

Non-governmental Organizations in Regional Conflict Prevention
A Case Study of the African Union's Continental Early Warning System

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Master's thesis is to study the role that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play in the collection, analysis and dissemination of conflict early warning information. This conception is based on the understanding that NGOs have a comparative advantage in the management of early warning information generating from a grass-roots communal level, and that this information can play a vital role in enhancing the capacity of regional mechanisms of conflict prevention to act in a timely and comprehensive manner. Particularly, the focus of this thesis is to study the integration of NGOs into the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and to understand the difficulties that this process is currently facing.

The conceptual framework of this research project is built on the normative academic discussion of distinguished authors in the field of conflict prevention and early warning. This seeks to methodically develop an understanding of the role that NGOs can play conflict early warning. Complementarily, Johan Galtung's Conflict Triangle model for conflict formation is used to bring together the main concepts of the thesis within an established analytical framework from the field of conflict theory.

The empirical material of this thesis consists of the analysis of policy papers and legally binding protocols of the African Union and its predecessor organization, the Organization of African Unity. In addition, semi-structured interviews with representatives of 5 NGOs and 2 staff members of the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development were conducted.

The lack of political will and the lack of adequate information are found to be the underlying forces affecting the implementation of preventive measures, the transformation of early warning into early action, and finally the integration of NGOs into the AU's CEWS.

keywords: conflict prevention, early warning, NGOs, African Union Continental Early Warning System.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

ACCORD	African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACR	African Contemporary Record
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AU	African Union
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution – Cape Town, South Africa
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CEWERU(s)	Conflict Early Warning and Response Unit(s)
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CGG	Commission on Global Governance
CICS	Centre for International Cooperation and Security
CMD	Conflict Management Directorate
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative – Finland
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
CSU	Colorado State University
DPPA	Disaster, Preparedness and Prevention Agency
DPS	Department for Peace and Security
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EWU	Early Warning Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWER	Forum for Early Warning and Response
FIIA	Finnish Institute of International Affairs
GDRC	Global Development Research Centre
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHL	International Humanitarian Law

ISS	Institute of Security Studies – Pretoria, South Africa
MSFB	Médecins Sans Frontières – Belgium
NCCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO(s)	Non-governmental Organization(s)
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPI-Africa	Nairobi Peace Initiative
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PTN	Peace Tree Network
REC(s)	Regional Economic Communities
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTL	Radio Television Libre de Mille Collines
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SEATINI	Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and People’s Region
TCEW	Technical Committee of Early Warning and Response
UCSC	University of California Santa Clara
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

1. INTRODUCTION:

Africa has been a recurrent victim of deadly conflicts; conflicts that have not only delayed the continent's struggle for a sustainable path of development and a dignified standard of living for all of its citizens, but that have also left deep scars in its collective memory. The last decade of the twentieth century became a powerful example of the destruction that conflict can bring to society when society itself does not have the means to avert and manage violence. If there is not a conscious attempt to counter the forces of conflict in the continent, it is unfortunately extremely likely that history will replicate it self, and that the world will have to see again how human suffering takes place in Africa and how the core of its society is challenged by the brutality of war.

This understanding is the primary motivation of this research project. It is a humble attempt to study one mechanism that could allow Africa to prevent the degeneration of disputes into violence, particularly in an intra-state communal level; the idea being that unless systematic structures for conflict prevention are created and sustained throughout the continent, in particular structures with the legitimate mandate to prevent conflicts at a pan-African level, the vicious cycle of violence will continue. Various attempts have been done to articulate conflict management and prevention mechanisms by Africa's various regional organizations but most have failed as positive intentions that where never properly operationalized. Political, financial and basic institutional constraints have hampered the establishment of effective and efficient structures to prevent the escalation of conflicts into violent confrontations in the continent. Africa needs a focused, sustained and consistent programme of conflict prevention, and also needs to eliminate from its mentality the past ad-hoc conception of the treatment of conflicts and violence within its territories.¹

One of the mechanisms that can serve the objective of conflict prevention in the continent is the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), an operational instrument to collect, analyze, and disseminate information on situations of emerging tensions with the

¹ Draman (2003) p. 234

prime goal of not allowing disputes to trespass the threshold of violence and to prevent human suffering from taking place as a consequence of conflict. Thus the objective of this research project is to study how the CEWS can be built as a comprehensive and efficient tool within the African Union's peace and security architecture. More specifically, this thesis will seek to explain why the CEWS must actively integrate non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into its operational objectives as a means of establishing a far-reaching network of partners that will allow it to gather early warning information from experts at a local communal level, and from many locations in the continent. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, this project will attempt to understand the obstacles that NGO participation within the CEWS is having as the mechanism itself is in the process of being consolidated.

Arriving to this precise subject of investigation was a consequence of trying to find the most proactive means to avert human suffering caused by conflicts in Africa. The first consideration for a thesis subject had to do with the link between humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction, but this topic was disregarded as it is in principle an outcome of a conflict that has already evolved and that has already left behind its own scourge of destruction. Conflict prevention thus came up as comprehensive initiative to avoid human suffering of civilian populations in Africa. In studying this subject in detail, one comes to the conclusion that one of the main prerequisites for effective conflicts prevention is information; trustful and accurate information that would allow decision makers to understand emerging situations and to initiate appropriate preventive measures before the actual episodes of violence begin to take place. Furthermore, upon studying the subject of early warning it was realized that non-governmental actors, especially NGOs, have a valuable role to play in the process of collection, analysis and dissemination of early warning information. It was finally on this premise that this research project began to take form.

The African Union's Continental Early Warning System was chosen for the project as it is seen to be the most important mechanism of its kind being built anywhere in the world; at least indeed the most comprehensive early warning mechanisms in the African continent. In addition, the fact that it is still under construction offers the space for research to take place in order to seek for the best possible ways in which it can be operationalized. Unfortunately,

academic or action-based research on this subject is almost inexistent, with the exception of some policy papers written by Dr. Jakkie Cilliers, Executive Secretary of the Institute of Security Studies in Pretoria (Tshwane), South Africa. In the particular subject of the need to integrate NGOs into the CEWS no specific literature was ever found through out the process of writing this thesis. It is a subject that is briefly touched upon by some authors studying the concepts of conflict prevention and early warning and its applicability in an African context, but one that has never been subject to a dedicated and comprehensive explanation. In this sense, this project is seen as a required effort to understand the importance of NGO-based early warning and to explain the problematics that are framing AU-NGO relationships in the operationalization of the CEWS. Not fully understanding these two questions can eventually pose a problem in the way the CEWS is built, which consequently will affect its effectiveness as a conflict prevention tool. It is believed that at this point in time research on this subject is necessary to allow those in charged of consolidating the CEWS to adequately consider all options open for the construction of an adequate early warning mechanism for the continent.

It is hoped that this project as a whole achieves its primary objectives, and presents a serious and valuable account of the subjects it has elected to focus on; that even considering the lack of previous literature on the subject and the ambiguous stage in the operationalization of the CEWS, some valuable conclusions can be obtained from this thesis. If it opens a discussion on the need to seriously consider the way in which NGOs are being integrated into the operational procedures of the CEWS, this research project would have served a valuable purpose.

1.1. Research Question:

As it has just been mentioned, this project is framed around one specific issue: the integration of non-governmental organizations into the African Union's Continental Early Warning System. In order to fully study this issue, the author has decided to focus upon two main questions to justify the importance of the project and also to explain the problematics that the subject is currently confronting from a pragmatic perspective. With this in mind, the two main research questions of this Master's Thesis are:

1. What are the comparative advantages that NGOs can bring to the operationalization of the AU's CEWS? Why are NGOs important in the field of early warning?
2. What are the main issues that are currently hampering the effective integration of NGOs into the AU's CEWS? Why, considering their relevance, NGOs are not being fully integrated into the CEWS? What information on this regard can be evidenced from the empirical data?

1.2. The Main Argument:

This Master's thesis is based on the argument that there is an outstanding need for coherent and consistent policies of conflict prevention both at an international as well as a national level. A culture of prevention must be mainstreamed in international politics as the most efficient and effective manner to treat the probable emergence of violent conflicts. The primary motivation of such conception is of course the need to avoid human suffering, but in addition it is widely understood that treating conflicts once they are already violent is a far more costly endeavor and one that offers the least probability of success.

Regrettably, the value and necessity of preventive thinking has not been met with the reciprocal willingness of political authorities to implement it as the standard procedure to treat evolving disputes that pose a considerable threat to both the civilian population and regional stability. The African continent, in this sense, is an unfortunate example of the lack of keenness from the part of national, regional, and international authorities to prevent conflicts from becoming destructive human tragedies. This lack of willingness from the part of decision-makers is seen by this project to be caused by one main reason: the absence of adequate information. Information here refers to the benefits of preventive action, the most adequate preventive measures for certain situations, and information about the realities in the ground; the causes of the dispute, the parties involved, the forces fuelling escalation, the possible triggers to violent confrontation, and the opportunities for positive transformation of the conflict. In the absence of all these elements, preventive action is impossible to be conceived, but in its presence, political will would be more likely to exist.

In this frame of mind, an important source for the data mentioned above is early warning information. Early warning information is understood to be that data collected at an early stage in the evolution of a conflict that serves the purpose of enlightening policy makers on the negative and positive dynamics of a conflict, its main actors, its severity, and also the policy tools that could most effectively be used to affect the conflict itself. In addition, this information must be up-to-date, accurate and verifiable for it to be useful in conflict prevention. The collection, analysis and dissemination of such data must be undertaken by a wide spectrum of actors with different fields of expertise; one if these actors are non-governmental organizations, particularly those working in local communal environments. This type of civil society organizations have a comparative advantage in producing early warning information, as compared to other actors, because of their long-term presence in grass-root environments, their proximity to local social dynamics, their contact with local actors and experience with communal problems. Consequently, this Master's thesis supports the idea that NGOs must be vital partners in the operationalization of inter-governmental mechanisms for early warning and conflict prevention as they bring a considerable added value to the capacities of these institutional arrangements.

Unfortunately, the relationship between NGOs and inter-governmental organizations, especially the African Union (AU), is not as prominent as one might expect or as it might be required. The gap that exists between these two agents is caused by a wide range for factors, of which the historical legacy of undemocratic governance in Africa and the lack of resources (knowledge, financing, and experience) are the most evident. Despite these obstacles, this project finally concludes that they are able to be overcome and that institutionalized early warning mechanisms in Africa, which actively integrate NGOs into their operational arrangements, are not a practical or a political impossibility.

1.3. The Methodological Description of the Project:

This Master's thesis is based completely on the use of qualitative research methods of Social Science. The information presented through out the different chapters of this project has been produced through the use of a particular research method; selected in accordance to its usefulness for the generation of valuable information from a particular sources of knowledge. The overall structure of the thesis is divided into firstly, the presentation and analysis of theoretical information and secondly, the presentation and analysis of empirically produced data.

The theoretical component of this project, comprising of chapters two (2) and three (3), has been written from the evaluation of existing literature on the subjects of conflict prevention, early warning and conflict theory. The methodology used in this endeavor is a combination of literature review and relational analysis in the sense that it seeks to discuss the meaning of concepts identified in a determined body of literature. In other words, it seeks to review theoretical literature on the subjects of the thesis while counterpoising the meanings that the different authors give to each of the concepts. This approach comes from the understanding that literature reviews attempt to “survey scholarly articles, books and other sources (e.g. dissertations, conference proceedings) relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of each work”², and that relational analysis, as a method of content analysis, seeks to interpret the meaning of concepts through their relationship with others. This method has also been referred to as semantic analysis.³ In chapter 2 of the thesis the concepts of conflict prevention, early warning and NGO-based early warning are each defined and valued with respect to the other two concepts in order not only to comprehend their meaning but also to establish an understanding of how they relate to each other. In chapter 3, literature on conflict theory, specifically Johan Galtung's *Conflict Triangle Model* for conflict formation and conflict transformation, is interpreted from the perspective of the definitions and the conceptual relationships defined in the previous chapter. This seeks to present an understanding of how conflict prevention, early

² UCSC web-resources March 28, 2007

³ CSU web-resources March 28, 2007

warning and NGO-based early warning relate with each other under a formal analytical model in conflict theory.

In this analysis, the author strives to maintain a considerable degree of formality by trying to sustain arguments with existing literature, published by writers of great reputation. The critical nature of chapter 2, and to some degree chapter 3, is based on the interaction between formal conceptions; on the dialogue between different theoretical understandings. In addition, and as it is expected from literature reviews, the author tries to avoid value judgments on the personal motivation of certain writers in defining the concepts they present. Arguments about the precedence of thoughts are made on the basis of objective reasoning, specifically searching for background explanations for different approaches. This section does not search for particular agendas of thought, instead it attempts to discuss some conditionalities that define the conceptual limits managed by the selected authors.

The empirical component of this project, comprised of chapters four (4), five (5) and six (6), is an outcome of information gathered both from policy papers and from material collected through the intervention of the author⁴; interviews. Two main methodological approaches were used in this regard. For the analysis of official policy papers the author used a simple text analysis in the search for acknowledgments of certain concepts and ideas within texts, and for the interviews the author selected to carry on semi-structured interviews with the objective of not only gathering official accounts from the interviewees, but also opinions and personal thoughts on the subjects treated within the conversations.

Chapters 4 and 6 of this research project are mainly an outcome of text analysis of official policy documents from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The purpose of this analysis was to search for all the instances in which these organizations acknowledge the role of non-governmental organizations (and other civil society actors) within their legal frameworks. This was for the most part limited to references from the organizations about the role of NGOs in issues of peace and security. In addition, the analysis sought to understand what

⁴ Silverman (2001) p. 119

these official statements meant (mean) with respect to the actual operationalization of the peace and security mechanisms of the three organizations; how their recognition of a role for NGOs is linked with how they construct their operational instruments in the field of peace and security. Logically, the primary focus in these chapters relates to the establishment of institutionalized early warning systems both by the African Union and by IGAD.

Sub-chapter 4.1 will present a brief historical overview of the role that the OAU and the AU have offered to actors from civil society within their peace and security architecture. This analysis is based on a study of the following four documents: the *Charter of the Organization of African Unity*, the *Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution*, the *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, and the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Union's Peace and Security Council*. In essence this chapter tries to present an image of how the process of political integration in Africa has valued to the role of NGOs as possible partners in issues of peace and security.

Continuously, sub-chapters 4.2 and 4.3 refers particularly to the AU's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and how the documentation establishing its legal and operational basis acknowledges the participation of NGOs with the system itself. This was accomplished from the analysis of two main documents: the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Union's Peace and Security Council* and the *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System*. Again, these two policy papers were surveyed primarily to identify the instances in which the AU acknowledges the role of NGOs within the CEWS and how these propositions affect the operational nature of the system.

Finally, chapter 6 presents a brief description of how IGAD has been able to integrate NGOs into the operational framework of its own early warning mechanism (CEWARN). The methodology used in this regard is equivalent to that used in the previous chapter; the textual analysis of official texts, and the source of information was in this case the *Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism*.

Chapters 4 and 6 are also complemented by published literature, particularly action-based research, on the institutional development of both organizations and by accounts from two interviews carried out with staff members of both the AU and IGAD. The methodology used to perform these interviews will be presented below.

Chapter 5 is primarily an outcome of the information collected from a series of interviews carried out in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia during the fall semester of the year 2005. These were performed with representatives of five NGOs selected by the author with the intention of gathering empirical insight on the research questions proposed for this thesis. With this in mind, it must be stated that face-to-face interviewing was favored over other techniques of inquiry because of the recognition (from personal experience) by the author that, in Africa, the use of impersonal channels of communication such as emails or letters do not usually result in any sort of response.

Methodologically, these interviews were carried out through semi-structured conversations with the interviewees and had the objective of compiling opinions, expectations, and innovative ideas on the subject, while trying to avoid only official policy perspectives from the organizations and institutions being represented. This of course does not mean that objective facts and actual experiences were ignored or not searched for in the interviews. Semi-structured conversations in this sense represent interview processes that are guided by a series of open-ended questions that do not themselves determine the sequential structure of the interview. This approach is also referred to as the *general interview guide approach*, “which involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins [and] the issues in the outline need not to be taken in any particular order...”⁵. These questions serve the purpose of reminding the author (interviewer) of the overall themes to be discussed in the conversations. This approach was selected to favor the fluidity of the dialogue and to allow the interviewee the chance to expand on the themes in which he/she had further knowledge and experience; expressing opinions and personal insights in the mean while. The use of open ended questions in a semi-structured manner goes

⁵ Patton (1980) p. 198

in line with what Irvin Seidman (1998) refers to as the objective of “establishing the territory to be explored while allowing the participant to take any direction he or she wants”⁶.

The information produced in the conversations was collected through written notes taken by the interviewer during the actual meetings. This technique, although not the most efficient and useful, was chosen because of the fact that at least one of the interviewees did not accept to be recorded. Thus, in the sake of maintaining a degree of equality among the conversations, all the information was gathered in this same manner. In time, this technique made it difficult for the author to present actual quotes from the persons interviewed because of the fact that simultaneous transcription cannot be done perfectly. For this reason all the direct references to statements offered by the interviewees are presented as paraphrased quotes in this project. The utmost effort was done to consistently and truthfully represent the views of the persons interviewed.

In addition, and although the title or position of the interviewees is described when each conversation is presented in the thesis, the actual name of the person is not offered. This was done to maintain in some degree of anonymity the identity of at least one of the persons interviewed. During the time in which these conversations were carried out the security situation of, again, at least one of the interviewees was unstable due to the internal problems that Ethiopia was experiencing; perhaps even today this person still has to deal with the same situation. Although this was not required expressly by any of the persons approach for the research, it was thought to be prudent by the author.

The interviews were carried out with representatives of five non-governmental organizations working in Ethiopia: the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), Action Aid – Ethiopia, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSFB), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The main parameter used in selecting these organizations as sources of information for this research project was not their actual expertise in working with issues of early, but the potential they could have if effectively integrated into an efficient early warning system. Three of these

⁶ Seidman (1998) p. 69

organizations (CRDA, EHRCO, and Action Aid) were approach after their names were recommended to the author by other people approached during the research process, or by a representative of one of the selected organizations. The other two, were approached out of own initiative.

Finally, sub-chapter 5.6 represents the main observations that can be concluded from the interviews with the five selected NGOs. This endeavor was done through the comparative analysis of the main points raised on each of these conversations, specially focusing on themes that could be observed in more than one of them and that could be used to propose comprehensive explanations for the problematics that are detected in the relationship between NGOs in Africa and the African Union. The frame of reference for this comparative analysis is constructed around the question of what is causing the gap between the AU and the NGOs specifically in the issue of the operationalization of the CEWS. In attempting to respond to this matter, the project presents three main arguments (theses) from all the individual suggestions of the interviewees. To conclude, these three theses are expanded and explained through the use of existing literature on the subjects raised and of course through experience and thoughts of the author.

1.4. Literature Review:

To be able to make an evaluation of the written material that was surveyed in this research process, it is necessary to divided it into four different categories: literature about the concepts presented, literature on the analytical framework, literature and policy papers on the African Union, and previous literature on the precise subject of the thesis.

First, it must be said that the literature on conflict prevention and early warning is abundant and includes work based from an academic perspective and from an action-oriented perspective. Perhaps, material of the latter category is even more accessible as it is evident in this project; in addition, it was seen to be more useful for the development of the arguments sought by the author. This project thus attempted to study the arguments of a considerable amount of the most respected authors in the field, and believes it achieved it. Authors such as

Ted Gurr, Michael Lund, David Carment, Albrecht Schnabel, David Hamburg, Luc Reychler, Raimo Väyrynen, Peter Wallensteen, Klaas van Walraven, Robert Rotberg and Howard Adelman were all used to frame a long but useful understanding of the primary concepts of the project.

Second, literature on an analytical model that allows the combination of the concepts of the thesis, conflict theory, and a pragmatic approach to the role of NGOs in early warning was found from the writings of Johan Galtung. Although other models were identified from the literature, such as those presented by Wallensteen (1998) and Reychler (1997), Galtung's *Conflict Triangle* approach to explain the transformation of conflicts fitted perfectly with the objectives of this project. It allowed a vivid explanation of how the idea of integrating non-governmental organizations in the early warning of communal violence fits into established perspectives of conflict theory, and in addition, the concepts it presents and the dynamics it uses to explain conflict formation fit with those in early warning theory. On the other hand, as Galtung has used this model in several of his works, it was necessary to review how the model has changed through time in order to further understand what it means to achieve and what can be explained with it. Even if Galtung's writings are at times difficult to comprehend, this project will try to present the Conflict Triangle model in a simplistic manner as to allow the easy understanding of the ideas that were sought to explain.

Third, material discussing the development of the African Union's policies in the field of peace and security is not difficult to locate, particularly that which is written by independent research and policy institutions in Africa. For example the Institute of Security Studies (South Africa), the Centre for Conflict Resolution (South Africa), and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (South Africa) continuously publish analytical reports on the African Union. In addition, published literature such as that written by David Francis (2006) and articles found in African journals of political science and security studies are of great importance to the project. With regard to official AU policy papers and declarations, it must be said that the African Union itself is not the most effective source to obtain such material. Arguably, the most comprehensive, and publicly accessible, database of AU

documentation is run by the Institute of Security Studies and is accessible through its web-based resources.

Fourth, previous academic work on the precise subject of this thesis does not exist, or at least was never found. Several action-oriented research papers do briefly touch upon the integration of NGOs into early warning systems, but no complete academic work on this subject was found. In addition, literature on the role of NGOs in early warning is not extensive, many authors present some short ideas on this regard but complete studies on the subject were very difficult to obtain. In fact, from all the literature surveyed for this project only one complete book, edited by Robert I. Rotberg (1996), was dedicated to this subject. He completed a comparative study of NGOs' experiences in early warning around the world, but he did not study any precise institutional early warning system which integrated non-governmental actors into its operational capabilities. Thus, it is the task of this project to bring together literature on early warning, NGOs and early warning, and on the African Union, in order to develop the argument of the thesis. In this regard, the most relevant material found on the AU CEWS is that done by Jakkie Cilliers, Executive Director of the Institute of Security Studies, but even he has never concentrated on the integration of NGOs into the system. The argument of this project is acknowledged by him, and by several other authors, but this has never resulted in any distinct academic or action-based research on the matter. This of course adds a considerable level of difficulty to this thesis as there is no comparable piece of work on the subject, particularly no academic work.

Finally, the author of this Master's Thesis has previously co-written a background research paper on the African Union's peace and security architecture and its partnership with African regional intergovernmental organizations and the European Union. This paper was titled *Building Peace and Security Capabilities in Africa: the Role of the African Union and its Partnership with African Regional Economic Communities and the European Union* and was published in 2006 by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI). The co-author of this project was Mikaeli Langinvainio.

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

2.1. The Concept of Conflict Prevention:

The concept of conflict prevention and its empirical value began to take major relevance as the Cold War ended, a period during which preventive actions were reduced to pre-emptive operations and super-power politics. In recent years, it is argued, no other issue in the field of international politics has received so much attention from the part of scholars and policymakers as has conflict prevention.⁷ The international community was faced with a new responsibility and with the authority to intervene in dispute situations in order to avoid their escalation into destructive armed confrontations. The international political system had changed in such a way that disputes and conflictual relationships that had been controlled by the interests and the resources of the dominant powers of the time began to reemerge as their fields of influence began to retract from most regions in the world. Thus, new methods to manage human-made crises were to be developed based on the re-emergence of multilateralism as a prominent framework in international politics. The hope of a peaceful international environment in the post-Cold War era was soon crushed, and the 1990s proved to be the most violent decade witnessed since the Second World War. “Cases such as the genocides in Rwanda, ethnic wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and state failure in Somalia, to name a few, point to the necessity of finding means to avert conflicts from escalating into war, human disaster and regional instability.”⁸ In addition, human disasters as the previous mentioned, demonstrated that the existing instruments of averting violence were no longer adequate for managing the security threats of the time. The basic objective behind this rising tendency was to develop a conceptual understanding and the empirical tools in finding viable solutions to differences that could become violent before they actually did; to stimulate preventive thinking⁹. Conflict prevention is based on the very simple idea that stopping a conflict is easier at an early stage and that acting in a full-blown conflict is the costliest and most dangerous way of intervening and also the one that offers the least possibility of

⁷ Wegner & Möckli (2003) p.1

⁸ Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p.3, Wegner & Möckli (2003) p. 18

⁹ Wallensteen (1998) p.9, Åkerlund (2005) p.116

success.¹⁰ “The onset of mass violence transforms the nature of a conflict. Revenge motives severely complicate the situation. Resolution and even limitations of conflict are then less likely to be effective. So, early preventive action is exceedingly attractive.”¹¹

Until the end of the 1980s, the concept of conflict prevention was restricted to the activities of a small group of states and some international governmental organizations in the pursuit of the avoiding conflict. In particular, wars between states. Since the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the international political system was characterized by a traditional state system and consequently the disputes that emerged at the time, and the methods to manage them were framed by the same conception of power and governance. Although many endeavors to prevent conflicts since then, and until the collapse of the Soviet Union, were preventive in nature they are not nominal regarded as conflict prevention; a term that emerged as such after the end of Cold War. “The good offices of the World Bank in the Indus water conflict between India and Pakistan (1947-1960) and the mediation efforts of Ethiopia’s Haile Selassie in the territorial dispute between Algeria and Morocco (1962-1970)”¹² are two examples that testify in favor of this argument. On the other hand, a great majority of the efforts that states took vis-à-vis conflicts were oriented towards the management of already violent disputes with the objective of limiting their escalation. Tackling the potentiality wars from the perspective of their root causes was not common practice.¹³

The post-Cold War conceptualization of conflict prevention is thus not significant in the sense that attempts to prevent violent disputes did not exist before, but in the emphasis it is being given in international politics today and in the inclusion of a broad variety of actors in its conceptual development and subsequent operationalization. The increase attention that is being placed to the field of conflict prevention is a direct consequence of the contribution of two main actors: states and the international governmental organizations they belong to, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). With respect to the governmental sector, conflict prevention gained a considerable level of notoriety after UN Secretary General Boutros

¹⁰ Bercovitch (1998) p.233, Van Walraven (1998) pp. 2-3, Murray (2001) p. 14, Reyhler (1997) p.58

¹¹ Hamburg (2002) p. 117

¹² Wegner & Möckli (2003) p. 20

¹³ Wegner & Möckli (2003) pp.19-20

Boutros-Ghali's publication of the *Agenda for Peace* in 1992. This document sought to promote and strengthen the concept of preventive diplomacy as a means of improving the United Nations' capacity to prevent conflicts. Even though the purpose of the initiative was to foment preventive thinking and action within the UN System, many individual states and international organizations adopted its recommendations as their own policy guidelines.¹⁴ On the other hand, non-governmental organizations and other actors within civil society have consistently become more involved in this field for a different reasoning; not necessarily detached to the promotion of the ideas fostered within the United Nations. According to Andreas Wenger and Daniel Möckli (2003), NGOs have been actively engaged in promoting the concept of conflict prevention at a public sphere because of the idea that stable local environments benefit the realization of their own objectives and mandate. Although this affirmation seems to be within realm of logic, it might not be as straightforward as it is put by the authors. This discussion will be continued on the following chapters of this project. In either case, it is true that these organizations have been active in both educating the public about the need to focus on the prevention of violent conflict and in lobbying with governmental actors on the need to anticipate disputes before they escalate into human tragedies.¹⁵

The study of conflict prevention, from a Social Science research perspective, has to begin with the establishment of a formal definition for the term, as it will be used in a determined context. As a review of major literature on the subject shows, conflict prevention has no absolute meaning; scholars have developed different ways of understanding the concept and thus have approached its study from different angles. In some circumstances, as Wallensteen and Möller (2003) and Lund (1996) state, it is important to define conflict prevention in such a way that it can be distinguished from other similar concepts and can also be operationalized.¹⁶ Broad conceptualizations tend to favor policy formulations that are weak and difficult to translate into actual operational mandates, and impede the possibility of valuable research.¹⁷ On the other hand, restrictive definitions of the concept might limit its

¹⁴ Wegner & Möckli (2003) pp. 17-18

¹⁵ Wegner & Möckli (2003) p.18

¹⁶ Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p.6, Lund (1996) in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p.6

¹⁷ Wallensteen & Möller (2003) pp.5-6

applicability in the analysis of measures and the treatment of disputes at different stages of their life-cycle. As it will be discussed below, conceptualizations of conflict prevention are not necessarily limited to any particular point in time in the evolution of a conflict nor are the methods used for its practical application.

In conducting a comprehensive analysis of the different interpretations and definitions of the concept, it is useful to begin by introducing it in broad manner; to have a general picture of what is to be discussed. An easy introductory definition to conflict prevention was developed by Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999) by stating that conflict prevention is “actions which prevent armed conflicts or mass violence from breaking out”¹⁸. Not much is able to be concluded from this argument, apart from the fact that it defines the main goal of conflict prevention; averting the use of violence in dispute situations. It also presupposed that the concept has a temporal limit. Conflict prevention according to these scholars takes place before initial violence erupts. This is a major theme in defining the concept as a topic of academic research and as an operational tool in politics. On the other hand, even if Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse define the notion as limited to a pre-violent stage in a dispute, it does not specify its relevance to any precise stage in the life-cycle of a conflict. In addition, no reference is made to any technique with which the objectives will be achieved or which actors would be mandated to achieve them. A similar conception can also be observed from the work of Njeri Karuru (2004), as she defines conflict prevention as “all those initiatives, movers, and actions that are undertaken with the express purpose of averting the outbreak of violent confrontations between parties in a conflict”¹⁹.

As mentioned before, a breaking point in the evolution of conflict prevention as a means in international politics was UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace* address in 1992. In this proposal, he defines preventive diplomacy as an “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur”²⁰. The first noticeable characteristic in this definition is not within the definition itself, but in the term used.

¹⁸ Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse (1999) p.99

¹⁹ Karuru (2004) p.265

²⁰ Boutros-Ghali (1992) p.11 – par. 20

Preventive Diplomacy is widely used in the existing literature as a synonym of conflict prevention, but this may not be necessarily always the case; the question here lies in interpreting all means to prevent violence as means of diplomacy. If one defines diplomacy as “the art of restraining the exercise of power”²¹ then coercive methods of conflict prevention could not be included within the scope of preventive diplomacy even if they are seen as valid vehicles of prevention. On the other hand, if diplomacy is interpreted as the “practice of conducting negotiations”²², and coercive means used in the prevention of violence are seen as tools within a determined negotiation process, then conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy would have a synonymous character. This of course requires a broad conceptualization of diplomacy. To this discussion, Peter Wallensteen adds that preventive diplomacy as an operational tool should avoid siding with any party to a dispute and avert adding offensive or military instruments to an already volatile situation. Thus, measures stipulated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (measures involving the use of armed force) could not be seen as preventive diplomacy.²³ This again is subject to one’s definition of diplomacy. If Wallensteen’s argument holds, it would be possible to consider preventive diplomacy as a tool within the means available in conflict prevention. But, for the purpose of conducting this discussion and considering the interchangeable use of the terms in respectable literature, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy will be viewed as concepts with such a degree of similarity that their definitions are able to be subject of comparison. Later on in this chapter, a concise definition of what conflict prevention means within the conceptual framework of this project will be presented.

Moving on, a second noticeable characteristic can be identified from Boutros-Ghali’s understanding. There are three stages in the life-cycle of a conflict where preventive diplomacy (conflict prevention) tools should be used to affect an evolving dispute. Firstly, measures should be taken to prevent disputes from arising, secondly to prevent disputes from evolving into violence, and thirdly, to avoid already violent conflict from spreading. Unarguably, this presupposes a broad conceptualization of conflict prevention and the need for an equally broad mandate for its operationalization. On this regard, Michael Lund,

²¹ Kissinger (1957) p.2

²² Merriam Webster Dictionary (01.02.2007), web-based service

²³ Wallensteen (1998) p. 35

believes that Boutros-Ghali's definition is "too broad to be useful"²⁴. "Defining conflict prevention, as actions taken at virtually any conflict stage -from the causes of disagreements through many possible thresholds of bloodshed- is too inclusive and blurs important operational distinctions among the interventions made at different stages of a conflict."²⁵ The first segment of Boutros-Ghali's definition, referring to the avoidance of disputes, lies outside the conceptual limits of conflict prevention. Preventing disputes from arising within society is a virtual impossibility; they are common features of social interaction. The purpose of preventing conflicts, even from a structural perspective, does not go as far as seeking the elimination of disputes, instead it attempts to create conditions that prevent differences from degenerating into violent confrontations. As it will be presented later on in this paper, peaceful discrepancies in society are not necessarily negative and can even represent possibilities for positive change.²⁶ According to Luc Reyhler, avoiding disputes from arising falls out of the realm of conflict prevention and touches on what he and C.R. Mitchell have denominated as *conflict avoidance*. "Efforts to avoid the development of contentious issues and the incompatibility of goals are called conflict avoidance; and the measures which contribute to the prevention of undesirable conflict behavior once some situation involving goal incompatibility has arisen, fall under the heading of conflict prevention."²⁷ On the same regard, Lund argues that Boutros-Ghali's formulation on the need to prevent disputes from arising is not a primary objective of diplomacy. Instead, he states, that this is an outcome of a successful process of *economic development*.²⁸ These two counter-arguments support the idea that conflict prevention as concept has its limits; an idea maintained in this thesis. The problematic in this case was to think of a concept and a policy formulation that seeks to change a core element of social interaction, particularly considering the role that disputes have in some societies as a vehicle of communication and change. Arguments and quarrels will always exist between groups and individuals in a determined social environment, the objective of politics should not be to eliminate them but to create sustainable conditions that would not allow them to become violent.

²⁴ Lund (1996) p. 34 in Wallenstein (1998) p. 33

²⁵ Lund (1996) p. 38 in Carment & Schnabel (2004) p. 4

²⁶ Schmeidl (2002) p. 70

²⁷ Reyhler (1994) p. 4 in Bauwens & Reyhler (1994)

²⁸ Lund (1996) p. 35 in Wallenstein (1998) p. 33

With regard to the third segment of Boutros-Ghali's definition, it is also argued that it falls outside the realm of preventive diplomacy or conflict prevention. The argument here is simple and straightforward. Limiting the spread of conflicts should not be considered conflict prevention as there is simply no conflict to prevent. Once violence erupts, the conflict exists and was not prevented, thus an approach is needed to control its voracity and to eventually bring it to an end. Preventing the expansion of an existing conflict is in principle different from preventing a conflict from starting. Even if some of the same methods are used, a difference in definition and purpose must be maintained. According to Lund, Boutros-Ghali confuses preventive diplomacy with crisis management and ending wars.²⁹ In the same line of thought, Reychler differentiates between conflict prevention and actions taken after a conflict crosses the threshold of violence. He states that any effort which is activated at a stage of hostile attitudes and disruptive behavior should be classified as conflict settlement or conflict resolution.³⁰ Once a conflict has degenerated into violence, and violence is still a principal characteristic or a principal threat within its dynamics, this study believes that the actions needed to affect it are best represented by the concept of conflict management, and not conflict prevention. As Renata Dwan states, "conflict prevention is understood by many to include efforts to prevent the escalation of violence already begun. Notwithstanding the difficulty of applying rigid distinctions, I prefer to look at escalation prevention within the context of conflict management"³¹. In very simple terms, the concept of prevention portrays something that may happen in the future, while management relates to something that exists, that is present. It is through this logic that both terms have a different, but equally valuable, place in the treatment of conflicts. In this respect those authors that favor the diplomatic focus to conflict prevention make a distinction between the tools required in both stages of a conflict. Lund differentiates between preventive diplomacy or conflict prevention 'during areas of unstable peace' and crisis diplomacy or crisis management 'during crisis situations'.³² Similarly, Bruce Jentleson argues in favor of the distinction between the concepts of "preventive diplomacy and war diplomacy"³³.

²⁹ Lund (1996) p. 55 in Wallensteen (1998) p. 33

³⁰ Reychler (1994) p. 4 in Bauwens & Reychler (1994)

³¹ Dwan (2000) p. 11(Note 4) in SIPRI (2000) and Schmeidl (2002) p. 71

³² Lund (1996) pp. 382-383 in Carment & Schnabel (2004) p. 4

³³ Jentleson (1996) p. 7 in Carment & Schnabel (2004) p. 5

Finally, the second segment of Boutros-Ghali's definition makes a direct allusion to what is considered conflict prevention as such; "measures which contribute to the prevention of undesirable conflict behavior once some situation involving goal incompatibility has arisen"³⁴. This argument is supported by David Hamburg as he defines the concept as "the use of proactive, peaceful measures to prevent political conflicts from erupting into violence and to promote peaceful, just dispute resolution"³⁵; the focus of course being in the avoidance of violence. From this last definition two main features can be highlighted. Firstly, the reference to political disputes opens the debate on whether conflict prevention is limited to any type of conflict, or if all types of conflicts can be defined as political. To the understanding of this project none of the two cases should hold true. It is not clear why the author, and indeed other writers (e.g. Wallensteen (1998), Lund (1996)), uses this terminology but it might indeed be that there is an understanding that all conflicts fit into the categorization of political. This requires a broad conceptualization of politics. On the other hand, it might relate to nature of interaction between actors in a dispute, even if this is a consequence of other phenomena. This is certainly the case in Lund's definition of preventive diplomacy as "actions taken in vulnerable places and times to avoid the threat or use of armed force and related forms of coercion by states or groups to settle the political disputes that can arise from destabilizing effects of economic, social, political, and international change"³⁶. Secondly, it is necessary to acknowledge that Hamburg focuses on the use of peaceful methods as tools for preventing violence; an idea supported by, among others, Munera (1994) who limits conflict prevention to "the application of non-constraining measures (those that are not coercive and depend on the goodwill of the parties involved), primarily diplomatic in nature"³⁷. Like mentioned before, these methods are restricted to a peaceful conception of diplomacy and are not the only operational tools used to prevent conflicts. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Another type of definition that can be identified from the literature is similar to Boutros-Ghali's in that it argues for conflict prevention to have a role in three stages of a conflict. But, the three stages proposed in this conception are different from the ones he envisioned. A

³⁴ Reychler (1994) p. 4 in Bauwens & Reychler (1994) p. 4

³⁵ Hamburg (2002) p. 117

³⁶ Lund (1996) p. 37 in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 4

³⁷ Munera (1994) p. 3 in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 4

proponent of this idea is the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts (1997) which perceived that “the aim of Preventive Action is to prevent the emergence of violent conflict, prevent ongoing conflicts from spreading and prevent the re-emergence of violence”³⁸. As the first two elements in this definition have already been discussed in this chapter, it is important to analyze the significance of the latter; preventing the re-emergence of violence. The question that must be raised here is if this argument is considered within the limits of the concept. This is certainly believed to be the case. The basic idea that has been presented as a pre-condition for a definition to be considered as conflict prevention is that there is an attempt to halt the transition between a dispute and a violent conflict; from a time of no physical violence to a time physical violence. Taking this into account, the analysis of re-emergence of violence guarantees the existence of this precondition, even if it is preceded by an episode of violence. Once violence is discontinued, particularly in a post-conflict situation, a new threshold of violence is created and should be protected. It is probable that the methods used to avert violence at this stage in the life-cycle of a conflict are not the same as before violence takes place for the first time, but the idea and the purpose are the same in both phases.

Similar definitions to the one developed by the Carnegie Commission can be found in the work of organizations such as the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI-Africa), the Centre for International Cooperation and Security (CICS) and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA). All think-tanks and policy research organizations dedicated to issues of peace and security.

- FIIA & CICS (2006): “activities undertaken to reduce manifest tensions and/or prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict”³⁹.
- NPI-Africa (2004): “a medium and long-term proactive strategy undertaken by a variety of actors, aimed at identifying all those factors that could lead to violence

³⁸ Carnegie Commission (1997) p. xvii

³⁹ Greene (2006) in Greene, Buxton & Saloni-Pasternak (2006) p. 14 (Box. 4.1) for FIIA & CICS

within a certain social group and ensure that violent conflict does not occur, regenerate or intensify”⁴⁰.

An explanation for the recurrent focus on the re-emergence of violence from the part of this type of organizations is not clear, but it is possible to bring up a couple of points that can help understand this occurrence. The fact that their work seeks to influence policies and operational practices might oblige these organizations to view conflicts and conflict cycles from a different perspective as those involved in pure academic work. It seems that the latter have focused their analysis on conflicts limited to one cycle, meaning that a dispute becomes violent and is later resolved and closed, while the former base their conceptualizations on the actual likelihood of conflicts constantly re-emerging in time; conflicts with several cycles of violence. At the same time, the focus on the operational value of their work leads to bypassing the conceptual discipline required in academic work, and which to some degree is sought in this paper. The acknowledgment of conflict management as conflict prevention can be an outcome of these conditionalities. A similar opinion can be expressed for, for example, Boutros-Ghali's (a diplomat and a practitioner in the field of peace-making) definition of preventive diplomacy.

At this point, a simple definition of conflict prevention can be:

-Efforts taken to prevent the emergence and re-emergence of armed conflict or mass violence arising from a dispute in a determined social environment.-

2.1.1. Approaches, Timing, and Tools of Conflict Prevention:

From the discussion on the concept of conflict prevention it is possible to identify three main themes that are used to characterize its operational applicability. These range from the approach to the treatment of a conflict, the timing of involvement, to the tools for prevention. Although some have already been mentioned before, now they will be presented in greater detail for the purpose of clarification and to enhance the comprehension of the concept itself.

⁴⁰ NPI-Africa (2004) p. 1

When debating the first segment of Boutros-Ghali's definition, the notion of structural conflict prevention was touched upon in relationship with the prevention of disputes within a certain social environment. This serves as the beginning for the first theme to be discussed; approaches to conflict prevention. Conflict prevention can be understood from two distinct, but intimately complementary, perspectives. The first approach has taken the name of *operational* or *direct* conflict prevention and is based on the treatment of the direct forces that fuel a dispute. "The immediate avoidance of violence and killing is focused, and the resulting order becomes an issue to be dealt later."⁴¹ It is a short-term approach and its primary goal is to stop the escalation of a conflict into full-blown violence. The main tools of operational prevention are principally found within the field of diplomacy: negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and other forms of good offices, but can be complemented with coercive measures such as sanctions, preventive deployments, etc. The purpose of this approach is to avoid that actors to a conflict cross the threshold of violence, and to discourage them from doing so.⁴² Luc Reyhler denominates this approach as peacemaking, in his typology of preventive measures. "Peacemaking is concerned with the search for a negotiated resolution of perceived conflicts of interest between parties."⁴³ The methods seen to be part of this approach are, as mentioned before, the imposition of a solution through coercion, the judicial settlement of the dispute, and negotiation.

The second approach, *structural* conflict prevention, in contrast focuses on the underlying, structural causes of disputes. It came to exist from the realization that short-term means for averting violence are often ineffective. Economic inequality, the absence of democracy, good governance, and rule of law are for example dynamics that can eventually lead to conflicts if they persist in time and are not met with the appropriate dispute settlement structures. Consequently, structural conflict prevention sees its role as a long-term process. "Aiming to provide structural stability as the key to peace, structural prevention operates on a far broader scale than operational prevention in terms of its targets, its instruments, and the actors involved."⁴⁴ For this precise reason, it is important to attempt to distinguish this notion from

⁴¹ Wallensteen (1998) p. 9

⁴² Wenger & Möckli (2003) p. 35

⁴³ Reyhler (1994) p. 5 in Bauwens & Reyhler (1994) p. 5

⁴⁴ Wenger & Möckli (2003) p. 35

other similar concepts. It is the understanding of this project that structural conflict prevention is not meant to prevent disputes from arising in society, as Boutros-Ghali and others proposed, but to create the conditions and the institutions that would prevent eventual disputes from becoming violent conflicts. Michael Lund acknowledges this idea by defining this approach as “any structural or intersectoral means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed force, to strengthen the capabilities of parties to possible conflicts for resolving their disputes peacefully, and progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce those tensions and disputes”⁴⁵. As it was mentioned before, preventing disputes from arising in society is an extremely difficult task as they are an integral part of patterns of social interaction and social change. Furthermore, if such would eventually take place they would not be a consequence of conflict prevention initiatives but an outcome of political, social and economic development schemes. Conflict prevention as such, even from a long-term structural prevention, must maintain some degree of consistency with its objective; the avoidance of violence. If not, then any attempt to improve the living conditions of people would be considered within the limits of the concept. By focusing on creating structural conditions to avert society from resorting to violence once disputes arise, the efforts can be included within a coherent definition of conflict prevention. This of course can be achieved by strengthening democratic institutions and promoting the respect for the rule of law and human rights within a state. Luc Reyhler refers to these efforts as peacebuilding; “a strategy which tries to avoid or resolve conflicts through measures of an attitudinal, socio-economic and political nature”⁴⁶.

With this in mind, the last definition of the concept, as described in this project, can be complemented with inclusion of two approaches prevented above. Conflict prevention at this point can be defined as:

-Operational and structural efforts taken to prevent the emergence and re-emergence of armed conflict or mass violence arising from a dispute in a determined social environment.-

⁴⁵ Lund (2002) p. 117 in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 5

⁴⁶ Reyhler (1994) p. 5

Keeping in mind the primary subject of this project, special attention will be placed to the study of operational conflict prevention tools and methods, while still stressing the importance of the structural approach as the ultimate means for achieving peace and security; in this case within the African context. The development of conflict early warning systems is a means to analyze immediate conflict processes and thus a direct conflict prevention tool.⁴⁷ Conflict prevention has to be perceived as a continuous process in which both direct and structural perspectives play a vital role, and complement each other. In particular, it is necessary to highlight the idea that direct conflict prevention cannot take place by itself; it must take place as the starting point or as part of a wider attempt for achieving structural change. Even though, and as it was just mentioned, the operational approach is placed within a primitive level of conflict prevention, it is still necessary. Especially in cases where conflictual relationships are escalating, it is essential to avoid violence as this would seriously hamper efforts to achieve a more sustainable and long-term outcome in the process. From a research perspective, both components of conflict prevention are analytically different and thus able to be studied separately.

Evaluating the success of direct conflict prevention attempts is not as simple as it may appear. There are still no theoretical and methodological rules to measure what is success and what is failure in this field. Considering that there is no consensus on what conflict prevention as a concept is, it is not difficult to understand the reasons for this phenomenon. In a very simple way, as Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse acknowledge, the success of direct conflict prevention is determined by the de-escalation of the dispute and by the promotion of efforts to transform the conflict in order to find a solution in the medium and long term. The success of light measures (operational measures) is the aversion of armed conflict.⁴⁸ Having this in mind, it is more important for research to study the tools that conflict prevention has to achieve its objective. As it has been pointed out throughout this chapter, the means to avert the use of violence by parties in a dispute can either be peaceful or coercive. Peaceful conflict prevention is based on the use of the traditional diplomatic tools of negotiation and goodwill gestures. According to Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen (2005), these measures can be divided

⁴⁷ Wallensteen (1998) p. 11

⁴⁸ Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse (1999) p. 127 in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 8

into verbal attention, relief efforts, facilitation, third-party coordination, proposals and decisions.⁴⁹ With verbal attention the authors imply the use of public appeals of concern about a certain situation. They do not necessarily have to be negative statements, as praise to the particular behavior of an actor can serve the purpose of de-escalating tensions. Secondly, relief efforts are an example of material expressions of goodwill that can diminish the difficulties that might be leading two groups to come into conflict with each other. Thirdly, facilitation stands for those attempts that allow the parties to a conflict to communicate with each other and discuss. In addition, the authors include mediation and fact-finding missions into this category. Fourthly, third party coordination encompasses the activities that actors outside the conflict setting take to organize other peaceful conflict prevention measures. It is not clear why this is considered a conflict prevention measure as in essence it is not affecting the conflictual situation directly. It is a preparatory activity, not a means in itself. Finally, proposals and decisions describe the points of entry through which a third party can directly try to affect the outcome of the negotiation process. Although intrusive to a certain extent they are not taken without the consent of the parties in dispute. On the one hand, proposals are those ideas that a third party actor suggests as a possible solution to a dispute and that the conflicting actors can accept on their own will. On the other hand, decisions include a third party taking into its own jurisdiction the outcome of the negotiation; deciding upon themselves the best possible solution for the situation at hand. In some cases, as in arbitration proceedings, the parties to the conflict are obliged to accept the consideration of the third party.

On the side of coercive preventive measures, Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen (2005) identify two main tools of engagement. On the one hand, they present what has become known as the ‘carrot and stick’ approach to dispute settlement. This implies the use of conditional offers to a particular party in a conflict as a means to persuade it from changing its pattern of behavior. These conditional offers can be categorized as positive or negative sanctions. The former correspond to rewards or recognitions for the implementation of a certain demand; a carrot, while the latter comes close to what can be considered a threat: a stick. It is the case of “comply or consequences” negotiations. On the other hand, if situations so demand,

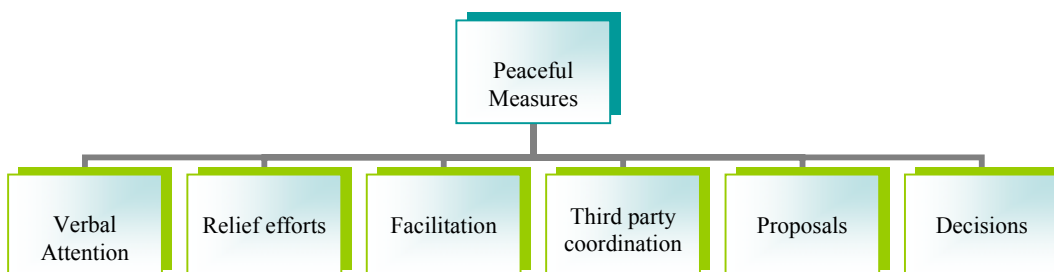
⁴⁹ Möller, Öberg & Wallensteen (2005) p. 5

preventive measures can resort on the imposition of sanctions or the actual use of force or threat of its use. According to international law, and in cases of inter-states disputes, the means available to the international community in this regard are defined under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Articles 41 and 42 in this chapter respective state that:

- The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.
- Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.⁵⁰

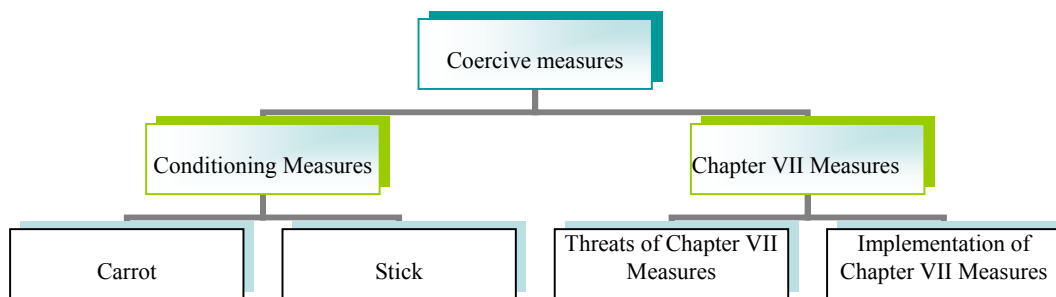
Without a doubt, the United Nations is not the only actor directly enforcing such an approach. In the case of coercive measures agreed upon at a regional or sub-regional level, corresponding inter-governmental organizations have the authority to implement their own actions if they comply with the principles set forth in the UN Charter.

*Figure 2.1: Typology of Conflict Prevention Measures*⁵¹



⁵⁰ UN Charter (1945)

⁵¹ Möller, Öberg & Wallenstein (2005) p. 6



Michael Lund and Jan Eliasson have also developed their own typology for the tools that can be used in direct prevention of conflicts. Lund (1996) focuses on the sources of action as the main basis for classification in order to propose the following categories for preventive action:

1. Military Approaches
 - a. Restraints on the use of armed force
 - b. Threat of use of armed force
2. Nonmilitary Approaches
 - a. Coercive diplomatic measures (without the used of armed force)
 - b. Non-coercive diplomatic measures (without the used of armed force)⁵²

Even if the terminology used by Lund is different from that used in the previous typology, it is possible to identify a series of similarities between the two approaches. In essence both are trying to describe the nature of the measures that are availed in conflict prevention and how they are enforced. On the other hand, no systematic approach to its application is presented; a relationship between the situation in the ground and the means to treat it is not observed from the typology itself. This notion is an important element when studying the reasons for the success of preventive measures and thus must be introduced in such a study. An example of a methodic presentation of the relationship between preventive measures and a conflict cycle can be identified from Jan Eliasson's *Ladder of Conflict Prevention*. In simple terms, this approach portrays how preventive measures must change as a conflict's degree of tension escalates; each category representing a higher level of aggression to be managed. Being Eliasson a career diplomat, and a former UN high official, his approach directly relates to the

⁵² Lund (1996) pp. 203-205 in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 10

operationalization of conflict prevention measures. In fact, it can be understood as a step-by-step guide for the United Nations system to intervene in emerging situations of violence.

1. Early warning
2. Fact finding missions
3. Stimulate the parties to use the eight measures of Chapter VI, Art 33 of the UN Charter (negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice⁵³)
4. Use the new generation of peace keeping operations, including preventive deployment
5. Use Chapter VII of the of the UN Charter peaceful coercive measures such as sanctions, not the least targeted sanctions
6. Threaten the use of military force, on the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter
7. Actual use of military force, on the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter⁵⁴

Even if Elliason's conception of preventive measures might appear more intrusive than the ones presented before and seems to focus to a greater extent on the coercive measures, it represents a very similar approach to the ones developed by Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen and Lund. A balance between coercive and non-coercive measures is met in the three frameworks. What is innovative from the last, apart from its more systematic way of presenting the measures, are the ideas of early warning and preventive deployments that were not introduced by the other actors. Early warning is a fundamental precondition for conflict prevention to be effective as it allows for actions to be taken at the earliest possible stage in the conflict cycle, with a margin of time significant enough as to allow preventive actions to take place before violence erupts. (This subject will be discussed to a greater detail through out this thesis.) Finally, the case of preventive deployments would also be an interesting idea to analyze, as it represents a less coercive version of military interventions.

⁵³ UN Charter (1945)

⁵⁴ Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 12

Typologies of preventive measures help in the understanding of the tools available in preventive action. The success of these actions is dependent on a large series of factors that may not always be in the hands of those seeking the de-escalation of a dispute and that exceed the focus of this discussion. What is relevant to acknowledge is the need to have coherent balance of coercive and non-coercive measures available to those involved in preventing the conflict. It is logical to think that de-escalating and resolving a dispute through non-coercive measures is always preferred, but this may not always be possible. Coercive measures should exist for two main reasons. On the one hand they serve as an implicit support for non-coercive tools and on the other hand, they are necessary as a last resource when diplomacy fails to produce an agreement. The decisive factor is the determination and the authoritativeness with which conflict prevention is assumed.

With this in mind, the definition of the concept, as described in this project, can be complemented with the inclusion of the tools studied above as means for preventing violence from emerging. At this point conflict prevention can be defined as:

-Operational and structural efforts taken to prevent the emergence and re-emergence of armed conflict or mass violence arising from a dispute in a determined social environment, through the use of coercive and non-coercive preventive measures.-

Finally, the analysis of the phases of the conflict and the timing in which certain preventive action is implemented has been discussed as an important aspect in the conceptualization of conflict prevention. It was proposed throughout this discussion that conflict prevention as a concept must be restricted to pre-violence stages of a conflict, including post-conflict situations. There is a difference in definition and purpose between the treatment of a conflict before and after the threshold of violence is crossed. In the case of a post-conflict stage, the contradiction that seems apparent from the previous arguments seems to be if the cyclical nature of conflicts is understood. Post-conflict stages have proven to be just the pre-violence stage of a continuous conflict cycle, as is the case in protracted wars; a constant transition between peace and violence that prolongs itself in time.

Different authors have studied the stages through which a conflict's degree of intensity evolves in time. As the dynamics of a conflict are case specific to that precise conflict, it is difficult to generate any sort of broad understanding of the phases that characterize a conflictual process. Donald Rothchild (2003) makes a considerably general, but safe, interpretation of this subject. He mentions four different phases in the life cycle of a conflict: *potential conflict, gestation, trigger and escalation and post-conflict*.⁵⁵ This is a logical conceptualization of the way a conflict evolves without going into any degree of detail, but it is still useful in placing conflict prevention, as a concept and a practical tool, within an actual crisis. A small error can be noticed from Rothchild's proposal as it ignores the process through which a conflict de-escalates from its highest level of intensity to a period of no violence. Regardless, the stages identified by the author suffice to understand the limits of conflict prevention. In contrast, Reyckler (1997) takes a more detailed focus and proposes a model that identifies 17 phases in the dynamic of a conflict:

1. Conflict gestation
2. Latent conflict
3. Peaceful protest
4. Peaceful confrontation
5. Hard-line confrontation
6. Low intensity war
7. Intense war: Over one thousand deaths in one year
8. Chances of escalation predominate
9. Scaling-down the conflict
10. Victory
11. Pre-negotiations
12. Negotiations
13. Truce
14. Peace agreement
15. Implementing the peace agreement

⁵⁵ Rothchild (2003) pp. 44-56 in Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 13

16. Building peace

17. Sustainable peace⁵⁶

The preciseness of this approach makes it difficult to find an actual case study that follows the steps proposed by the author. The value of this work lies in the presentation of a comprehensive framework to analyze the different stages through which a conflict can actually evolve. Some conflicts can follow Reychler's steps completely but most likely the great majority undergo limited version of his outline. Regardless of the degree of detail in the understanding of a conflict life-cycle, preventive actions, as understood in this study, must then be implemented at a pre-violence stage; sometime during Rothchild's potential conflict and gestation phases or during post-conflict phase, and before phase five (Hard-line confrontation) in Reychler's model or after a peace agreement is sign (phase 14); always keeping in mind that an earlier stage is always a better target.

What needs to be concluded here is that once violence begins any attempt for conflict prevention has to be transformed into a mandate for conflict management. Although the pre-violence stages of a conflict are not easily distinguished, there is a threshold when the conflict becomes violent and it is too late for conflict prevention to be considered an option. The difficulty lies in understanding the dynamics of a dispute as conflicts with a steeper escalation curve will transform more rapidly into violence than others. This phenomenon is influenced by variables such as the type of contradiction, the type of conflicting parties and its relation with each other, previous experiences, the physical capacity to wage war, etc. As these are forces that drive the escalation of a dispute into violence they are of primary focus when studying direct conflict prevention, their acknowledgment and understanding will determine the success of any attempt to prevent violence. Finally, and even though these conditions can carry a great drive, conflicts can still be prevented.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Reychler (1997) pp. 57-58 (list)

⁵⁷ Wallensteen & Möller (2003) p. 17

Figure 2.2: Conflict Life-cycle and Conflict Prevention – Single-Cycle Conflict

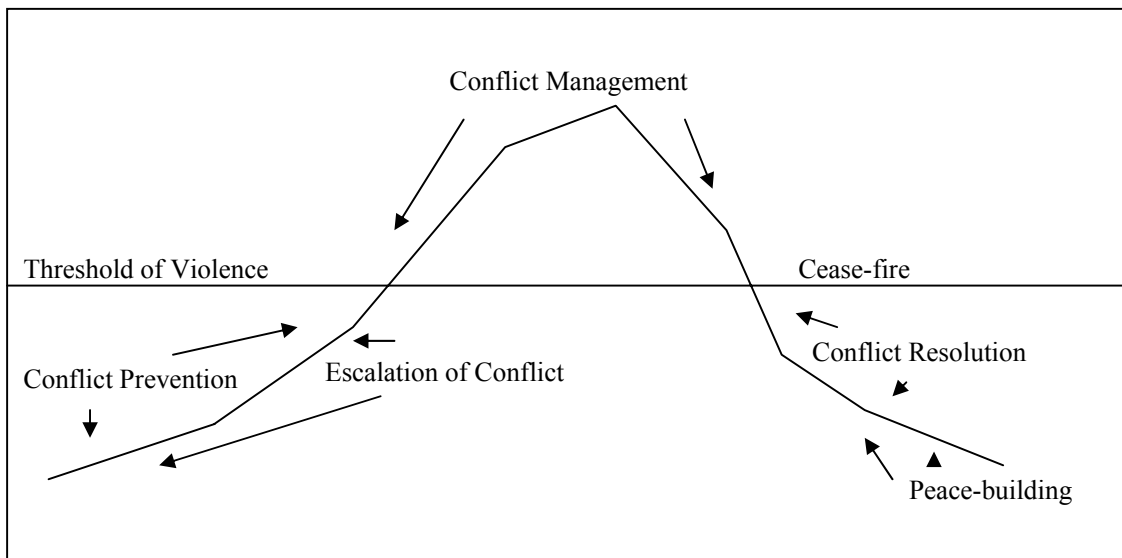
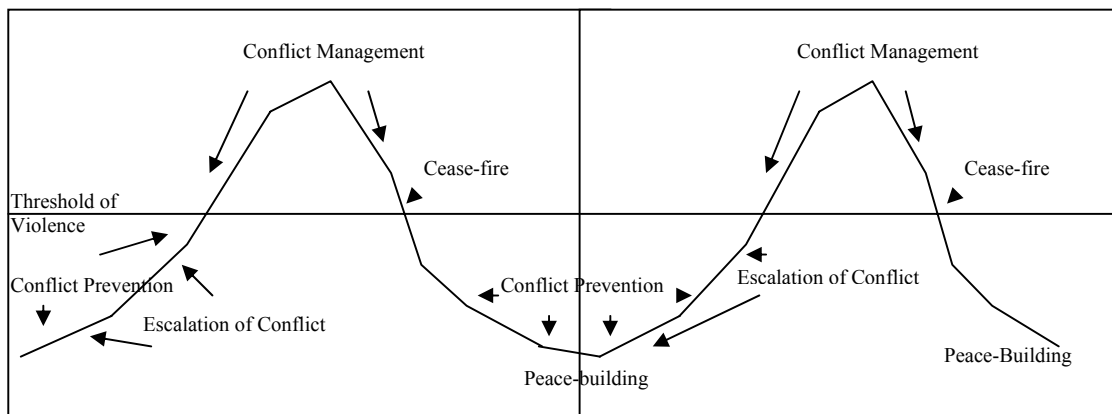


Figure 2.3: Conflict Life-cycle and Conflict Prevention – Multi-cycle Conflict



It is thus necessary to develop methods for the systematic analysis of political, cultural, social, and economic dynamics that can lead to the generation of violent confrontation, and that can generate alarms of volatile situations before they have actually become violent. This approach has taken the name of early warning and has been operationalized through the establishment of early warning systems.

2.1.2. The Politics of Conflict Prevention:

The importance of conflict prevention as a proactive tool in the treatment of disputes is relatively unquestioned. Academics, diplomats and professional practitioners alike have stressed the need to mainstream the use of preventive measures as the principal means to avert the consequences of mass violence. Despite this fact, translating the normative understanding of the concept into actual policy frameworks is something that is still lagging behind. “Despite the urgency to develop a more effective conflict prevention policy, there still exists a considerable amount of skepticism.”⁵⁸ A rift between research and policy makers’ willingness to prevent conflicts from becoming violent seems to exist. The reasons for this phenomenon can be the lack of an absolute definition for the term and what can be denominated as the politics of conflict prevention. As the former has been discussed in greater detail above, this section will focus on the political obstacles for the operationalization of preventive measures. Politics of conflict prevention is understood as the political cost that policy-makers perceive from successfully preventing violence from taking place. As contradictory as this might seem, it is a valid topic to discuss when understanding the limitations of the concept as a practical tool in international politics. In essence the argument is as simple as it is disputable; successful conflict prevention efforts may be disregarded by political authorities as they do not generate the same degree of public recognition as does the resolution of violent wars. In other words, when conflicts are prevented from becoming violent they do not become publicly known and the actors that accomplish such an achievement do not get the gratitude otherwise offered to those that act in a later stage of a conflict. It is of course a mediatic problem, a question of legacy and public exposure. Furthermore, the media more often than not covers conflicts once they become violent and the international community becomes concerned of escalating situations once human suffering is so evident to be ignored. At this stage, the degree of escalation has exceeded the threshold of violence and the conflict cannot be prevented anymore. This is not to say that media sources should publicize conflict at an earlier stage. In fact, media attention might just complicate preventive actions by adding a different actor in the dispute. Success stories in conflict prevention should not be publicized; they should be recognized and acknowledged as achievements of the international

⁵⁸ Reychler (1999) p. 12

community. Even in academia, literature on human-made tragedies is abundant but studies on cases of successful prevention are very limited. The case of modern African conflict history is a striking example of this idea. Only experts in the field of peace and conflict studies have some degree of knowledge about situations of impending crisis that were successfully mitigated. The Organization of African Union (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) both have participated deterring conflicts within their jurisdiction, but these cases never gained any attention. Recognition and respect for those actors committed to the field of conflict prevention is a must if the international community is serious about changing the fact that blood and carnage is usually the first motivation for action.

As conflict prevention is not an attractive policy instrument, policy-makers are not willing to incur on the costs of preventive action. Allocating funds to something that is not tangible or visible carries a significant burden with respect to public opinion and political adversaries. Spending public resources to prevent an event, which could not happen at all, is not an easily justified policy even if the benefits of preventive action are arguably unquestionable. Making an argument on behalf of conflict prevention has to be based on the realization that the costs of managing a full-blown conflict far exceed those of prevention. “The development of a more effective proactive conflict prevention system requires better insight into the economics of war and peace.”⁵⁹ This is not only restricted to the simple financial relationship between the economic costs of both approaches, nor to the human costs of violence, it relates also to the social, political, ecological, cultural, psychological and spiritual destruction that violent conflict generates. Preventive thinking thus must be defended through the understanding that not only is conflict management far more costly than prevention, but that war devastates many of the core factors that hold a society together and thus makes any attempt of reconstruction extremely difficult and expensive. For international organizations and individual nation states, or indeed any actor involved in this field of work, with limited resources, it is necessary to acknowledge the fact that conflict prevention offers them a better chance to successfully intervene in an emerging dispute. The case of the African Union is a perfect example to support this argument. An intergovernmental organization with a very limited budget and a continuous medley of regional disputes, is not capable of intervening in all these situations

⁵⁹ Reychler (1999) p. 13

once they become violent; its capabilities and resources are just not enough. Conflict prevention as an institutional objective would thus be the most cost-effective approach in conducting its mandate in the field of peace and security.

The cost rationality of conflict prevention is a first step to approach a theme that is constantly referred to as the greatest obstacle in its operationalization: the absence or lack of political will. As it has been mentioned before, policy-makers have difficulty in committing themselves to preventive thinking and action. The recent past has demonstrated the validity of such a conception, but it has not proven it to be insurmountable. For this reason, it is necessary to briefly discuss a series of arguments that attempt to shed some light on how this barrier can be overcome. The first of these ideas is of course that relating to the difference of costs between the prevention and the management of violent conflicts. Complementarily, the Krusenberg Seminar on Preventing Violent Conflict (Sweden, 2000) concluded that three other factors can influence such a policy-making process. Firstly, *moral considerations* have to be seen as motivating force behind preventive measures, particularly thinking of the avoidance of human suffering. Some authors, including Jan Eliasson, take this far as referring to conflict prevention as a moral obligation in international politics.⁶⁰ This is logically subject to individual opinions but it is reasonable to claim that preventive thinking must be a primary objective for in treatment of human-made crises throughout the world. The problem of focusing excessively on moral considerations lies in the idea that this sort of appeals “rest on a sense of urgency that may be difficult to convey in the context of early prevention”⁶¹. It is probable that decision-makers might feel compelled to act once human suffering is already taking place or once a dispute is too close to crossing the threshold of violence as to allow any coherent preventive measure from taking place. More often than not, morally-driven initiatives take form once the imagery of violence and destruction becomes public.

The second argument presented by the Krusenberg Seminar shares the same understanding presented above on the difficulty of allocating resources to the financing of conflict prevention. *Domestic political considerations* limit the degree though which practitioners and

⁶⁰ Eliasson (1996) p. 318

⁶¹ SIPRI (2000) p. 1

political authorities can commit themselves to this objective. “The apparent intractability of many intra-state conflicts can encourage a perception of prevention as unmanageable.”⁶² Furthermore, the domestic political debate might not consider the primacy of prevention as means for advancing its own interests. “As long as the conflict is not perceived as threatening vital interests, the response(s) tends to be too little, too late and of a low risk nature.”⁶³ The conflict is perceived being too ‘far away from their bed’ to care.⁶⁴ This is an extremely short-sighted approach to issues of peace and security, particularly considering the nature of conflicts in contemporary times. Conflicts and violence do not anymore represent a hazard only to the precise location where they are taking place, or to adjacent states, due to globalization they have become challenges to international peace and stability. Refugee flows, terrorism, the disruption of commercial ties, just to name a few, are features of current conflicts that have to be assumed by the international community as being within their own vital interests. Conceptualizing conflict prevention as means to guarantee the wellbeing of domestic interests must be understood. In addition, the cost-efficiency argument must be used in this regard.

Thirdly, the Krusenberg Seminar concluded that because of the implications of conflicts within the international community, a global culture of prevention must be fomented. International and impartial mechanisms for the promotion and operationalization of preventive practices must be conceptualized in order to guarantee their existence and effectiveness. This does not necessarily mean that conflict prevention is dependent of external interventions, particularly from ‘western’ actors, but it does imply that a cooperative and co-dependent international security regime should be recognized.⁶⁵

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, it is understood that a major force behind the repeated cases of political unwillingness to commit to preventive action is the lack of knowledge; knowledge not only about the cost-benefits of conflict prevention but also about the precise requirements of preventive measures. This is titled by Luc Reyhler (1999) as preventive

⁶² SIPRI (2000) p. 1

⁶³ Reyhler (1999) p. 15

⁶⁴ Reyhler (1994) p. 10

⁶⁵ SIPRI (2000) p. 2

know-how. Conflict prevention requires “a good analysis of the conflict (threats and opportunities), a thorough understanding of conflict transformation dynamics, and an acquaintance with the policy tools and architecture of conflict prevention”⁶⁶. For this purpose a broad range of actors have to be integrated into building a comprehensive preventive apparatus. Expertise and information from different fields, including the United Nations, regional multilateral organizations, major states, international financial institutions, and international and national NGOs, will allow decision-makers the tools required to take fully informed decisions promptly. As Lund states, “to reverse an old, saying, ‘if there is a way, there might be more will’”⁶⁷

2.2. The Concept of Early Warning:

The study of conflict prevention from an empirical perspective has to be built around a series of support elements that make prevention possible. Its operationalization depends on actual capabilities to foresee impending situations of danger and the capacity to influence them in a positive way. This is “based on the belief that it is possible to read a conflict before it erupts and that proper measures can be taken for its early engagement”⁶⁸. Consequently, conflict prevention is seen as an active process where analysis and response interact to avoid the emergence of violence within a determined social context. The analysis of situations that could become violent before they have actually become so is intimately related to the capacity to recollect valuable and timely data. Information is thus a pre-requisite of conflict prevention both as a concept and as a practical tool in international politics.

The need for useful information that warns of probable danger, and the need for this information to be timely enough so that preventive actions can be taken, opens the way to the study of concept of early warning and the need to develop effective early warning systems for conflict prevention. The failures that the international community confronted during the Rwanda(1992-1994) and in the Congo-Zaire (1996) where information was either ignored or misinterpreted resulted in the realization that more effective methods for the collection of

⁶⁶ Reyhler (1999) p. 16

⁶⁷ Lund (1998) p. 156

⁶⁸ Karuru (2004) p. 265

early warning information need to be developed. This initiative relies on the understanding that good early warning systems directly influence early preventive action. In other words, the better and more authoritative early warnings are the more policy makers will feel committed and responsible to act. As stated by Schmeidl and Adelman, “early warning needs to be seen as a precondition to developing political will and thus initiate (or better inform) reasonable response strategies. This makes early warning the *sine qua non* of effective conflict prevention for humanitarian action cannot be undertaken without it”⁶⁹. Information leads to action.

Early warning as a concept has two historical roots, both distinct to the conceptual understanding portrayed in this study, but which have complementarily influenced the development of the term as such, specifically relating to the prevention of violent conflicts in the current international political system. The first use of the term early warning can be traced to the work of military intelligence, and the need for advance knowledge of hostilities from an enemy and on the actor conducting the intelligence collection; one actor producing early warning information about probable danger to its own integrity and to protect its national interests and the integrity of its state borders.⁷⁰ This is certainly a case in inter-state armed conflicts, especially referring to the security environment of the Cold-war period. The second application of the term refers to the anticipation of natural phenomena that might lead to humanitarian disasters (i.e. hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, and droughts).⁷¹ The idea behind the latter is the protection of third parties as the situations analyzed do not necessarily pose any direct risk to the party emitting the warning.⁷² Both roots have been put in practice within the United Nations System, the first conceptualization was used in order to protect UN peace-keeping forces from hostilities in Africa, and the second through the efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in its attempts to anticipate famines. Consequently the contemporary understanding of early warning as a concept and as a tool stems from a combination of the previously mentioned ideas, as a means to protect third parties, particularly innocent civilians, from the dangers of violence and violent confrontations. Early

⁶⁹ Schmeidl & Adelman in Schmeidl (2002) p. 72

⁷⁰ Schmeidl (2002) p. 74

⁷¹ Hough (2004) p. 27 and Adelman (1998) p. 45

⁷² Adelman (1998) p. 45

warning today is not synonymous to intelligence as it utilizes open-source channels to gather data, aims to serve human security and not state or national interests, and depends on transparent methods of information sharing.⁷³ It is dependent on collaboration and information sharing procedures accepted by a wide variety of actors, including representatives of civil society. “Central to this principle is the understanding that the success of early warning cannot depend on any one state or organization to do it alone or to hold a monopoly over it”⁷⁴; in addition to a decentralized conception of its operational frameworks. Similarly it defers from the concept used by FAO as it focuses on human made disasters and in particular deadly conflicts⁷⁵; but maintaining the ultimate goal of the elimination or reduction of human suffering. Again, as previously mentioned referring to the concept of conflict prevention, it is necessary to maintain a level of discipline when defining early warning. Its different interpretations may lead to confusion in the analysis of its role as a normative and practical tool for conflict prevention. As was the case of conflict prevention, the lack of a coherent understanding of early warning as a concept and as a practical tool correlates with lack of political will to translate its findings into action.

In this frame of mind, a concrete conceptual framework can be built from the analysis of the following definitions; developed both through academic and action-based research. A starting point for this exercise can be the definition of the concept from a very broad perspective. This can be obtained from Gouden’s (1995) simplified characterization of early warning as “simply a warning at an early stage of an event or a set of circumstances that will have negative consequences”⁷⁶. In other words it is a signal of something bad happening or impending danger. Being himself a practitioner in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building in Africa, it is difficult to understand the vague conceptualization that he uses in this regard. Perhaps, the context and the timing during which he presented this definition might influence the criterion used. This definition was presented in a policy works shop at the Organization for African Unity when the concept was relatively unknown to policy makers and when the idea of operationalizing early warning in Africa was at an infant stage. In any

⁷³ Cilliers (2005), p. 1 and MacFarquhar, Rotberg & Chen (1996) p. 5

⁷⁴ Schmeidl (2002) p. 74

⁷⁵ Van Walraven (1998) p. 3, and Adelman (1998) pp. 45-46

⁷⁶ Gouden (1995) p. 43

case, it serves as a base argument for the development of a more comprehensive definition of the concept. Early warning is the communication of information concerning a negative circumstance before it takes place; particularly relating to violent conflicts.

Even though Gouden's definition allows some understanding of the purpose of early warning, it offers very little insight on the practical implications of the concept and its relevance to the field of peace studies. In this sense, Klaas van Walraven takes the definition one step further. He defines early warning as a process that "would involve the collection of data on the basis of uniform, systematized procedures; their analysis according to a proper scientific methodology, and if it would be concluded that those data pointed to a high probability of impending violent conflict, the transmission of a warning to political decision-makers"⁷⁷. The first aspect that must be highlighted from this argument is the idea that early warning, as an operational tool, should follow a series of established methodological procedures that would guarantee the relevance and accuracy of the information being produced. Random and unstructured warning messages, where the information is not verifiable, cannot be seen as useful instruments for policy makers. Secondly, van Walraven points to the understanding that early warning as a process is constructed on three main stages. These are the collection of information, the analysis of the information, and the communication of the information. Any early warning endeavor is framed by these elemental steps, but it must be acknowledge that the sequential relation between the stages is not always linear as in this conceptualization. Depending on the amount of actors and in their capacity to manage information, its communication and analysis can be done at several levels of the process. Collection is logically a precondition for the latter two and thus must be conceived as the first step in the process. Finally, this author recognizes that there is an ultimate normative aim or purpose for performing early warning activities. This is of course, facilitating in decision-making processes. Early warning reports are needed to allow policy-makers the tools to make informed decisions with respect to emerging security threats and violent conflicts. Van Walraven's understanding is complemented by Howard Adelman's (1998 – also used by the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER) a network of non-governmental organizations involved in the field of conflict prevention and early warning) definition of

⁷⁷ Van Walraven (1998) p. 3

early warning as “the communication of information on a crisis area, analysis of that information, and the development of potential, timely, strategic response options to the crises”⁷⁸. Firstly, this author highlights the significance of both communication and analysis of information as stages in the early warning process as did van Walraven, but sees its sequential pattern differently. In the latter argument the information is first communicated and then analyzed while in the former the relation is opposite. As it was mentioned before these are by no means contradictory conceptions, instead they acknowledge the idea that the early warning process is not linear and is determined by the actors that are involved in it. Secondly, and most importantly, Adelman adds to the policy-relevant aspect of early warning information. Not only should it be descriptive data on a certain situation, it can and should provide relevant insights on how that situation can be affected in a positive manner. He introduces the understanding that early warning is not only restricted to issuing specific warnings but has the capacity to provide policy options that can be used by those in charged of determining the respective responses to the information being produced. In addition, Adelman determines the usefulness of early warning as a means of treating conflicts in their different stages of escalation. He states that the concept is “concerned with the prevention, mitigation or management of conflicts that result in humanitarian emergencies such as those caused by inter-ethnic violence, gross-human rights violations or genocide”⁷⁹. Unlike what has been argued with respect to the concept of conflict prevention, early warning is not restricted to any particular stage in a conflict cycle as it can be used without changing its meaning or purpose to warn of impending events at any moment in time within the dynamics of evolving violence. As it can serve as a tool for conflict prevention in the way that it studies the potential of violence breaking-out in a near and probable future, it can also be relevant in managing already violent confrontations by foreseeing actions that can further escalate the conflict or degenerate the dynamics with which the clash is being conducted. Nevertheless, as this project is focused on the prevention of violent conflicts, and the limitations of such an idea have already been established, it is consequent to underline the utility of early warning within the temporal and conceptual limitations of conflict prevention as such; without denying it further relevance.

⁷⁸ Adelman (1998) in Hough (2004) p. 25

⁷⁹ Adelman (1998) p. 53

Once again, Howard Adelman's definition and the previous others can be strengthened by that developed by Davies (2000) in which he introduces the basic ingredients that early warning information should include. The latter authors had talked about information as a general concept but did not specify, within the definition, what sort of data was needed for effective early warning to take place. In this sense Davies' work introduces the basic elements of this discussion. He argues that "early warning can generate analyses that identify key factors driving instability, assess future scenarios, and recommend options oriented to preventive action"⁸⁰. This conception is a more systematic view of what analyzed early warning information should provide policy makers. Here again it is possible to find a sequential model, this time on how early warning information evolves. Firstly, early warning information should identify the factors that are fueling the escalation of a dispute into probable violence; which structural and direct conditions are making tensions grow. Secondly, and based on the analysis of the key factors driving instability, images of what could happen if conditions continue to deteriorate can be generated as a means to determine a spectrum of possible measures that can be taken in an effective and efficient manner. Indeed, developing scenarios is not an exact science and reality most probably will differ to some extent to artificially made situations, but they do serve the purpose of preparation for future events. Having a limited or vague idea of what can occur in the future is usually better than having no mental images at all; particularly considering the urgency with which preventive actions are required to be taken. Davies seeks to portray the idea that early warning is a dynamic process, not only because information is moving within a system of actors, but because the information is itself evolving with the purpose of positively affecting policy-making processes; as van Walraven first implied. As whole, the Davies' argument is shared by Gurr and Harff (1996) as they introduce the idea of forecasting. "An early warning model should provide forecasts of impending conflicts with a higher degree of certainty. Generating warnings of or at an early stage in the escalation of a conflict, and allow analysts to predict which conflicts scenarios are most likely to take place."⁸¹

⁸⁰ Davies (2000) pp. 1-2

⁸¹ Gurr & Harff (1996) p. 20

Finally, Davies relates the concept of early warning with that of conflict prevention by stating that “early warning is more than the flow of information and reports from those on the ground regarding highly visible or rapidly escalating crises. It should also provide reliable analyses that identify still-latent or low level conflicts or instabilities”⁸². Through this argument it is possible to establish a direct relation between early warning with those stages in the life-cycle of a conflict that where understood to be within the limits of direct conflict prevention; pre-violence escalation and post-conflict peacebuilding. What is not explicit in this definition is the role that early warning can take in what has been defined as structural conflict prevention initiatives. Perhaps the reference to low level conflicts and instabilities could have been done in this regard but is not sufficient to relate both concepts in an absolute way. This particular issue will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs of this chapter.

With this in mind, a definition of the concept as seen in this project could be:

-Early warning is a proactive and methodical process for collection, analysis, dissemination, of valid, accurate, verifiable and timely information on the likelihood of violence emerging within a certain social context, and the formulation of possible strategic responses to that situation-.

Having developed a coherent understanding of the concept and its pragmatic implications to preventive policy, it is important to retake one of the argument presented by Davies on the type of information that needs to be managed within an effective early warning process. According to Jakkie Cilliers, who complements the Davies’ approach, early warning in its most basic form should always analyze the following factors:

1. Which issues underpin and drive the conflict (manifestations and causes)
2. Which factors would serve as catalysts for peace
3. Who are the stakeholders in the conflict

⁸² Davies (2000) pp. 1-2

4. Which are the best practical options to prevent the situation from becoming violent⁸³

Considering point No. 3 of this argument as case specific, and recalling that a series of preventing measures have already been presented in this study, it is both necessary and interesting to concentrate on the manifestations and causes of conflicts as the primary source of warning. It is here necessary to highlight the idea that by collecting the right sort of information on the factors that are driving instability it is possible to recognize the measures needed to respond to them.⁸⁴ To understand what types of information should be collected as part of an early warning endeavor, it is necessary to retake the idea of conflict stages. By doing so, it is possible to characterize different data according to the timing on which they are perceptible. According to John L. Davies and Ted Gurr, three main stages in the escalation of a conflict can be identified for this purpose. Indeed other authors divide the escalation into different stages, but those proposed by the former authors are normally distinguishable in any conflict formation. Furthermore, it is important to mention that it is not very common for writers on early warning to separate the data or indicators on a temporal basis. From the literature reviewed, only Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney and Väyrynen (2004) present a similar conception as that of Gurr and Davies. In any case, these two authors make the mentioned division into structural tensions, escalation and crisis. Structural tensions represent the root causes of conflicts; conditions that change slowly and thus can be seen as long-term early warning indicators. Examples of these are a history of state repression, exclusionary ideologies, land desertification, and population pressures, to name a few. Continuously, during the escalation stage of the conflict it is possible to identify dynamic factors; meaning those elements that accelerate the evolution of the dispute towards violence. Examples of such data are human rights violations, refugee flows and internally displaced peoples, mobilization of local youths, the proliferation of small arms and arms trade, environmental degradation and the scarcity of shared resources.⁸⁵ As it can be noticed from the references on this issue, most writers focus on this type of data as main (direct) early warning indicators. Finally, at the moment in which the crisis is about to detonate, factors characterized as triggers serve as last

⁸³ Cilliers (2005) p. 2

⁸⁴ Last (2003) pp. 159, 179

⁸⁵ Davies & Gurr (1998) p. 3, Åkerlund (2005) p. 118, Bakwesegha (1995) p. 32 and Cilliers (2005) p. 2

minute early warning signals.⁸⁶ On this regard, Howard Adelman argues that these last indicators are the best elements to warn of violence. He states that economic, technological (build-up of weapons) and psychological indicators (resulting from issues relating to poverty itself and bad governance) provide little guide to anticipating disasters, and that human right violations track situations that are already violent. Instead he states that “security risk assessments in terms of the degree and frequency of threats of violence and the extent that internal violence is exacerbated by interventions of an external actor”⁸⁷ are the key ingredients of early warning. The physical risk of violence remains “the most important indicator of the degree to which discrimination will lead to mass slaughter”⁸⁸. Although agreeing that the physical risk of violence is an indicator of a probable crisis, this study considers that this sort of indicator represents a point in the life-cycle of a conflict too close to the outbreak of violence as to allow for any preventive action to be taken. In addition, by evaluating the degree and frequency of a threat, analysts ignore the factors fueling the escalation of tensions and thus have no proper means to determine the best practical tools to prevent them from becoming a deadly conflict. A comprehensive early warning system should not concentrate on specific threats of violence, but on patterns of social behavior that are likely to produce them. In this precise argument lies the value of an academic perspective to early warning which is worth to highlight. Academic research in the field of early warning views triggers of violence as just triggers, and thus focuses on other underlying pieces of information that can foresee conditions that can lead to the explosion of violence. Although preventing a trigger from being activated is still a primary concern of early warning and conflict prevention, such a short term perspective will most likely result on the fact that there will never be insufficient time to deploy preventive measures.

According to Vasu Gouden, director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), information on early warning indicators must be valued through three main criteria; the quantity and quality of information, its urgency or long-term perspective, and its multi-disciplinary background. The balance between quantity and quality of early warning information carries great significance considering the circumstances in which it is

⁸⁶ Davies & Gurr (1998) pp. 4-5

⁸⁷ Adelman (1998) p. 61

⁸⁸ Adelman (1998) pp. 61-62

being managed. Information should be shared sufficiently detailed as to allow for a clear understanding of the evolution of a certain situation and to permit analysts and policy-makers to design a comprehensive preventive strategy. Simultaneously, it must be presented in such a way that the urgency for action is understood, both in the sense that too much information requires long periods of analysis, and that quantity might go in contradiction with the level of attention policy-makers might offer to a certain report. For a decision maker, who will always have limited time at his disposal, it is important that the information is packaged in a way so that he/she is able to make an informed decision within a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, information should meet certain quality standards; it must be timely, accurate, valid, reliable and verifiable. In this sense it is determining that the sources of information can be trusted and the process through which the information is collected can be tracked in an open manner.⁸⁹ These aspects will depend on the experience, the methods used for interpretation, and the degree of objectivity used by those generating early warning reports. Complementarily, and as presented before, this information should, depending on the nature of the conflicts themselves, take the form of urgent reports on rapidly escalating situations or long-term analyses of volatile relationships; especially the historical relationship of the actors involved and the nature of their interaction. As it is understood that the conflicts being managed today, particularly in Africa, are deep rooted, the long term analysis of these situations facilitates to achieve higher degrees of predictability of their dynamics. It is the understanding of this study, that this sort of analytical framework is the ultimate goal of proactive and comprehensive early warning, although very serious attention must be placed to the consolidation of real-time early warning mechanisms which cannot rely on dated information.⁹⁰ Finally, and most importantly, the multi-disciplinary dimension of information is indispensable. As it can be understood from the list of early warning indicators previously presented, this information corresponds to a variety of fields of knowledge (i.e. political science, anthropology, environmental studies, military intelligence, economics, etc.).⁹¹ Thus, the integration of actors offering such expertise is a prerequisite for the establishment of a comprehensive early warning system. Cooperation between an open and reliable network of actors at different levels of society is the only path for the construction and operationalization

⁸⁹ Schmeidl (2002) pp. 81-82

⁹⁰ Schmeidl (2002) p. 81

⁹¹ Gouden (1995) pp. 43-46

of a comprehensive early warning system that is able to track and analyze information from a wide territorial jurisdiction and concerning different categories and natures of conflicts. Logically, early warning does not depend solely on information alone; as a process it encompasses a series of tools that determine the reliability and usefulness of the information which is being shared. The gatherers and their different expertise, the categories for naming and classifying, the standards of evaluation, the elements of confidentiality and the modes of transmitting the information all significantly matter within the network that makes up an early warning system.⁹² As it can be understood from the variety of information that needs to be collected in an effective early warning process, it is logical to realize that a vast network of actors must come in to play in the collection, analysis and sharing of the data. These actors are as important to early warning as the information itself, as they are the first link in the process of analysis of the collected data. An early warning network must integrate a central monitoring centre with field monitoring units, special envoys and missions, intergovernmental organizations, nation states, the United Nations system and civil society organizations, particularly non-governmental organizations (rights and watch organizations, local, international and humanitarian non-governmental organizations), research centres, academic institutions and the media.⁹³

Problems and Obstacles of Early Warning:

The final logical step in developing a comprehensive understanding of the concept of early warning is to recognize the main problematics that its operationalization has evidenced. It is clear that a simple analysis of the history of conflicts in the past two decades portrays a series of events that represent failures from the part of early warning and early warning systems utilized to prevent disputes from escalating into all out wars. In an attempt to build from past failures it is necessary to comprehend the factors that allowed them to take place. This analysis can be done by studying each stage in the early warning process and locating obstacles that can, and have been, identified in each level. These stages have been presented as collection of information, analysis, communication and decision-making.

⁹² Adelman (1998) p. 62

⁹³ Bakwesegha (1995) p. 31 and Adelman (1998) p. 68

Firstly, problems in the collection of information within an early warning process represent the first level of possible failure. Information and data of emerging situations must be seen as the core element in any early warning system, thus any difficulties that may arise at this stage will most probably affect the validity and effectiveness of the whole process. Susanne Schmeidl (2002) identifies this problematic as *inadequate, lacking, and poor information* in the sense that insufficient information results on incapacity of analysts to interpret the dynamics of the situation in the ground.⁹⁴ This is of course true, but one must be conscious of the fact the amount of information collected can be problematic also if it is excessive. Scarce information, as too much information, poses an obstacle to analysts responsible for its processing. This goes in hand with the arguments of Vasu Gouden which were previously presented. Complementarily, Anton Ivanov and David Nyheim (2004) detect in the collection of information a predicament which they regard as the *lack of accountability*. This corresponds to the idea that the sources of early warning have to be, at least within a system itself, known. Information on potential conflicts has traditionally been treated in a secret manner. This contradicts the need to secure the production of reliable, credible and verifiable early warning information.⁹⁵

Secondly, the analysis of the information collected is critical not only in understanding the emerging situation but also to have the capacity to think of possible preventive measures that can affect the dispute in a positive manner. *Inadequate or faulty analysis* is another obstacle in an early warning process. Misreading events on the ground will usually result on failure to act, as was the case in the Rwandan genocide (1994), or in the implementation of inadequate response strategies as in the crisis in Congo-Zaire in 2006. According to Schmeidl, the Rwandan example portrays a situation in which enough information was produced but inadequate analysis of the seriousness of the events that were developing was done.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the complexities of the crises in Congo-Zaire were so vast, that the analysis made by international community resulted on the misinterpretation of the situation and the deployment of an inadequate peace support mission that focused on the treatment of

⁹⁴ Schmeidl (2002) p. 77

⁹⁵ Ivanov & Nyheim (2004) p. 164

⁹⁶ Schmeidl (2002) p. 77

humanitarian aspects and not focused on affecting the dynamics of the conflict itself.⁹⁷ Of course, these factors were not the only causes of failure in these two crises situation; some others will be discussed below. Another factor that may hamper the analysis stage in an early warning process is the idea of *mind-blindness*. This represents the cognitive impulses of people that can impair their judgment when analyzing situations of crisis. “In some cases this can be seen as wishful thinking or a vague hope for the best and does not want to take the worst possible scenario into account.”⁹⁸ Schmeidl argues that in the case of the Rwandan crisis, both analysts and policy-makers did not want to realize the possibility of genocide taking place in the country. In this regard, it is also important to understand that the solution to this problematic is not to create a schizophrenic mentality that seeks to perceive disputes from catastrophic perspective. In fact, it is thought that in certain situations public statements predicting the degeneration of disputes into chaos may influence the escalation of the situation in negative manner. It is the case of a self-fulfilling prophecy; when expecting the worst results actually drives them to take place. In the case of conflicts, beliefs that a dispute will become violent can motive certain actors to actually use violent means in fear of becoming victims themselves.⁹⁹ The early warning process thus has to be mindful of both extremes.

Thirdly, the need for effective communication channels needs to be seen as the link between the other three stages in the early warning process. Obstacles in the transition of information at any point in the process might put to waste the effective functioning of the system as a whole. In this sense particular attention should be placed in the communication of early warning reports to those with the mandate of developing and launching preventive measures. In a network of multiple actors and in early warning mechanisms that have a vast bureaucratic structure, it is likely that information does not flow fluidly. Adelman (1998) refers to this situation as the *dead-ending* of information; when a signal is produced and received at some stage in the process but is not transferred to the adequate actor responsible for its further analysis or is transformation into policy options¹⁰⁰ because of institutional inefficiencies. An illustrative example of this is the warning report launched by General Dallaire of United

⁹⁷ Sollenberg & van Dassen (1998) p. 140-152, Adelman (1998) pp. 63-64

⁹⁸ Schmeidl (2002) p. 77

⁹⁹ Ivanov & Nyheim (2004) p. 165

¹⁰⁰ Adelman (1998) p. 65

Nations Mission in Rwanda informing of the high probability of mass killings of Tutsis in Kigali that was lost somewhere inside the complex UN bureaucracy and that never reached the Security Council for consideration. Another obstacle that can be observed when analyzing communication channels in early warning refers to disregarding reports do to the existence of other warnings at the same moment in time. Schmeidl (2004) refers to this problem as *noise or static*, and Adelman (1998) names it as the *crushing* of signals. When several crises are taking place at the same time an early warning system might not be able to handle all of them and some reports might be ignored. Background noises can cover up (crush) specific signals coming from a certain crisis area. This is a phenomenon that will most likely take place on a constant basis as the world is often confronted with multiple conflicts. Thus, adequate communication channels should be developed with this in mind.¹⁰¹

Finally, decision making must be viewed as the final aim of early warning; the level in which the work of early warning is translated into preventive action by policy makers. The link between warning and action might well be the most complicated aspect in the study of early warning and conflict prevention as it is the moment in which actors working with conflict prevention usually fail. This is the effect of two main issues, one that relates directly with the information produced in early warning reports, and the second is a complex phenomenon that affects conflict prevention as a whole. On the one hand, and as it was discussed above, early warning must not only be seen as the production of assessments of crisis situations but also as a means to develop possible response strategies for the situations at hand. In this sense, it is possible that preventive action does not occur because the early warning process was not able to advice on possible response policies, or the measures recommended by the warning report where not adequate for the situation being confronted. This can directly result on the mistiming of preventing actions (policy-makers taking to long to deploy measures) or on policy-makers taking ineffective or contradictory decisions regarding the treatment of an escalating dispute. Unclear policy formulations within early warning reports may lead to decision-makers being unclear about what they can do to impact the dynamics of a conflict in a positive manner.¹⁰² On the other hand, the analysis of the link between early warning and

¹⁰¹ Schmeidl (2002) p. 78 and Adelman (1998) p. 65

¹⁰² Ivanov & Nyheim (2004) p. 164 and Schmeidl (2002) p. 77

decision-making results on the recognition that political will is a primary means for action. As it was discussed before, political will is usually the main obstacle for any preventive measure to take place, but here it must be highlighted that this study believes that a determining factor in breaking the political barriers to conflict prevention is the development of comprehensive and efficient early warning systems. Even if the lack political will might finally destroy the work of early warning, it is superior early warning the force that can finally generate political will.

2.3. The Role of NGOs in Early Warning:

Early warning requires a comprehensive web of actors operating efficiently and together. The collection of information, its analysis, and its dissemination must be conducted with competence if this process will ultimately lead to a political decision on developing any sort of preventive action. Since the focus on the field of conflict prevention has been endorsed, a large web of actors has been called upon to actively engage their institutional capabilities in the field of conflict prevention and early warning. These actors included international and regional inter-governmental organizations, the private sector, international financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to Carment and Schnabel (2004) the logic behind the vision to include this heterogeneous collection of players, with different mandates, histories and objectives, needs to be seen as the result of three main arguments. Firstly, it is understood that “conflict prevention is an imperative”¹⁰³ not only in the sense of securing a peaceful international environment, but also for the ability of the former actors to complete their respective mandates accordingly. Secondly, the diverse mandates, leadership, funding, operational activities and locations that these organizations enjoy, enhance the capacity of the international community to prevent conflicts. In particular, “for an early warning system to be effective, the initial information gathering phase of early warning should cast a wide net to gain as complete a picture as possible, and keep it up-to-date”¹⁰⁴. This means that the organizations’ own competences and mandates must be utilized in favor of preventive measures instead of the latter being imposed as a new element in the

¹⁰³ Carment & Schnabel (2004) p. 4

¹⁰⁴ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) p. 36

actors' organizational objectives. Finally, the third argument is "based on the assumption that, while different development practitioners, the corporate sector, foreign policymakers, and NGOs are coming to conflict prevention from different directions, they reflect common objectives"¹⁰⁵ which should allow them the motivation to communicate and cooperate with each other for the purpose of establishing comprehensive mechanisms for conflict prevention and early warning.

The objective of this section is thus to study the role that one of the previously mentioned actors can play in the field of early warning: NGOs. It is believed that these organizations can become valuable actors within the process of collection, analysis and communication of early warning information as it has been presented above. A comprehensive analysis of the entry-points for NGOs to get involved in early warning will be presented in accordance with what are understood to be the comparative advantages that these actors can offer. In addition, the difficulties and problems that NGOs can encounter when integrating themselves into early warning systems will be studied in order to understand the factors that are hampering the establishment of a more active role for these organizations in this field.

Having understood the basic indicators that have to be studied in order to determine early warning signals, it is evident that information generated at a grass-root level is indispensable. The nature of the majority of conflicts that are emerging since the end of the Cold War, especially in Africa, have their genesis and their first signs of evolution at a local communal level. Therefore actors with the capacity to identify these phenomena need to be considered and integrated when developing an early warning system. In addition, early warning must be seen as a dynamic process in which actors to a conflict and local social dynamics are in constant dialogue and result in rapidly changing situations. "Early warning systems have to be capable of producing nuanced interpretations of the behavior and the stakes of the parties to a conflict"¹⁰⁶, and in order to do so, they require the means to obtain information from the 'ground' which is culturally and politically sensitive. In this sense, it is the understanding of this project that the actors better suited for this type of mandate make part of civil society,

¹⁰⁵ Carment & Schnabel (2004) p. 4

¹⁰⁶ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 34-35

specifically civil society organizations (CSOs), and in particular those organizations which have taken the denomination of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As stated by Ragnar Ångeby, supporting the role that these actors can play, and the competitive advantage they can bring to conflict prevention is acutely needed as it is often more effective than government initiatives.¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, the roles, responsibilities and limitations of NGOs in the field of conflict prevention are not well understood.¹⁰⁸

Civil society is a considerably abstract concept defined as the “phenomenon that arises when people organize themselves and act together in the space between the family, the state and the market”¹⁰⁹, taking the form of informal or formal networks and organizations. From within this space civil society organizations have emerged as means to counterbalance and scrutinize the other three levels of social life. In doing so, they have also become a logical complement to the state, the market, and the family in the respect that the latter’s limitations have been able to be overcome through the efforts of CSOs. Within the framework of this project the de spectrum of organizations that have emerged from civil society is limited to NGOs, independent media, academic and research institutions, and faith-based organizations. Furthermore, the focus will be on the analysis of the role of non-governmental organizations in the field of early warning of conflicts. An NGO as defined by the United Nations’ Department of Public Information is a:

*“not-for-profit, voluntary citizens’ group, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good. Task-oriented and made up of people with common interests, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens’ concerns to governments, monitor policy and programme implementation, and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level.”*¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Ångeby (2002) p. 112, Cedergren (2002) p. 49, Hjelm-Wallen (2002) p. 71 and Nicolaidis (1996), p. 60

¹⁰⁸ Carment & Schnabel (2004) p. 7

¹⁰⁹ Åkerlund (2005) p. 37 and GPPAC (2005) p. 143

¹¹⁰ UNDPI: web-based resource (04.10.2006)

Considering this definition, the term NGO, as will be used from this point forward encompasses rights and watch organizations, local, international and humanitarian non-governmental organizations, and faith-based organizations. In particular those working in projects based at a grass-roots level. Contact with local communities and with local social structures is the first determinant of their importance in the field of early warning.

The emergence of a tenuous role for civil society organizations, and NGOs, as legitimate actors in issues of peace and security particularly in Africa came to be with the fall of the colonial era. In many of the emerging African countries “the state became the enemy of its own citizens and therefore a major threat for both national and personal security”¹¹¹ and thus obliged other sectors of society to intercede in such matters. Furthermore, this phenomenon has taken a greater degree of relevance since the early 1990’s when the exclusive responsibility that states had on issues of security became discontinued and a multidimensional approach to conceptualize and treat them began to emerge; even though there is little doubt that the primary responsibility to protect citizens and prevent conflicts lies on governments themselves.¹¹² This occurrence can be viewed as a consequence of the strengthening of democracy that took place in Africa during the last decade of the 20th century, which has favored the participation of civil society organizations in public sectors that used to be under the jurisdiction of the state. The relationship between democracy and the participation of NGOs in conflict prevention and early warning is determining and will thus be further studied later on in this project. Additionally, security was not anymore concerned with prevention of inter-state conflicts, but with achieving stability and peace at an intra-state, communal level. Non-governmental organizations thus began to work with direct and structural sources of violence such as human rights, disarmament, good governance, environmental degradation, etc.; consequently becoming vital normative actors in the early warning of conflict, and helping build official mechanisms for conflict prevention through the sharing of expertise and know-how.

¹¹¹ Molutsi (1999) p. 180

¹¹² NPI-Africa (2004) p. 2

Non-governmental organizations, depending on their nature and on the resources they manage and have the capacity to manage, have the possibility of establishing different approaches through which they could treat the emergence of violence. The NGO community is itself a collection of very diverse organizations, but regardless of their financial capacity, their staff, and their areas of influence, they all have a distinct role to play in early warning. Local and indigenous NGOs, for example, may have the ability of producing more comprehensive and detailed warning signals because of the fact “that they are generally grassroots efforts and therefore have closer relations with the affected populations and a special understanding of the problems they face”¹¹³. On the other hand, international non-governmental organizations because of their own institutional nature and because of their greater capacity to mobilize resources have the possibility of accessing communication channels to disseminate their findings to a wider audience¹¹⁴; in addition they may have the leverage to affect policy decisions at an inter-governmental level through their own warning reports. Some international NGOs through their work have become important actors in world politics as their messages are heard around the world and are usually respected within public opinion. Their views have become means to apply public pressure on decision makers, and their respected position in society has made them powerful lobby actors. In any circumstance, the role of NGOs in this field holds a great potential that is still largely untapped, while the need for solid cooperation between all types of NGOs has to be recognized in order to effectively utilize their expertise and organizational capacities.¹¹⁵

The recognition of the importance that non-governmental organizations have in the field of early warning has come to be as the debate in this field has been transformed since the failure of the international community to understand and act upon the warning signals that were being produced in Rwanda and the Congo-Zaire (DRC) in the early and mid-1990’s. The debate on early warning shifted from the question of “why” it would be necessary, to the question of “how” it should be carried out in order to efficiently and effectively anticipate and prevent violence. In this sense, it was recognized that there was a profound need to enhance the capabilities of conflict prevention mechanisms to acquire better knowledge of the

¹¹³ Aall (2004) p. 178

¹¹⁴ MacFarquhar, Rotberg & Chen (1996) p. 5

¹¹⁵ Suifon (2005) p. 423, Nicolaidis (1996) p. 60 and McCleary (1996) p. 103

volatility of emerging situations, its root causes, and the risks that could they present.¹¹⁶ In addition, the need for alternative policy sources that could provide innovative ideas on the manners through which conflicts could be prevented was acknowledged. With regard to these two questions, NGOs have been identified as having a positive role to play.

Non-governmental organizations, especially those operating at a grass-roots communal level, have the distinct comparative advantage of understanding local dynamics; their experience, presence in the field and personal contacts with actors give them the capability of foreseeing possibly violent confrontations arising at an earlier stage as compared to other actors. This understanding is based on the fact that non-governmental organizations have and will work in specific conflict settings and thus have a greater degree of proximity to their dynamics. “This proximity affords them access to information and insights that state actors may not have. In many instances, NGOs are more acceptable to armed and opposition groups than representatives of governments, allowing them to play a positive role.”¹¹⁷ In this sense, they tend to be less constrained than other actors in establishing contact channels with non-governmental parties to a dispute, and consequently can gather a more profound appreciation of the situation itself.¹¹⁸ In addition, “individual NGOs are often the first outsiders to become aware of groups readying revenge, of disappearances, and of covert military incursions and government-sponsored massacres”¹¹⁹.

Furthermore, the observation of early warning signals requires knowledge of politics and society at a local level to understand the accelerators and decelerators of violence. In practical terms, this means that observers must be able to talk to communal politicians and leaders, understand local politics and social pressures, and have the trust and confidence of the local people to collect information about the changing dynamics of domestic tensions. In this sense, international and local NGOs “are often uniquely positioned to identify early warning signals as their sources of information include parties to which governments and media may not have

¹¹⁶ Suifon (2005) pp. 421–422, Peck (1999) pp. 41–42 and Carment & Schnabel (2003) p. 158

¹¹⁷ NPI-Africa (2004) pp. 2–3 and GPPAC (2005) p. 144

¹¹⁸ Peck (1999) p. 41

¹¹⁹ Rotberg (1996) p. 267

access in the early phases of conflict”¹²⁰. Achieving this position requires the long-term presence of those collecting the information within a determined social context and the understanding of affinities, stereotypes, and power struggles of the community. Furthermore, the great majority of indicators of probable violence falls away from the traditional focus of military intelligence, and cannot possibly be acknowledged by short diplomatic fact-finding missions. Military observation logically places a great degree of attention to military factors, omitting important social and economic dimensions of a conflict, while flying diplomatic missions allows for a high degree of access but lack local long-term knowledge of the situation.¹²¹

Finally, it is necessary to note that the comparative advantage that NGOs have in the field of early warning should not be restricted to only the collection of information, but also to the prescription of policy options for preventive action. As it was stated before, early warning as a concept and as a practical tool in conflict prevention encompasses the proposal of means to treat the escalation of violence in accordance to the know-how and experience of those producing the early warning reports. In this sense, it is believed that NGOs working in the gathering and interpretation of early warning information should also have the capacity to advice on possible response options. The same elements that that favor their involvement in the collection of data are also determining to their ability to participate in this step of the early warning process. It is believed that presence and knowledge of local social and political dynamics must result the in the understanding of which particular preventive measures can best suit the situation evolving in the ground. Further comprehension of grass-root processes applied to prescriptive policy actions most likely will enhance the capacity of policy-makers to take the decisions needed to prevent the escalation of disputes into violence.

¹²⁰ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) p. 40

¹²¹ Last (2003) pp. 159-166

As stated by Gareth Evans, President of the International Crisis Group, a leading international non-governmental organization working in the field of early warning:

*Competent non-governmental organizations are “steeped in local language and culture, getting dust in their boots, and engaged in endless interaction with locals and internationals in the scene. All their policy prescription and advocacy starts with field-based analysis – an accurate take on what is happening on the ground, focusing not only on the issues that are resonating but the personalities that are driving them.” When an organization of this sort briefs decision takers in inter-governmental organizations and the United Nations on probable conflicts, the accurate real-time knowledge is what makes the information credible and persuasive.*¹²²

In addition, further arguments in favor of a more coordinated and systematic role for non-governmental organizations in early warning of conflicts are based on the lack of capacity of state actors to perform this undertaking, the cost effectiveness of using locally-based actors in conflict prevention strategies, and the nature of NGOs themselves. Firstly, the recurrent fact that states have been too weak to provide the most basic social services to its constituency, and the sheer lack of outreach that state institutions have been able to develop particularly in Africa, relates to the fact that communal disputes are occurring outside the circle of influence and knowledge of the state’s power architecture. Spaces for non-governmental organizations open as the capacities of the state are weak and diminish. “The state itself has become the problem and this has opened up the debate as to what role non-state actors can play in the early warning and conflict prevention in general.”¹²³ Secondly, utilizing actors that are already located in the field, understand local culture and behavior, and have the capacity to communicate in local languages represents a considerable lessening of funding requirements considering the costs of external monitoring interventions.¹²⁴ Funding and time are valuable but limited resources within the field of early warning and thus need to be utilized in a competent manner. Finally, the nature of non-governmental organizations allows them to act in a flexible and non-coercive manner; adapting their internal policies to emerging situations

¹²² Evans (2005) p. 126

¹²³ Suifon (2005) pp. 423–424

¹²⁴ Schmeidl in Suifon (2005) p. 423, 428

and being more prone than official institutions to produce creative and innovative strategies for the realization of their activities.¹²⁵

An analysis of the set of early warning indicators previously presented in this project allows the understanding of specific cases in which non-governmental organizations can have a comparative advantage in communicating signals of probable violence in their surroundings. As Åkerlund (2005), Cilliers (2005) and Bakwesegha (1995) presented, evidence shows that conflict emerges, or can be predicted, as a consequence of abuse of power, politics and practices of exclusion, human rights violations, religious and ethnic tensions, refugee flows and internally displaced peoples, mobilization of local youths, the proliferation of small arms and arms trade, environmental degradation and the scarcity of shared resources. These serve as early warning indicators that emerge and can usually be detected at a grass-roots level if the understanding of local social dynamic exists. NGOs based in local communities and regardless of their field of expertise enjoy the level of proximity to their surrounding as to become aware of elements that can lead to violence, and could have a positive role in communicating these signals to appropriate authorities while utilizing formal channels for dissemination of the information.

From a review of four case-studies presenting the experiences of local and international non-governmental organizations in the collection of early warning information in Guatemala, Nigeria, Kenya and Rwanda a series of grass-roots indicators of probable violence can be gathered. Presence and understanding of local life has allowed them to recognize details in the behavior of local people that can only be noticed within certain communal contexts. Although some warning signals are not applicable in the development of the normative role that non-governmental organizations have in early warning of communal conflicts, the following are interesting examples to be studied for that purpose:

1. Rumors: The realization that people within communities know and discuss what is happening in their living environment is a necessity and a tool that needs to be utilized by NGOs if they are to be effective sources of early warning information. A

¹²⁵ Barnes in GPPAC (2005) pp. 143-144

considerable amount of rumors about forthcoming violence turn out to be true, and thus must not be taken lightly.¹²⁶ The role of non-governmental organizations here, especially in rumor-driven societies, is not only to recollect the versions managed within the community, but to verify them to the best of their possibilities and disseminate if considered valid early warning information.¹²⁷

2. Rituals: In some traditional indigenous communities episodes of violent confrontations are preceded by preparations rituals in which the groups chosen to attack or defend a community are blessed for the upcoming events. These ceremonies can, in some cases, be rites of passage particularly when youths are being prepared by their community, and where carrying on certain attacks on other communities are considered stepping stones in the personal development of young men within their ritual system. The amount of people that these ceremonies bring together and their public character makes them easy to detect.¹²⁸
3. Local media messages: The use of local media channels as a means to promote aggression and violence between communities and between groups within communities. An analysis of the genocide in Rwanda clearly demonstrated how media outlets, especially local radio stations were used to incite hatred between ethnic communities and to rally citizens into committing acts of violence. Even though the infamous chronicle of the Radio Television Libre de Mille Collines (RTLM), and its role on fueling ethnic violence in Rwanda, was a national phenomenon, local media channels can serve the same purpose and pose an even greater threat to the security of their community as they enjoy great ties with their people and are not as easily noticed by impartial parties as was the case of the RTLM.
4. Disruption of patterns of economic and social life: Local communities, in general, have a set of social and economic activities that frame the normality of life within its boundaries. Ceremonies, events, meetings in traditional places, among others, become central patterns in the cycle of communal life and consequently disruptions in the normal functioning of these events may be a warning of impending danger, and an

¹²⁶ Gunja & Korir (2005) p. 442

¹²⁷ McCleary (1996), p. 103

¹²⁸ Gunja & Korir (2005) p. 442

evident sign of fear from the inhabitants of the communities.¹²⁹ An empty market place, at a time in the day where crowds usually gather and trade takes place, can be a signal that an episode of violence is expected.

Some of the latter indicators represent warnings of events that will most likely take place in a very short period of time and that allow little room for preventive action to take place; particularly if it has to be carried out by actors external to the locality. Regardless of that fact, they represent vivid examples of early warning indicators at a grass-roots level which are for the most part ignored in academic and action-based research on early warning. In this precise project, they serve the purpose of valuing the need for understanding communal dynamics and presence at a local level to have the capacity to detect them and communicate their significance.

Logically, and considering the fact that the type of early warning discussed in this project takes place in acutely sensitive environments, there is a series of arguments questioning the role that in reality non-governmental organizations can play in this field. Although these present serious obstacles, it must be highlighted that it is the understanding of this project that they can ultimately be overcome and NGOs, particularly local organizations with limited resources, can effectively be integrated in to early warning systems in Africa. Firstly, and keeping in mind the previous statement, one of the primary obstacles to achieving the participation of non-governmental organizations working in the field is the lack of resources which often impedes them from taking on tasks that are not directly related with their main field of expertise. Even though the actual financial cost of integrating these organizations into an official early warning system is not insurmountable, local organizations will most likely lack both the financial and human resources to take on this responsibility in detriment of their own projects. Diverting money and energy towards early warning is still a contested idea, while mobilizing resources for this purpose is still not a developed strategy.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Gunja & Korir (2005) p. 442

¹³⁰ Suifon (2005) p. 422

Secondly, and probably the most significant obstacle to this process is the realization that participating in the early warning of violence within a communal environment can be a security risk for the organizations involved. An NGO issuing early warning signals about emerging tensions or violence within its surroundings can probably lose the image of impartiality enjoyed as development or humanitarian agents. People working in or for an NGO, especially those originating from the local community, can become vulnerable targets of those actors which perceive them as a threat to their own interests. The more complicated a situation proves to be, the more likely any involvement from part of a non-governmental organization will be considered as interference, and will compromise the safety of the field workers and of the original mission of the organization.¹³¹ Particularly in situations of state-sponsored repression, being perceived as partial observers to a dispute will most likely pose a serious threat to the security and integrity of those compelled to produce early warning reports.¹³² This problematic can be even great when considering those NGOs that not specialized in the reporting and monitoring of security situations, but are dedicated to the delivery of services and development work. Furthermore, it must be stressed that early warning activities performed by NGOs might be seen as highly political intervention in domestic affairs by parties holding interests in certain disputes, but on the other hand, it is in this sensitive situations where early warning is most critical.¹³³

In this regard, NGOs need to be recognized and supported by the international community as valid and legitimate actors in early warning¹³⁴, while “stronger safeguards to protect individuals and NGOs which avail themselves of international human rights complaints procedures, and their legal representatives, against adverse action or penalties”¹³⁵ must be put in place. “If the military requires a casualty-free operational environment, peace brokers, human rights activists, and relief workers are certainly entitled to similar safety.”¹³⁶

¹³¹ MacFarquhar, Rotberg & Chen (1996) p. 5 and Nicolaidis (1996) p. 61

¹³² Rotberg (1996) p. 265

¹³³ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 40-41

¹³⁴ Rotberg (1996) p. 265

¹³⁵ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) p. 40

¹³⁶ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) p. 40

Thirdly, the partiality of early warning reports comes into question. Even though the information produced describes the overall dynamics of pre-violent tensions, it must also pay close attention to the actors involved in the dispute. In this respect, a two-fold problematic can be identified. It is often perceived that non-governmental organizations, especially those with international affiliations, have a tendency to become partial to the weakest group in the dispute or to the population they serve; either in a situation involving two civilian or non-state groups, or in a confrontation between a governmental actor and a civilian one. In the latter case, NGOs can probably be accused of subversion. This problematic is of course a consequence of the fact that early warning information produced by NGOs is filtered through the organization itself, and through the ideological base of its partners. In some situations, even governments with a stake in the reported situation might influence the outcome of the reports produced by non-governmental organizations. In this sense, the issues of accountability and trust become extremely important when analyzing the role of NGOs in official early warning systems. How can institutional mechanisms guarantee that the non-governmental organizations that can cooperate with their work are capable and willing to maintain high standards of truth, quality and impartiality in their reporting? This question is not easily answered, but one can consider that factors such as the performance history of an NGO, its reputation, and its ideological independence (neutrality) must come into play when establishing a network of organizations to deliver early warning signals from a grass-roots level.

Fourthly, non-governmental organizations ultimately depend on authorization and licenses to operate from the government of the state in which they are based. In cases where an organization's primary mission is not related to issues of peace and security, including human right monitoring, there is a possibility that early warning would not be in its best interest; NGOs might feel obliged not to jeopardize those arrangements made to gain local access. Furthermore, organizations may feel inclined to maintain sufficient levels of leniency with official institutions in order to maintain their operational status and avoid persecution by official security forces. More often than not, and because of the politicized nature of early

warning, it is a question of whether the original mission of the organization will be severely affected by its involvement in early warning activities.¹³⁷

A fifth argument to problematize the participation of NGOs in the field of early warning emerges from the lack of coordination and understanding that exists between the organizations that can play a role in this process. The fact that NGOs are so diverse in nature, mandate and resources and think differently about their role in conflict prevention, results in the notion that they “hardly think as one regarding the efficacy, much less the wisdom, of early warning”¹³⁸. In addition, NGOs many times compete with each other for respect and attention both from host states, and from the countries where they were established, particularly in order to secure financial support. Competition leads not only to lack of coordination between organizations, but also to the possible diminishment of trust in the reports that are produced by the NGOs. Although competition is certainly seen to be a means to promote quality, competition for scarce financial resources might lead the exaggeration of reports or the exaggeration of security situations in the ground. This is of course an unwanted outcome of NGO integration in early warning. As it was mentioned before, early warning and early warning systems must not become generators of schizophrenic reports of escalating violence.

Finally, the lack of efficient links between NGOs and official mechanisms with the mandate to prevent conflicts is an overarching obstacle for the efficient participation of the former in early warning activities. NGOs’ capacities to monitor and report on escalating disputes at grass-roots communal level must be systematically integrated to international means of gathering, reporting and analyzing this information (UN, and regional intergovernmental organizations). This effort will ultimately enhance the capacity of decision-makers to take the appropriate and timely courses of action to prevent violence from emerging and human suffering from taking place.¹³⁹ The need for the promotion of this institutional link was first acknowledged by The Commission on Global Governance (CGG, 1995) which recommended “an institutional reform that would provide new global machinery through which warnings

¹³⁷ Nicolaidis (1996), p. 61

¹³⁸ Rotberg (1996) p. 263

¹³⁹ Rotberg (1996) p. 264 and Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 41, 50

could be articulated: the creation of a Council of Petitions in which the ‘right of petition’ could be exercised by non-state actors. In this way, situations endangering security within states could be brought to the attention of the United Nations and its member states”¹⁴⁰. In addition it calls for the recognition NGOs as actors that have the capacity to ‘draw attention’ on situations of probable violence at an intra-state level.¹⁴¹

To conclude, it must be noted that although some advances have been done in this regard, particularly at regional and sub-regional levels, a lot of work is still to be done in order to institutionalize the participation of NGOs in official early warning mechanisms throughout the world. This will be the primary focus of the coming chapter in this project, specifically focusing on the integration of non-governmental organizations into the Continental Early Warning System being developed by the African Union.

As stated by Robert I. Rotberg:

“It will inevitably continue to be the role of NGOs to sound the bells of alarm, to discomfort blood-stained local governments, to plead with world powers and the UN for help and action, and to expose and publicize the details of human rights abuses and all too frequent killing fields. That their voices need to continue to be heard is an obvious conclusion. That their voices can be heard best, and early action by governments and the international community enhanced if and when their outcries can be recognized, focused, and converted into public pressure, is also obvious but important. The sooner NGOs can create that center of concern, the sooner innocent and endangered lives around the globe will be spared.”¹⁴²

This conception serves the purpose of motivating research on the means to integrate non-governmental organizations into the operational capabilities of the African Union. NGOs have and will continue to have a valuable role in the collection and dissemination of early warning information as long as they continue to work with people in sensitive and difficult local communal environments.

¹⁴⁰ CGG (1995) p. 92

¹⁴¹ CGG (1995) p. 92

¹⁴² Rotberg (1996) p. 268

3. THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK - Non-governmental Organizations, Early Warning and Conflict Theory:

A determining goal of this research project, in line with other academic studies in the field of conflict prevention, is to be able to sustain its arguments through existing conflict theory. For this purpose, a simple interpretation of Johan Galtung's model of conflict transformation will be used, specifically its focus of conflict formation, to argue in favor of the normative role of non-governmental organization in the field of early warning of conflicts. By understanding their value from a theoretical perspective, it is possible to build a comprehensive idea on what is their place in the empirical implementation of early warning systems.

The purpose of this chapter is not to study the role of non-governmental organizations in the transformation of conflicts as such, but to develop an argument on how these organizations can utilize their experience, expertise, and comparative advantage in early warning to create the most conducive environment for actual conflict transformation to take place. It is sustained throughout this research project that the most efficient way of finding the channels to solve escalating disputes is to prevent them from becoming violent. With this in mind, Galtung's model will be analyzed within a temporal limit, focusing on the pre-violence stages of conflict formations with the objective of understanding which elements in the model can serve as early warning indicators that can be best observed by NGOs working in certain local and communal environments. As it was previously argued, there are certain components in the formation of conflicts that can be utilized to foresee the emergence of violence before it actually takes place. Galtung's explanation of the factors that drive the escalation of conflict allows for a clear exposition of these arguments. A similar analysis to the one presented in this chapter was built by Anna Åkerlund (2005) in the book "Transforming Conflicts and Building Peace", and served as the basis to acknowledge the link between non-governmental organizations, early warning and conflict theory.

3.1. A Model of Conflict Formation:

The Theory of Conflict Transformation, as presented by Johan Galtung, bases its significance in the understanding that within the forces that drive conflicts into violence are forces that can be managed in order to transform a dispute into a constructive argument for the solution of the issues that are generating tensions. This goes in line with the classical Chinese double-character definition of ‘crisis’, a concept that in certain circumstances can be a synonym of ‘conflict’, as danger and opportunity; meaning that conflicts could also lead to constructive behaviors such as dialogue and meditative postures, if treated quickly and decisively.¹⁴³ To comprehend this idea and specially to find a place through which no-governmental organizations involved in early warning of conflicts can play an enabling role, it is necessary to understand how conflicts are formed.

Behind every conflict lies a problem that impedes the attainment of a certain goal by an actor or a series of actors in society. This obstacle, and more specifically the need to solve it, will at some point in time become the driving force that actors will utilize to act, and action can in certain specific situations take the form of violence against others and become difficult to solve. The recognition of the “other” as a competitive counterpart in a group’s attempt to achieve a certain goal allows restricting this examination to the analysis of disputes as the genesis of conflicts. Within Galtung’s theory, it is argued that conflicts can take two forms depending on the amount of actors involved and the number of issues generating the problem. A dispute, in its simplest form, is a situation in which two actors pursue the same scarce goal, while a dilemma describes a situation in which one actor is pursuing two incompatible goals.¹⁴⁴ Although in both instances violence can be generated, and in some situations a dilemma can result in the use of violence against another actor, the conceptualization of conflict in this project adapts to a greater extent to the idea of disputes as sources of conflict; especially if it is recognized that disputes can easily lead to attempts to harm the integrity of the “other”.

¹⁴³ Galtung (1996) pp. 70-71

¹⁴⁴ Galtung (1996) p. 70

In such a situation, two actors are found interacting within the dynamics of a conflict in formation. In this respect Galtung has developed a model to explain what he considers to be the manifest and latent forces behind the evolution of disputes into violent conflicts. A fully articulate conflict emerges as an outcome of the behavior, B, and attitudes, A, of the actors, and the contradiction, C, which is generating the dispute. A similar understanding of the forces fueling the escalation of conflicts is presented by Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) as they argue that the conflicts evolve along two axes. *Vertically*, conflicts can escalate due to the behaviors of the actors and the means they use to act. In this sense, the conflict's intensity and degree of violence (not necessarily physical violence) grows. *Horizontally*, conflicts can escalate in 'size', both physically and mentally. This means that conflicts can escalate because new actors join the dispute or the geographical location of the conflict expands. In addition, new issues/goals can be included, or the existing one(s) are expanded.¹⁴⁵ From this analysis it is possible to identify two of the factors that Galtung presents in his model; behavior and contradiction. The attitudinal element is not directly recognized from the latter model, but is present in its argumentation. Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen define 'issues' at an intranational level as being material (control of resources), structural (social hierarchies and cleavages), institutional (control of political and military institutions) and cultural (value systems, myths and memories). It is in this last conception that one can identify a comparable notion as that defined by Galtung as attitudes, in the sense that values and memories determine the perceptions one has of the others.¹⁴⁶ This will be explained to a further extent below.

The behavior of the actors as characterized by Galtung is assumed to be destructive but not necessarily in the sense of violent physical acts; verbal acts and hostile body language can also be included within this description. In a sense, the use of the term destructive seems an exaggeration of the manner in which hostility can be exposed and can easily be interpreted as actual destruction of things and lives, but on the other hand presents the fact that certain behavioral patterns can lead to the damaging of relations and perceptions between two social actors; it can also be understood not as action itself, but as the readiness and capacity to act.

¹⁴⁵ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 75-76

¹⁴⁶ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 60-64, 69

Behavior, as an element in the process of conflict formation is manifest, empirical, overt, and can be observed, but, by itself does not necessarily lead to actual violence. It can also take the shape of imposed “economic, social, political or symbolic costs, with no physical injuries or deaths”¹⁴⁷. Two examples of behavioral patterns that can be seen to be conducive to the deterioration of disputes into violence can be identified from historical accounts on the Rwandan Civil War, and the subsequent genocide of 1994. The first exemplifies visible and evident conflict behavior. The congregation and preparation for combat of Rwandan refugees in Uganda, militants of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), in 1988 was an indication that something was going to take place at least in the boarder line regions between Uganda and Rwanda. Furthermore, the RPF’s failed incursion in Rwanda in late 1989, and the following successful invasion of 10,000 well-armed combatants, led by Major General Rwigyema, was a manifest action that would lead to the start of the Rwandan Civil War.¹⁴⁸ The second example represents behavioral patterns that are not publicly observable, but that do correspond to favorable conditions for conflict. This relates specifically with the build up of arms stocks by any party involved in the escalation of a dispute. In the case of the Rwandan Civil war, the covert transfer of arms from the Ugandan government to the RPF forces is an example of this group’s preparation for armed confrontation.¹⁴⁹ As it was stated above, preparation for conflict is also a behavioral pattern that warns of a future security crisis, even if it does not signifies a direct action against the opposing party.

Attitudes and assumptions, on the contrary, represent a latent, hidden force in the same process; they define the cognitions and emotions that an actor has about the other and about the dispute it self; what one thinks of the other and how this idealization is formed. An idea related to the German concept of *Feindbild*, the image of the enemy, and the U.S. American idea of Self-Other images; how one perceives oneself in relation to the other, and how one perceives the other.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 60-64, 69

¹⁴⁸ Otunnu (1999) p. 31

¹⁴⁹ Austin (1999) pp. 33-34

¹⁵⁰ Galtung (1989) p. 3

“Consider two individuals, A and B, initially strangers, who come together in some social interaction. If A for some reason assumes that B is hostile towards him, his assumption may be that reflected in his own hostile manner towards B. If B replies in kind, A’s original assumption will have been corroborated. Conversely, if A’s initial assumption is that B is friendly, this assumption can also be reflected in A’s manner, evoking similar response from B.”¹⁵¹

This element is of course a powerful driving force for conflict and violence, but again, it does not necessarily lead to a fully articulated conflict when considered in isolation. Examples of cases where assumptions and attitudes have served to fuel the escalations of disputes are abundant, particularly in conflicts that emerged along ethnic divisions. The Liberian Civil war, between 1989 and 1997, even if it ultimately represented the perpetuation of violence for the purpose of economic gain, was fueled by a history of ethnic oppression from the part of the Americo-Liberian elites towards the rural, inland, population of native African descent. In 1980, the divisions between the population compounded by economic problems, led to the military coup of Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe, who himself led a brutal government motivated by ethnic hatred not only against those elites formerly in power but also against other native communities of Liberia. The combination of odium and fear from the part of Doe against other ethnic groups that were not his own, paved the way for the conditions of internal chaos that allowed Charles Taylor, and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), to invade the country in December 24, 1989, and the resulting eight year civil war.¹⁵² In the case of the Rwandan genocide, attitudes and assumption also played a strikingly important role. The use public media such as the *Kangura* magazine and *Radio Rwanda* by Hutu elites to promote an exaggerated, and often false, sentiment of fear against the Tutsi population prompted the beginning of the Rwandan genocide. In March 3, 1992, messages of hate spread by *Radio Rwanda* led the Interahamwe militias to begin a campaign of Tutsi assassinations in the Bugesera region, motivated by the idea of ‘self-defence’. This first incident left a toll of 300 deaths in the span of four days. This media campaign continued until the genocide took place in 1994, also fuelled by hate messages presented by the ill-famous, privately own,

¹⁵¹ Rapoport (1987) p .167

¹⁵² Adebajo (2002) pp. 45-46

Radio-Television Libres des Mises Collines (RTLM).¹⁵³ As stated by the United States Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations (Sub-committee on African Affairs), “the encouragement of ethnic hatred in the radio, together with the creation of and arming of militias, was one of the clearest early warning signals of an imminent genocide”.¹⁵⁴

Finally, the contradiction corresponds to the actual issue that is creating the problem; usually the desire to achieve a certain goal in competition with the desire of another group to achieve the same objective. “For a conflict diagnosis to be justified there has to be an identifiable contradiction between the two actors.”¹⁵⁵ As defined in Galtung’s model, a contradiction is an “incompatible goal-state in a goal-seeking system”¹⁵⁶, or as implied from Clausewitz’s work, the success of one of the conflicting actors is incompatible with the interest of the others¹⁵⁷. Contradictions generate from a variety of sources, which can be clustered into three main categories: material-structural, cultural and institutional.¹⁵⁸ Firstly, the material-structural category, even if it seems to be a conceptual contradiction, explains the emergence of conflicts from a very comprehensive perspective. Structural explanations of conflicts are based on how society is organized, while material explanations define conflict through the distribution of resources. Put together, they explicate how “various social groups, their interests, and resources are related to each other”¹⁵⁹ and how they can come into conflict. According to Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney and Väyrynen (1999) this category is further divided into entitlements (access to food, shelter, education, etc.), territory, and social cleavages. These three factors interact to create structural-material sources of conflicts, particularly in conditions where resources are scarce (scarcity conflicts). Secondly, the cultural explanation to contradiction formations relates to how the interaction between culture and identity can result in the generation of disputes. This relates directly to Galtung’s concepts of attitudes and assumptions and how they can fuel the escalation of the conflict, but in contrast it sees this problematic from a long-term, historical, perspective. How identities come into conflict through normal social interaction, and not in the actual dynamics of a

¹⁵³ Chalk (1999) pp. 94-96

¹⁵⁴ United States Congress (1994) in Chalk (1999) p. 94

¹⁵⁵ Galtung (1996) p. 72

¹⁵⁶ Galtung (1996) p. 71

¹⁵⁷ Von Clausewitz (1968*) in Rapoport (1987) p. 163

¹⁵⁸ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) p. 51

¹⁵⁹ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 51-52

conflict. In the long-term this phenomenon is represented by myths and memories that one creates of the other and that can eventually lead to, or serve as a motivation for conflict. Finally, institutional factors serve as an explanation for conflicts that generate from political factors, such as those that emerge from unjust political representation of certain members of society, politics of exclusion and discrimination, and illegitimate, undemocratic governing systems.¹⁶⁰ A simple example of conflicts that can result from the emergence of powerful contradictions can be identified from the pastoralist conflicts of the Horn of Africa, particularly the boarder regions of Uganda, The Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. These are conflicts based on scarcity of livelihood resources and the modification of social and communal social patterns of the pastoralist communities. “The decline of pastoral livelihood systems as a result of unfavorable ecological patterns; inadequate development policies and interventions, poor infrastructure, resource allocation, and social services has increasingly marginalized pastoral communities.”¹⁶¹ The struggle to access water supplies, livestock and grassing grounds, compounded by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region, has led pastoralist communities to use violence against fellow communities as a means of guaranteeing their subsistence. For example, cattle raids have become an alternative means of livelihood.¹⁶² The normalization of such activities has stimulated the emergence of pastoralist *warlordism* as a way of managing living conditions in pastoralist areas, especially in the boarder region between Kenya, Uganda and The Sudan. As an illustration, in Kenya, the Pokot community has actively attacked the Tugen, Marakwet and Keiyo communities, while they have also clashed with the Turkanas and the Karamanjons in Uganda and the Toposas in Ethiopia.¹⁶³ In line with the conception of contradictions presented by Galtung, pastoralist conflicts of this kind are a representation of competing interests and the incompatibility of goal-states in a goal-seeking system.

As attitudes and assumptions, contradictions represent a latent force in the process of conflict formation, and like all of the elements mentioned above do not necessarily lead to violence by themselves. A fully articulated conflict is thus a combination of behavior, assumptions and

¹⁶⁰ Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen (1999) pp. 51-68

¹⁶¹ Mwaura, Baechler & Kiplagat (2002) p. 39

¹⁶² Mwaura, Baechler & Kiplagat (2002) p. 39

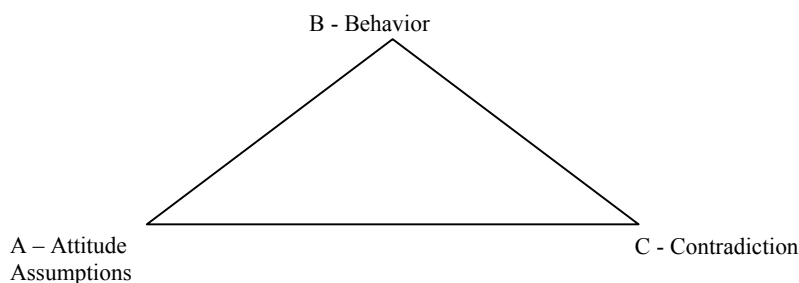
¹⁶³ Mwaura, Baechler & Kiplagat (2002) p. 40

attitudes and a contradiction. It is worth to note here that in his early writings, Galtung used the term ‘conflict’ to label what he later identified as contradiction.¹⁶⁴ An idea that has evolved into the more comprehensive definition of conflict, not just as incompatibility in goals, but as a combination of all three elements presented above.

$$\text{Conflict} = A + B + C$$

As opposed to what this arithmetic representation of the model might expose, these three elements do not follow any sequential logic in the formation of conflicts, nor does a conflict generate from the simple sum of the three elements. A fully articulated conflict generates from the existence of a contradiction, behavior and attitudes, and the interaction between the elements themselves. From this understanding, Galtung developed a graphical representation to explain how the latter interrelate to create conflict. This has taken the name of ‘The Conflict Triangle’¹⁶⁵:

Figure 3.1: The Conflict Triangle



Having the Conflict Triangle as a visual tool to analyze the dynamics that exist between the three elements of the model it is possible to complement the previously presented arithmetic definition of conflict in order to include its non-static nature.

$$\text{Conflict} = B (A, C) + A (B, C) + C (A, B)$$

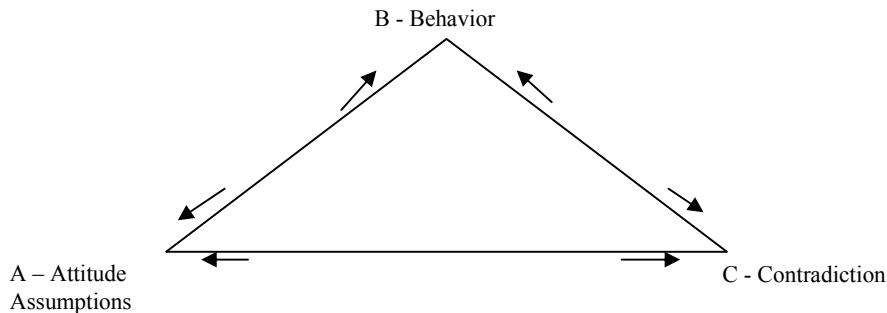
¹⁶⁴ Galtung (1978) p. 486, (1989) pp. 3-4

¹⁶⁵ Galtung (1978) p. 487, (1996) p. 72

In simple terms this formula represents the fact that each element in some way or another is influenced by the other two elements in the model, thus being a function of the other two. The logic behind this argument is straightforward in the case of Behavior being a function of Attitudes and Assumptions and a Contradiction, and in the case of Attitudes and Assumptions being influenced by Behavior and a Contradiction. In the first case it is not complicated to visualize how emotions and the problem itself can determine the kind of behavior one actor portrays towards the other. Similarly, Attitudes and Assumptions, representing emotions and cognitions, can be affected by the nature of the problem itself and by one's exclusive behavior and the behavior of the other. It is here believed that the degree of complexity that a contradiction carries can influence the way one perceives and feels about the other, in the same sense that aggressiveness noted in the behavior of both parties can serve as a generator of more adverse attitudes and assumptions towards the adversary. Certainly it is not always this precise case, but the definition allows the relation to exist or not. Understanding the way a Contradiction is influenced by A and B, is more problematic, but to a certain extent can still be explained. In this sense, it is necessary to not to think of a contradiction as a static element, as it can evolve within the dynamics of conflict formation. In others words, the problem generating the dispute can become bigger or more complex. This variation could be influenced by one's perception of the other and the behavior one chooses to use with respect to the other; in addition, to the other's own attitudes and ways of expressing themselves. The Conflict triangle can be used to identify flows in all six directions, starting anywhere, demonstrating the dynamics of conflict formation. As the three factors interact with each other the complexity and aggressive nature of the conflict increases until violence emerges as a way of interaction between the conflict actors. As stated by the creator of the model, "violence breeds violence, the triangle becomes the projection of a spiral that may run its course in the same way as a fire: stopping when the house is burnt down."¹⁶⁶ This could certainly be the case if the conflict is not prevented, but it is not an absolute law. In a case where a conflict is escalating into full-blown violence, negative attitudes and violent behavior can be restrained by means of conflict prevention and the contradiction can be superseded in an atmosphere of non-aggression. In addition, the actors to the conflict can become emotionally exhausted and physically incapacitated, unable thus to continue into conflict.

¹⁶⁶ Galtung (1996) p. 72

Figure 3.2: *The Dynamics of the Conflict Triangle*



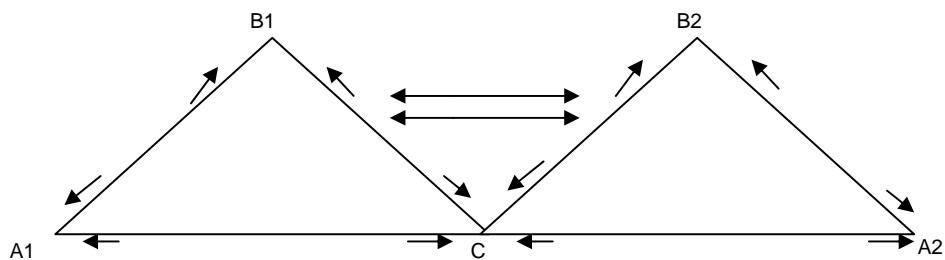
A question that arises from the Galtung's model of Conflict Formation relates to the question of how much the actors' own natures influence the dynamics presented above. It is true that in his theory a definition of the "actors" can be deduced, but underlying forces that determine an actor's way of behaving, the way they generate assumptions and attitudes, and the needs that determine their contradictions with others, are not presented as elements of the model. He restricts himself to defining actors as both conscious and concrete; meaning that they are aware of the dynamics of the dispute and that they are identifiable groups of people within society, which have goals, and can experience their fulfillment or deprivation. According to Galtung's later works on the matter (1996), abstractions such as gender, generation, race, nation, state, etc. do not have goals; instead certain groups within them do and these groups can be identified. This conceptualization evolved since his 1978 publication of the essay *Conflict as a Way of Life*, in which he identified the 'nation' as an actor within his conflict formation model, but still avoided the study of the nature of actors as an element in his model. It would thus be interesting to understand the manner in which an actor's own background affect the way a conflict is formed.

Peter Wallensteen recognizes the exclusion of this element from the previous arguments and touches the issue of actor formations as a factor within the dynamics of conflict formations. In this frame of mind, he introduced the idea of contradictions built-into society and how they influence the way actors are shaped with respect to conflicts. The way actors are organized within a society, the influence they carry, the position they have towards others, and their

preparedness and capacity to confront conflicts are all factors that determine an actor's role as an element in a conflict formation process. The more conflict theory, and certainly practitioners in the field of conflict prevention, understands the forces behind formation of actors will result in a more comprehensive explanation of how conflicts are generated.¹⁶⁷

Taking this final consideration into account, the Conflict Triangle could be transformed in order to illustrate the existence of two different actors, determined through different dynamics, separately.

Figure 3.3: The Conflict Triangle considering Actor Formation



This representation visualizes the Conflict Triangle model when two actors interact vis-à-vis one contradiction. In this sense two independent characteristics of behaviors and attitudes (and assumptions) meet within the dynamics of the conflict itself.

3.2. Conflict Formation and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Early Warning of Conflicts:

The Conflict Triangle, and the study of the elements that conform it, opens the debate on how this sort of conflicts can be managed and resolved. It is a straightforward perspective on the point of entry where practitioners in the field of conflict prevention can influence the dynamics of a dispute in order to either de-escalate it or solve the problem that generated the dispute. As seen in Galtung's work, influencing the behavioral expressions of a conflict, and

¹⁶⁷ Wallensteen (1988) p. 121

its negative attitudes is a means to manage a conflict in a way as to eliminate some of the sources of violence within it; an attempt to freeze the conflict while a more comprehensive solution can be constructed and negotiated. In this same line of thought, manipulation of the contradiction that is generating the confrontation is the most constructive strategy to solve the conflict in its entirety.¹⁶⁸

This way of approaching conflicts is not Galtung's preferred choice, although he agrees on the pragmatic value of controlling the escalation of violence within a conflict and the attempts to resolve them. Instead he focuses his thoughts on the elaboration of a framework to analyze the positive forces within conflicts and how they can be used to transform negative disputes into positive relations. Based on the conception of conflict as a unifying force within society, he seeks to identify those opportunities present in conflicts that could allow them to be transformed into a relationship of mutual dependency between the actors. As valuable as this perspective is, as well as the ideas of conflict prevention presented above, it is understood in this project that Galtung's idea of transforming conflicts is focused too much towards the treatment of conflicts that have already broken out into violence. The analysis of conflict prevention, as a primary step in the process of conflict transformation would be an interesting addition to the existing studies on the subject.

If we consider Galtung's interpretation of conflict as being composed of danger and opportunity, it is possible to find a space for conflict prevention as a means for opening the most conducive environment for conflict transformation; meaning a point in time when violence and destruction has not taken place.

$$\text{Conflict} = \text{Danger} + \text{Opportunity}$$

If conflict prevention is understood as being a means to decrease and ultimately avoid the dangerous component in a conflict, it would be possible to achieve a situation where the concept of conflict would be very close to that of opportunity. By avoiding violence, it could be easier to transform the conflictual forces in a dispute into positive forces of interaction.

¹⁶⁸ Galtung (1978) pp. 489-490

When violence is occurring, the behavior and attitudes of the actors involved progressively become more aggressive; making it more difficult for them to understand and accept the positive dynamics of the conflict that could lead to mutual understanding.

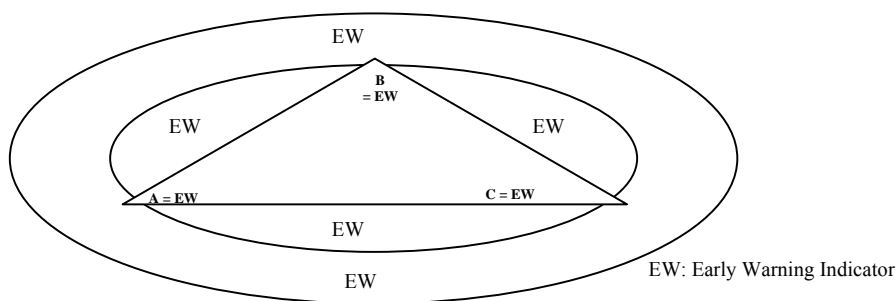
$$\text{Conflict} = \blacktriangledown \text{Danger} + \text{Opportunity}$$

$$\text{Conflict} \approx \text{Opportunity}$$

Keeping in line with what has already been discussed in the previous chapters of this project, for conflict prevention to be effective and efficient it must be based on comprehensive early warning information. In this regard, it was also presented that non-governmental organizations have a comparative advantage over other actors in the process of identifying and analyzing early warning indicators, especially at a local communal level. Through the analysis of Galtung's Conflict Triangle it is possible to enforce this argument by identifying the dynamics in the formation of conflicts that can be identified by NGOs as indicators of emerging violence. By placing the Conflict Triangle framework at a stage in the life-cycle of a conflict before violence has erupted, we can identify that its three main elements are early warning indicators. Non-governmental organizations with the capacity to understand social dynamics at a local level have the capacity to identify when attitudes and behavioral manifestation of certain groups within the community can lead to violence in the future. Proximity, as discussed before, allows this type of organizations to understand which behavior, within a determined social environment, is not normal and is indicative of distrust or aggression between its members, and to notice changes in the way some actors perceive others. For actors lacking the adequate knowledge of local life it is difficult to identify and interpret these elements at an early stage; allowing preventive measures to take place. In addition, and following the same logic, non-governmental organizations have the ability to identify contradictions at an earlier stage, while having the ability to understand the underlying reasons for the emergence of such incompatibility. Finally, with respect to Wallensteen's argument on the need to understand the nature of actors as another element in the formation of conflicts, it is reasonable to argue that NGOs working in the field and interacting with local actors on a daily basis have the ability to better understand this matter.

An actor's history, its position in a social environment and its relationship with others is better understood through experiencing the social dynamics of the community on a consistent basis. The three elements in Galtung's Conflict Triangle model are thus early warning indicators. In addition the combinations of two or three are even stronger signs of impending danger if they portray a sense of aggression between groups. This can be presented in a visual manner as follows:

Figure 3.4: The Conflict Triangle and Early Warning:



This image is a visual representation of the argument that states that the elements in Galtung's Conflict Triangle model are early warning indicators, and that the combinations of two or the three elements are as well. The relations seen inside the triangle represent the idea that A, B, C, as defined by Galtung, are early warning indicators:

$$A/B/C = EW$$

The three half-circled areas, which can be seen adjacent to the three sides of the triangle, represent the understanding that the combinations of two of the elements in the model are also indicators of probable violence:

$$A + B = EW, B + C = EW, C + A = EW$$

Finally, the area visualized as an oval encircling the triangle and the three semi-circled areas, represents the idea that the combination of the three elements is again an early warning indicator:

$$A + B + C = EW$$

3.3. NGO-based Early Warning and Conflict Theory - An Example:

A good way of understanding the significance of the arguments presented above is to translate them in to the realm of pragmatic work. Providing an example of how an actual non-governmental organization has been able to operationalize its presence in local communal environments and its understanding of local social dynamics in an attempt to identify early warning indicators and effectively utilize them in the search to develop effective preventive measures for communal conflicts, helps to understand the significance of Galtung's model for this project. In particular, it is necessary at this point to demonstrate that there is a logical manner of finding a coherent relationship between Conflict Theory and the practical role that NGOs can play in conflict early warning. With respect to Johan Galtung's Conflict Triangle model, and the elements he presents, it is important to prove that non-governmental organizations have the capacity of recognize them and utilize them as conditions indicative of emerging tensions and probable violence. Attitudes, behavioral representations, and contradictions need to be useful early warning indicators of conflict, which can be identified by non-governmental organizations, for this analytical framework to be relevant for this field of study.

An interesting example that can be utilized for this purpose is the case of the National Council of Churches of Kenya's (NCCCK) early warning indicators module which is presented by Peter Juma Gunja and Selline Otieno Korir as part of the People Building Peace II project of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention. From this illustration, an attempt will be made to integrate the NCCCK's understanding of early warning with that developed the Galtung's theory, and how the indicators used in this example have a relevant relationship with those exposed in the Conflict Triangle model.

Realizing that episodes of aggression between ethnic communities in Kenya's North Rift Valley did not usually occur by surprise and that evidence of preparation and mobilization of resources was noticed well before the actual incidents, the NCCCK decided to elaborate a consistent method of translating evidence into actual early warning indicators which they believed would contribute to the reduction of violence in the region. Through the training of a small number of their staff members in matters of early warning and response mechanisms, and through cooperation with the Nairobi Peace Forum (NPI-Africa), the organization managed to elaborate a list of indicators that would warn of potential violence in their target communities. Through the use of local knowledge, and traditional ways of detecting impending violence, they have put together the following set of indicators:

1. Movement to safer grounds: The movement of women and children to areas where they will not be targeted by attackers.
2. Alien footprints: Communities are able to identify footprints of outsiders as they wear different footwear.
3. Preparation rituals and rites of passage: Cattle raids and other attacks are preceded by rituals and taboos.
4. Rumors: Local versions of possible attacks usually turn out to be true, while in some instances enemies send out signals of intent before the attacks take place.
5. Women wearing the "prayer belt": Mothers of youths taking part in attacks wear special garments as symbols of prayer for protection of their sons.
6. Fires lit at strategic places: Fires are lit both as provocation to other communities and as a means of communication and orientation for those committing the attack.
7. Gunshots: Usually fired as a means of communication by cattle raiders.
8. Deserted marketplaces: People avoid public places when they fear an attack on their community.
9. Presence of firearms and sale of ammunition.¹⁶⁹

In 1997, the NCCCK formally introduced an early warning and early response system based on the previously established parameters, which has proven to be effective in utilizing local

¹⁶⁹ Gunja & Korir (2005) pp. 441-443

knowledge and local structures of authority to prevent violence in the pastoralist areas of north-west Kenya.

The NCKK's early warning indicators model is a fine example to understand the operationalization on the three elements presented in Galtung's Triangle model as practical tools to forecast the escalation of violence with an a process of conflict formation. From an analysis of the early warning indicators identified by the NCKK, it is possible to directly link them to the elements that structure Galtung's model: behavior, attitudes and assumptions and contraction.

Behavior is defined within the model as an action or as the capacity to perform an action (preparedness) from the part of one actor in a dispute, and against the integrity of the other, or as a response to potential violence. As stated above, behavior does not necessarily have to be a direct episode of physical violence; hostile body and spoken language, preparations for violence, among others, are behavioral expressions that can be considered within this conceptual framework. This, as a means to analyze the model developed by the NCKK, allows the consideration of all of its indicators as representations of behavior as defined by Galtung. In this precise case three distinct behavioral categories can be identified. Firstly, there are acts that are directly related to the attack itself, such as the firing of gun-shots and the lighting of fires. These by themselves are not as useful in the field of early warning as they take place just before an episode of actual violence takes place, and do not allow time for any studied preventive measure to be implemented. A possible last minute attempt to prevent violence from taking place can be possible, but extremely difficult considering the environments where these episodes take place. Secondly, there are indicators that identify behavioral patterns which directly relate to the preparation for violence. Movement to safer grounds, rituals and the presence of fire arms and ammunition represent manners by which the local population prepare themselves to carry on an attack against others or to receive an attack from others. These are off course useful early warning indicators, particularly if they are able to be identified as such, with time. In order to do so, the personnel issuing early warning information must understand the communities' regular patterns of social interaction and distinguish them from those that indicate an extra-ordinary event such as a violent episode.

Finally, there are behavioral indicators within the NCKK model that foresee the preparation for action itself. Rumors and alien footprints inform about probable violence and the preparation for violence, but are not actually a violent act or an act of preparation. Rumors, particularly, if interpreted objectively and calmly and if they can in some way be verified, can serve a valuable role in the early warning of disputes. As stated above, local populations usually gain knowledge of this sort of situations in advance, and informally discuss them within their community.

Attitudes and assumptions, on the other hand, represent the cognitions and emotions that an actor experiences in relation with the other or in relation to the dispute it self. Indicators 1, 2, 4, and 8 in the NCKK model can be identified as exposing attitudes and assumptions that warn of violence within the social context in which they are interpreted. In this precise case, two representations of element A, in Galtung's model, can be discovered: fear and distrust. Movement to safer grounds, rumors, and deserted market places, although also representing behavioral expression, also clearly correspond to the feeling of fear from one of the parties to the dispute. In addition, alien footprints seen as evidence of a probable cattle raid demonstrate a high level of distrust between the actors. Here again, the ability to recognize attitudes and assumptions, such as fear and distrust, from more visible behavioral evidence, requires the understanding of local social life and its dynamics.

The contradiction or the problem that is generating the type of violence that is presented in the NCKK example is not necessarily identifiable from the nine early warning indicators developed by the organization, but requires the comprehensive understanding of the whole situation, and in particular the relationship between the two communities in the dispute. In this sense, it is believed that an organization as the NCKK through its presence in the community and through its interest in preventing this sort of violence has the capacity to understand which is the primary contradiction, or conflict of interests, that results in cattle raids or ethnic violence in this particular context. For example, and for the purpose of making this argument clearer, the contradiction in this precise case study can be the struggle to gain access to a vital and scarce resource such as livestock, or tensions between ethnicities that are manifested through sporadic cattle raids.

4. THE AFRICAN UNION'S CONTINENTAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION:

4.1. African Political Integration and Civil Society Participation:

From a survey of the content of the four most important documents in the history of African political integration in the field of peace and security, the *Charter of the Organization of African Unity*, the *Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution*, the *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, and the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Union's Peace and Security Council*, and maintaining the focus of this project on the role of non-governmental organizations in the field of early warning, it is interesting to analyse the importance given to the involvement of civil society actors in the development and operationalization of common continental institutions and mechanisms for peace and security. This will allow an understanding of the level of relevance that the pan-African political debate has placed for the participation of non-governmental organizations in this process, and will offer documented evidence on the present relationship between NGOs working in Africa and the African Union, particularly in issues related to the general themes of this paper.

A comprehensive analysis of the four documents identified above clearly exposes the understanding that civil society has been given a marginal space for participation in the continent's political sphere. The fact that the first mention, in these documents, of the need to build a strong relationship between a pan-African institution and African citizenry is given in the Constitutive Act of the African Union is indicative of this phenomena. It took Africa's process of political integration 37 years to formally allocate a tentative role for civil society within its main legal frameworks and its operative principles. Paragraph 7 in the AU Constitutive Act's opening remarks states:

“Guided by our common vision of a united and strong Africa and by the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women,

youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among our peoples;”¹⁷⁰

Complementarily, Article 4(c) of the same document reaffirms this understanding by including it as a principle of the organization:

“Participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union; ...”¹⁷¹

The need to establish an institutional link between the African Union and civil society was realized, but according to these two paragraphs the latter’s role in the actual endeavours of the organization remained ambiguous. *Solidarity* and *cohesion* are two very broad concepts as to determine the possible added value that cooperation between the organization and civil society could bring in the development of the AU itself, and in the achievement of its mandate. Very little insight can be found from this in an attempt to understand the rights and the obligations that non-governmental actors in Africa would have vis-à-vis the African Union, and the areas in which the proposed cooperation would take place. On the other hand, the simple fact that this was acknowledged in the elaboration of the AU Constitutive Act indicates the evolution of African political culture towards a more participatory and democratic conception of governance. This phenomenon will be discussed in greater detail later on in this project.

In fairness sake, it must be acknowledge that the concept of civil society participation in pan-African politics was not completely neglected prior the establishment of the African Union, but the fact that no formal mention was done in this regard in the OAU Charter and in the Declaration on the establishment of the OAU Mechanism can be taken as evidence of the lack of commitment from the part of the continent’s political elites to build on this relationship. At least in the field of peace and security this is certainly believed to be the case. The lack of a comprehensive base within the legal structures of the OAU to establish an effective partnership with non-governmental actors in the continent could be seen as an obstacle for the

¹⁷⁰ OAU (2000) p. 3

¹⁷¹ AU (2002) p. 6

development of this idea at a later stage in the consolidation of the OAU's institutional structures. After the creation of the OAU Mechanism, the organization began to recognize the fact that civil society actors needed to play a considerable role in preventing and managing conflicts in the continent, especially considering that NGOs and other civil society groups are usually in a better position to identify the emergence of tensions well before they erupt into full-blown crises. In fact, the OAU acknowledged that the Mechanism could not succeed without the participation of civil society actors.¹⁷² In addition, these agents will most normally remain in the areas where conflicts take place well after external interventions complete their mandates. Consequently, the OAU sought to develop channels in which such actors could be integrated into its operational capabilities. The creation of a continental registry of non-governmental actors working with issues of peace, security and stability was proposed, as well as the establishment of a focal point within the OAU that could serve as a link between the organization and those actors in civil society interested in cooperating with it. Unfortunately, no evidence of the consolidation of these two proposals could be found. Most probably, these initiatives were discontinued with the dissolution of the OAU and the emergence of the AU as Africa's new continental organization in 2000. By that year some civil society groups were attending some OAU meetings and the organization had developed the programme named "Building Partnership with Civil Society Organizations".¹⁷³ Again, it is believed that the evolution of this concept within the OAU and the OAU Mechanism would have always been hampered by the lack of commitment evident in its founding principles.

The participation of civil society actors within the current institutional composition of the African Union's peace and security architecture is acknowledged in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). It is in this document that a basic realization for the need to integrate non-governmental organizations and other civil society groups into the development and the operationalization of the Union's main mechanisms in the field of peace and security is defined. The AU PSC and its operational arms, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, and the African Standby Force, must be, in

¹⁷² Muyangwa & Vogt (2000), pp. 5, 32

¹⁷³ Muyangwa & Vogt (2000), p. 33

part, built on the capacities of civil society in Africa to achieve a greater degree of effectiveness and legitimacy.

Article 20 of the Protocol determines that:

“The Peace and Security Council shall encourage non-governmental organizations, community-based and other civil society organizations, particularly women’s organizations, to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security, and stability in Africa. When required, such organizations may be invited to address the Peace and Security Council.”¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, and focusing particularly in the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System, the Protocol established the need for cooperation between the mechanism and civil society organization in Africa to guarantee its effective functioning. Article 12(3) states:

“The Commission shall also collaborate with the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centres, academic institutions and NGOs to facilitate the effective functioning of the Early Warning System.”¹⁷⁵

The Protocol of the PSC is thus the main legal text in the African Union calling for the participation of non-governmental actors in the functioning of its peace and security architecture. As compared to the references made on the role of such actors within the overall institutional framework of the Union, in its Constitutive Act, the Protocol represents an advancement in the recognition of specific channels through which NGOs can be integrated. The achievement of these objectives is thus dependant on the commitment from African political elites to implement the visions set for in the Protocol and on their recognition that civil society actors can bring an added value to the operational capabilities of the AU. Particularly, and continuing to focus on the main themes of this project, close attention will be given below to the integration of NGOs in the institutional consolidation of the AU CEWS.

¹⁷⁴ AU (2002) p. 26

¹⁷⁵ AU (2002) p. 17

4.2. The African Union's Continental Early Warning System:

The African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is one of the three main operational mechanisms proposed by the Protocol Relating to the PSC to achieve the ambitious goals determined in its mandate. It is the main instrument for the production and analysis of information about situations that pose grave danger to the peace and stability of continent. In this sense, its primary goal is the detection of emerging and re-emerging levels of tension that can lead to conflict; with the purpose of deciding on adequate preventive measures before the situations evolve into full-blown crises. This conceptualization follows the normative arguments presented in favour of conflict prevention and in regard to the difficulties and the costs that dealing with a fully articulated conflict poses, particularly considering the limited resources that the African Union has for its endeavours. To achieve this, the AU must construct a systematic and efficient mechanism to recollect early warning information at a timely basis; information that serves the purpose of translating field evidence into institutional action. Even though the latter is not just a direct consequence of gathering early warning information, it is believed that an accurate and trustworthy early warning system will stimulate the political will needed to take preventive action before situations degenerate into chaos and human suffering. When instituted, the AU CEWS should be able to serve this purpose.

Although the idea of establishing a continental early warning mechanism precedes the establishment of the African Union, its current institutional framework and consolidation process is presented within the Protocol of the PSC. Precisely, Article 12 calls for the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System to “facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts”.¹⁷⁶ Although the use of these two concepts can be identified in the Declaration on the Establishment of the OAU Mechanism, it is the first time that an actual early warning system has been officially instituted within the overall peace and security architecture of the continental organization. In fact, the Protocol of the PSC determines a broad design for the structures of the system and the responsibilities that different agencies within the African Union will have to facilitate the operationalization of the CEWS. (An

¹⁷⁶ AU (2002) p. 17

outline of the historical development of early warning and an early warning system within the OAU-AU can be seen as an appendix to this project.)

“The Early Warning System shall consist of:

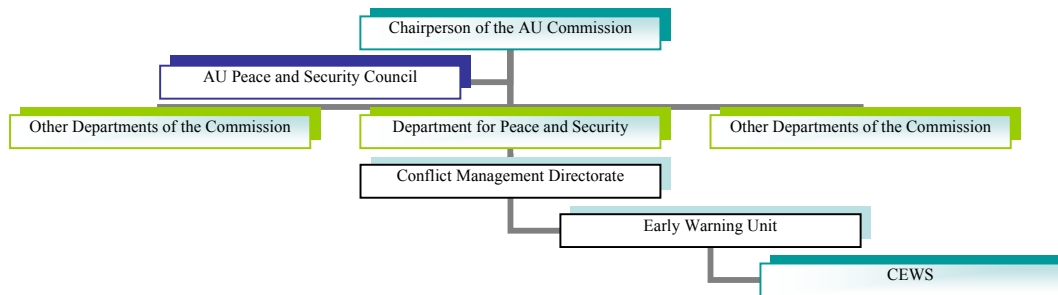
- a. an observation and monitoring centre, to be known as the ‘The Situation Room’, located at the Conflict Management Directorate of the Union, and responsible for data collection and analysis on the basis of an appropriate early warning indicators model; and
- b. observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanism to be linked directly with through appropriate means of communications to the Situation Room, and which shall collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room.”¹⁷⁷

The CEWS, although being established as a support structure of the Peace and Security Council, is not linked directly to the latter within the AU peace and security structures. This is due to the fact that the PSC is a forum of debate and policy formulation, but does not coordinate operational programmes. Recommendations from the PSC are put into practice and managed by the Commission of the African Union, particularly the Department for Peace and Security (DPS). It is within this department that the CEWS links with the other relevant structures of the AU. Within the DPS is the Conflict Management Directorate (CMD) mentioned in the Protocol which itself has a substructure identified as the Early Warning Unit (EWU).¹⁷⁸ It is at this precise level that the information produced by the CEWS is forwarded to those structures within the Union designed to have decision making authority, namely the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission. Following this conceptualization, the CEWS can be observed within the following schematic representation.

¹⁷⁷ AU (2002) p. 17

¹⁷⁸ Langinvainio & Reyes (2006) pp. 12-13

Figure 4.1: The CEWS at AU Headquarters



According to the Protocol, the primary user of the information generated but the CEWS is indeed the Chairperson of the Commission, who “shall use the information gathered through the Early Warning System timeously to advise the Peace and Security Council on the potential of conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa and recommend the best course of action.”¹⁷⁹ In addition, the Chairperson can utilize this information to perform any other tasks placed under his/her responsibility by the Protocol of the PSC. The idea that the findings generated by the CEWS will be directed to a single particular figure within the organization can pose a problem to the effective capacity of the AU to use this information for purposes of preparing timely preventive measures. Relying on the judgement of the Chairperson of the Commission to determine if a situation requires the attention of the Peace and Security Council jeopardizes the legitimacy of the decision making process within the Union and places too much responsibility on a person that may not always be in the capacity to dictate the adequate course of action. Taking decisions on sensitive issues such as those treated by the CEWS comes at an extremely high political price that may not always be managed by such a visible personality. In addition, the effectiveness of this procedure requires the absolute impartiality and independence from the part of the Commission’s Chairperson vis-à-vis the interests of the Member States and his/her country of origin. In the case of African political culture, this might pose a significant obstacle in the translation of early warning information produced by the CEWS into a decisive measure proposed by the PSC. On the other hand, if the Chairperson actually fulfils the normative requirements presented above, the idea of allocating such responsibility to that precise office may serve the purpose

¹⁷⁹ AU (2002) pp. 17-19

of timeliness and efficiency as it would avoid a more complicated bureaucratic process to determine an official course of action. At this point in time it is not possible to judge the rightfulness of this determination as the CEWS is yet to become operational, but this can be a factor to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of the overall AU mandate on conflict prevention. As a means to counter-balance the influence of political interests in the process of anticipating and preventing conflicts in the AU, it would be appropriate to staff the CEWS with personnel with no prior political commitments to any member state of the Union. “The staff working within the CEWS at continental or regional levels should probably be recruited directly by the Commission or regional Secretariat. They should not be seconded from Member States, and should also not be serving (or recently served) in a security agency of a Member State.”¹⁸⁰

To produce the information that will eventually be utilized by the Chairperson of the Commission, the CEWS, according to the Protocol, must be linked directly to the continents Regional Mechanisms which will act as the CEWS’ regional branches for the collection and analysis of early warning information. Regional Mechanisms in this sense is a term utilized to name Africa’s regional intergovernmental organizations or Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The process of African political integration, since 1991, has acknowledged the idea that the continental organization should be built on the existing capabilities and expertise of Regional Mechanisms as it does not have the capacity or the need to cover the whole continent single handed in any of the fields of its mandate.¹⁸¹ For this purpose, the African Union has identified five RECs as the building blocks for its peace and security architecture; each representing a regional division of the continent:

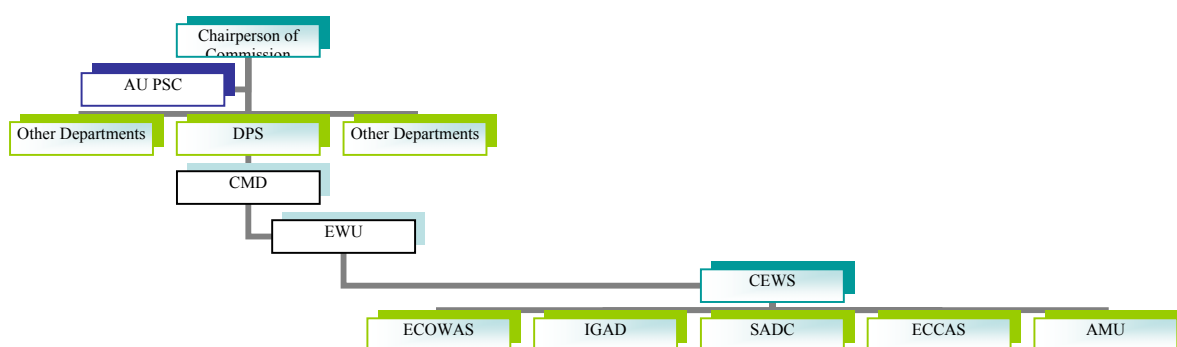
1. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS – Western Africa)
2. Inter-governmental Authority for Development (IGAD – Eastern Africa)
3. Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS – Central Africa)
4. Southern Africa Development Community (SADC – Southern Africa)
5. Arab Maghreb Union (AMU – North Africa)

¹⁸⁰ Cilliers (2005) p. 17

¹⁸¹ OAU (1991)

Consequently the AU’s CEWS should utilize the capabilities and experiences of these Regional Mechanisms as the first institutional level of collection and analysis of early warning information. This is a practical necessity in terms avoiding the duplication of activities and the inefficient use of limited resources, and in utilizing the experience of those RECs that have already some history in dealing with early warning systems at a regional level.¹⁸² Unfortunately, it can be affirmed that only IGAD and ECOWAS have operational early warning systems which can be promptly integrated into the CEWS. In the case of the three remaining Regional Mechanisms, the AU must cooperate in building their capacity to produce useful and accurate information that could be utilized within the continental system. The AU Peace and Security Council “is mandated to harmonize, coordinate and work closely with the conflict prevention and management mechanisms established at a regional level”¹⁸³, particularly with the mission to establish regional observation and monitoring units, and promote regional initiatives to anticipate and prevent conflict. Finally an effective link between the two levels of cooperation must be established. With this in mind, the CEWS now would follow this schematic structure:

Figure 4.2: The CEWS and Africa’s Regional Mechanisms:



Finally, the third level of cooperation within the CEWS relates to those agencies and actors that are outside Africa’s governmental structures. As previously mentioned, the Protocol of the PSC realizes the need to integrate the United Nations System, international organizations,

¹⁸² CCR (2005) pp. 24-25
¹⁸³ Cilliers (2005) p. 8

research centres, academic institutions and NGOs, to facilitate in the process of collecting, dissemination, and analysis of early warning information at a continental level.¹⁸⁴ The integration of NGOs into the CEWS is of course the prime focus of this project.

The CEWS is visibly not conceived to be a closed system of government-government cooperation in the collection of early warning information, nor is it dependent of only secret intelligence information provided by Member States. “Its work should be complemented by other views that would strengthen the hand of the Commission and encourage acting through the Peace and Security Council.”¹⁸⁵ The relevance of non-governmental agents in the collection of information that could lead to the anticipation and prevention of conflicts was recognized by those political leaders that envisaged the CEWS and established the Peace and Security Council of the AU. This has been a conceptualization that matured, to some degree, in the years following the establishment of the OAU Mechanism, and has become an explicit objective of the AU in the Protocol of the PSC. In fact, as late as 1995, it was still possible to observe deferring understandings of the role of NGOs, and other non-governmental actors, in a proposed pan-African early warning system. Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary General of the OAU, presented a role for this sort of agents not in the collection and analysis of early warning information, but in the reception of such to promote preventive action. According to him, it was the expectation of the OAU that “ultimately, it should be possible to bring [early warning information collated and analyzed] to the attention of all potential affected actors, including regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and where possible, local political actors in potentially affected countries.”¹⁸⁶ NGOs in this sense are seen as users, and not providers of early warning information. Furthermore, and in the same paper, Salim Ahmed Salim acknowledges the need for multiple sources of information to feed a comprehensive early warning system but does not present NGOs as actors in this process. Regional Mechanisms and educational and research institutions are suggested as valuable partners in this regard.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ AU (2002) p. 17

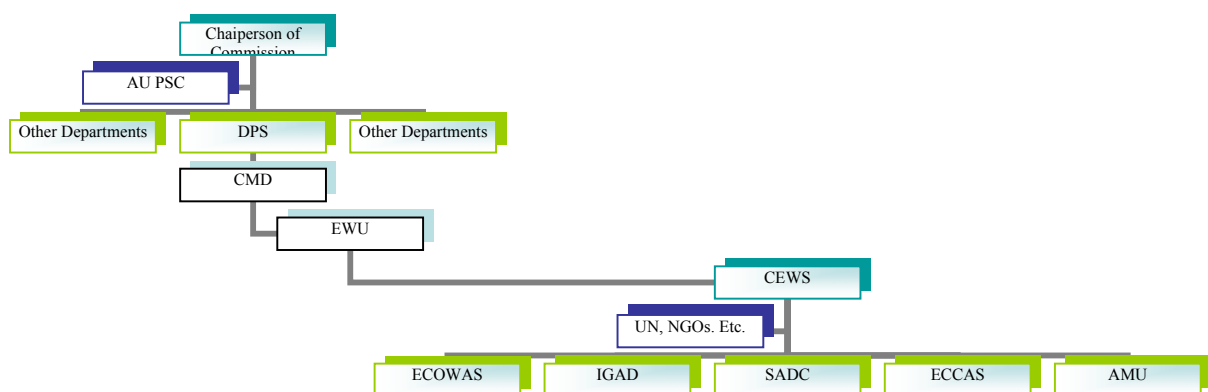
¹⁸⁵ Cilliers (2005) p. 18

¹⁸⁶ Salim (1995) p. 17

¹⁸⁷ Salim (1995) p. 2

According to what is interpreted from the Protocol of the PSC and from Jakkie Cilliers paper, “Towards a Continental Early Warning System for Africa” (2005), NGOs, and the other non-governmental actors defined in Article 12(3), would be integrated into the CEWS through a direct link to the Situation Room at AU Headquarters. Following the previous visual representations of the system, the integration of the latter actors would follow this scheme:

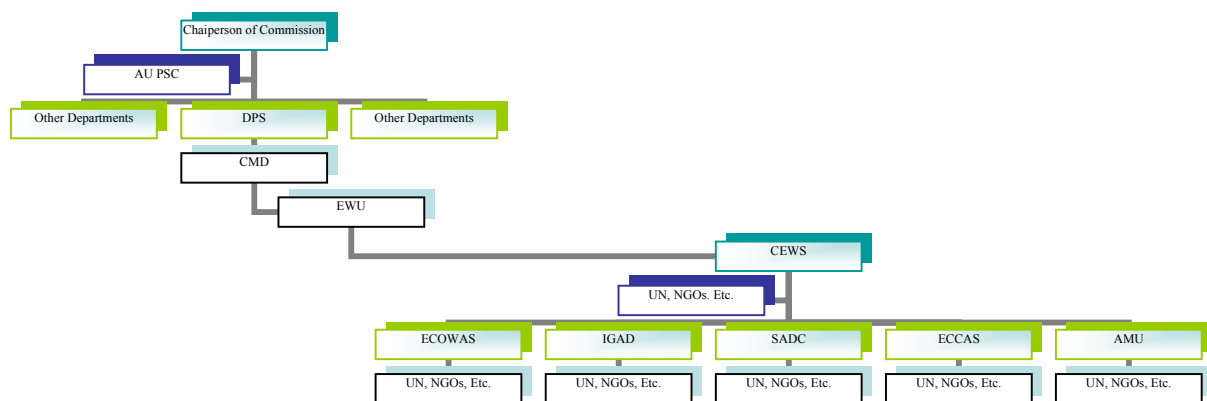
Figure 4.3: The CEWS, Regional Mechanism and Non-governmental Actors:



This proposal would certainly pose a problem for the great majority on NGOs that do not have the capacity and the resources to establish direct communication links from their places of operations to the central monitoring centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In addition it would be an enormous logistical endeavour for the AU to allow these organizations the channels to directly access the Situation Room from remote locations in the continent. On the other hand, for the United Nations, large international and local NGOs, research centres, and academic institutions this would be possible, as they are significantly less in quantity, and often have greater capabilities to communicate their findings to a larger and more distant audience. Unfortunately, and as previously stated, smaller and especially local NGOs would be restricted in their ability to disseminate early warning findings to the CEWS. This would arguably hamper the effectiveness of the system considering that local NGOs with presence in local communal environments might be the first agents to identify elements that warn of emerging violence, particularly in communal conflicts. The idea of the CEWS is not to make the integration of these actors difficult, but instead offer them the most adequate and efficient channels of communication through which they can share their comparative advantage in

collecting early warning information for the good the CEWS. It is thus the understanding of this study that NGOs in general should be integrated to the system through closer links with the observation and monitoring units to be established in the Regional Mechanisms. These would guarantee greater participation of these actors in the system and would allow the CEWS to evaluate their findings in a decentralized manner. This is a positive argument if it is considered that Regional Mechanisms have greater knowledge of local dynamics, and thus, information being received in the Situation Room would already be filtered by regional experts. In addition, other non-governmental actors should have the capacity to interact with regional monitoring units if deemed appropriate. This is the CEWS conceived by this project:

Figure 4.4: The CEWS, Regional Mechanism and Non-governmental Actors (2):



Finally, and in order to conclude this section, it must be highlighted that the Protocol of the PSC, Article 12, does not only conceive the participation of non-governmental actors in the actual operationalization of the CEWS, but also opens the possibility for their participation in its institutional development. Article 12(7) states:

“The Chairperson of the Commission shall, in consultation with the Member States, the Regional Mechanisms, the United Nations and other relevant institutions, work out the practical details for the establishment of the Early Warning System and the all the steps required for its effective functioning.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ AU (2002) p. 18

Although the term *relevant institutions* is considerably ambiguous, it is assumed in this project that it includes those non-governmental actors identified by the Protocol as partners in the operationalization of the CEWS. The importance of understanding their role in this matter will be discussed in the coming chapters of this paper, but it is evident that their expertise and experience can be an important asset for those determining the logistical requirements and communication channels needed for the efficient running of the CEWS when it becomes operational.

4.3. The Prospects of NGO Participation in the AU CEWS According to the Roadmap for the Operationalization of the CEWS:

Evaluating the prospects of NGO participation in the African Union's Early Warning System at this point in time is a complicated endeavour. The fact that the mechanism is under construction does not allow the study of constant or final policy decisions from the part of the AU. For this reason, it is difficult for this study to analyse concrete features of the CEWS and its capacity to integrate NGOs into its process of managing early warning information. Instead, it is necessary to analyse identifiable trends about the manner in which the consolidation of the CEWS is opening the channels for NGO participation in the mechanism. The Roadmap for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System (Draft) is the latest official document on this matter, and one that allows the study of the prospective role that NGOs, and other non-governmental actors, will have in the CEWS once it is established.

This section will seek to evaluate the role that NGOs are offered in the Roadmap by reviewing the sections that call of participation of such actors in the operationalization of the CEWS. In addition, a conversation with Mr. Ahmed Mokhtar Awed, Political Officer at the Early Warning Unit of the AU Department of Peace and Security, will be presented as a complementary source of information.

The Roadmap for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System:

The Roadmap, as its name implied, sets forth the proposed steps that the AU should take to build “an operational, cost-effective CEWS within the obligations stipulated by the Protocol of the PSC”.¹⁸⁹ In addition it identifies the technical, financial, and human requirements needed for its establishment. For this reason it is interesting to study in which way it seeks to incorporate NGOs into this process and into the consequent operational functioning of the mechanism.

“The PSC Protocol is clear in providing that the continental System should obtain its information from a variety of sources- the CEWS is therefore envisaged as an open source system. In this regard, the CEWS is specifically mandated to collaborate with the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centres, academic institutions and NGOs.”¹⁹⁰

Paragraph 7 of the Roadmap’s introduction recalls the vision set forth in the Protocol of the PSC and highlights the need for collaboration with non-governmental actors in order to facilitate the functioning of the CEWS. This conception sets forth the general framework under which the AU seeks to integrate NGO’s into its early warning system and is the guiding principle for any role proposed in the Roadmap for these actors. Complementary, Paragraph 8(a), recalling the conclusions drafted in a workshop on the establishment of the CEWS held in Addis Ababa in October 2003, stresses the need to develop a multilevel network for the efficient collection of early warning information throughout the continent. Precisely, it calls for the AU to:

“Build a measurable, verifiable and standard data base that is simple, user friendly, based on multi-levelled and field-based sources”¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁹ AU (2006) p.1

¹⁹⁰ AU (2006) p. 1-2

¹⁹¹ AU (2006) p. 2

This understanding opens a space for the participation of NGOs in the mechanism. In line with the general principles of this research paper, non-governmental organizations can serve as the grassroots branches of the CEWS by being able to collect and disseminate early warning information from local communal environments. Consequently, they could be portrayed as the lowest level of the information network being able to collect field-based information, as that called for in the Roadmap. Indeed, they are not the only agents capable of identifying this sort of information, but as stated throughout this project, they do offer a competitive advantage with respect to other actors.

By being able to offer a distinctive added value to the capacity of the CEWS, NGOs can serve as complements to the primary sources of information identified in the Roadmap. Paragraph 16 relating to data collection with the CEWS determines that:

“In the optimisation of information collection, priority will be given to primary information and data generated by the African Union itself, and more specifically by AU Missions and offices such as that in Darfur”.¹⁹²

Although it is logical that the AU identifies its own operational mechanisms as means for collecting early warning information, it is important to understand that the AU does not have the capacity to survey the security situation of the continent by itself. Furthermore, AU Missions similar to that in Darfur should not be seen as tools in what is proposed to be a systematic early warning system. Missions like this are an outcome of the extreme deterioration of a crisis and the AU must strive by all means to prevent this from taking place. In addition, a considerable proportion of local communal conflicts emerge in environments where the AU, or any governmental body, has no physical presence. To a certain extent the latter conception seems to be in contradiction to the nature of the CEWS as such. If the mechanism seeks to anticipate conflicts from the taking place, an AU field missions would certainly fail in this objective. They would certainly be a valuable source of information in preventing the escalation of ongoing or latent conflicts, which is also an objective of the CEWS, but do not have the capability to prevent emerging disputes because of the simple fact

¹⁹² AU (2006) p. 3

that they would not be in place. For this reason, the AU must identify other relevant actors that could serve this purpose. An early warning system, as has been stated throughout this project, must be composed of a wide variety of actors for it to be up-to-date and able to gather information from a wide geographical area. Cooperation must then be seen as a primary principle in its operationalization.

On this regard, Mr. Ahmed Mokhtar stated that:

*-The AU has no capacity to have people on the ground or field missions throughout the whole continent, so it needs to build its capabilities on existing mechanisms such as the RECs-.*¹⁹³

The contradiction that is identifiable from the statement made by Mr. Mokhtar, in contrast to the clause in the Roadmap, highlights the principal argument of this project. Even though the AU's own capacity to recollect grass-root early warning information is of great importance to the system itself, it is very difficult to envision an organization with the ability to cover such a vast and complex region as is the African continent. The recognition, especially from the part of an AU officer working in the Early Warning Unit, of the in-capacity of the organization to have a far reaching network of its own early warning sources is a clear indication that other actors must be integrated as vital elements to the AU CEWS. Of course, the Roadmap does not exclude the participation of non-governmental or non-AU actors in the system but it certainly does not acknowledge the significance of their role and the practical necessity of their integration to the CEWS.

Continuously, now referring to the drafting of early warning reports that will be used by the Chairperson of the Commission and the Peace and Security Council for the purpose of deciding on preventive measures, the Roadmap identifies another channel for NGO participation. Paragraph 27 acknowledges that:

“The processes provided for the [Department of Peace and Security and the Peace and Security Council] also provide for the use of external reports and views from academics, the

¹⁹³ Ahmed Mokhtar Awed (2005) in conversation with the author

United Nations and its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centres, academic institutions and NGOs”¹⁹⁴.

In other words, the Rules of Procedure of these two bodies allow for non-governmental actors to interact in the process of informing the AU’s decision making bodies on situations at probable risk and on possible approaches of dealing with them. This is an integral part of the role that NGOs could play in preventing conflict in Africa as their expertise and experience allow them to produce early warning reports that would directly target decision making processes within the AU. But, it is also necessary to understand that the majority of NGOs working in local environments do not have the capacity and resources to interact with the CEWS at such a high level. As proven in this project, NGOs have a distinct comparative advantage in the collection and dissemination of early warning information, but also need to be provided with easier and cost-efficient channels of integration with the AU. In addition, some NGOs may have the capacity to identify and inform about emerging disputes but not necessarily have the knowledge to determine the course of preventive measures. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen lower channels of interaction between the CEWS and NGOs than those proposed in paragraph 27 of the Roadmap. Although some NGOs can be integrated into the system at this level, and have the expertise to guide AU decision makers, others might have a role only limited to the collection of grassroots early warning information.

This argument is related to the previous discussion on the physical integration of NGOs into the AU CEWS. Non-governmental actors in general are suggested to participate at a stage in the early warning process that does not meet their capacities. As is seen in the diagram titled *The CEWS, Regional Mechanism and Non-governmental Actors (2)*, NGOs must be given the space to participate in the system at a local or regional level. Accessing the Department of Peace and Security and the Peace and Security Council is an endeavour that very few actors have the resource to do; furthermore they would lack the political drive to be heard. In this respect, Mr. Ahmed Mokhtar, highlights the need to have a decentralized CEWS.

¹⁹⁴ AU (2006) p. 5

-There is the need for a decentralized process of collection of early warning information and decision making to guarantee the efficiency of the CEWS.

The AU needs to strengthen the capacities of the RECs in early warning, as they could serve the role of focal points within the early warning system.-¹⁹⁵

Finally, it is interesting to make an overview of the Summary Implementation Schedule proposed in the Roadmap of the CEWS to see if the AU has identified any procedures that would seek to prepare NGOs for participation in the operational early warning system. Out of the 63 steps proposed in this section of the Roadmap none refer directly to the integration of NGOs in the CEWS. Step 9 mentions the need to “establish networks and identify relevant sources of information and partners for the CEWS”¹⁹⁶ for the purpose of analysing early warning information and not for its collection. This in itself is not a great advancement in the inclusion of NGOs into the operationalization of the CEWS and ignores to a great degree the added value that these actors can bring to the system. Furthermore, the Implementation Schedule does not call for any workshop or capacity building programme to promote the CEWS to non-governmental actors or to instruct them on requirements to participate in it.¹⁹⁷ Such programmes are an important part of any conscious attempt from the part of the AU to include these actors into the effective functioning of its early warning mechanism. As it will be discussed later the lack of understanding of early warning work and the lack of knowledge about the African Union’s endeavours in this field are two main problematics in integrating NGOs into the CEWS.

-For the time being, the link between the AU and the NGOs is not good, but this will soon be established through coordination with the Regional Mechanism.-¹⁹⁸

This final statement is yet to become a reality and considering the evidence presented in the Roadmap for the Operationalization of the CEWS very little progress has been achieved on

¹⁹⁵ Ahmed Mokhtar Awed (2005) in conversation with the author

¹⁹⁶ AU (2006) p. 8

¹⁹⁷ AU (2006) pp. 8-10

¹⁹⁸ Ahmed Mokhtar Awed (2005) in conversation with the author

the matter. The integration of NGOs into the AU's early warning system is a practical necessity for the AU to be a successful actor in the prevention of conflicts in the continent, but there is still a massive amount of work to be done. Most importantly, the political will to drive this process seems to still be lacking behind, even though, and as stated by the contact, - *steps after the establishment of the Peace and Security Council are being taken very fast and in a serious manner*-.¹⁹⁹

Two problematics need to be considered at this point in the discussion, particularly focusing on the prescribed role provided to NGOs within the Roadmap to the Operationalization of the CEWS. Firstly, it is necessary to question if the current progress, or lack of, is a consequence of the inexperience of the AU as an organization working in early warning and of its lack of understanding of the requirements needed to establish an effective early warning system, or if it is a consequence of the lack of interest from the part of AU decision-makers to integrate civil society actors within its peace and security architecture. Although the answer is probably a combination of both explanations, focusing on the latter would eventually lead to a negative and unconstructive approach to the subject. Even if it is assumed that a considerable lack of interest exists, it is necessary to understand why this is so. At this point, it would be possible to explain the last argument through the former; it is a logic that has already been treated in this project. The lack of political will (interest) can be explained to be the direct consequence of the lack of knowledge of those with the mandate to take political decisions. As it was explained when analysing the problematics of conflict prevention, and the link between early warning and early action, lack of knowledge relates with lack of commitment to act. The same can be true in the case of the AU's CEWS. Lack of knowledge about the comparative advantage that NGOs can bring into an early warning system has led those in charged of the development and operationalization of the CEWS to allocate non-governmental actors a relatively dubious role. Perhaps this is a naïve explanation to this problematic, but it could certainly hold some degree of truth, and indeed allows for a more positive outlook towards the future of NGO participation in the CEWS. Nevertheless, other rationalizations on the same issue will be presented in the following chapter.

¹⁹⁹ Ahmed Mokhtar Awed (2005) in conversation with the author

Secondly, the interest of the individual member states to allow the participation of civil society actors within the CEWS may be low, and this would eventually pose a problem to the operationalization of this mechanism. In this sense, it is necessary to always be conscious that the African Union is a congregation of independent and sovereign states that hold total control of the internal affairs of their country (except in the situations regarded in Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the AU Constitutive Act). The participation of NGOs, for example, in a continental mechanism is thus subject to the recognition and authorization of their role by the national governments where they are registered. Even international NGOs are accountable to the government of the country where they are performing their operations.

-The African Union need permission from the Member States to have communication with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) based in their territory. Even if early warning information can come directly from CSOs to the African Union, any further interaction must be authorized by the Member States, who are in charged of identifying the CSOs concerned.-

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As confirmed by Mr. Ahmed Mokhtar, the commitment of individual Member States is determining to the participation of NGOs in the AU's Continental Early Warning System. It is not clear how the actual procedure for AU-NGO interaction might be or how national governments would mediate in this process, but it is unquestionable that their authorization will be required at some stage. The question would thus be if national governments would be willing to allow independent NGOs to participate in the communication and analysis of politically sensitive information at a pan-African level. Perhaps, a quick answer would be inclined to be negative but this could probably be contradicted. It is conceivable that because the CEWS is, as the name indicates, a continental mechanism, countries might be inclined to accept the conditionalities determined by the AU as a supranational institution. This is an extremely interesting phenomenon in international politics of cooperation and one that will be discussed in the last chapter of this project. It is possible to propose that the perceived resilience of African states to hide sensitive information is not as big of an obstacle when it comes to regional or continental mechanisms of early warning.

²⁰⁰ Ahmed Mokhtar Awed (2005) in conversation with the author

5. NGOS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AFRICAN UNION:

Maintaining the arguments presented through out this project, and considering the principles on which it has been built, the realization that non-governmental organizations need to play an important role in the consolidation of the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (AU CEWS) needs to be further demonstrated. Conflict Theory and the conceptualization of the AU CEWS have both given a space for the participation of civil society organizations in the process of conflict prevention in Africa. The importance of this issue to some degree been discussed by academics, politicians, and actors in civil society in and outside Africa, but the translation of the debate into actual practice is still lagging behind. The relevance of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations, in the field of peace and security is still at a premature stage, but it is constantly evolving and strengthening itself.

In this chapter an attempt to present and discuss the current relationship between non-governmental organizations working in Africa and the African Union in the field of conflict early warning and conflict prevention will be made. Focusing on the perspective of a series NGOs that were identified as having the capacity and potential to work within the AU's early warning system, it is sought to understand which obstacles have impeded a more comprehensive level of cooperation between these two actors in the consolidation of the AU CEWS as a viable tool for the prevention of conflicts in Africa. In particular, an explanation of why non-governmental organizations have not been active participants in this process will be made taking into account their own institutional capabilities and the difficulties they perceive in cooperating with the African Union. In addition, this chapter will seek to build an argumentative link between conflict theory, the normative role of NGO organizations in conflict early warning and the operative capacity of the selected organizations to perform this role. Particular attention will be placed to the operationalization of the elements presented in Johan Galtung's Conflict Triangle model, which can be interpreted as early warning indicators of emerging conflicts. Furthermore, reference to some of the arguments offered as obstacles for the involvement of non-governmental organizations in early warning work will

be presented, especially those relating to the safety of field staff and the early warning–organizational objectives conflict of interest.

For this purpose, a group of five non-governmental organizations were selected with the interest of having fruitful discussion about their views on the issue of early warning and to gather their opinions and experiences in cooperating with the African Union. The main parameter used to select these organizations as sources of information for this research project was not their actual expertise in working with issues of early warning, but the potential they could have if effectively integrated into an efficient early warning system. The organizations presented here follow that characteristic and thus their opinions and perceptions are valuable to this project; and to the consolidation of the AU CEWS. This is not to say that the NGOs' own field of expertise is irrelevant to this study. Different NGOs working in different fields have different ways of understanding the issue of early warning, and their role in it. In addition, they have diverse experiences in cooperation with the African Union. These factors are all relevant to the arguments presented in this chapter.

Although the organizations selected for this purpose represent a small sample of the almost infinite number of NGOs working at a local communal level in Africa, they also represent a considerably wide spectrum of expertise and backgrounds. Within the sample studied there are international and local NGOs, secular and faith based organizations, which are working in fields such as humanitarian relief, human rights, development, and peace advocacy. Do to the nature of this study, and the novelty that is the issue of early warning within civil society actors, several other organizations were approached but had no knowledge of the issues being raised in the interviews. In addition, some of them had no contact with, or opinions concerning, the African Union. This in itself is a significant finding that will be discussed below, but the organizations will not be presented as specific case studies. Regardless, it is believed that valuable observations are possible and a clearer picture of the existing problems in integrating non-governmental organizations into the AU CEWS will be presented.

The discussions with the selected organizations were framed in order to approach the two main themes of this project from a perspective that could be understood by NGO

representatives that did not necessarily have a considerable amount of knowledge and experience on the issues. With this in mind, the discussions were carried out with the purpose of obtaining answers to two broad questions:

1. Which role can NGOs, like the ones selected in this survey, have in the collection and dissemination of early warning information of communal conflicts in Africa? What comparative advantage do NGOs with presence in local communal environments have in this field, in comparison to other actors?
2. Which are the general perceptions of the organizations selected towards the African Union, particularly concerning its role in the field of peace and security? Do the organizations have any institutionalized cooperation agreements with the African Union?

In addition, a tentative questionnaire was developed as a guideline and a tool to maintain the focus of the discussions towards the objectives of the project, and to remind the researcher of specific issues that were to be brought up depending on the knowledge of the contact on the subject at hand. (A copy of this questionnaire can be seen as an appendix to this project.) The organizations selected were:

- Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) - Ethiopia
- Ethiopian Human Rights Council - Ethiopia
- Action Aid – Ethiopia
- Doctors Without Borders - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) - Ethiopia
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – Permanent Representation to the African Union.

5.1. *Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA):*

The Christian Relief and Development Association is an umbrella non-governmental organization working in the field of humanitarian relief and development in Ethiopia. It began operations in 1974 in response to the Ethiopian Government's incapacity to manage the

famine that hit the country in 1973. In order to assist in the alleviation of the difficulties that the country was confronting, twenty church representatives organized themselves to mobilize assistance and coordinate the distribution of aid. At first operating under the name of Christian Relief Fund, it was registered with the Ethiopian Government two years later as the CRDA.

Today it has a membership of 210 faith-based and secular organizations of which 134 are local NGOs and 76 are international non-governmental organizations with operations in Ethiopia. Since the beginning of the 1990's its focus has shifted away from relief and rehabilitation and concentrated most of its resources to development work; specifically to the coordination, networking and capacity-building of its member organizations in this field. Because of the sheer size and the diversity of its membership base, and seeking active participation of these within its internal structures, the CRDA has divided its operations into seven forums: HIV/AIDS, Urban Development, Rural Development, Gender, Children and Youth, Capacity Building and Good Governance and Policy Advocacy. The latter and the organizations capacity to share information are of special interest to this study.²⁰¹

From conversations carried on with the CRDA's Civil Society Coordinator and Good Governance and Advocacy Forum Coordinator on the 17th of December, 2005, a couple of interesting observations were possible.

According the organization's Civil Society Coordinator, the CRDA has made contacts to establish a cooperation agreement with the African Union in the field of development and humanitarian relief, but until the day of the meeting no agreement had been done. As the contact stated:

*-There is mutual interest from the part of the CRDA and the African Union to establish channels of dialogue between the two, but the lack of a clear agenda from both parts has made a concrete agreement difficult-.*²⁰²

²⁰¹ CRDA (2003) pp. 22-24

²⁰² CRDA Civil Society Coordinator (2005) in conversation with the author

The recognition, from the part of the CRDA, that they haven't found a clear and concise area of cooperation with the African Union is indicative of a problematic that can be generalized to most development NGOs in Africa, and particularly in Ethiopia. There is lack of public information on the AU's development policies and programmes. This could be a consequence of the Union's incapacity to promote its activities to the general public and to non-governmental organizations in Africa, and the fact that the AU's agenda in development issues is very limited and lacks adequate funding. In contrast, the Christian Relief and Development Association has cooperated with the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD - an organization with a clearer set of goals and plans in the field of development policy and a more considerable budget) in the drafting of key policy papers.²⁰³ It is probable, according to understanding of this project, that such partnership will be translated into the overall structures of the African Union when NEPAD becomes the AU's formal development programme at the beginning of 2007.²⁰⁴ It is hoped that by fusing the NEPAD to the AU, the latter will officially become an active and authoritative actor in the field of development policy and development work in the continent. On the other hand, the CRDA's inability to frame a useful cooperation plan with the African Union can be due to the lack of knowledge that the organization has of its counterpart, and to the difficulties that can arise from any attempt to establish a clear policy framework in an organization that has a membership of the magnitude and diversity of the CRDA. A cooperation agreement between the two organizations would have to be considerably broad to encompass all the activities that the Christian Relief and Development Association, and its member organizations, carry out. This can be an obstacle in cooperating with the African Union, which is constantly searching for partners in specific fields and for specific projects. Again, the issue of knowledge and understanding comes as an impediment for action. In this precise case, the NGO itself has very little knowledge about the African Union, its programmes, its limitations, and the channels through which they could both cooperate. This is of course a consequence of a failure by both actors. From the part of the AU, it is evident that it has not been able to publicly promote the organization itself, its projects and its successes, and from the part of the CRDA, it has not have the capacity to inform itself sufficiently about the African Union and

²⁰³ CRDA (2003)

²⁰⁴ AU Assembly (2006) p. 18

thus has not been able to determine in which fields they could possibly offer their experience and expertise for the benefit of pan-African integration as a whole. Even if the CRDA is based in Ethiopia, cooperating with the AU would allow the transmission of its input across the entire continent. This in itself would be an appealing effect that should motivate the interest of this NGO to foment cooperation with the AU in the short-term future.

Relating to the precise issue of non-governmental organizations participation in the management of early warning information, the CRDA's Advocacy and Good Governance Forum Coordinator indicated that:

-The organization has not been active in this field, but recognizes the possibilities that it could have if early warning would become an institutionalized objective of the organizations-.²⁰⁵

The fact that the CRDA encompasses such a large number of organizations, many of which have projects at local communal levels, allows this project to believe that it has the potential to recollect information on the emergence of possible violence through out Ethiopia, and disseminate it in a compact and coherent manner from its headquarters in Addis Ababa and to the African Union once the Continental Early Warning System is established. In addition it could share its experience in managing information networks that include a considerable set of diverse actors with the AU for the institutional development of the CEWS. These two policy objectives could be incorporated within the CRDA's work, through the possible establishment of a Forum for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building. Unfortunately, cooperation with the AU in the field of peace and security is still a distant objective of the CRDA and even more in the precise question of early warning information management. In this regard, the contact affirmed the belief that a big gap exists between African civil society and the African Union. This can be explained as a consequence of:

-The lack of vibrancy from the part of non-governmental organizations and the deficiency of the AU of promoting the participation of NGOs in this process-.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ CRDA Advocacy and Good Governance Forum Coordinator (2005) in conversation with the author

²⁰⁶ CRDA Advocacy and Good Governance Forum Coordinator (2005) in conversation with the author

Which in themselves were believed to be a direct outcome of the idea that the issues discussed in this project are:

*-Still very new in Africa and the African Union is still a very young and inexperienced organization-.*²⁰⁷

The nuance that is the subject of early warning cooperation between non-governmental actors and an organization as the African Union, and the fact that the institutional consolidation of the latter is still at an early stage are thus the two sources for the gap mentioned by the contact. What is interesting to highlight here is the conception that NGOs themselves have some responsibility in not being able to acknowledge their role in this field of work; unlike a more generalized understanding that the AU is to blame for not being able to successfully bridge the gap that exists between pan-African political institutions and their citizenry. These issues will be discussed in greater detail through out this chapter.

Finally, and although none of the persons which took part in the discussions was clear on the future possibilities of the CRDA participation directly in issues of conflict management and peace-building, the organization is part of the Peace Tree Network (PTN). This is a solidarity forum of organizations that are working with issues of peace, justice and reconciliation in the Eastern Africa, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, and is a rallying point for the participation of NGOs from these region in the worldwide Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC) initiative.²⁰⁸ From this perspective, the participation of the CRDA in pan-African programmes for conflict prevention is more likely.

The Role of the CRDA and Conflict Theory:

Although the CRDA has never participated in the collection and dissemination of early warning information, it could of course have a role to play. Regardless of their institutional policies and the willingness of their member organizations to participate in this field of work,

²⁰⁷ CRDA Advocacy and Good Governance Forum Coordinator (2005) in conversation with the author

²⁰⁸ PTN (2005) p. 6

a normative space for this kind of organization can be found within the model of conflict formation that was presented in this project, particularly considering its relevance to conflict early warning. Recalling Galtung's Conflict Triangle model, and the three elements that compose it, it is possible to relate it with the field of work of an organization such as the Christian Relief and Development Association. If we reduce the organization's objectives into one main area of operation, sustainable development, it is possible to identify how it can become an actor, within a theoretical model, in the field of early warning and conflict prevention.

Galtung's model presents three main and inclusive elements that can be understood to be indicators of emerging tensions: attitudes, behavior and contradiction; each representing a force in the formation of conflicts, and that if present simultaneously represent a fully articulated conflict. Non-governmental organizations, according to the arguments presented in this project, have the capacity to identify one or all of these elements due to their presence at local communal levels and their understanding of local social dynamics. The question here is how an organization such as the CRDA can participate in this process, specially focusing on its field of expertise. This is not a contradiction to the argument that NGOs regardless of their objectives and mandate have a role to play in the collection and dissemination of early warning information. Instead it seeks to identify how early warning itself can be operationalized through various perspectives and points of involvement from the part of NGOs. Decomposing the model into separate elements can be a tool to clarify the role of non-governmental organizations within early warning and within a theoretical perspective to early warning. If CRDA's main objective, and expertise, relates to sustainable development it can be placed in a better position to identify a certain element in the Conflict Triangle model. Sustainable development relates to the standard of life of a certain population, and to the set of comprehensive solutions for the obstacles it confronts in order to improve its living conditions, while preserving natural resources and ecosystems.²⁰⁹ In simple terms, sustainable development is concerned with the problems people have to achieve a better living standard. Their problems, within Galtung's model, relate to the element of contradiction; as issues that create a dispute. Consequently, the field of sustainable development works with some of those

²⁰⁹ GDRC web-resources November 11, 2006

underlying conditions that generate conflicts such as poverty, lack of resources, lack of education, and alienation of communities.

An organization as the CRDA can be able to notice circumstances where the latter conditions can evolve into disputes, and with enough time as to allow some sort of preventive measure to be taken. Evidence clearly shows that poverty and especially the competition for access to scarce resources such as water and land have constantly evolved into violence between communities. As the theory states, these conditions represent incompatible goal systems that influence the formation of conflicts.

5.2. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO):

The Ethiopian Human Rights Council is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan and non-political organization which was established in 1991. Although it was established by Ethiopian nationals, and is registered under the Ethiopian Government, it has support committees in major cities of Europe, the United States of America and Canada. These are coordinated to a great extent, but not exclusively, by Ethiopian diaspora interested in the human rights situation in their country of origin.²¹⁰

The EHRCO has three fundamental objectives:

1. “To strive for the establishment of the democratic process
2. To promote the rule of law and due process
3. To encourage the respect for, and monitor violations of human rights in Ethiopia.”²¹¹

In order to achieve these objectives the organization has campaigned for the acceptance of international conventions, covenants, charters and declarations relating to the respect of human rights by the Ethiopian government. In addition, EHRCO organizes seminars and workshops to promote its objectives, and publishes periodicals and books on the human rights

²¹⁰ EHRCO (2003) pp. 2-3

²¹¹ EHRCO (2003) p. 2

situation in Ethiopia. Finally, the organization monitors human rights violations and has published twelve regular and 22 special reports on the matter.²¹² This last characteristic is of great interest to this project.

According to a discussion with the EHRCO's Acting Director, on the 3rd of December, 2005, the organization is the only independent NGO in Ethiopia to report on the human rights violations being committed in the country. For this precise reason they are under constant threat from Ethiopian security forces which have accused two of their staff members on the counts on treason. Regardless of this situation, the organization still has the right to publish its work and has continued to do so in a periodic manner.

*-The work done by the EHRCO is intimately related to the production of early warning information, particularly with regard to the probable emergence of ethnic conflicts within Ethiopia-.*²¹³

Through this affirmation, the contact strengthens the understanding that human rights violations are a primary source of violence and thus must be considered as relevant early warning indicators of conflict; in this case communal violence between different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. On the other hand, the significance of the information produced by the EHRCO is dependant on it being utilized by legitimate actors in an attempt to prevent human suffering and disputes between communities in the country. Unfortunately, the only authority, with the capacity to act, to which the EHRCO presents its findings, is the Ethiopian government itself.

With respect to the question of cooperation between the Ethiopian Human Rights Council and the African Union, particularly referring to the prospect of the AU developing a continental early warning system, the organization's representative gave a set of demonstrative opinions on the manner they perceive cooperation with the AU to be. The EHRCO has worked with the

²¹² EHRCO (2003) pp. 4-5

²¹³ EHRCO Acting Director (2005) in conversation with the author

African Union in issues relating to the institutional consolidation of the AU Commission on Human and People's Rights, but does not value their relation as positive.

-The EHRCO finds the African Union to be completely unreceptive and uninterested of the reports that it produces on human rights violations in Ethiopia-.²¹⁴

Further more, the organization regards the AU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as having no voice in the condemnation of human rights violations in the continent. The degree of credibility that the Africa Union, in particular, represents for the EHRCO is minimal. Even though the two have worked together, the latter has failed to recognize the way in which former has acted to promote the respect of human rights in the continent. The consolidation of the AU Commission on Human and People's Rights has seemingly not provided enough evidence of the commitment that the AU has in working with such issues; at least not until the day in which this conversation took place.

For this reason, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council refused an invitation from the African Union to attend its Summit (November, 2005) in Banjul, The Gambia.

-The decision was taken because EHRCO realized that cooperation with the AU, at this point, is useless and brings no added-value to the activities performed by the EHRCO-.²¹⁵

In this sense, the organization prefers to cooperate with international non-governmental organizations interested in the protection of human rights in Africa, and with donor countries. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (U.S.A.) and The Foundation for Democracy in Africa (U.S.A.) where identified as being more interested in their work, and more active in promoting its cause. In addition, it was highlighted that upon its establishment, the EHRCO had no support from the United States' Department of State but now is regarded with utmost respect. The underlying argument in this discussion was the realization that organizations foreign to the issues that drive the EHRCO's work seem to be more interested in cooperating

²¹⁴ EHRCO Acting Director (2005) in conversation with the author

²¹⁵ EHRCO Acting Director (2005) in conversation with the author

and listening to them, than the African Union which has its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Again, the question of credibility arises from the opinions presented, but this time compounded by the lack of authoritative presence that the AU seems to continually reflect upon the population, especially in Ethiopia. The episodes of political violence that took place in this country after the general election of May 2005 were never condemned by the African Union and thus generated a especially high level of resentment from the population and from those organizations monitoring these episodes, against the AU's commitment to uphold its principles.

Finally, it must be stressed that the organization acknowledges the need to have an African Union capable of enforcing the respect of human rights within its member states, and active in utilizing information produced by independent NGOs as a means to identify threats to civilian population in the continent.

The Role of the EHRCO and Conflict Theory:

The Ethiopian Human Rights Council can be utilized as another example to demonstrate the manner in which NGOs can participate in the early warning of conflicts, and within the theoretical framework developed by Johan Galtung. As the work and the activities performed by the EHRCO are focused on a more specific field, it is easier to explain its space within this argument, in comparison with that presented for the Christian Relief and Development Association.

Finding a place for the EHRCO within in the Conflict Triangle model is dependant on understanding what human rights monitors actually do, and what are human rights violations. An organization which monitors human rights in essence surveys the methods used by the authorities, and other actors in society, to enforce or to violate the conditions set forth by international agreements on human rights. A human rights violation is any act to negate the standards set forth in these agreements. The EHRCO thus focuses on the behavioral representation of violence between certain social groupings.

Logically, human rights violations do not occur as independent and sporadic incidents, but carry behind competing interests and attitudes of mistrust, using Galtung's terminology. Human rights violations, unacceptable and contemptible as they are, are performed for a purpose which in itself relates to a conflicting goal-seeking system; a contradiction. This is not ignored in this argument, but for the purpose of focusing on a single element in the model, a human right violation is analyzed as an act; a mode of behavior. Thus an organization like the Ethiopian Human Rights Council has the capacity to report on behavioral patterns that can warn of the emergence of violent conflict.

5.3. Action Aid – Ethiopia:

Action Aid – Ethiopia is the national office of Action Aid International in Ethiopia. The latter is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1972 as a charity association in Britain. From its origin it worked to provide specific services to individuals living in conditions of poverty and with difficulties securing a proper living standard. In addition it established a child-sponsorship programme. Progressively its activities evolved from specific service provision to comprehensive participatory community development programmes. Since 2003, Action Aid established a new institutional framework becoming Action Aid International with head offices in Johannesburg, South Africa, and operating in 47 countries worldwide. It is stated by the organization that their programmes positively influence the life of 13 million people. Furthermore, it is worth to highlight that it participates, in Africa, in development of continental poverty reduction policies through an established partnership with the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), and in cooperation with the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), the African Women's Economic Policy Network and the Africa Leadership Forum.²¹⁶

Action Aid – Ethiopia, as stated before, is Action Aid International's country office in Ethiopia, and as such it is registered under the Ethiopian government as a non-governmental organization. Operating with a completely local staff, its main areas of work are the

²¹⁶ Action-Aid web-resources October 20, 2006

prevention of HIV/AIDS infection, the care and treatment of its victims, family relief, peace-building, food provision and education.²¹⁷

In a conversation with the organization's Policy Development Officer, on the 7th of December, 2005, at its national headquarters in Addis Ababa, it was possible to identify how Action Aid - Ethiopia perceived its participation in issues relating to peace and security. From a short conversation with the contact two very clear conclusions were possible to identify.

*-Action Aid - Ethiopia does not consider itself an actor with the responsibility to directly work in conflict prevention or early warning-.*²¹⁸

Even though the organization's description states that peace-building is one of its main areas of operations in Ethiopia, its approach is restricted to more traditional development project work. Regarding the specific subject of early warning and conflict prevention, it was acknowledged that the organization is working with issues and in projects that can serve as channels for the identification of early warning information, but that it does not see itself as providing that kind of insight, and does not elaborate any sort of early warning reports.

Upon further discussion, the contact mentioned what he understood to be a programme that the organization was carrying out that could better relate to the field of early warning of communal conflict.

*-Action Aid – Ethiopia manages information about social inequalities in the Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region in South-western Ethiopia. This relates to situations in which certain communities are constantly being oppressed by others-.*²¹⁹

This information is highly relevant as early warning but is not treated as such by the organization. This is a clear representation of the lack of recognition, from the part of NGOs with access to such information, that they have a role to play in facilitating the prevention of

²¹⁷ Action-Aid web-resources October 20, 2006

²¹⁸ Action Aid – Ethiopia Policy Development Officer (2005) in conversation with the author

²¹⁹ Action Aid – Ethiopia Policy Development Officer (2005) in conversation with the author

conflicts in the communities where they operate. In comparison to the experience of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, the information collected by both organizations is probably very similar; the difference lies in the understanding they have about the use that can be given to their findings. The EHRCO acknowledges early warning as part of its work, while Action Aid – Ethiopia has not, probably in the sake of focusing on their original mandate and objectives.

With respect to Action Aid – Ethiopia's relationship with the African Union, its Policy Development Officer was very clear in affirming that there was no cooperation agreement between the two.

*-Why study the African Union?-*²²⁰

Using a derogative tone, the purpose of this study was put in doubt as the relevance of the AU was not appreciated. Again, this project foresees that this conception might change positively in the near future as NEPAD will become the African Union's official development programme. It is not clear why Action Aid and the CRDA have managed to frame cooperation agreements with NEPAD and not with the African Union, particularly considering that the three organizations share their physical presence in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Some explanations for this phenomenon will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The Role of Action Aid-Ethiopia and Conflict Theory:

The case of Action Aid-Ethiopia as a potential actor in the field of conflict early warning, in particular within Johan Galtung's model, is very similar to that of the CRDA. This is due to the fact that both organizations have similar objectives and similar focuses; both are development NGOs. As such, they address the same problematics and the same conditions that can generate contradictions and disputes over competing interests between communities at a local level. This is not to affirm that their role in the early warning of conflicts is exactly

²²⁰ Action Aid – Ethiopia Policy Development Officer (2005) in conversation with the author

the same, nor that they have no relevance or role in identifying behavioral and attitudinal elements that can act as drivers of violence, but the general analysis of its field of expertise and the type of projects it conducts can allow them to understand and recognize contradictions more proficiently. For example, the case of the SNNPR-project represents a situation in which issues of authority, access to resources and ethnic tensions can evolve into communal violence.

5.4. Médecins Sans Frontières – Belgium (MSFB) – Ethiopia:

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF - Doctors Without Borders) is an international humanitarian aid organization dedicated to the provision of medical services to people in crises situations and in conditions of extreme poverty in over 70 countries.²²¹ MSFB is the Belgian branch of MSF and is registered as an NGO under the Ethiopian government's Disaster, Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) and the Regional Ministry of Health.²²²

From a conversation with MSFB-Ethiopia's Coordinator for Logistics, on the 29th of October, 2006, it was possible to elaborate a concise idea on the organization's views on the issue of early warning. According to the contact,

*-MSFB has often been recognized as having the commitment to inform the international community of situations detected in our project areas; situations considered being of grave danger to civilian populations and that need to be address by the international community. MSFB came to exist in order to be able to complement the work already being undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by being able to speak-out about certain episodes noticed with the presence in the field. The first teams to represent the organization in crisis situations were thus comprised of medical staff and journalists, in order to perform their dual mandate of providing relief medical aid and the reporting of their experiences.-*²²³

²²¹ Médecins Sans Frontières web-resources October 29, 2006

²²² MSFB-Ethiopia Coordinator of Logistics (2006) in conversation with the author

²²³ MSFB-Ethiopia Coordinator of Logistics (2006) in conversation with the author

In the particular case of MSFB-Ethiopia, the organization was active in condemning the fact that during the 1983-1985 famines the Ethiopian government was utilizing food aid granted by the World Food Programme for political purposes. In addition it spoke out against a resettlement project that was being undertaken at the same time, and that was concluded to be causing grave suffering to the population. By doing so, and publicly portraying their position on these two scenarios, the organization was expelled from the country by the Ethiopian government which was at the time ran by the Derg Regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. This precise example relates to the previously mentioned difficulties that NGOs have in participating in early warning; non-governmental organizations could often be inclined to ignore sensitive situations taking place in their area of influence in the sake of not jeopardizing their original mandate and mission. The fact that MSFB recognizes the idea of having a voice as an institutional objective, allows it to put at risk its mandate as a medical relief organization. This is certainly not the case of other organizations which are compelled to focus on their primary field of expertise regardless of situations emerging in their surroundings.

Because of the fact that MSFB has, through out its history, reported on situations it has been witness to, it has established the need to have expatriate staff in its field projects.

*-In crisis situations the local staff will usually not be considered neutral or impartial and thus their involvement in disseminating information might place their life and integrity at risk.-*²²⁴

To a certain extent foreign nationals, as outsiders to local social dynamics, are perceived to be non-aligned to any of the parties involved in a dispute. As stated by the contact, MSFB seeks to be close to the communities it is working with, but in situations of danger sees its role as of un-active witnesses. Again, the issue of safety comes up as an obstacle in the participation of non-governmental organizations in the collection and dissemination of early warning information. For this reason, MSFB has made a conscious attempt to secure the integrity of its field staff through the presence of expatriate workers. This is not the case of many other organizations, particularly local and indigenous NGOs, and those international

²²⁴ MSFB-Ethiopia Coordinator of Logistics (2006) in conversation with the author

NGOs which have implemented policies to promote the complete staffing of their projects with local workers, such as Action Aid International.

With respect to the question of cooperation with other non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations in managing early warning information, the Coordinator of Logistics highlighted the willingness of MSFB to communicate their observations to other actors, but only if always maintaining their independence and neutrality from the issues at hand. The organization has addressed problematics it has witnessed to organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union, and the European Union, but will never take on the responsibility of becoming agents in the political resolution of disputes, for example, by participating in conflict negotiations.

*-MSFB will under no circumstance be part of an umbrella organization.-*²²⁵

In addition it was mentioned that MSFB, according to institutional policies, will in no circumstance be part of an umbrella organization. Independence is a primary value for the organization and a practical tool in the achieving its objectives; being perceived to be too close to any other actor might hinder their ability to perform their work. In sensitive circumstances, where emotions and half-truths are constantly emerging from communities, it is necessary to maintain the sense of neutrality with great care. Sudden shifts in the perception that local people have towards an organization may completely obstruct their ability for perform their work.

A vivid example of this is evident in MSFB's involvement in the Darfur crisis in The Sudan. As affirmed by the contact, the organization's field staff in the region was at one point the only NGO able to move with relative freedom to give assistance to the victims of the conflict. This was due to the fact that other non-governmental organizations and the UN were perceived to be linked with a certain actor involved in the crisis.

²²⁵ MSFB-Ethiopia Coordinator of Logistics (2006) in conversation with the author

*-Being the only actor able to reach a considerable amount of locations and communities, MSFB was witness to grave suffering and distress from the part of the civilian population, but decided to keep silent due to the fear that by voicing our observations we would lose the right of accessing those communities where other NGOs could not.-*²²⁶

At a later stage, when the conflict received greater international attention and other organizations had access to more locations, MSFB decided to condemn the circumstances through international media sources. This in turn resulted on the incarceration of two of its expatriate staff members. In any case, this example evidently portrays situations where organizations may be forced to choose not to inform about situation on the ground for the sake of accomplishing their original objectives.

The Role of MSFB and Conflict Theory:

Placing an actor of the characteristics of MSFB within Galtung's model of conflict formation follows a similar argument than the one presented above with regard to the Ethiopian Human Rights Council. Its role in identifying the elements in the model that serve as early warning indicators is related to its capacity to witness behavioral representations of violence. To a certain extent its function is restricted to only this element. Do to the nature of its field operations and its expertise, MSFB acts as a pure witness to the events that unfold in the areas where it carries on its mandate and may not have the adequate knowledge to understand the background conditions of what is taking place. In a situation such as the one confronted by the organization in the Darfur crisis, this is certainly the case. In other circumstances, where MSFB has long-term field projects, such as community hospitals or rehabilitations centres, they may have access to other sources of knowledge, apart from observation, that allow them to understand local social dynamics.

Referring again to the example of MSFB's operations in Darfur, the value of the organization, vis-à-vis the positive arguments previously presented on the role of NGOs in early warning of conflicts, is greatly restricted to its presence in the places where events take place. Seeing and

²²⁶ MSFB-Ethiopia Coordinator of Logistics (2006) in conversation with the author

witnessing events is another determining factor for non-governmental organizations to have a role in early warning; even if they do not necessarily understand the dynamics of social interaction in a certain local setting. Without a doubt, visual access to events is sometimes more relevant than any other way of interpreting a crisis. If the analysis is restricted to these precise cases, MSFB can generate early warning signals from actual things that occur, in other words, the behavior of the actors to a crisis. This is of course relevant to the organization's capacity to operationalize the elements that Galtung presents in his Conflict Triangle model that can serve as early warning indicators.

5.5. The International Committee of the Red Cross Geneva (ICRC) – Switzerland:

Considering the International Committee of the Red Cross in this chapter and for the purpose of this study is not a straightforward endeavor, as was the case with the previously mentioned organizations. The definition of the ICRC as a non-governmental organization demands the consideration of a broad conceptualization of the term. Although it is defined as a private, “independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and armed conflict”²²⁷, it has been granted an official international mandate by the states that have ratified the Geneva Convention, particularly in the active promotion of International Humanitarian Law. “The legal basis of the ICRC activities and humanitarian initiatives in the international community have been provided by the four 1949 Conventions, their 1977 Additional Protocols, Articles 5(2) (a) and (g) of the Statue of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as the Headquarters agreements with various countries.”²²⁸ The ICRC and the entire Red Cross – Red Crescent Movement, of which it is its founding body, are initiatives that even if having an official status within international law, still operate independently from the structures of any particular state. For this reason it can still be considered a non-governmental organization, even if it is considered borderline case.

The inclusion of the ICRC within this study serves the purpose of presenting an organization that has an institutionalized cooperation framework with the African Union that dates from

²²⁷ ICRC web-resources November 7, 2006

²²⁸ Ewumbue-Monono (2004) p. 2

the times of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The ICRC Permanent Mission to the OAU was established in 1992. Even though the ICRC may also have a valuable role in the collection and dissemination of early warning information, within the conceptual principles of this project, the focus of this section will be on the organization's perceptions towards the African Union and the value it gives to their mutual cooperation, especially in the field of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In addition, the organization's participation in the planning and development of the AU Continental Early Warning System will be discussed.

In a conversation with the Deputy Head of the ICRC's Permanent Mission to the African Union, these issues were brought up and discussed, creating a clearer picture of the nature, and the present stance, of AU-ICRC cooperation. This meeting took place at the Mission's Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the 13th of December, 2005. The relationship between the two organizations is based on one primary issue, the promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in conflict situations within the continent. From this starting point other ad-hoc cooperative projects have taken place, including joint IHL Dissemination Activities, cooperation in initiatives such as the World Disarmament Campaign and the Campaign Against Antipersonnel Mines, and training and capacity building programmes for African military officers. Finally, jointly organized roundtables and symposiums on specific issues relating to IHL have been conducted.²²⁹ This endeavor opens the opportunity for joint AU-ICRC discussions on issues relating to early warning and conflict prevention and in which even other non-governmental organizations could participate with the purpose of developing the African Union's capacities and mechanisms to prevent conflicts. Unfortunately, and according to information gathered for this project, this has not taken place.

According to the contact, cooperation today between the ICRC and the AU in issues relating to International Humanitarian Law is framed by an agreement to conduct brainstorming meetings every two years on specific needs for the promotion of IHL in African conflict situations. These meetings take place with representatives of the AU Commission's Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Social Affairs. As a result, the ICRC

²²⁹ Ewumbue-Monono (2004) pp. 41-42, 56-57, 70-73, 75-77

has launched a study on the relevance of International Humanitarian Law in the protection of internally displaced peoples in Africa (2005) and a report on Customary International Humanitarian Law (30.10.2006). In issues concerning conflict prevention and early warning, cooperation between the two organizations has not been as active as it might have been hoped.

*-The ICRC has not been actively involved in the process of building up the AU Continental Early Warning System (since it has not been invited) since May 2005, to any discussions on the subject.-*²³⁰

The possibility that the organization had cooperated with the African Union in this project prior to the arrival of the contact to the office was left open, but could not be confirmed during the conversation. In any circumstance, any advancement in the development of the CEWS achieved from the day in which the Protocol of the PSC was approved and May 2005 does not represent a critical stage in its establishment.

Regardless of ICRC's participation in the process of building up the AU CEWS, and in the actual collection and dissemination of early warning information, it was stressed through out the discussion that the AU needs to involve field organizations with knowledge on local social dynamics. This was not just highlighted as a re-affirmation of the idea that NGOs working in the field have a greater capacity to manage early warning information, but also acknowledging their input in the actual process of institutional building of the AU CEWS. This recalls the earlier mentioned conception that NGOs don't only have the capacity to participate within the African Union as providers of early warning information, but also as agents in the development of the institution itself, as stipulated in the Protocol of the Peace and Security Council. In the case of an organization such as the ICRC, one would expect that it would have a vast amount of knowledge and experience that would serve in the development of the AU and the CEWS. Particularly, the ICRC could be insightful in the management of cooperative relations with a vast spectrum of organizations that work and report information from areas where security is a sensitive issue.

²³⁰ ICRC Deputy Head of Mission (2005) in conversation with the author

*-Organizations working in the field understand the logistical requirements to participate in an early warning system better than civil servants based at AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa.-*²³¹

Their ideas on how best to integrate themselves into the AU CEWS are thus necessary in building up the system as such. Regrettably, and as a recurrent idea of the discussion, this understanding seems not to be translated into actual practice even if it is conceived in the Protocol of the PSC. If the ICRC, which has an established long-term cooperation agreement with the African Union, has not been asked to participate in the process and its vast expertise and experience in dealing with conflict situations was not properly utilized, the prospects of other organizations being active participants in building the AU CEWS are not very positive.

Finally, and complementary to the perception of other organizations presented in this chapter, and to the overall motivation of this research project, the Deputy Head of the ICRC Permanent Mission to the AU, and the Head of Office who briefly participated in the conversation, stressed the idea that:

*-Africa needs the African Union and hopefully all the effort that is being placed in its development will result in an efficient capacity to prevent and manage conflicts, and protecting civilian populations from the scourge of war.-*²³²

5.6. The NGO-African Union Gap – Explaining the Causes:

From a review of the major themes discussed in the conversations presented above, it is possible to identify an important lack of understanding and cooperation between non-governmental organizations working in Africa, and the African Union; regardless of the NGOs' field of expertise, size or country of origin. For example, from the organizations selected in this study, the ICRC and MSFB are international NGO with foreign staff in their mission to the AU and in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council and the CRDA are local organizations with local staff, and Action Aid is an international NGO with a staff

²³¹ ICRC Deputy Head of Mission (2005) in conversation with the author

²³² ICRC Head of Mission and Deputy Head of Mission (2005) in conversation with the author

composed completely of local workers. The gap that exists between these two actors is not a normative law, nor is it an invariable phenomenon. In the field of peace and security, it is possible to name a series of NGOs that have been able to cooperate with the African Union in issues concerning the operational architecture established by the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council. These organizations have considerable levels of expertise and the resources which allow them to conduct large scale projects with African regional organizations. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, these organizations are dedicated to the analysis and development of security policy in Africa. For example, organization such as the Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria, South Africa), the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (Durban, South Africa) and SaferAfrica (Pretoria, South Africa) have actively participated in building the AU's capacity to respond to the continent's security challenges. The fact that these organizations are all located in the Republic of South Africa raises some questions on the reasons why some NGOs are cooperating with the AU while others have not been able to. It is difficult to think that the country of origin of an organization has direct a bearing in this question, especially considering African NGOs. Perhaps the most important explanation for this phenomenon is the understanding South African organizations may probably have access to more significant financial and human resources. On the other hand, this would not explain the observations regarding all but one (EHRCO) of the organizations surveyed in this project. Therefore, the field of expertise must be a determinant in the case of these three NGOs as they are specially focused on studying security sector policies in Africa. In this regard it is not known to the author why South African organizations have a particular interest in this field of study and practice, but it is clear that this element, together with that of institutional resources, play an important role in explaining the reasons why these three organizations have been able to cooperate with the AU. Still, they are exceptional cases considering the amount of NGOs working in Africa and with projects focused on matters of peace and security.

Logically, a great proportion of the NGOs operating in Africa do not have the capacity or the know-how to embark in large-scale capacity building programmes with the AU, nor do they have the need to do so. The purpose of this project is demonstrate that NGOs in general, have a role to play in the operationalization of the African Union's Continental Early Warning

System and in this sense should be allowed the channels to integrate and actively participate in the mechanism. Respected non-governmental organizations operating at local communal environment, regardless of their field of expertise or their resource capacity, can offer their comparative advantage in the collection and disseminations of early warning information within the AU CEWS, and thus must be allowed the possibility to do so.

Regrettably, and as previously expressed, the intensity of cooperation between the NGOs selected in this study and the African Union is still low, and the perceptions that some of these NGOs have towards the AU are especially negative. For example, the cases of the EHRCO and Action Aid-Ethiopia are particularly demonstrative in this regard. Therefore, in this section an attempt will be made to expose the main problems that are causing the forth-mentioned AU-NGO gap and to understand the conditions that have generated these problematics.

The first theme that can be identified from the conversations with the organizations is the lack of credibility that the African Union has in the eyes of civil society in the continent. This was particularly noticeable from the discussions conducted with the Ethiopian Human Rights Council and Action Aid –Ethiopia. The representatives from these two organizations were openly critical about the capacity and the will of the African Union to carry on its mandate successfully. For instance, the question posed by the representative of Action Aid – Ethiopia on the purpose of conducting a research project about the African Union exemplifies this conception. Not seeing the worth of research on the AU demonstrates the lack of significance that these organizations give it, and the negative perception they have for its future consolidation. Furthermore, the fact that the EHRCO prefers to present its reports to other non-governmental organizations and/or foreign governments which have no legal authority to enforce the respect for human rights in Africa, reflects the lack of trust the organization has towards the AU's actual authority in this field. Although no statistical proof of this is available, it is believed that the great majority of Africa's citizenry has a negative perception towards the African Union, and seldom believes that it has the capabilities to effectively and efficiently achieve the goals set forth in its Constitutive Act. This is due primarily to the apparent history of inactivity and un-involvement from its predecessor organization, the

OAU, in solving the challenges that the normal African citizen was confronting at the time. Although this is not an absolute fact, and the OAU accounts for some successes, especially in the field of peace and security, its legacy is not subject to abundant praise. This can be explained not only by the lack of knowledge about positive OAU interventions, but also by the realization that the organization was assembled by an array of undemocratic national governments, many of them military dictatorships, with dreadful human rights records, and unwilling to interfere in the internal affairs of other Member States even in situations of extreme danger to peace and stability; political leaders that were for the most part addicted to power itself but not extremely interested in translating this state of authority into good governance and wellbeing for their constituencies. Of course, this reflected in the performance of the OAU throughout its history. As stated by Jeffrey Herbst (2000), the Organization of African Unity immediately upon its conception proved to be an inter-governmental mechanism to promote the rights of the state rather than those of individuals. This can be observed from the first three principles of the organization, which stressed the equality and sovereignty of states, the commitment to noninterference in the internal affairs of states and the respect to states' territorial integrity.²³³ Further more, the fact that the Charter of the OAU's opening sentence quotes: '*We the Heads of African States and Governments assembled in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*', indicates the trend that Boutros Boutros-Ghali identified as the establishment of an "Africa of Heads of States"²³⁴ and not an Africa of its peoples. In contrast to this notion, the Charter of the United Nations begins with the phrase '*We the peoples of the United Nations*'. As irrelevant or trivial as this might seem, it does indicate the level of proximity that the organization seeks to achieve with the citizens of its member states. Unfortunately, the AU Constitution maintains the same conception as the OAU Charter, but it is hoped that the outcome will be different.

In addition, it must be stated that the lack of credibility that the African Union encounters today is a direct consequence of the lack of credibility and trust that the individual member states face from their citizens, and the history of incompetence that has marked Africa's national political life in the post-colonial era. Independent African states failed to live up to

²³³ Herbst (2000) pp. 106-107

²³⁴ Boutros-Ghali in Herbst (2000) p. 111

the people's "expectations of independence, including the fulfillment of their basic human needs".²³⁵

In the case of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council's judgment, this is reinforced by the continuous disregard from the part of the African Union to the human rights situation in Ethiopia; where its headquarters are located. The conditions of insecurity and threat to the integrity of the personnel with which the EHRCO works, compounded by the sluggishness in which the AU mechanisms for the enforcement of human and peoples rights are being built, results on the critical and almost resentful manner in which it perceives the continental organization. The lack of criticism that the African Union manifested against the Ethiopian government during the period of political unrest of 2005, when civilians were killed, mass arrests were made, and the core leaders of the opposition were arrested on charges of treason, is a vivid, and unfortunately recurring, example of the motives that organizations as the EHRCO have to distrust the AU's willingness to defend the basic principles it promotes. According to Human Rights Watch, in November 2005, on the second stage of civil protest after the parliamentary elections of May, 2005,

*"Ethiopian security forces again reacted with brutality, killing at least 46 people and arresting more than 4000 in Addis Ababa and other towns. The government then ordered the arrest of several dozen opposition politicians, journalists, editors and civil society activists. Ethiopian authorities have indicated that several among them are likely to face charges of treason, which carries a potential sentence of death under Ethiopian law"*²³⁶.

In very simplistic terms, Action Aid-Ethiopia and EHRCO, and perhaps African civil society in general, lack the belief that the African Union will be able to achieve the ambitious goals set forth by its Constitutive Act. It is understandable that history and recent experiences are the basis for viewing the future with doubt, particularly if no other information is available to change this perception.

²³⁵ Nzongola-Ntalaja (1997) p. 15

²³⁶ Human Rights Watch web-resources March 16, 2007

The second theme noticeable from the conversations is thus the lack of visibility of the African Union and its operations. This was particularly evident from the conversation conducted with the representatives from the Ethiopian Human Rights Council and the CRDA, but could also be concluded from the general lack of knowledge that the rest of the organizations have about the efforts that the African Union is making to build a comprehensive peace and security architecture for the continent. The lack of positive information on the AU, and the incapacity of the organization itself to inform African civil society, and its NGOs, about its achievements and objectives, has caused the mystification of the African Union as an institution separated from its citizens and with a negative history of performance. Simply put, if the common citizen does not know what the AU is doing, it is impossible to expect that it would eventually change the opinion she has of the organization. In the field of peace and security, cases in which the AU played a significant role in preventing or managing crises are not publicly known, nor are the ambitious objectives set forth by the Protocol Relating to the Peace and Security Council. Particularly, in the case of the AU Continental Early Warning System, all of the organizations contacted, except the International Committee of the Red Cross, had very limited knowledge on the subject and absolutely no awareness of the fact that it was being developed within the African Union's peace and security architecture. The lack of physical and mediatic contact between the AU and its constituency has helped to maintain the image of doubt that Africa's continental organization has had for the past three decades. Information, and thus visibility, is one of the primary means that the organization has to gain the support of the people which it is trying to help, and is a necessity if it is to effectively integrate non-governmental organizations into its operational mechanisms. An NGO cannot become interested in participating in, for example, the collection and dissemination of early warning information within the AU CEWS if it does not know that this mechanism will exist in the near future, or if it certainly does not know that it can play an important role within it.

Attempting an explanation for the lack of credibility towards the African Union and the lack visibility from its part towards Africans in general is not a simple endeavor. It is due to a combination of factors which have guided the pan-Africanist movement away from the citizens and into closed political elites. One of these factors, and one which will be the focus

of the next sentences, is the tradition of undemocratic governance that dictated Africa's political culture since the beginning of the colonial era and that was translated to the regimes of African political elites after independence.²³⁷ "In the period between 1930 and 1990 in [Africa], state-society relations were largely characterized by unprecedented hostility and violence. The state became a violent institution."²³⁸ From records of the political systems of all independent African states presented in the African Contemporary Record (ACR - 1990-1992) it is possible to make a survey of the type of regimes that were most common in the continent by 1990. According the ACR itself, only six countries in Africa have maintained some level of multiparty democracy since independence; The Gambia, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal and Zimbabwe.²³⁹ If we seek to assess the political systems of these countries prior to 1990, it is necessary to eliminate Namibia as it gained its independence that year. Thus, from all independent African countries before 1990, only five states had maintained a regular (electoral) democratic tradition; The Gambia, Botswana, and Mauritius, Senegal, and Zimbabwe. This understanding might differ from those of other authors as this issue is highly contested. In essence, the argument holds in the idea that very few African states maintained any degree of democratic rule before 1990.

*"Unfortunately, after the departure of the colonialists, the African political elite who inherited the reins of power behaved much more like their departing masters. With some exceptions, the African political elite continued to deny the African peoples their basic freedoms and human rights."*²⁴⁰

Undemocratic regimes of the time, in an attempt to maintain exclusive control of the state relied on the use of violence to subdue opposition movements that were emerging from civil society. This was the practical expression of what Claude Ake named "the criminalization of political dissent"²⁴¹. Thus, the relationship between the state and society was characterized by mutual fear and distrust. Instead of being perceived as a complementary structure to official governmental rule, civil society and non-governmental organizations were seen as

²³⁷ Salih (2001) p. 1

²³⁸ Molutsi (1999) p. 184

²³⁹ Legum (1998) p. A-73

²⁴⁰ Salih (2001) p. 1

²⁴¹ Ake in Conteh-Morgan (1997) p. 19

destabilizing forces acting against dictatorial modes of governance. The post-colonial Africa state, as its predecessors, suppressed the general demand from its citizens to establish a truly participatory system of government; a phenomenon that resulted in the “relocation of political activities beyond mainstream national politics”²⁴². Alternative political movements and pressure groups began to emerge from within society with the aim of voicing the aspirations and dreams that were promised during the independence movement. The creation of alternative political forces thus challenged the position of the government and generated the forth mentioned tension between the citizenry and the ruling elites.

Even in countries which claimed to be committed to democratic principles of governance, the state “became suspicious and deeply opposed to the development of a strong opposition in the form of political parties, civil society structures and individual citizens themselves”.²⁴³ This by itself generated a civil society movement that confronted the official governing systems; sometimes even through the use of their own techniques of violence as a means of “expressing their disappointment with the state’s handling of the national question”²⁴⁴. As a consequence, civil society and the state became adversaries and the space for common interaction continuously became smaller and smaller, as understanding between the two parties dissolved do to physical and ideological mistrust. Using Victor Azarya’s terminology, African civil society began to *disengage*²⁴⁵ from mainstream political life, and the state grew further apart from its citizens; a process of mutual disengagement. The rift between the state and civil society organizations was bread for a century and generated perceptions of hostility and distrust which have proven to be difficult to overcome. The fact that the African Union today still has not been able to reach out to its citizens, to expose its objectives and to promote its principles and achievements, and the realization of the negative perception that African civil society has toward the organization is believed in this project to be a direct consequence of the historical legacy of undemocratic rule presented above. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that even if since the mid-1990’s Africa has submerged itself in a process of political transition towards democratic systems of governance, it is still relatively soon to

²⁴² Salih (2001) p. 2

²⁴³ Molutsi (1999) p. 185

²⁴⁴ Salih (2001) p. 2

²⁴⁵ Azarya (1994) p. 96

expect a comprehensive change in the way in which politics are conducted vis-à-vis the citizenry. The chasm between African political elites and the people is still immense, and almost a normative conception of African politics, but it is progressively decreasing in size. The *process of democratization* in Africa is influencing this process. Between 1990 and 1994, “in twenty-nine, out forty-seven seven states in the region, the first multiparty elections in over a generation were convened” and “in a smaller set of countries, elections were fully free and fair and resulted in the defeat and exit from power of the erstwhile authoritarian head of state”.²⁴⁶

Despite these advancements, the consolidation of democracy in Africa, and consequently in the African Union, is still an ongoing process located in an ambiguous grey zone in which administrative frameworks balance elements of participatory democracy and authoritarianism in what has come to be known as hybrid government regimes.²⁴⁷ Most possibly, this can explain the nature of the role that the AU Constitutive Act envisions for the participation of civil society within its mandate.

A third theme that was perceptible in the conversations was the constant failure from the part of the non-governmental organizations to acknowledge the potential they could have if they integrated issues of peace and peace-building within their own practices. Particularly, the subject of early warning was seen not to be discussed within the internal structures of most of the organizations prior to the meetings conducted for this project. Once explained about the concepts of the research and its objectives, the contacts realized the potential role that their organizations could have in this field. This occurrence was identifiable in the cases of the Christian Development and Relief Agency and Action Aid – Ethiopia. On the other hand, in the case of Médecins Sans Frontières – Belgium, the organization did work in the reporting of early warning information, but did not define it as such within their own operational culture. The fact that the normative obstacles for the participation of NGOs in early warning seldom came up as themes of the conversations is an indicator of the lack of knowledge and the lack of engagement that the organizations selected have in relation to early warning as an

²⁴⁶ Van de Walle (2001) p. 235

²⁴⁷ Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi (2005) p. 13

operational endeavor. Only from the conversations with the EHRCO and MSFB did the issue of personnel security come up as a hazard of early warning, and only from the conversation with the MSFB did the dichotomy between early warning and organizational objectives (the original objectives of an NGO) come up as a problem for an NGO to participate in this kind of work.

Furthermore, and focusing particularly on the development of the AU Continental Early Warning System, the realization that the organizations could have an active role in the mechanism was inexistent. This, off course, is a phenomenon directly related to the issue of visibility discussed previously in this section. Of all the organizations approached just the ICRC had knowledge of the African Union's attempts to establish a continental early warning system in the continent, let alone, the proximity in which this system is planned to be operationalized. Consequently, without knowledge on the AU CEWS itself, it is difficult to expect NGOs to acknowledge their potential role in it and to understand the channels through which they could be integrated into the process of collecting and disseminating information for the AU. In addition the actual technical know-how on the requirements to produce useful early warning information is absent. Logically, this problematic is not completely caused by the African Union's lack of visibility, and its incapacity to breach the gap that separates it from NGOs in Africa, it is also due to the un-involvement from the part of civil society in actively participating in fields such as early warning. Using the terminology employed by the CRDA's Advocacy and Good Governance Forum Coordinator, African civil society lacks the vibrancy needed to actively engage its expertise in the field of peace work and in establishing a more vigorous process of cooperation with the African Union. This is due to the novelty that are the subjects of early warning and AU-NGO cooperation for the non-governmental organizations themselves.²⁴⁸

In this same line of thought, a second attempt to present an explanation on the gap that exists between the African Union and non-governmental organization in Africa can be built from combination of the fact that the AU is still a very young and inexperienced organization and that it constantly confronts a limiting lack of resources to fund its programmes. Four years

²⁴⁸ CRDA Advocacy and Good Governance Forum Coordinator (2005) in discussion with the author

after the installment of the African Union, and two years after the operationalization of its Peace and Security Council, the organization has been obliged to focus its limited resources to the management of grave humanitarian crises in Burundi (2003) and in Darfur (The Sudan, since 2004). This has hampered the planned development of the mechanisms set forth in the Protocol Relating to the Peace and Security Council. An example of the general resource deficiencies that the organization has to manage every year can be observed from the differences between the actual AU Budget for the year 2005 and the annual indicative budget proposed by the AU Commission's Strategic Plan 2004-2007. According to Dr. Maxwell M. Mkwezalamba, AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, the actual budget in 2005 was US\$ 158 million²⁴⁹, while the Commission's strategic plan proposes an annual budget of US\$ 571 million²⁵⁰ to complete the objectives set forth between the years 2004 and 2007. In addition, funding mechanisms supported by the international community, such as the European Union's African Peace Facility, which are in part meant for capacity building programmes, have had to be funnelled to covering the operational costs of the AU's peace support mission in The Sudan (AMIS).²⁵¹ For this reason any attempts to develop programmes that might relate with the issue of bridging the forth mentioned AU-NGO gap, enhancing the visibility of the organizations among its citizenry, and promoting the participation of non-governmental organizations within its own operational mechanisms, such as the AU CEWS, have been crippled by the lack of financial resources.

All in all, the problematic that is integrating non-governmental organizations into the AU's Continental Early Warning System must be seen as a consequence of a combination of all the factors presented above. The history of adversity between the African state and civil society, the lack of knowledge and experience in the field of early warning, and the lack of financial resources have compounded to create the situation presented in this study. Perhaps other explanations still exist, but it is believed that the ones discussed in this chapter give a significant account of the complexities that this subject entitles without disregarding the possibility that this problematics can be overcome in time.

²⁴⁹ Mkwezalamba (2005) pp. 2-3

²⁵⁰ AU Commission (2004) p. 74

²⁵¹ Reyes & Langinvainio (2006) p. 37

6. IGAD'S SUCCESS IN INTEGRATING NGOS INTO THE CEWARN EARLY WARNING MECHANISM:

The integration of NGOs into the AU's Continental Early Warning System has proven to be a problematic process in the consolidation of a comprehensive pan-African peace and security architecture. Even though the legal framework of the Peace and Security Council calls for the inclusion of such actors into its support mechanisms, the gap that exists between African political elites and civil society has not been easily overcome. Even if democracy is progressively cementing itself in the continent and the process of political integration has achieved considerable successes in the last six years, the operationalization of civil society participation in peace and security mechanisms is still lagging behind. At a continental level, the participation of NGOs in the field of early warning is taking time to consolidate and the short-term future of the CEWS does not seem to indicate any considerable change. But, within certain regional mechanisms this situation has been different. The integration of NGOs into institutional early warning systems is not a practical impossibility and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is an interesting example to support this idea.

This section will shortly introduce the IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) as a positive illustration of an institutional approach to conflict prevention that has been able to effectively utilize the comparative advantage that NGOs offer to early warning. The IGAD CEWARN system serves the purpose of demonstrating the likelihood of integrating governmental and civil society actors in effective mechanisms for conflict prevention. Arguably, the complexity of the CEWARN system is less than that of the proposed AU CEWS, but this does not mean that its experiences cannot be assimilated as examples in the operationalization of the latter. The fact that IGAD has been able to understand the role that NGOs can play in the early warning of local communal conflicts and that it has been able to integrate these organizations into its mechanism must be seen as a demonstration that the AU can and must do something comparable. In addition, the CEWARN experience allows revealing an institutional mechanism that has overcome the

restrictions that national governments have tended to place on the participation of civil society actors in issues of peace and security.

6.1. CEWARN's Policies and Structures of Cooperation with NGOs:

Since the consolidation of IGAD as a relevant regional inter-governmental mechanism in the Horn of Africa in 1996, its member states (The Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia) have consistently worked to strengthen the organization's mandate in the field of peace and security. In this process, the need to establish an efficient early warning mechanism was acknowledged and rapidly integrated into its short-term objectives. The Khartoum Declaration, signed in November 2000, endorsed this initiative and paved the way to the establishment of what is now the CEWARN; an operational regional early warning and early response mechanism. The political drive behind this effort emerged from the realization that the region was plagued with political and communal instability, and that these phenomena had to be address through regional channels. The 1990's vividly portrayed this situation. "State collapse in Somalia due to internal conflict, the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, 30 potentially threatening inter-communal conflicts, a great number of endemic violent cross-boarder pastoral conflicts, and the continuous threat of inter-state wars arising from cross-boarder inter-communal and inter-clan conflicts have raised the need for the establishment of the CEWARN."²⁵²

After a year continuous consultations between IGAD's member states, the organization's Council of Ministers signed the Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism in January 2002 and instituted the legal and logistical framework through which the system would be operationalized. According to this document, CEWARN's main functions would be to:

- "To collect information and data using specific indicators and a standardized reporting tool.

²⁵² IGAD (2005) p. 6

- To analyze and verify information and collaboration among IGAD Member States on early warning and response.
- To establish and manage databases on information for early warning and response, including information sharing with other organizations.
- To communicate recommendations on policy and response options to decision-makers through national Conflict Early Warning and Response Units (CEWERUs).²⁵³

For this purpose IGAD has established a comprehensive structure of cooperation between the main structures in its early warning system. In a simplified manner, the CEWS is build around four main organs, the Committee of Permanent Secretaries, the Technical Committee on Early Warning and Response (TCEW), the CEWARN Unit and the seven national CEWERUs. Each of these offices has a specific task in the management of early warning information within IGAD’s territorial jurisdiction and is mandated to strengthen the organization’s cooperation channels with external actors involved in the field of early warning, including regional civil society organizations.

The Committee of Permanent Secretaries is designed to form a coordinating mechanism within the overall IGAD early warning structure and is composed by representatives of the organization’s executive branches. According to Article 9 of the Protocol on the Establishment of CEWARN, this organ brings together Permanent Secretaries to IGAD, or equivalent ranks, from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the seven member states, the organization’s Executive Secretary, the Director of Political and Humanitarian Affairs and the Coordinator of the CEWARN Unit.²⁵⁴ Within its overall functions lies the facilitation of coordination between CEWARN’s headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the seven national CEWERUs. In addition, the Committee shall be the link between CEWARN and IGAD’s higher executive bodies; the Assembly, the Council, and the Secretariat. Within this framework, and relating precisely with the issue of civil society participation in early warning, the Committee is responsible for reporting and making recommendations to the Council in the area of “cooperation between governments and civil society in early warning and conflict

²⁵³ IGAD (2005) p. 7 and IGAD (2005) p. 3

²⁵⁴ IGAD (2002) pp. 6-7

management”.²⁵⁵ This is the first example, within the CEWARN Protocol, of the recognition of need to include civil society actors in the mechanism and of the commitment to strengthen the degree of cooperation between civil and governmental institutions as a primary means for the success of CEWARN. In addition, this statement marks a contrast with the existing AU guidelines on the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System which do not designate any specific responsibility to any organ within the CEWS in matters concerning coordination with civil society and non-governmental actors. The fact that IGAD has established a high level mandate for the evaluation of cooperation between Member States and civil society most probably indicates the degree of political will that the organization has towards the integration of non-governmental actors into its early warning system. As it was established before in this project, a precondition for the efficient participation of non-governmental organizations in early warning systems such as that being developed by the African Union is the political will of governmental and inter-governmental authorities to recognize their comparative advantages and consequently utilize them effectively.

Following, the Technical Committee on Early Warning and Response is identified as the second coordinating structure within IGAD’s early warning mechanism. This office has the responsibility of promoting cooperation between the seven national CEWERUs and their host governments and between the CEWERUs and the CEWARN Unit. In addition, it is entitled to review the mechanism’s information sharing channels and propose the amendments to the Protocol that it sees necessary for improving the manner in which data is transmitted through the different levels of the system. Furthermore, and again dealing with IGAD – civil society relationships, the Technical Committee, as the Committee of Permanent Secretaries, is assigned a role focused on the facilitation of civil society participation in CEWARN. In this case, Article 10(2)(e) states that the Technical Committee on Early Warning and Response shall “liaise between civil society and the Secretariat”.²⁵⁶ In order to facilitate this endeavor, the committee shall be composed of the heads of all national CEWERUs, the coordinator of the CEWARN Unit, and “one representative from civil society or one representative from an

²⁵⁵ IGAD (2002) p. 7

²⁵⁶ IGAD (2002) p. 8

independent research institution of each member state”.²⁵⁷ In this case, it possible to observe that not only has IGAD recognized civil society’s role in the field of early warning but it has allocated it participation in the construction of CEWARN as such. Within the framework of the TCEW, civil society organizations (NGOs and Research Institutions) are not only required to provide early warning information to the system, but are involved in framing the policies and procedures through which their own information is processed and utilized. This level of involvement given to civil society organizations within CEWARN is worth recognizing and marks a clear division with what seems to be the role allocated for these organizations within the AU CEWS. In addition, this approach represents the ideas presented in the conceptual chapters of this thesis with respect to the role of NGOs in the institutional development of early warning systems; an idea re-enforced by the opinions of the ICRC representative approached for this project.

Thirdly, the CEWARN Unit defines the third level of coordination within CEWARN. In this case, it provides the system with the hub in which early warning information is received, processed and reported to the entities responsible for deciding on the vehicles of preventive action available to IGAD; within its legal and operational capabilities. In addition, it is responsible for the management of the organization’s database on information for early warning and response. In relationship to civil society organizations, the Protocol on the Establishment of CEWARN does not provide the Unit with any specific responsibilities of cooperation; instead, it is given the freedom to “establish collaborative relationships, including information sharing, with similar international, regional and sub-regional mechanisms in Africa”.²⁵⁸ The CEWARN Unit also has the authority to recommend response strategies for the situations that it evaluates, but does not have the legal authority of deciding actual preventive mandates.

Finally, the seven national CEWERUs provide IGAD with the adequate mechanisms for the collection of field-based early warning information in each of its member states. In other words, these organs come to be CEWARN’s main operative branches responsible for

²⁵⁷ IGAD (2002) p. 7

²⁵⁸ IGAD (2002) p. 5

gathering specific data on the emergence of tensions at local communal environments. Apart from the actual collection of early warning information, the CEWERUs are entitled to perform preliminary analyses of the accumulated information, formulate possible response strategies, and prepare periodic conflict early warning reports from their areas of jurisdiction.²⁵⁹ In order to enhance their capacity to efficiently collect information, IGAD has recognized the need to ensemble, within the CEWERUs, a comprehensive body of actors that could allow the system to access data from a wide spectrum of sources. As it has been stated previously in the project, the collection of early warning information must be seen as an interdisciplinary endeavor. For this purpose, each CEWERU is composed, among others, by what are denominated the *CEWERU Steering Committees*. According to Article 11 of the CEWARN Protocol, these organs shall be composed of the following actors:

- a. “Representatives from the central government;
- b. Representatives from the parliament;
- c. Representatives from the provincial authorities;
- d. Police;
- e. Military;
- f. Representatives from civil society, including religious organizations;
- g. Academic institutions;
- h. Research institutions;
- i. Such other representatives as individual governments may designate.”²⁶⁰

Although the congregation of such a diverse and sometimes conflicting assembly of participants may be complicated, if carried out within a sincere and committed atmosphere of cooperation, it can result in a comprehensive forum of information sharing that can only assist in guaranteeing the effectiveness of CEWARN. As the sources of conflicts in Africa, the sources of early warning information are multiple. Unarguably IGAD has in principle design a framework through which CEWARN can access them with relative facility and where different perspectives can be discussed in order to produce deep interpretations of complex

²⁵⁹ IGAD (2002) p. 9

²⁶⁰ IGAD (2002) pp. 8-9

situations on the ground. Most importantly, the fact that the organization has recognized the need for multi-level and multi-disciplinary cooperation in early warning is an aspect to recognize and one that must be seen as a benchmark for any emerging regional or continental early warning system in Africa and in the entire globe. In this sense, it is important for the argument of this thesis to stress the significance placed by IGAD to the work of civil society organizations in this field. Their capacity and the comparative advantage they provide in collecting early warning data from local communal environments vis-à-vis other actors is constantly highlighted throughout the Protocol on the Establishment of CEWARN. For example, within the operational framework of the CEWERUs' it is stressed the need to liaise "with civil society groups involved in collecting information at the grassroots and other levels".²⁶¹ This conception comes from the idea that "IGAD could benefit from the fact that civil society groups often work at a grass-roots level thus have levels of access that could significantly enhance government action"²⁶².

The realization for the need to integrate civil society organizations into inter-governmental early warning systems in Africa is strengthened by IGAD through the *Operating Guidelines for CEWARN* (Annex to the Protocol on the Establishment of CEWARN). Part II of the document, under the title: *Information*, presents an underlying feature of the kind of early warning information that is being sought by the organization; one that allows to recognize the space that civil society organizations have within its overall operative framework.

Paragraph 1 of the forth-mentioned Part II states that:

"CEWARN shall rely for its operations on information that is collected domain from the public domain, particularly in the following areas:

- a. livestock rustling;
- b. conflict over grazing and water points;
- c. smuggling and illegal trade;
- d. nomadic movements;

²⁶¹ IGAD (2002) p. 9

²⁶² Schmeidl, Mwaura & Adelman (2002) p. 175

- e. refugees;
- f. landmines;
- g. banditry.”²⁶³

In the same line, Paragraph 3 continuously reaffirms the idea that the primary sources of information for the previously selected indicators must be present at a national and local level. In addition, the following paragraph calls for Member States to “promote the involvement of the following partners as sources of information:

- a. other governments;
- b. humanitarian agencies;
- c. non-governmental organizations;
- d. individuals;
- e. the media;
- f. the academic community;
- g. community based groups”.²⁶⁴

*“The model proposed for CEWARN is based on an inclusive system that integrates civil society (at a national level) into the processes of information collection and analysis as well as decision-making. This is important, as it implements the spirit of the Khartoum Declaration and builds a solid foundation for a more comprehensive approach to peace and security in the IGAD region.”*²⁶⁵

As the significance of CEWARN for the overall argument of this thesis is determining, a conversation was carried out with Mr. Raymond Kitevu, CEWARN Head of Conflict Analysis, on the 15th of December 2005 at the CEWARN Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The objective of this meeting was to gather his opinions about the participation civil society organizations in early warning and to understand to a greater the degree the manner in which CEWARN has been able to successfully operationalize this idea.

²⁶³ IGAD (2002) pp. 13-14 Annex

²⁶⁴ IGAD (2002) p. 14 Annex

²⁶⁵ Schmeidl, Mwaura & Adelman (2002) p. 175

*-The use of local expertise is needed-.*²⁶⁶

The underlying theme of the conversation with Mr. Kitevu was the need to understand that only with knowledge of local social dynamics, and the access to this information, can an early warning system be able to identify evidence of emerging violence at a point in time when preventive measures are still able to be taken. For this purpose IGAD has valued the capacities of civil society organizations and has worked to utilize them in the operational functioning of CEWARN.

-The role of NGOs is based on their capacity to access information and present it in an unbiased form; this is specially important in a region where governments seek to control the dissemination of information on sensitive issues as those treated by an early warning system.-

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*-Civil society organizations were recruited, chosen and mandated by IGAD according to their field of expertise. The organization has established cooperation agreements with the Africa Peace Forum (Kenya), the Centre for Basic Research (Uganda), the Inter-Africa Group (Ethiopia) and the Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Khartoum (The Sudan).-*²⁶⁸

Not only does these statements reaffirm the significance of civil society-based early warning information, it also opens the discussion on how has IGAD been successful in opening up its early warning system to a wide variety of non-governmental and non-military actors considering that it is an organization that is coordinated by seven national governments that do not have a strong tradition of respect to democratic principles and the rule of law. The explanation for these phenomena is not clear, nor has it been subject to considerable research, but one can attempt to briefly touch upon a couple of explanations. This can be done with the purpose of finding possible counter arguments to those presented in the previous chapter as impediments for the participation of NGOs within the African Union's Continental Early Warning System. Certain degree of similitude can be identified in the background conditions

²⁶⁶ Raymond Kitevu (2005) in conversation with the Author

²⁶⁷ Raymond Kitevu (2005) in conversation with the Author

²⁶⁸ Raymond Kitevu (2005) in conversation with the Author

to the operationalization of non-governmental actors in both the CEWS and the CEWARN systems.

6.2. Explaining IGAD's Success in Integrating NGOs into CEWARN:

The question here would be on how intergovernmental mechanisms manage to incorporate and operationalize practices that its Member States do not necessarily carry out in their own countries.

In an integrated early warning system, in which each Member State is an equal partner, it could be possible that the better regimes or the best practices of each state would become the normal practice within the system. In other words, in a mechanism where states are mutually responsible and mutually dependent on each other for the functioning of the system itself, there is a logical possibility that they might feel obliged to perform within the highest existing standards. The best practices within the arrangement would become benchmarks for the behavior of each individual state and for the system itself. This could possibly be the case within the CEWARN and within several other peace and security mechanisms in Africa that seem to function with a higher degree of openness, democracy, and accountability than the individual states that institute them; for example the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) own early warning system. With respect to the notion of benchmarks and best practices, it is necessary to refer to the role of external actors. To some extent, external actors pressure regional organizations to follow a certain set of operational guidelines considered as acceptable to international standards of good governance. On the one hand, one needs to consider that "regional organizations are closely connected to the UN world and hence under the socialization pressure of the UN"²⁶⁹. This means that regional organizations as building blocks of the United Nations peace and security apparatus, as stipulated in the UN Charter (Chapters VI and VIII), must to some degree feel obliged to follow the standards of the UN as a way to maintain a level of respectability among its peers. On the other hand, the fact that regional organizations such as IGAD are funded and supported by international donors makes them comply at least in principle with the guidelines set forth by their

²⁶⁹ Stefano Guzzini (2007) in email communication with the author

cooperation partners. To a great extent, the need for external financing of their project makes regional organizations comply with the standards with which further support will be guaranteed; their own operational success becomes dependent on foreign aid. The extent to which they actually follow these guidelines is another question, but with regard to IGAD it would appear that the performance of the organization is commendable. As a contradiction to this argument, one could finally argue that national governments, particularly in Africa, are also dependant on foreign aid and have continuously failed to achieve the standards established by the donor community in issues of respect for the rule of law, good governance, human rights and democratization.²⁷⁰ This brings us back to the original question on why regional organizations can perform differently from the individual nation states that form them.

Another argument on this regard can be framed from a more pragmatic perspective. Within a regional framework as that of IGAD, with all the security related difficulties mentioned above, its Member States might be compelled to follow the normative guidelines of an efficient early warning mechanism motivated by the practical necessity of diminishing the burden of conflict in the region and in their national territory. Possibly a naïve point of view and one that can be counter-argued with relative ease, it does not lie outside the realm of logic. Particularly considering the existence of cross-boarder disputes that require consequent solutions, individual states would have to adhere to the guidelines accepted by the regional mechanism entitled to treat such situations. This argument is dependent on the latter in relation to the need for best practices to be accepted as operational guidelines of the regional early warning system and the existence of Member States willing and capable of pursue them.

Finally, a third argument could centre on the conflicts and the other security situations that are treated within the CEWARN mechanism. At this point in time, IGAD has concentrated its resources in monitoring the emergence of violence between pastoralist communities in two main locations: The Karamoja Cluster which is the cross-boarder area of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, and the Somali Clusters in the cross-boarder regions of Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. These two target locations, complicated and volatile as they are, are

²⁷⁰ Lars Buur (2007) in email communication with the author

geographically remote from the administrative centres of each affected state. In addition, pastoralists communities are not known to carry any great national political weight in the Horn of Africa. For these reasons the open treatment of these situations by non-governmental and non-military actors in CEWARN might not be such a politically sensitive subject for the national governments of the Member States. Furthermore, the political cost of pastoralist disputes being treated outside the closed environment of a national government may not be as high as it would be if it involved, for example, more powerful ethnic groups. It is not easy to predict that the performance of CEWARN, and the relative independence that it currently has, will be maintained once it expands its operations and starts treating conflicts in other countries and in other sectors of society. This explanation is supported by Mwaura, Nyaba, Otim and Gebreselassie (2002) as they analyze the ways in which CEWARN has been able to open a space in which it can operate freely within the states, and has enjoyed the endorsement of the national governments; this of course against a background of lack of trust and cooperation between the actors participating in the mechanism. This was thus solved by taking a narrow approach to the operationalization of CEWARN, choosing only those areas where national governments would be willing to cooperate. The expansion of the system to other areas will be a result of the success of CEWARN at this level and the trust it can gain from the member states. As the mechanism's protocol establishes, the ultimate goal of CEWARN is to cover a comprehensive set of conflicts and geographical regions; this will take place in the long-term development of the system and through a progressive and incremental process of expansion.²⁷¹

Regardless of the explanation for such a phenomenon, the reality tells that IGAD has been able to successfully integrate civil society actors into a quite respectful regional early warning system; Professor Howard Adelman, a highly respected scholar in the field of conflict prevention and early warning, has described it as “absolutely remarkable”²⁷². This gives hope, and raises the commitment, for the African Union to be able to do something comparable despite the structural difficulties that hamper governmental-civil society relationships in Africa. The experience of existing regional mechanisms has to be used an

²⁷¹ Mwaura, Nyaba, Otim & Gebreselassie (2002) pp. 147-148

²⁷² Adelman (2004) in IGAD (2005) p. 5

example for the African Union in their attempt to build an effective early warning system without duplicating the mistakes and difficulties that other organizations have already committed in the past.

-The African Union's Continental Early Warning System has to be built on the input of the Regional Mechanisms, while the AU should act to expand de capacity of existing regional early warning systems and build the one that are yet not operational.-²⁷³

Finally, when asked about the current role of non-governmental organizations, and other civil society actors, in the institutional development of the AU CEWS, Raymond Kitevu presented a perspective that was not previously conceived by this project, but that sees a more positive degree of participation from these actors in the establishment of the pan-African system. According to him,

-civil society organizations are playing a big role in building regional early warning systems, for example those developed by IGAD and ECOWAS, so in that sense they are giving input to the AU CEWS.-

To some degree this affirmation is true, at least to the extent by which the African Union relies on its regional partners to build its own early warning system. In principle this is the case and the Roadmap for the Establishment of the CEWS so indicates. On the other hand, the idea that the African Union has not been able to open direct communication channels with civil society organizations is indicative of the chasm that exists between governmental and non-governmental actors in the continent. Indirect participation of NGOs in the institutional development of the CEWS will most probably result in the absence of direct channels of participation for this type of organizations in the operationalization of the system as such.

²⁷³ Raymond Kitevu (2005) in conversation with the Author

7. CONCLUSIONS:

Studying the integration of non-governmental organizations into the African Union's CEWS has proven to be a task far more complicated than it was expected at the beginning of this project. It is a topic that has not been subject to any type of focused research from the part of academics or action-oriented researchers with more experience and capacity to perform such an endeavor than that that was employed in the drafting of this Master's Thesis. In addition, the simple fact that the consolidation of the AU CEWS is still an ongoing process makes it difficult for research to be able to be conclusive in its analysis and in the evaluation of its development. Perhaps the broad nature of the observations and conclusions that can be identified through out this project are a direct consequence on the ambiguous state in which the operationalization of the continental early warning mechanism is currently at. Furthermore, the complexity of the issues being studied is increased when focusing on the precise subject of the role and integration of NGOs within the CEWS. This is by far a more problematic question as it has been subject to almost no serious debate. In this regard, this research project reflects to a great extent the character of its main subjects of analysis, and to the resources that were available to the researcher in its elaboration. Of course, this argument is not intended to deny the fact that mistakes were made at different stages of the research process, and that the inexperience of the author in conducting academic research and in studying peace and security issues in Africa is reflected in the outcome of this work.

On the other hand, it is believed that a very relevant analysis of the factors that are affecting the integration of non-governmental organizations into the AU CEWS has been done, and that although results may perhaps be thin, they are still substantial and important for the study of peace and security problematics in Africa. More importantly, as it is thought that this is the first serious research project on this particular issue, it serves as a significant first-step for further studies to be performed. If in fact this thesis motivates more comprehensive studies of the role of NGOs in the field of early warning and in institutional mechanisms for early warning in Africa, it would have served its purpose.

With this in mind, an evaluation of the research process will now be conducted in order to understand the factors that have allowed this paper to be concluded and to possibly understand in which ways future projects on the subject could be improved. Furthermore, a final conclusion on the prospects of NGO participation in the AU CEWS will be presented as a means to bring together the main points that have been discussed throughout this Master's thesis.

7.1. On the Achievement of the Project's Objectives:

The objectives of this research project have evolved as the research process itself has evolved and as the author has understood the subject to a greater extent. Perhaps the first conception of what this Master's thesis could produce was framed by the lack of knowledge about the complexities that the subject encompasses and by not recognizing the limitations that existed in gathering all the information that was at first thought to be possible. Being confronted with the realities in the ground, particularly in terms of realizing that the subject was a new issue to the majority of the people approached, and on recognizing that finding sources of information, both in terms of quantity and quality, was not an easy task, the expectations for what could be achieved in the project were adapted.

The idea of generating specific conclusions about what NGOs perceived of the AU CEWS was not possible because of the fact that the organizations that were approached had no deep knowledge of the process through which this mechanism is being developed. In addition, the idea of producing a set of actual field experiences, from the part of NGOs, about how they could participate in the CEWS was not as fruitful as it was expected because most of the organizations that participated in the research had no previous experience in working with early warning. Both of these problems could have been tackled if the author had access to a greater amount of NGOs, and particularly NGOs active in the field of early warning and conflict monitoring. Unfortunately, as the field research was restricted to only organizations located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, it was not possible to locate that sort of NGOs with ease. From the knowledge gathered throughout the research, the most experienced non-governmental organizations in the field of early warning are located in Kenya, Ghana, and

South Africa; locations that were not accessible to the author due to lack of resources and because other than face-to-face channels of communication (e.g. email) were not effective. Furthermore, if more time would have been allocated to identifying and interviewing more NGOs, instead of searching for published work, it would have been possible to gather a more comprehensive set of informants for the project.

Notwithstanding, a comprehensive normative account of the role that NGOs can bring to the field of conflict early warning was developed through the use of academic and action-oriented research. In addition, some studies on the actual work of NGOs in collecting, analyzing and communicating early warning information were found in the literature and allowed a certain confirmation that normative conceptions on this subject are valid in reality. Finally, the analysis that was carried out on the participation of NGOs within IGAD's early warning mechanism allowed to conceive the possibility that civil society actors can have a role in institutional early warning systems in Africa.

With regard to the objective of demonstrating that non-governmental organizations do have an important role to play in early warning, in institutional early warning mechanisms, and specifically in the AU's Continental Early Warning System, it is believed that the project has been successful to a great extent. A considerable amount of arguments in favor of this understanding were presented and supported by an important quantity of sources; it was an overriding theme in the project. Through the review of normative academic discussion, the collection of NGO perspectives, the analysis of official policy papers developed by the African Union, the presentation of the IGAD CEWARN mechanism, and interviews with both Mr. Ahmed Mokhtar Awed (AU) and Raymond Kitevu (IGAD), it was sought to develop a complete rationalization of the fact that the AU can and should integrate NGOs into its early warning mechanism.

Complementarily, the previous argument was counter-posed with the reality of current NGO-AU relations as a means to identify the problems that have hampered a higher degree of cooperation between the two actors, principally in the field of peace and security. The conclusions that resulted from this endeavor were considerably broad, possible to be

generalized to the experience of many NGOs and to the nature of post-independence African political history. Precise problems of actual and concrete AU-NGO relationships of cooperation in early warning were not possible to be presented as none of the organizations approached in the project had any experience in this regard. On the other hand, it might be possible to think that particular and case-specific problematics are the result of broader, underlying issues as the ones discussed in this project.

Finally, the last objective of conducting this research project was the personal wish to learn about Africa and about the African Union. In this regard, it is believed that a clear picture of the continent's process of political integration was discovered by the author, specially focusing on issues of peace and security. A good understanding of the AU's policies on this field was developed through the analysis of both published literature and policy papers and from the possibility of visiting the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and discussing with some its personnel. Indeed, experiencing the African Union personally leads to its more comprehensive understanding, and to the recognition of its achievements and of its capabilities. Although this project is critical of the performance of the organization in seeking to integrate NGOs into its early warning mechanism, it has tried to maintain a level of constructiveness motivated primarily by the recognition of the positive evolution that the AU had had since its foundation. The challenges are great but not impossible to overcome.

7.2. On the Research Methods used in the Project:

As it was defined in the introductory chapter of this thesis, three main research methods were used to complete this research: literature review, interviews, and a comparative study of the information obtained from the interviews. With regard to literature review it must be said that it served its purpose by allowing the development of conceptual framework of the project, its analytical framework, and the understanding of AU policies in the field of peace and security. Furthermore, it made it possible to explain the difficulties that the integration of NGOs in the CEWS is facing, in addition to presenting the analysis of IGAD's CEWARN system as an example of the prospect of NGOs being integrated into inter-governmental early warning mechanisms in Africa.

Semi-structured conversations (interviews) carried on with representatives of NGOs, AU, and IGAD, allow the collection of information on the perceptions that these actors had on the issues discussed in the thesis. The fact that the conversations were carried out in an open and flexible manner allowed the presentation of ideas that were not necessarily official statements from the organizations they represented. The latter was certainly not the objective of this approach, instead the author sought to gather opinions and perceptions from people that have some degree expertise on the issues of the project or from people that eventually could play a role in the CEWS. The problematic with this endeavor was not related to the method itself, but with the way it was carried out by the researcher. Firstly the selection of the targeted NGOs might have been naïve, as it was expected that those organizations chosen would have more knowledge of the subject of the thesis in comparison to what they actually knew. This was a finding in itself, but didn't allow the development of more specific ideas on the role of NGOs in early warning and on the relationship between NGOs and the AU. For example, field experiences were just presented by the contact working for Médecins Sans Frontières. This would have been extremely interesting and useful for the project, but unfortunately, the other organizations were not able to provide this kind of information. Secondly, the way in which the conversations were organized was not as systematic as it should have. Most conversations took place spontaneously, without prior appointment; except those conducted with the MSF-B and the ICRC. This didn't allow the contacts to prepare the subject of the discussion and seemed to decrease the level of seriousness and attention that the contacts gave to the conversation; notwithstanding, all the contacts seemed kind and interested in the research. On the other hand, un-planned meetings result on spontaneous answers, perhaps more honest and less attached to official-diplomatic institutional believes. This was a positive outcome of the approach used but in general the way the meetings were arranged is seen as a negative. Finally, the questions selected for these conversations were effective as they motivated constructive discussions on the main themes of this Master's Thesis.

As a clarification, the interviews with the AU and IGAD staff were carried on after appointment. They served the purpose of complementing official policies of the organizations they represented.

Lastly, from the conversations conducted with the representatives of the five selected NGOs, a comparative analysis of their ideas and opinions on the matters of the thesis was done. This allowed the development of arguments for the gap that exists between NGOs and the AU; the problematics that are making the integration of NGOs into the CEWS difficult. Although this analysis concluded with very interesting and enlightening conclusion, having had the possibility of approaching more organizations would have been useful considering the information that was gathered from those selected. In contrast, if the organizations had more expertise in the subject, a small sample would have been enough. As a research method, the comparative analysis is believed to have been the appropriate manner of producing the conclusion mentioned above. The possible vagueness of the conclusions is thus not a result of the method used to produce them but a consequence of the problems identified when the information was being collected.

7.3. On the Prospects of NGO Participation in the CEWS:

Developing any kind of certain conclusions about the prospects of NGOs participating in the AU's Continental Early Warning System once it is fully operational is very difficult. The fact that the system is still being build implies the risk that the problematics identified in this project can be overcome at any moment in time, making this project outdated. In any case, it must be said that the evidence presented through out this thesis is clear in acknowledging the idea that the African Union is not fully defining the role for non-governmental organizations in the CEWS that one might insist for; specially with regard to the normative role that action-based research has established and considering the example of IGAD's CEWARN system. As it was expressed before, do to the nature of the subject of this research project, concrete features of the CEWS cannot be presented because they are in a process of evolution. Instead, policy trends determined the findings that are presented. In this sense, it is believed that these trends are consistent with the empirical data that was collected from the interviews conducted with the representatives of the five NGOs.

As a final conclusion, it must be said that two themes were the overriding features linking all the chapters of this Master's Thesis. The great majority of the discussions presented in this paper eventually trickled down to two main issues: information and political will. The success of conflict prevention, early warning, and NGO-based early warning is conditioned by the existence of these two factors; furthermore the value of the IGAD CEWARN system is based on the operationalization of NGO-based early warning through the understanding of their comparative advantage and through the political will of its Member States to do so. Logically, the success that the AU will most probably achieve by building its peace and security architecture and particularly its CEWS is also intimately related with the understanding the benefits of NGO participation within its structures and also with the development of an administrative culture that favors both conflict prevention as the primary means of approaching the emergence of violence and the inclusion of NGOs as valuable partners in this endeavor. This conception will hopefully result in the generation of a virtuous cycle of decision making in which positive politics will allow for more and better channels of information sharing, and consequently more comprehensive information sources will positively influence the capacity of decision-makers to take action. As it was stated in this project, paraphrasing the words of Michael Lund, where there is a way there most likely might be a will. This phrase defines the motivation and the core understanding of this project. Effectively integrating NGOs into the African Union's Continental Early Warning System is thus as one means of creating the conditions for an effective conflict prevention mechanism in the continent.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Cover Letter and Questionnaire:



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Web: <http://www.ossrea.net>

Information Request
Master's Thesis Research Work

Life and Peace Institute - Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Firstly let me begin by warmly thanking you for taking the time to read this introduction and the questions that follow. The purpose of this inquiry is to gather the perspectives that your organization has on the issues I have chosen to be the primary focus of this research project.

This project is an attempt to understand and promote the role of civil society organizations as indispensable actors in the prevention of conflicts throughout the African continent. Specifically, it seeks to study the **African Union Continental Early Warning System and the Role of Civil Society Organizations in its Institutional Consolidation**. The conceptual framing of this subject came to be from the understanding that civil society organizations have a pronounced and natural competitive advantage over other actors when it comes to noticing evidence of probable conflicts at an early stage.

Considering it a relevant subject to your field of work, it is of great interest to me to be able to openly discuss about the role your organization perceives it has or could have in the soon to be established AU Continental Early Warning System (AU CEWS).

I appreciate your attention and collaboration, and hope that you will be able to agree to this request.

Sincerely,

Juan Daniel Reyes
Master's Programme in Development and International Cooperation
Faculty of Social Science and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä
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Resident Vice-President: Kassahun Berhanu

Vice-President: Linda E. R. De Vries
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Members: Grephas P. Opata
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On the Continental Early Warning System and the Role of Civil Society Organizations in its Institutional Consolidation

1. Name of Organization:
2. Country of Registry:
3. Field of Expertise:
4. Does the organization have activities at a local, national, regional, international level?
5. Is the organization involved in any way or form in the recollection and dissemination Early Warning on Conflict information? If so, what types of information does the organization manage?
6. To which organization or agency does the organization report of its findings?
7. Has the organization ever cooperated with the African Union on the field of Early Warning of conflicts?
8. Is the organization aware of any possibilities and channels of participation in the Early Warning System of the African Union?
9. What benefits and positive input can the organization bring to the African Union Early Warning System in terms of information and logistical knowledge? Would the organization be in the capacity to propose strategies and action plans to prevent conflicts from escalating?
10. Is the organization by any means impeded to participate in the early warning of conflict situations by agreements or legislation with and from its host government(s).

President: **Rosalia S. Katapa**
Resident Vice-President: **Kassahun Berhanu**

Vice-President: **Linda E. R. De Vries**
Vice-President: **Jotham C. Momba**
Executive Secretary: **Alfred G. Nhema**

Members: **Grephas P. Oyata**
Idris Salim Elhassan
Lily Mafela

Appendix 2: Historical Outline of the Development of the CEWS:

1991	African Leadership Forum – Kampala, Uganda
1992	International Peace Academy (IPA) Seminar on Africa Conflicts
1992(June)	28 th Assembly Meeting of the OAU – Dakar, Senegal: Decision to establish a Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention and Management for the OAU is taken.
1993	IPA – OAU Consultation Meeting
1993(June)	Cairo Declaration signed but does not acknowledge the creation of an early warning system.
1994(June)	OAU establishes the Division for Conflict Management and the Peace Fund. The Division is mandated to undertake activities of early warning.
1995	OAU Council of Ministers meeting accepts the proposal of the Secretary General to establish an early warning system for the organization.
1996(Jan.)	Seminar of Experts to study the modalities and networks of early warning systems
1996	Yaoundé Declaration establishes the OAU early warning system.
1998	Second Seminar of Experts: Proposal to build a rudimentary early warning system based on an internet link between a Situation Room in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Focal Point in the ground. This system included the use of NGOs, Universities, Journalists, etc. as actors in early warning. Developments in the intervening years saw the establishment of an early warning Situation Room at the OAU, staffed by four information assistants and one professional staff member (the Head of the Early Warning Unit). The unit produced two daily news reports from media sources, distributed as hard copies or via the OAU Intranet.
2000	Constitutive Act of the African Union
2002-2003	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) performs an assessment of the OAU’s early warning system and makes recommendations for the improvement of the system’s communications tools.
2002(July)	Protocol for the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council

- 2003(July) AU Summit in Maputo, Mozambique: The Heads of State of the AU mandated the Commission to take all the necessary steps to establish the Continental Early Warning System.
- 2003(Oct) Expert Workshop for brainstorming modalities for the Operationalization of the CEWS
- 2005(June) 7th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU in Sirte, Libya stresses then need to advance in the operationalization of the various bodies of the peace and security architecture proposed in the Protocol of the PSC; including the CEWS.
- 2006 Roadmap for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ This Outline was developed from information forwarded to the author by Jakkie Cilliers – 09.10.2005