder dialogues. Specifically, multi-stakeholder dialogues can lead to: ‘trust-building; future-oriented cooperation; innovative solutions; ownership of results; and collective responsibility for change’.⁶⁷ In addition, multi-stakeholder dialogues strive for sustainable outcomes and long-lasting cooperation structures, on this basis they can contribute towards short-term, intermediate and longer-term goals relating to inclusive reconciliation

⁶⁰Brandon Hamber and Gráinne Kelly, ‘Reconciliation: Time to Grasp the Nettle?’, *Scope: Social Affairs Magazine*, (Belfast: NICVA, 2007), p.14.

⁶¹Petra Kuenkel, Silvine Gerlach and Vera Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues: Key Concepts and Competencies for Achieving Common Goals – A Practical Guide for Change Agents from Public Sector, Private Sector and Civil Society*, (Cape Town and Potsdam: Collective Leadership Institute, 2011), p.17.

⁶²Kuenkel, Gerlach and Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues*, p.17.

⁶³Kuenkel, Gerlach and Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues*, p.17.

⁶⁴Kuenkel, Gerlach and Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues*, p.17.

⁶⁵Kuenkel, Gerlach and Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues*, p.17.

⁶⁶Kuenkel, Gerlach and Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues*, p.17.

⁶⁷Kuenkel, Gerlach and Frieg, *Working with Stakeholder Dialogues*, p.18

processes. The fact that these dialogues can be implemented with stakeholders drawn from a range of levels of engagement, and can include both representatives of state institutions, communities and individuals, suggests that they can function as the framework for establishing the linkage between the different levels of engagement with reconciliation discussed above. On this basis, multi-stakeholder dialogues can function as catalysts for activating the relationship between the different levels of engagement with reconciliation. In addition, multi-stakeholder dialogues are a viable mechanism that could form part of a more integrated approach to inclusive reconciliation at different levels.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues provide entry points for trust and relationship building processes that contribute directly towards reconciliation. Inter-agency support for, and operationalization of these multi-stakeholder dialogues, at the pre-planning and implementation phases, provides concrete entry points for engagement, and would add value to reconciliation processes. These structured multi-stakeholder dialogue processes can be monitored for their impact in agenda-setting and problem-solving, and for their ability to contribute towards the outcome of promoting inclusive reconciliation.

The precise modalities and manner in which multi-stakeholder dialogues can foster connectivity between the different levels of engagement with reconciliation needs to be further elaborated. This elaboration would indicate in practical terms how state institutions can interface directly, and regularly, with the communal and interpersonal levels in order to advance the quest for inclusive reconciliation. In particular, the role of inter-agency interventions in supporting multi-stakeholder dialogues, which enable state institutions to engage with the communal and interpersonal level initiatives can further enhance the connectivity of multiple processes.

There have been recent developments to make a distinction between multi-stakeholder dialogues and national dialogues with a set agenda and structure, clearly set out guidelines for representation and participation, and an understanding of how the outcomes will be applied, as compared to multi-stakeholder and other forms of dialogue which are often informal processes, which may or may not result in agreements which can be taken forward by the state. Even though this distinction is emerging the qualitative difference is yet to be demonstrated in practice. It might be more fruitful to frame national dialogues as a variant of multi-stakeholder dialogues, rather than a process that is qualitatively different.

Institutional Transformation and State-building

In line with the need to expand the discourse beyond the limited focus on 'people to people' relationship building, an additional dimension that needs to be emphasised is the notion of institutional transformation and state-building as a central component of how we think about reconciliation. Reconciliation can be understood as a process of rebuilding institutions which are tasked with promoting the reconstruction of interpersonal and societal relationships. Specifically, the UNDP Expert Consultation, of September 2014, suggested that 'if reconciliation is to prevent conflict it must be guided by the principle of non-recurrence, which would include working on truth recovery, reparations and justice, as the basis for rebuilding institutions and trust in the state'.⁶⁸ The South African example is instructive in this regard, even though the post-1994 democratic government led by Mandela, emphasised addressing the violations of the past, it actively worked to frame a future vision for the society through its participation in the CODESA talks as well in its contribution towards compiling and adopting the Constitution of South Africa, which is primarily a forward-looking document.

The intention is not to view institution building as primarily being about capacity building in a narrow state-building sense, but rather to see institutions themselves as one potential platform for transforming relationships, cultivating trust and restoring legitimacy. The ways in which institution building can serve as a platform for transforming relationships, needs to be further understood by drawing upon, and documenting, a broad range of practices, experiences and lessons. The South African example is again instructive in this regard. The institutions of the state from the executive branch, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, became platforms for

⁶⁸UNDP, 'Reconciliation: A Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Development', Summary of the Expert Consultation, 2 to 4 September 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.8.

reconciliation.⁶⁹ For example, Mandela, at the outset, embraced a Government of National Unity (GNU) which included both blacks and whites, including the politicians drawn from former apartheid regimes. Similarly, the composition of the South African judiciary and parliament reflected a commitment to inclusiveness of the range of groups within the society. These institutions were operationalized under a Constitution which protected the rights of minorities and which stipulated the need for a commitment to participatory democracy. The South African experience is therefore instructive in terms of the use of an inclusive approach to democratic practice, which was exemplified by Mandela's approach, to lay the foundation for promoting reconciliation.

An Engine for Peacebuilding and Development

The Framework Team meeting, of 21 October 2013, observed that 'in essence, reconciliation is a key component of the peacebuilding agenda dealing with both the causes and consequences of conflict often by focusing primarily on understanding and transforming relationships that have been damaged and destroyed'.⁷⁰ The process of 'transforming relationships' would out of necessity incorporate a developmental agenda. The Framework Team meeting also concluded that a core element of reconciliation is 'working toward at least some socio-economic and political equity for the parties (for example, changing access to resources and services)'.⁷¹ During the UNDP Expert Consultation, the keynote speaker Professor Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, warned 'about the dangers of the embitterment that would follow reconciliation efforts that are not transformative'.⁷² Furthermore, Habib argued that 'forms of social change that do not directly address the sense of deprivation and social injustice that accompanies economic inequality will be viewed sceptically by people emerging from violent conflict'.⁷³ On this basis, reconciliation can be conceptualised as an engine for promoting peacebuilding and development, as part of a deeper social transformation process.

In Sierra Leone, development projects were embedded into the reconciliation process as 'former combatants helped to build water pumps in areas where they had destroyed infrastructure'.⁷⁴ The Framework Team meeting proposed that 'at the UN Country Team, reconciliation-sensitive development and institutional reform, whether in the context of constitution-drafting, elections, good governance programs or police reform, for example, should become part of normal operating procedure'.⁷⁵ This further reiterates the centrality of reconciliation processes in advancing peacebuilding, state-building and development initiatives.

Reconciliation and Peace Processes

On 29 January 2014, Jeffrey Feltman, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), addressed the UN Security Council thematic debate on 'War, its Lessons and the Search for a Permanent Peace' and observed that 'as we have seen repeatedly, fighting ends without reconciliation – especially fighting inside states – is fighting that can, and often does, resume'.⁷⁶ Feltman further proposed that the UN system needed to reflect on its 'ability to repair trust in societies and foster genuine reconciliation'.⁷⁷ Along these lines, it is useful to frame a range of reconciliation interventions and entry points, from early and preventive initiatives which can be undertaken within situations of ongoing conflict, to engagements which are undertaken in the aftermath of war and during democratization processes. In the course of formal peace processes, reconciliation interventions can focus on influencing mediation or negotiation initiatives so that they include a political commitment to laying the foundation for societal transformation, beyond their primary objective of halting the violence.

⁶⁹Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994).

⁷⁰ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.1.

⁷¹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

⁷² Smith, 'Additions to the Workshop Summary Report', p.3.

⁷³ Smith, 'Additions to the Workshop Summary Report', pp.3-4.

⁷⁴ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.4.

⁷⁵ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.4.

⁷⁶ United Nations News Centre, 'Security Council stresses reconciliation during debate on war and the search for lasting peace', 29 January 2014, p.1.

⁷⁷ UN News Centre, 'Security Council stresses reconciliation', p.1.

The role of leadership in peace-making and reconciliation processes cannot be understated, for example, Mandela's role in leading the in-country peace process through direct negotiation between the political formations. Mandela also led his political party, the African National Congress (ANC), in participating in a mediated process, with the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) at the height of political violence in 1993. Approximately 3500 people were killed, during this period, notably in the Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng provinces of South Africa.⁷⁸ However, there are also leaders who can emerge organically from societies as consensus figures and enablers of reconciliation. As the example of 'peace mothers' in Sierra Leone demonstrated, consensus figures, or enablers of reconciliation, are also vital particularly in local communities, social constituencies and groups such as women and youth. These consensus figures emerge as organic leaders from within their communities. The potential contribution that these consensus figures make can include an enabling creative and problem-solving role in advancing the reconciliation agenda within their particular constituencies. This is particularly evident when consensus figures are able to cross the divides at the local level that political elites are unable to bridge. This provides a basis for further developing a localized understanding of leadership for reconciliation.

Reconciliation as Outcome and Process

Reconciliation can be conceived as a goal towards which societies will strive. However, the fact that reconciliation has not been consummated without any residual challenges, means that it is often viewed as an aspirational objective. This aspirational aspect of reconciliation has led critics to dismiss it as unattainable, and perhaps an undesirable initiative specifically when opposing groups do not acknowledge each other's right to exist. From a strategic point of view, given reconciliation's aspirational nature it may be necessary to establish some intermediate steps or shorter-term objectives so that concrete interventions can be undertaken in the interim, towards the broader goal of societal transformation. If reconciliation is an aspirational goal then it must be process-driven, which would assist in knowing whether or not progress is being made in achieving it, which is an issue that will be discussed later in the document. Similarly, if reconciliation is an aspirational goal then the issue of visioning, or developing a shared vision, becomes a central element in its implementation and consolidation.

As noted above, if the aspirational nature of reconciliation is acknowledged, then it is more useful, from a strategic point of view, to frame reconciliation as a process, with a series of intermediate steps or shorter-term implementation phases. Since reconciliation only becomes necessary where relationships have become antagonistic or affected by violent conflict, or where societies are deeply divided by structural and systemic factors, it is possible to map a trajectory for how the mending of these relationships can proceed. A series of intermediate steps towards repairing or constructing a new future, can be based on progressively changing perceptions of the other, or the extent to which meaningful and genuine interaction and engagement takes place across previously divided communities within society. Such a 'mapping' exercise of the prospective trajectory of reconciliation has to always be informed by the specific context in which it is being undertaken.

Linking transition's phases to a Reconciliatory Framework

Transitional phases include the peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and the process of democratization and the primacy of the rule of law. It is imperative to link these transitional phases to the over-arching reconciliation process. Specifically, this is achieved by integrating the strategic objectives of reconciliation into the implementation of interventions at the different transitional phases.

For example, mediators who are overseeing the peacemaking processes, should do so with an eye to integrating a reconciliation framework into the peace agreement. Similarly, during the peacekeeping or stabilization phase the intention should be to create the conditions for the opposing parties to engage in reconciliation processes.

By the time that you get to the peacebuilding phase, the reconciliation processes should already be embedded into strategic thinking, design and implementing of post-conflict interventions. The transition to democratization

⁷⁸Ray Hartley, 'The day in 1993 when there was no turning back for SA', *Business Day*, 18 November 2013, www.bdlive.co.za, accessed July 2014.

is often not associated with reconciliation processes. Yet it is the transition during which reconciliation processes need to orient the transformation of society.

d. A Multi-Agency Approach

The document has argued for expanding the conversation relating to the prospective range of engagements relating to reconciliation. To reiterate, the optimal approach to reconciliation engagements would ideally be a combination of interventions at the different levels implemented in a way that enables their cumulative impact towards transformation.

International Agencies

Consequently, a coherent multi-agency approach to reconciliation engagements would enable a range of stakeholders, partners and international agencies, such as the United Nations system, to appropriately support the transformation of relationships at different levels in a society. However, in order to achieve this, the cumulative contributions of a broad range of stakeholders and partners at different levels of society have to be integrated and connected.

By drawing upon the UN ethos of 'Delivering as One', it is necessary to work through the existing institutions and identify appropriate ways to ensure buy-in so as to ensure the coherence of programming. The Framework Team meeting, of 21 October 2013, recommended that 'outside actors like the UN must be particularly sensitive to what is possible and desired at specific times and in what sequence'.⁷⁹ Specifically, the UN Department of Political Affairs, collaborating with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the UN Development Programme can target their support for different levels of engagement with reconciliation, in partnership with the relevant actors at the appropriate level.

National Governments

The role of national governments in driving the reconciliation agenda cannot be understated, and has been discussed extensively throughout this paper. Following the events relating to the Arab uprisings of 2011, Tunisia underwent a degree of turmoil as it embarked upon a precarious transition. The Tunisian authorities attempted to implement a national process to deal with the past and map the way to the future. In December 2013, the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (NCA) passed a law to establish and organise this process.⁸⁰ In 2014, a Truth and Dignity Commission (TDC) was established to address the grievances of the victims of the erstwhile dictatorship. This is the first step towards creating a 'reconciliatory moment' for Tunisia, which can be further leveraged to map out the future aspirations for the Tunisian society. The significance the Tunisian approach is the emphasis and focus on national consultation and a commitment towards reconciliation and democratization. The transition though is fraught with challenges including the recent attacks by extremists, which is undermining the basis for its economy.

Civil Society

The Framework Team meeting recommended that 'there needs to be greater local engagement in setting the reconciliation agenda and greater outreach and engagement with civil society, community groups and women – the most impacted need to be the designers of the healing'.⁸¹ Civil society is understood in this context as the broad range of organised formations including ecumenical associations, business enterprises, cultural leaders, women's and youth groups as well as the diaspora.⁸² This broad range of potential actors within the CSO landscape means that they can become politicized and partisan in their engagements, which can undermine

⁷⁹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.1.

⁸⁰ Rim Gantri, 'Transitional Justice in Tunisia: The Implications of Political Change', *Insight on Conflict*, 5 May 2015, p.2.

⁸¹ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.4.

⁸² UN Peacebuilding Support Office, NOREF and KAIPTC, *Building Just Societies: Reconciliation in Transitional Settings*, p.3.

inclusive reconciliation processes. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the CSO stakeholders are reflective of those who need to be included to uphold inclusive reconciliation. As noted above, it is only when civics avoid utilising their social power, that reconciliation processes can become elite driven and based on pursuing self-interested goals.

Furthermore, the Framework Team meeting argued for the need to support 'local champions of reconciliation for the long-term effort'.⁸³ The prospect of international actors supporting local engagement in setting the reconciliation agenda opens up a number of concrete programmatic entry points, notably convening public consultations and outreach programmes, knowledge sharing interventions, policy development initiatives and capacity development processes.

e. Measuring Reconciliation?

An enduring challenge is to determine what constitutes a reconciled society and state. How do we define successful reconciliation? Du Toit argues that 'normative guidance towards achieving social transformation ought to include more precise evaluative questions that could provide a frame of reference by which to determine, utility, empirical recognisability and ultimately justification or explanation for the success or failure of processes facilitated in the name of reconciliation'.⁸⁴

In order to measure reconciliation this requires the acceptance of the concept and its objectives at different levels of society, and an attempt to continue forging a shared understanding of what it means. Furthermore, it is necessary to articulate the necessity for reconciliation and the type of societal transformation that is being sought. There may not be an initial consensus as to the type of societal transformation that is desirable, which can be defined through a multi-stakeholder dialogue process. Such an articulation of the desired societal transformation can also provide all stakeholders with the means to identify the goals by which to measure progress.⁸⁵ Du Toit proposes three questions that could guide efforts to measure the impact of reconciliation processes:

- i) what conception of reconciliation would be politically relevant and rhetorically effective in areas of intense and protracted context?
- ii) how does one recognise national reconciliation processes once they are underway?
- iii) what are the goals against which reconciliation processes ought to be judged, justified or evaluated?

When these questions are applied to societal transformation, it becomes evident that normative consensus is required on what inclusive reconciliation is trying to achieve and how it can be gauged. On this basis, measuring the results of reconciliation interventions can be undertaken by a national reconciliation barometer, based on the South African model developed by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. From 2003 to the present, the IJR has continuously conducted an annual South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) to gauge perceptions about the extent to which the society is reconciling.⁸⁶ This model relies on articulating a theory of change, identifying the short-term and medium-term outcomes that are being sought as well as defining the indicators which will illustrate this change over time. Short and medium-term outcomes would need to be determined through an inclusive process utilizing the multi-stakeholder dialogue framework. To concretize monitoring and evaluation, a national reconciliation barometer, along the SARB model, can establish context-specific system of perceptions survey, targeted focus groups to generate data on the degree of reconciliation and its impact on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development. In terms of measuring the extent of gendered reconciliation processes, this would require barometers and other survey tools, to collect sex disaggregated data, the development of gender-sensitive indicators and the inclusion of gender-sensitive questions in any questionnaires

⁸³ UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.2.

⁸⁴ Du Toit, 'A Double-Edged Sword', p.90.

⁸⁵ Du Toit, 'A Double-Edged Sword', p.90.

⁸⁶ Kim Wale, (ed), 'Confronting Exclusion: A Time for Radical Reconciliation', *South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2013 Report*, (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2013), www.ijr.org.za, accessed July 2014.

that are developed.⁸⁷ Understanding the key objectives and outputs that local actors seek to achieve can provide some yardstick for measuring and evaluating the results of their work.

f. Developing a Critical Pedagogy for Inclusive Reconciliation

A critical pedagogy emphasises a continuous process of learning and self-reflection. On this basis, critical pedagogy requires its proponents to think critically about their situation and connect their knowledge to the ability to take constructive action.⁸⁸ The Framework Team meeting suggested that 'the UN's engagement on reconciliation must be a more self-conscious process'.⁸⁹ Subsequently, external interveners in reconciliation processes should approach in-country situations as learners and 'knowledge sharers' with local actors. The Framework Team meeting proposed that 'honouring the values identified by the community and adhering to and inculcating those values where needed was found to be indispensable'.⁹⁰ Consequently, international actors should build on, strengthen and respect progressive and gender-sensitive local values and approaches to reconciliation. In addition, where international actors are concerned, it is important not to impose but rather propose or facilitate the adoption of reconciliation solutions. It is necessary for local champions who intervene to promote reconciliation to become sufficiently empowered with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop a more informed approach in their work. It is counter-intuitive to begin with the assumption that people do not have any insights into how to reconcile. In fact, societies are more innovative than is assumed and a critical pedagogy approach by international actors would first inquire into what cultural processes for reconciliation are inherent in communities. In other words, the international community, can bring its understanding of what is required to reconcile, however, it must be tempered by a critical pedagogy that prioritizes the cultural and national insights that might contribute to reconciliation. This approach would then place an emphasis on developing a framework that is predicated on empowering local actors to determine which additional skills and knowledge they may require. There will inevitably be a disparity in the capacities of different in-country stakeholders, as well as between international and national actors to envision, design, plan and implement reconciliation processes. In particular, consensus figures and enablers of reconciliation, who could function as local champions of transformation may need additional technical support to initiate, guide and consolidate reconciliation processes. Within this ambit of 're-learning' and visualizing a common future, one of the most important elements of initiating a reconciliation process is to involve local actors, communities and governments in undertaking a scenario planning process in order to envision a shared future, as discussed above.

6. Policy Recommendations

The UNDP Expert Consultation generated a series of policy recommendations including the following:

a. To the United Nations system and other inter-governmental organisations:

- Design reconciliation programmes as forward-looking future-oriented processes, to be measured by a series of intermediate phases which contribute towards conflict prevention, peacebuilding, societal transformation and development;
- In partnership with national authorities, convene multi-stakeholder dialogues which include national, communal and individual actors at the outset to design in-country reconciliation interventions, which ensure that ongoing local processes are identified and incorporated into programmes;
- Proactively seek inter-agency coordination at the very outset of the engagement with in-country reconciliation processes to ensure a coherent and inclusive approach to engaging with local governmental and civil society actors;

⁸⁷University of Peace and Femmes Africa Solidarité, *Gender, Peace Processes and Transformation in Africa*, (San Jose: Costa Rica, 2006), p.22.

⁸⁸Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage*, trans. P. Clarke, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

⁸⁹UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.5.

⁹⁰UN Inter-agency Framework for Preventive Action and SSRC CPPF, p.3.

- Utilize multiple entry points to engage with in-country reconciliation processes including supporting initiatives at the national, communal and individual level;
- Ensure that mediation processes place an emphasis on including reconciliation initiatives prior to and during drafting of peace agreements;
- Mainstream reconciliation initiatives in the design, conceptualization and implementation of peacebuilding and development initiatives, including emphasizing gender sensitive interventions;
- Integrate reconciliation initiatives as part of the broad array of conflict prevention processes undertaken to prevent the recurrence of violent conflict;
- Utilize the establishment of new inclusive political dispensations, including new constitutional frameworks, as an opportunity to integrate reconciliation interventions;
- Promote a self-reflective approach to learning about ongoing local reconciliation processes, as well as the cultural platforms that exist to drive in-country reconciliation processes, and utilize these insights to inform policy analysis;

b. To governments:

- In partnership with international partners, where possible, convene multi-stakeholder dialogues which include national, communal and individual actors at the outset to design in-country reconciliation interventions, which ensure that ongoing local processes are identified and incorporated into programmes;
- Utilize multiple entry points to promote reconciliation processes, including supporting communal and individual level initiatives
- Utilize state institutions as platforms for relationship building and promoting reconciliation;
- Develop a country-specific framework for measuring reconciliation processes at the different levels and their contribution towards national societal transformation, and incorporate the data into policy analysis and research initiatives;

c. To international developmental partners:

- Through developmental policy frameworks mainstream the notion of reconciliation as a forward-looking and future-oriented process which is geared towards societal transformation through peacebuilding and development;
- Support national reconciliation plans - at multiple levels and utilising multiple entry points - which have been designed through an inclusive multi-stakeholder process;

d. To civil society actors:

- Articulate the role of civic leadership in reconciliation processes and proactively engage the state institutions in advancing societal transformation as a common goal;
- Contribute towards raising awareness among the wider society of national reconciliation plans, and support their buy-in by communal groups and individuals;
- Utilize research interventions as platforms for identifying the challenges to, and promoting, in-country reconciliation;
- Provide and facilitate policy analysis and training, in partnership with other stakeholders, to generate new knowledge and analysis on reconciliation process and to transfer skills to a wide range of stakeholders;
- Undertake the monitoring and evaluation of reconciliation processes, benchmarked on national reconciliation plans;

e. To communal groups within countries:

- Conduct community level multi-stakeholder dialogues to engage directly with reconciliation issues among societal groups and individuals;

- Identify cultural platforms, that are gender inclusive, which can contribute towards promoting localized and nation-wide reconciliation processes;
- Capacitate communal and cultural leaders to understand how to implement reconciliation processes with a view to promoting societal transformation and gender equality;

7. Conclusion

Reconciliation is in essence about dealing with the future and restructuring the horizontal relationships between people across societies. This document argued that reconciliation is also about rebuilding the vertical relationship between people and the institutions of the state. In addition, state institutions should also be viewed as platforms for promoting reconciliation. This document argued further for the need to embrace a transformative approach to reconciliation which seeks to engage with the underlying patterns, and the systems and structures that entrench or promote forms of exclusion, marginalization and exploitation, with a view to constructing a new society and state predicated on political inclusion and socio-economic development. This document called for the need to situate inclusive reconciliation within a preventive, forward-looking and future-oriented discourse, based on its transformative intent to build a new society.

This document also argued that it is necessary to widen the range of programmatic approaches relating to reconciliation at different levels. Furthermore, this document proposed that it is necessary to adopt a multiple level approach to engaging with reconciliation, which would enable stakeholders and partners to appropriately support the process at local, communal and national levels. Coordination and integration of these approaches are seen as essential. This multiple level engagement with reconciliation would assist in ensuring inclusivity of the broad range of stakeholders and local ownership of the process.

This document suggested that these different levels of engaging with reconciliation are mutually inclusive and complementary. Furthermore, that it is necessary to further strategize and develop the modalities for a multiple level approach to engaging with reconciliation. The adoption of such an approach suggests the need for better coherence focusing on a range of practices, experiences and lessons from around the world. This document also proposed that utilizing the multi-stakeholder dialogue process can provide a vehicle for linking the multiple level engagements in a manner that reinforces their cumulative impact in promoting inclusive reconciliation. The document also suggested potential strategies for measuring reconciliation, and a prospective pedagogy to inform future engagements. Ultimately, developing an agenda that frames inclusive reconciliation in terms of a transformative approach, will encourage a more focused engagement with peacebuilding and development challenges.

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Reconciliation as a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: Experts Consultation

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Johannesburg, South Africa

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