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DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION (CPDC)
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**JOINT ROOM DOCUMENT 1:
CAN VIOLENCE, WAR AND STATE COLLAPSE BE PREVENTED?
*THE FUTURE OF OPERATIONAL CONFLICT EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE
SYSTEMS***

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Can Violence, War and State Collapse be Prevented?

The Future of Operational Conflict Early Warning and Response Systems

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific
APFO	Africa Peace Forum
AU	African Union
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CDA Inc.	Collaborative Learning Projects
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CEWERU	Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIFP	Country Indicators for Foreign Policy
CPDC	Conflict Prevention and Development Cooperation Network
CPP	Conflict Prevention Pool
CPR Network	Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Network
DFAIT	Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EAWARN	Network for Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EISAS	Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat
EU	European Union
EUSITCEN	European Union Situation Centre
FAST	Early Recognition and Analysis of Tensions
FCE	Foundation for Coexistence
FEWER	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response
FEWER-Africa	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response-Africa
FEWER-Eurasia	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response-Eurasia
FSG	Fragile States Group
GCPP	Global Conflict Prevention Pool
GEDS	Global Events Data System
GIGAS	German Institute for Global Area Studies
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
ICG	International Crisis Group
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IGO	Inter-governmental organisation
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KEDS	Kansas Events Data System
LICUS	Low Income Countries Under Stress
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MARAC	Mécanisme d'alerte rapide de l'Afrique centrale
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity (now AU)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PANDA	Protocol for the Analysis of Nonviolent Direct Action
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
PITF	Political Instability Task Force
PPEWU	Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (EU)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Système d'Alerte Précoce (France)
START	Stabilisation and Reconstruction Task Force (Canada)
UN	United Nations
UNDHA	United Nations Department for Humanitarian Affairs (now UNOCHA)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPA	United Nations Department for Political Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VRA	Virtual Research Associates
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace-Building
WARN	West Africa Early Warning and Response Network

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. INTRO AND BACKGROUND

The aim of this study is to support the efforts of OECD DAC members and others to better integrate conflict early warning analysis and response into their programming. The study is based on a review of the literature on early warning and response and inputs from surveyed agencies. It seeks to assess the value and role of early warning for the prevention of violent conflict and peace-building; identify the most effective early warning and response systems; evaluate strengths and weaknesses of different systems; pinpoint the obstacles to early response; and make some tentative judgments on what the role of OECD/DAC could be in influencing future developments in this field.

1.2. CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE

Conflict early warning was conceived as a means of protecting and preserving life. The field has evolved significantly since its initial conceptualisation and early warning has been integrated into the policies of many organisations. But we cannot say today that we are in a position to prevent another Rwandan genocide. Conflict early warning faces similar challenges to those it did 15 years ago. And there are new challenges on the horizon.

From initial conceptualisation in the 1970s and 1980s, conflict early warning only really emerged on the international policy agenda after the end of the Cold War when the conflict environment and the international conflict management framework evolved rapidly in response to the new geo-strategic reality. The failure to respond to the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the experiences of the Balkans conflicts were major spurs to the development of better conflict early warning and response leading to several major policy initiatives in governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental sectors.

From the start conflict early warning was envisaged as distinct from intelligence based analysis that focused on protection of state interests. It sought multi-stakeholder solutions and gender sensitivity, used open source information and aimed at protecting human lives and creating sustainable peace based on locally owned solutions. However, this approach has been overshadowed by the new Northern perception of international threats that emerged after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and consequent counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation measures taken by the United States and its allies. Those attacks also acted as a spur to growing interest in and analysis of weak, fragile and failed states.

In spite of increased resources going into early warning, key shortcomings of governmental and multilateral interventions in violent conflict remain, including faulty analysis, late, uncoordinated and contradictory engagement and poor decision making.

Conflict early warning as a field of conflict prevention is today undergoing significant scrutiny. There have been inaccurate predictions, failure to foresee important events, and inadequate linking of operational responses to warnings. From a donor perspective, the visible impacts of early warning are often seen as meagre. Indeed, at times early warning analyses can provide donor officials with political headaches, by being alarmist, offensive to other governments, or by advocating responses that are not feasible. However, proponents of conflict early warning insist that it contributes to the evidence-base of conflict prevention decision-making.

1.3. EARLY WARNING TOOLS AND SYSTEMS

The focus of this study is on tools/systems that deal with violent conflict and state fragility.

The evolution of the conflict early warning field has been driven by the advances made in quantitative and qualitative analytical tools. As the capabilities and value of these tools grew,

they were integrated into the different early warning systems operated by governments, inter-governmental organisations, and NGOs.

Significant advances have been made in quantitative and qualitative analytical tools for violent conflict and state fragility. Quantitative methods have strong predictive capabilities, particularly in relation to political crisis and instability. State fragility indices provide easily graspable “watch-lists” and help agencies working on these issues to set priorities. Qualitative methods provide rich context analysis, as well as ways to plan programmatic responses and assess the impact on violent conflicts of these responses. The more recent qualitative methods for state fragility analysis provide useful planning frameworks for programmatic responses. Qualitative tools satisfy important analytical requirements among development agencies – particularly in terms of informing programming. Numerous weaknesses persist, nonetheless. Analytical tools fundamentally over-simplify complex and fluid violent conflicts and situations of state fragility. They provide simple snap-shots that are quickly outdated and the quality of analysis suffers from data deficits that characterise many of the countries covered by such studies.

Two analytical conclusions can be drawn when it comes to quantitative and qualitative tools. First, there is no “best methodology” or “best set of indicators”. There is basic good practice in quantitative and qualitative analysis. Many methods are based on this good practice and are designed to address the needs of specific institutions. Second, the best way to use these methods is to combine quantitative and qualitative tools. This ensures the necessary triangulation required for creating a robust evidence-base for decision-making.

Early warning systems exist now within governments, multilateral agencies, and NGOs. They play different roles – ranging from giving alerts and catalysing response, to bolstering the evidence-base of decision-making, to serving as response mechanisms themselves. There is consensus on what constitutes a “good” early warning system and this good practice has been operationalised in several initiatives. Early warning systems provide: a crisis prediction capacity that enables proactive decision-making; a stronger basis for evidence-based decision-making on countries affected by crisis; improved programming through systematic country reviews and expert analysis; a priority-setting contribution through watch-list type products; a starting point for developing a shared problem definition on crisis-affected countries that sets the stage for more coherent responses; and an ideas pool for responses and sometimes the forum to meet fellow responders and plan joint response strategies. However, with a few exceptions, early warning systems suffer from under-investment. The more natural clients for early warning systems are political decision-making entities.

Nonetheless, the often poor/shallow quality of analyses, unrealistic recommendations, and biased or ungrounded opinions present in many early warning products means that “poor early warning” still remains an important cause of non-responses to violent conflict.

1.4. RESPONSE TOOLS AND SYSTEMS

Advances over the last 15 years or so in early and rapid response have been made in the range of institutions, mechanisms, instruments, and processes available to manage violent conflict – and in national, regional, and international willingness to use force in situations of violent conflict. At national, regional and international levels, capabilities to respond to situations of violent conflict and state fragility have evolved significantly. Institutional mandates for response have been strengthened, funding has increased, there is a greater range of operational tools, and mechanisms have been refined on the basis of applied experience. However, the multiplicity of actors and responses means that the problem of late, incoherent, fragmented, and confused response is perhaps greater today than it was at the time of the Rwandan genocide.

Numerous challenges are identified in the literature and in the survey of practitioners carried out by this study. First, the role of evidence in determining response (as opposed to political expediency, budgetary considerations, etc.) remains limited. Second, *ad hocism* and limited strategic thinking is prevalent. Many actors do not define or share a clear strategy for supporting

peace in violent conflict situations. The absence of such strategic frameworks leads to incoherence and uncoordinated responses. Third, sustainability concerns remain unaddressed. Whether related to macro-level strategies for stabilisation, or sector-specific approaches responses are rarely designed to outlast themselves. Fourth, stove-piped responses, based on narrow institutional interests have not been overcome. Deep divisions between security and development agencies, and a propensity for “blueprints” in responses to different countries with perceived similar problems remain problematic.

From evaluations of responses to violent conflict, several “good practice” principles have been drawn by scholars, including: (a) understand the problem, hold the “ground-truth”; (b) ensure that responses are diverse, flexible, and sustainable; (c) invest time in planning and strategy; (d) be conflict-sensitive; (e) don’t push technical solutions onto political problems; (f) balance speed, ownership and coordination. This review identifies a number of important gains from the development of governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental response mechanisms/instruments including: more rapid, coherent, and informed responses within institutions to situations of violent conflict and state fragility; perceived potential for reduced costs associated to expensive “late” responses to violent conflict and state fragility; the promotion of more consensus-based decision-making both within the bureaucracies and political leadership to crisis situations; and their role as a resource to help avoid the derailment of developmental investments by crises and conflict.

However, more mechanisms/instruments have not translated into better responses. The link between warning and response remains weak. This is due to the poor quality of early warning, immature mechanisms/instruments and response measures, along with a range of personal, institutional, and political shortcomings that affect decision making. If the problem was “that early warning is not wired to the bulb”, it may be that today there are too many “bulbs” competing with each other or not working when they should.

1.5. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE

Early warning and early response will be faced with an evolution of threats over the next decade. These threats will come from the combined impacts on conflict and instability of climate change, fall-outs from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, fall-outs of the war on terror, and the increasing criminalisation of conflict, among other factors. There is little indication of forward thinking among early warners on these critical issues. However, the future relevance of the field depends largely on work undertaken now to be able to understand and provide useful analysis on these new emerging threats.

Technological advancements have played an important role in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of early warning systems. Most inter-governmental and non-governmental systems, however, have not gone beyond the use of email and websites for dissemination, and communication technology for data collection. Governmental and some inter-governmental systems do benefit from access and resources to use satellite and GIS in their analysis and reporting. However, access to technology remains very unequal between systems.

There are several important trends in the early warning community that should be noted. First with the closure of FEWER and FAST there is now less diversity in early warning analysis at a global level. Exclusive reliance on a few sources, no matter how good they are, is not smart decision-making practice particularly on complex issues such as violent conflict and state fragility. Second, development agencies working on structural prevention see less value in early warning than before. Agencies involved in operational prevention remain interested, but current early warning systems need to consider how to shift their networking efforts to these actors if they have not done so already. Third, with increased corporate use of early warning and risk assessment tools, there are new partners to bring into the early warning fold.

In terms of early response trends, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, along with work to ensure greater government and inter-governmental coherence, there is a need to empower

officials working on conflict and state fragility (through capacity-building, etc.) to do their work well. Second, an increase in response capabilities and experience needs to be bolstered by initiatives to document and share good practice. Not doing so will constitute a missed opportunity. And third, micro-level responses to violent conflict by “third generation early warning systems” are an exciting development in the field that should be encouraged further. These kinds of responses save lives.

1.7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the balance between future security threats and trends in technology, early warning, and early response, this study concludes that the early warning and response field is unprepared for the challenges that it is likely to face over the next decades.

The study concludes with eight technical, institutional, and political recommendations to be considered by the OECD/DAC and its members:

1. Assist in the consolidation of good (quantitative and qualitative) methodological practice for conflict analysis and state fragility analysis.
2. Define and disseminate quality standards for “good early warning reports” – along with guidelines for implementing them.
3. Ensure that the forthcoming OECD Guidelines on Armed Violence Reduction includes pointers for how early warning systems can promote improved understanding of armed violence issues.
4. Commission a study and organise a conference on the role of technology in early warning and early response.
5. Ensure that early warning systems target political decision-makers and stay on their radar-screen.
6. Assess capacities-needs among decision-makers in government and international/regional organisations who deal with violent conflict and state fragility.
7. Make government and inter-governmental decision-makers more accountable for appropriate and timely response (or the lack thereof).
8. Organise a high-level conference on the warning-response link, global early warning and response architecture – and how these need to evolve to effectively address current and future threats to human and state security.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. BACKGROUND

This study of early warning and response systems has been commissioned by the OECD DAC Conflict Prevention and Development Cooperation Network (CPDC) and the Fragile States Group (FSG) as part of the joint workstream on early warning, preventive action, and collective response.

The aim of the study (and indeed of the workstream itself) is to support the efforts of OECD DAC members and other governmental, multilateral and NGO partners to better integrate early warning analysis and response into their programming. The research leading to this study was carried out over four months (December 2007 – April 2008) and involved:

- A web-based review of articles, papers and books on early warning and early response, including good practice, tools and systems;
- A questionnaire-based survey on early warning and early response sent to CPDC and FSG members and other partners;
- A questionnaire-based survey on key methodologies sent to selected agencies involved in the development of such methodologies;
- Meetings and telephone discussions with key respondents on issues that required further investigation;
- Analysis of findings and drafting of the report, including a peer-review exercise with key experts in the field; and
- Incorporation of feedback from the peer-review and client into a final draft report that was circulated to CPDC and FSG members for comment.

The reader of this study should keep the following caveats in mind:

- Because of the needs of the target audience of the study, the emphasis is placed on the operational application of early warning tools and systems rather than on theoretical and academic issues.
- The study does not review all existing early warning tools and systems. It is based on responses from surveyed agencies and a review of those tools/systems that are used by policy-makers in selected institutions.
- The study does not review all existing early response mechanisms and instruments. Rather, it is focused on a selection of funding and expertise mechanisms/instruments used by OECD/DAC members and multilateral agencies, along with a sample of NGO-led response mechanisms.
- The definitions used for “early warning”, “early response”, etc. necessarily restrict what is covered in this study. However, discretion has been used to expand coverage when deemed appropriate.
- The “open source” focus of the study means that intelligence based systems (found particularly in government agencies) are not reviewed in this study.

2.2. KEY DEFINITIONS

The scope of the study rests heavily on the definitions used. Taken from an operational angle, these include:

- *Early warning* is a process that (a) alerts decision-makers of the potential outbreak, escalation, and resurgence of violent conflict; and (b) promotes an understanding among

decision-makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict (adapted from FEWER in Schmid (1997)).

- *Early warning systems* involve regular and organized collection and analysis of information on violent conflict situations. They deliver a set of early warning products (based on qualitative and/or quantitative conflict analysis methods) that are linked to response instruments/mechanisms (adapted from FEWER in Schmid (1997)).
- *Early and rapid response* refers to any initiative that occurs once the threat of potential violent conflict is identified and that aims to manage, resolve, or prevent that violent conflict.
- *Early/rapid response systems* are one or several preventive instruments and mechanisms (political, economic/financial, social, security), informed by an early warning, that are deployed to manage, resolve, or prevent the outbreak, escalation, and resurgence of violent conflict.
- *Fragile, weak and failing states* are defined here “as countries that lack the essential capacity and/or will to fulfil four sets of critical government responsibilities: fostering an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth; establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent, and accountable political institutions; securing their populations from violent conflict and controlling their territory; and meeting the basic human needs of their population” (Rice and Stewart, 2008).

2.3. CRITICAL QUESTIONS

This study seeks to shed light on the following critical questions:

- What is the value of early warning for the prevention of violent conflict and peace-building? What role does early warning play in prevention?
- What are the most effective early warning systems? Why are they effective and what impacts do they have?
- What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of different methodologies – e.g. quantitative vs. qualitative analysis, and conflict analysis vs. assessment of state fragility?
- What does it take to prevent violent conflict? What do we currently know is good practice and what works?
- What early/rapid response mechanisms/instruments are available?
- What influences and blocks early response? What are the personal, institutional and political factors at play?
- Where should the early warning/response field go from here? What role should the OECD/DAC play?

These questions are answered in different sections of the report and revisited in the concluding chapter.

2.4. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The report seeks to explore these questions in four sections:

- *A brief contemporary historical review of the early warning field.* This chapter covers the integration of early warning into the mandates of different agencies, the evolution of early warning tools into systems, the paradigms underpinning warning and response, and the transition from first to second to third generation early warning and response systems.
- *A discussion of governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental early warning tools and systems.* This part includes a review of quantitative and qualitative tools and methods of analysis, and a discussion of current operational early warning systems.

- *Assessment of mechanisms and instruments for early response to conflict.* This chapter briefly reviews challenges and lessons for responses to violent conflict, provides an analysis of a cross-section of response mechanisms and instruments, and discusses the warning-response link.
- *Future directions for early warning and early response.* This chapter discusses some of the future trends in early warning and early response and the potential impact of emerging security threats and technological advances.
- *Conclusions and recommendations for the OECD/DAC.* This chapter reviews critical questions and the answers given in the report and concludes with recommendations for the OECD/DAC.

A separate *Compendium of Surveyed Early Warning Systems and Early Response Mechanisms/Instruments* with profiles is separately available from the OECD/DAC.

3. A SHORT CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF CONFLICT EARLY WARNING

Conflict early warning was conceived as a means of protecting and preserving life. The field has evolved significantly since its initial conceptualisation, with important contributions from many individuals and organisations over the years. Early warning has been integrated into the policies of many governmental intergovernmental and non governmental organisations and agencies. Both the concept of early warning and individual systems have been subject to numerous reviews and debates. Many different tools and methodologies have been developed. We have witnessed the rise (and fall) of a number of different early warning systems. However, can we say today that we are in a position to prevent another Rwandan genocide? We cannot. Conflict early warning faces similar response challenges to those it did 15 years ago. And there are new challenges on the horizon. Our ability to protect and preserve life in the face of war remains weak as Darfur, DR Congo and Iraq show all too clearly.

Charting a short contemporary history of the conflict early warning field is not easy. The field draws heavily on work in many sectors (early warning for natural disasters for example), and has benefited from thinking, research, and advocacy by numerous individuals and organisations. This chapter seeks to explain initial thinking behind conflict early warning and looks at its emergence on the international policy agenda. It outlines the evolution of operational early warning systems after the end of the Cold War and particularly after the Rwandan genocide in 1994. It reviews the initial debates on early warning among implementing organisations. It also discusses the evolution of different tools and methods (e.g. conflict assessment and analysis of state fragility) and of individual operational early warning systems. The chapter concludes with a review of the main points of criticism and challenges with which proponents of conflict early warning need to engage.

3.1. FROM THE FIRST THINKERS TO POLICY INTEGRATION

The conceptualisation of early warning as applied to violent conflict gained momentum as early as the 1970s and early 80s. As explained by Rupesinghe (1989), thinkers such as J. David Singer (1979) applied forecasting to war and Israel Charney (1982) explored the application of early warning to genocide prevention. Specific international proposals for an early warning system were made by the Special Rapporteur, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan in his report on Massive Exodus and Human Rights delivered to the UN Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights on 31 December 1981 (Rupesinghe, 1989).

The initial drivers, however, of early warning at an international level were humanitarian agencies (e.g. UNHCR, UNDHA and others), driven by the need for accurate and timely predictions of refugee flows to enable effective contingency planning. The establishment of the first conflict prevention NGOs, such as International Alert in 1985, and their advocacy for early warning also pushed thinking forward internationally.

The end of the Cold War had a positive impact on the international framework for conflict prevention, enabling among other things sustained cooperation on conflict management, including conflict prevention in the UN Security Council. At the same time the end of the Cold War had both negative and positive impacts on the evolution of conflict environments in various parts of the world. In some areas it contributed to an easing of tension and the ending of long running conflicts. In others it triggered new conflicts and transformed old ones into new kinds of armed struggles. International policy makers were forced to focus on new intra state conflicts in the Horn of Africa, West Africa, the Balkans and elsewhere.

These developments were behind the June 1992 report to the Security Council of the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peace-Keeping". In it, he laid out aims for UN engagement, the first being "to seek to identify at the earliest possible stage situations that could produce conflict, and to try through diplomacy to remove the sources of danger before violence erupts." "Preventive steps", the report also said, "must be based upon timely and accurate knowledge of the facts. Beyond this, an understanding of developments and global trends, based on sound analysis, is required. And the willingness to take appropriate preventive action is essential." (United Nations, 1992) At a regional level, policy integration moved a step closer to implementation in June 1992 with the formal initiation by the OAU of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, a unit for conflict early warning in Africa (Cilliers, 2005), though it took some time for this to develop into anything very effective.

The failure to prevent the Rwandan genocide in 1994 underlined the weaknesses of regional and international mechanisms for early warning of and response to mass violence. The multi-government evaluation of the international response to the Rwandan genocide concluded that "pieces of information were available that, if put together and analyzed, would have permitted policy-makers to draw the conclusion that both political assassinations and genocide might occur" (Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996). These conclusions and the critical questions raised in the study (why were the signals that were sent ignored, and why were they not translated into effective conflict management?) spurred several international policy initiatives.

- The *OECD DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace, and Development Co-operation* (1997) specified the importance of conflict early warning in catalysing early response. The *Guidelines* highlighted the need to support networks with early warning, monitoring, and analytical capabilities.
- The *Final Report* of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (1997) stressed the need for early warning, stating that "the circumstances that give rise to violent conflict can usually be foreseen. This was certainly true of violence in Bosnia in 1992 and in Rwanda in 1994." The *Final Report* also underlined the need for local solutions to violent conflict and the need for early international responses to support these.
- The *Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations* (2000), commonly known as the "Brahimi Report", placed early warning within the broader framework of UN peace keeping, stating that "without such a capacity, the Secretariat will remain a reactive institution, unable to get ahead of daily events [...]". The proposed Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS) was to consolidate the existing DPKO Situation

Centre with other policy planning offices but it was never implemented due to member state sensitivities.

- The “Brahimi Report” was followed by several policy papers issued by donor governments. The United Kingdom’s 2000 White Paper on International Development, for example, called for the implementation of the “Brahimi Report” within 12 months, and spelled out the UK government’s strategy for greater cohesion in its own engagement on conflict prevention. This included the establishment of the Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools (United Kingdom, 2000).
- At a sub-regional level, IGAD Heads of State issued the *Khartoum Declaration* in 2000, stating that, “We endorse the establishment of a mechanism in the IGAD sub-region for prevention, management, and resolution of intra-state and inter-state conflicts, and direct the Executive Secretary to prepare a draft protocol on the establishment of the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for consideration by the assembly at its next meeting” (IGAD, 2000).
- The UN Secretary General’s *Prevention of Armed Conflict – Report of the Secretary General* in 2001 stressed the need for the Secretariat’s Department of Political Affairs to strengthen its capacity to carry out conflict analysis in countries prone to or affected by conflict. It stated that the “timely application of preventive diplomacy has been recognised by the General Assembly as the most desirable and efficient means for easing tensions before they result in conflict.”
- The European Commission’s *Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention* in 2001, included statements on the link between early warning and various Commission and Council instruments, stating that “A capacity for troubleshooting depends crucially on the existence of a proper EU early warning mechanism, not only to alert EU decision-making and operational centres to an imminent crisis but also to study its causes and possible consequences and identify the most appropriate response.” (European Commission, 2001)

3.2. THE INITIAL DEBATES

At an operational level, the period immediately after the genocide in Rwanda saw the establishment of several early warning initiatives in the academic and NGO community, including the establishment of the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER)¹, the West Africa Network for Peace-Building (WANEP)², the Network for Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning (EAWARN), and the Early Recognition and Analysis of Tensions (FAST), an initiative of SwissPeace. The initial debates among operational groups involved in early warning of conflict were focused on the purpose of early warning, the differences between conflict early warning and traditional intelligence work, gender considerations, the constituency and ownership of early warning systems, paradigms, and the link between warning and response.

3.2.1. The Purpose of Early Warning

There were two strands to the debates on the purpose of early warning among operational agencies. On the one hand, some argued that early warning should serve as a tool to predict the outbreak, escalation, or resurgence of violent conflict. According to this school of thought, early warning analysis as an exercise should also be kept separately from advocacy efforts on response. Such a separation was seen as necessary to ensure that early warning analysis did not lose rigour because of a need to promote one response option or another.

¹ A global network of NGOs, United Nations agencies, and academic institutions focused on response-oriented early warning that was launched in 1997.

² A West-African network of civil society organisations working on conflict prevention and later early warning established in 1997.

The other argument countered this saying that simply predicting or providing analysis on whether violence will erupt (and lives will be lost) in a given area was not in the interests of the populations living there. Rather, early warning should be linked to strong response mechanisms and advocacy efforts at national, regional, and international levels *to save lives*. This was much in the spirit of the recommendations of the Rwanda Joint Evaluation.

3.2.2. Early Warning versus Traditional Intelligence

The risks of conflating early warning with traditional intelligence work were a key concern as systems became operational. What distinguished the work of an early warning system from that of an intelligence agency? Maintaining a well defined and well publicised distinction became critical for any early warning system with a presence in areas affected by violent conflict. Perceptions that they were one and the same could greatly undermine the security of personnel and their ability to operate.

The distinction was derived from the roots of conflict early warning. As Adelman (2006) explains, early warning systems “followed the pattern of climate and humanitarian based early warning systems in adopting a global perspective and not looking at potential or actual violence from the perspective of the threat to one’s own state. Further, early warning relied primarily upon open sources in adopting a non state-centred approach to conflict management.” The reliance on open source information is important. The pursuit of multi-stakeholder solutions to conflict means that there is a dependence on transparent methods of collecting and sharing of information (Cilliers, 2005).

The debate settled on that early warning differs from intelligence in so far as open source information is exclusively used, analyses are shared across groups, systems do not serve state interests, but the interests of peace, and multiple stakeholders are involved in the process of early warning and response.

3.2.3. Gender-Sensitivity

Initial work on operational early warning benefited significantly from concurrent initiatives on gender and peace-building. The work on gender and peace-building by organisations such as UNIFEM, International Alert, SwissPeace, highlighted the need for gender sensitivity in early warning. In particular, a system that *does not* adopt a gender sensitive approach:

- May overlook indicators of conflict and peace that are rooted in negative gender-relations;
- May formulate response recommendations that inadvertently are harmful to women or detrimental to harmonious gender-relations; and
- May overlook important female actors and stakeholders, along with capacities for peace and violence.

For an excellent review of these issues, see Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002).

3.2.4. Constituency and Ownership

In providing recommendations for response, those working in early warning were quickly faced with the question of “whose peace” they promoted. What interests, some would ask, are promoted in recommendations of organisations like International Crisis Group (ICG) or FEWER? What constituency is represented in the recommendations of these and other early warning agencies?

The question of constituency was and remains closely related to the question of legitimacy, particularly for Southern civil society groups. Issuing recommendations for response as an external expert group is very different from doing so as a civil society network from a conflict

affected region. The question of constituency is also closely related to the question of ownership. Locally defined solutions, some groups argue, are more sustainable, as local ownership is a prerequisite for sustainability.

The constituency debate, in turn, is related to whether early warning systems perpetuate an interventionist paradigm – discussed below.

3.2.5. Paradigm Challenges

The paradigm within which conflict early warning was initially conceived was challenged in several ways by civil society groups working on conflict management in conflict-affected regions. They pointed out that:

- Most early warning systems would extract information from conflict areas and use this to inform interventions by Northern governments;
- International responses generally were plagued by inconsistency, lack of coordination and political bias, aside from generally being reactive and “late”;
- A state-centric focus in conflict management does not reflect an understanding of the role played by civil society organisations in situations where the state has failed; and
- An external, interventionist, and state-centric approach in early warning fuels disjointed and top down responses in situations that require integrated and multilevel action.

These arguments were reinforced by academic research on conflict management (see, for example, Smith 2003) and also gained traction among some donor agencies (e.g. USAID, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and later Norway and the United Kingdom). Funding was given to regionally based early warning systems led by local organisations, like WANEP’s WARN, or regional bodies such as IGAD’s CEWARN.

3.2.6. The Warning-Response Link

The 1996 Rwanda Joint Evaluation provided important insights into the shortcomings of governmental and multilateral interventions in violent conflict. It highlighted late, uncoordinated and contradictory engagement, as well as a range of political, institutional and individual failings and errors on the part of decision-makers. All these shortcomings remain present in contemporary international responses to violent conflicts.

With the call by the “Brahimi Report” for greater coherence in conflict management, efforts to promote more streamlined and integrated responses to conflict picked up momentum. In the donor community, the OECD/DAC forum pushed forward good practice in policy and programming. Some donor governments launched important joined-up government approaches, including the UK government’s Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools (CPP). In the NGO-sector, there were several other initiatives (see Box 1). However, the link between warning and response has remained weak as evidenced in the Kenya and Chad crises in 2007 and 2008. A more detailed discussion of the link between warning and response follows in Chapter 5.

Box 1: Integrated Responses to Conflict
FEWER, WANEP, EastWest Institute, and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre launched in 2001 a roundtable process that brought state and non-state (local, national and international) decision-makers together to formulate joint response-strategies to early warnings. The initiative was piloted in Georgia (Javakheti) and Guinea-Conakry, and later replicated in other early warning systems (EAWARN, WARN, FAST, etc.).

3.3. FROM TOOLS TO SYSTEMS

A critical question in conflict early warning, especially in the early days, was what methodologies are best suited to predict violent conflict and/or better understand its nature. Much research was

done in the 1990s, by American academics in particular, to develop (mostly quantitative) methods of analysis. Initiatives such as Minorities at Risk, Global Events Data Systems (GEDS), Protocol for the Analysis of Nonviolent Direct Action (PANDA), and others developed a strong empirical base for theories of violent conflict and advanced significantly on the coding (automated and manual) of information³. Work also started towards the end of the 90s on several qualitative conflict analysis methods (e.g. by the Fund for Peace, FEWER, USAID, World Bank, and DFID) that linked conflict analysis, with stakeholder analysis, and later, peace analysis (e.g. capacities for peace, peace indicators, conflict carrying capacities).

The fragile states agenda emerged later from a convergence of thinking on links between: human security and peace building; state effectiveness and development performance; and underdevelopment and insecurity. The 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the view that fragile states are likely to generate (or fail to manage effectively) global security threats catalysed this already emerging international agenda (Cammack et al., 2006).

Several initiatives have been launched to develop indices and lists of fragile states that are intended to guide aid prioritization, including DFID's proxy list of fragile states, George Mason University's State Fragility Index, the Fund for Peace "Failed States Index", the "Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger" of the University of Maryland, Carleton University's Country Indicators for Foreign Policy Project, the Brookings Institution's Index of State Weakness, and the work of the Center for Global Development.

Other groups have sought to develop guidelines for planning and programming in fragile states. Planning and programming methodologies have been prepared by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), DFID, the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the UK government's Cabinet Office. What has remained a challenge is the absence of a comprehensive and measurable definition of state fragility. The field is too young to define what constitutes good practice in these indices and methods. A more detail discussion of the fragile states agenda follows in Chapter 4.

Work on conflict early warning systems took place in parallel with the development of new methods of conflict analysis. Some government agencies, such as the German Ministry for Development Cooperation (BMZ), developed indicator check-lists (also used by the European Commission) that initially were to be completed by embassy staff (now they are completed by external experts and reviewed internally) in countries seen as being at risk of violent conflict. Among the multilaterals, the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities set up several local early warning networks (e.g. Macedonia) to provide it with relevant information and analysis (see case-study in Chapter 4).

In addition there was also work on the development of advanced systems in the non-governmental sector. Here agencies such as EAWARN, WANEP, the Africa Peace Forum (APFO) and later SwissPeace/FAST, set up networks of local monitors and linked these to other sources of information, trained analysts in different methods of analysis, established formats and protocols for reporting and communication, and found targeted and broad-based channels for dissemination.

Around 2001-2002, a broad-based consensus emerged that a "good" early warning system was one that: (a) is based "close to the ground" or had strong field-based networks of monitors; (b) uses multiple sources of information and both qualitative and quantitative analytical methods; (c) capitalizes on appropriate communication and information technology; (d) provides regular reports and updates on conflict dynamics to key national and international stakeholders; and (e) has a strong link to responders or response mechanisms.

³ "Coding" here refers to the categorisation of information under different indicator headings.

This understanding of good practice in early warning systems was fed into the development of several inter-governmental initiatives, including the IGAD's CEWARN and ECOWAS's ECOWARN (2003-2004). Beyond this good practice some systems (e.g. CEWARN, WARN, and the Programme on Human Security and Co-Existence) started combining early warning and early response into one system (discussed further below). This was a key characteristic of the newer systems.

3.4. FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD GENERATION SYSTEMS

It is possible to chart the evolution of early warning systems in generations according to their location, organisation, and purpose. Different generational systems meet different demands, institutional needs, and mandates.

- First generation systems of conflict early warning (mid to late 1990s till today) are largely headquarter-based. They draw information from different sources and analyse it using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. Examples include the early form of the ICG, before regional offices were established, the GEDS research project, the conflict indicators model used by the European Commission, or the current German BMZ indicator-based system.
- Second generation systems (early 2000 onwards) have a stronger link to the field. Often incorporating networks of monitors operating in conflict areas, they analyse data using qualitative and quantitative methods, prepare a range of different reporting products, and often either provide recommendations or bring decision-makers together to plan responses. Examples include the contemporary systems of ICG, EAWARN, and FAST.
- Third generation systems (2004 till today) are based in conflict areas. Organised along lines similar to second generation systems, they have stronger response links. Often early warning information is used to de-escalate situations (e.g. by dispelling rumours). Field monitors also often serve as first-responders to signs of violence. Networks of local/national responders are part of the system. Examples include the Programme on Human Security and Co-Existence in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka (Foundation for Coexistence), FEWER-Eurasia, WARN, ECOWARN, CEWARN, and some corporate systems established by multinationals in conflict-affected regions⁴.

A more detailed discussion of these systems (categorised into governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental systems) follows in the next chapter.

3.5. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

Conflict early warning as a field of conflict prevention is today undergoing significant (and appropriate) scrutiny. What value does it have for conflict prevention as a whole? Do investments in early warning yield better results than investments in other preventive projects? Have early warning efforts helped prevent violent conflict? And perhaps most importantly, are we in a better position today to prevent the loss of life on the scale seen during the 1994 Rwandan genocide?

Critics point to inaccurate predictions, failure to foresee important events and inadequate linking of operational responses to early warning (Matveeva, 2006). Indeed, the open source nature of many early warning systems means that they cannot capture information about the plans of conflicting parties that determine when and where violence is to escalate. It is also often argued that ultimately a good analysis of conflict boils down to simple personal judgement and that the "bells and whistles" (graphs, local information networks, etc.) of some early warning systems add little value. Furthermore, from a donor perspective, the visible impacts of early warning are often seen as meagre and therefore less appealing than other interventions, such as disarmament, security sector reform, which appear to have more obvious benefits. Indeed, at times early

⁴ Due to confidentiality issues, these systems cannot be described here.

warning analyses can provide donor officials with political headaches, by being alarmist, offensive to other governments, or by advocating responses that are not feasible.

Proponents of conflict early warning say that it basically serves today the same function as it has for centuries in other fields: it helps decision-makers and other stakeholders to anticipate developments and understand the nature and dynamics of different situations (Lavoix, 2007). In its contemporary form, and at its minimum, conflict early warning contributes to the evidence-base of conflict prevention decision-making. Beyond that, a good early warning system (along with its information sources and analytical tools) helps anticipate trends in violent conflict situations. Those systems that have strong links to response, it is argued, provide options for conflict management and prevention, and forums for joint problem definition, response planning among different actors, and local responses to escalating situations.

However, despite advances made in policy integration, tools, methodologies, and systems, we are now only marginally (if at all) in a better position to prevent situations of mass violence. Early response remains elusive and, of course, driven by political, institutional, and operational considerations. Additional perspectives on these issues will be given throughout this paper. The final chapter revisits the value of conflict early warning and draws conclusions.

4. THE RANGE - EARLY WARNING TOOLS AND SYSTEMS

Conflict early warning is today trying to find a balance between staying relevant to its funders and focusing on the protection and preservation of life. However it is tilting significantly towards the former. The pursuit of relevance means that the notion of an open-source, pro-people and pro-peace conflict early warning system is giving way to one with a far more pronounced intelligence dimension, particularly among governmental and inter-governmental agencies that run such systems. Whereas this is in part a consequence of changing perceptions of international threats in the North, it bodes badly for those who believe that conflict early warning can contribute to a more democratic peace, focused on human security.

An all-encompassing view of the early warning field will show tools and systems that cover natural disasters, famine, and refugee flows, to mention a few. Although narrower, conflict early warning also has a fairly broad scope, including tools and systems that seek to predict and prevent mass violence, violent conflict, war, genocide, human rights abuses, political instability, and state fragility. The focus here will be on tools/systems that deal with violent conflict and state fragility⁵.

It is important to stress that most conflict early warning tools and systems respond to an expressed target audience need. These needs are institution- and context-specific. Both the institutional framework and the context (i.e. the conflict environment) have changed substantially over the last 15-20 years.

- Institutionally, the last 15-20 years have seen significant advances in international, regional, and global capabilities to respond to conflict, both in terms of operational and structural initiatives⁶. Development agencies have been given a greater role in prevention and conflict-sensitivity has been mainstreamed among them. Geographically, stronger capabilities among regional organisations and civil society groups in early

⁵ See the *Compendium of Surveyed Early Warning Systems and Early Response Mechanisms/Instruments* for profiles of systems covered.

⁶ As explained in the Carnegie Commission's *Preventing Deadly Conflict* (1997) report, operational prevention are "measures applicable in the face of immediate crisis", while structural prevention are "measures to ensure that crises do not arise in the first place or, if they do, that they do not recur."

warning, preventive action and crisis management has added an important new target audience for early warning systems.

- Contextually, real and perceived threats to security have changed. From the end of the Cold War, the focus shifted in the 1990s to the prevention and resolution of intra-state conflicts. The 2001 September 11 attacks on the United States saw a dramatic shift of focus towards counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The complexities and fall-outs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, organised crime, drugs and human trafficking, and mass migration, are now high on regional and international agendas, along with a more explicit focus on the capabilities of individual states to manage these.

At a more technical level, a review of conflict early warning systems has to start with an understanding of the evolution and range of different analytical tools and methods. Without these different tools and methods, early warning systems would be simple information gathering entities – with no analytical capability. The sections below, therefore, discuss quantitative and qualitative tools and methods for analysis of violent conflict and state fragility, before reviewing existing early warning systems in governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental organisations.

4.1. THE TOOLS AND METHODS

4.1.1. Overview

The evolution of the conflict early warning field has been driven by the advances made in quantitative and qualitative analytical tools. As the capabilities and value of these tools grew, they were integrated into the different early warning systems operated by governments, inter-governmental organisations, and NGOs. The sections below look at the range of quantitative and qualitative analytical tools available, discuss their approaches and applications, and assess their strengths and weaknesses.

4.1.2. The Number-Crunchers... Quantitative Tools and Methods

As mentioned above, quantitative conflict analysis tools emerged in the 1990s. Quantitative indices for state fragility (see Table 1) came into view roughly from 2000 onwards. Fundamentally, the empirical research that has gone into the development of these tools and indices has contributed significantly to our understanding of causal relationships in violent conflict and state fragility. Some of these models now demonstrate high predictive accuracy (80%+) and to that extent are an important contribution to the field.

The development of these tools and methods (particularly forecasting models) involves “training algorithms on historical data, usually examining several decades in the post-World War II era, to arrive at factors [with most predictive significance]” (Goldstone, 2008). Goldstone also distinguishes between quantitative forecasting models (that use a discrete set of variables for predicting crisis and conflict in any given country) and structural analogies (methods based on key similarities across a set of countries). Most of the models developed over the years to predict (or assess risk of) violent conflict and state fragility can be categorised as either one or the other.

Table 1: Quantitative Models/ Methods/Systems – Violent Conflict and State Fragility	
<i>Violent Conflict</i>	
Leiden University (Netherlands): Inter-Disciplinary Research Programme on Root Causes of Human Rights Violations	Kansas University (USA): Protocol for the Assessment of Non-violent Direct Action (PANDA); Kansas Events Data System (KEDS)
Georgia Institute of Technology (USA): Conflict Early Warning Project – Pattern Recognition	Fein (USA): Life Integrity Violations Analysis (LIVA)
Carleton University (Canada): Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP)	Virtual Research Associates (USA): VRA Knowledge Manager
Economist Intelligence Unit (UK): The Global Peace Index	US Naval Academy (USA): State Failure Project; Accelerators of Genocide Project
<i>State Fragility</i>	
Fund for Peace (USA): Fragile States Index (annual)	University of Maryland/Centre for International Development and Conflict Management (USA): Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger (annual)
George Mason University (USA): State Fragility Index (annual)	Center for Global Development (USA): Engaging Fragile States
Political Instability Task Force (USA): Internal Wars and Failures of Governance 1955-2006	Center for Systemic Peace (USA): Polity IV, Coups d'Etat, PITF Problem Set
Carleton University (Canada): Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP)	Institute for State Effectiveness (USA): Sovereignty Index
United Agency for International Development (USA): Measuring State Fragility	

The purpose of quantitative conflict analysis methods has largely been to predict or assess the risk of violent conflict. The models are indicator based and data is collected for indicators as the basis of analysis. Data used is in some cases structural (e.g. poverty data, etc.) or events based (e.g. actions by different parties), or both.

An early challenge encountered by quantitative methods to predict or monitor violent conflict was how to use and code available information for purposes of analysis. This was particularly challenging for models designed to monitor evolving conflict situations for early warning purposes (e.g. KEDS). It was less of an issue for those initiatives (e.g. CIFP) that drew heavily on less dynamic data-sets to determine risk of conflict. The challenge was increased as sources of data for these pre- and actual conflict situations were limited. A certain number of events is required in order to draw any trend conclusions. For example, the Conflict and Cooperation Model (used by VRA and FAST) (see Box 2 and Figure 1) requires ideally one to two reported events per day for useful trends to be drawn. If media sources only were used, studies of pre-crisis situations would have less (and often too few) reports to draw from. (Local reporting in newspapers might help but these are not online and not translated). Global news feeds that provide easy access to and monitoring of millions of news clippings have addressed some (but far from all) of these challenges.

Box 2: Basic Theory behind Goldstein's Conflict and Cooperation Model

Average Domestic Cooperation - The Goldstein Average Domestic Cooperation indicator displays the cumulative average of the positive (Goldstein) values of all cooperative intrastate or domestic events in a specific time period (means the sum of the positive Goldstein values divided by the total number of cooperative domestic events).

Average Domestic Conflict - The Goldstein Average Domestic Conflict indicator displays the cumulative average of the negative (Goldstein) values of all conflictive intrastate or domestic events in a specific time period (means the sum of the negative Goldstein values divided by the total number of conflictive domestic events). For interpretation purposes we take the absolute values (means positive values).

Adapted from "Strategic Reconstruction and Development Assessment – North Caucasus". FEWER-Eurasia 2005.

In the example below for Chechnya, two graphs (red and blue) indicate trends in "conflict events" and "cooperation events" in Chechnya over two years. The assumption is that violence is likely to erupt when the number of "conflict events" increases and the number of "cooperation events" decreases. Visually, that happens when the red curve goes up at the same time as the blue curve goes down. However, in order to draw part of the line each month, a certain number of

“cooperation events” or “conflict events” are needed. The challenge of managing data was overcome with advances in automated coding and the use (by FAST) of local monitors for data collection.

Quantitative models are also used to monitor state fragility or to assess the risk of state collapse. Also indicator-based, most of these models present a “risk score” and ranking for different countries – often displayed in indices. For example, the PITF uses four indicators (or variables) to predict political crisis, including regime type, infant mortality, the presence or absence of high levels of discrimination, and

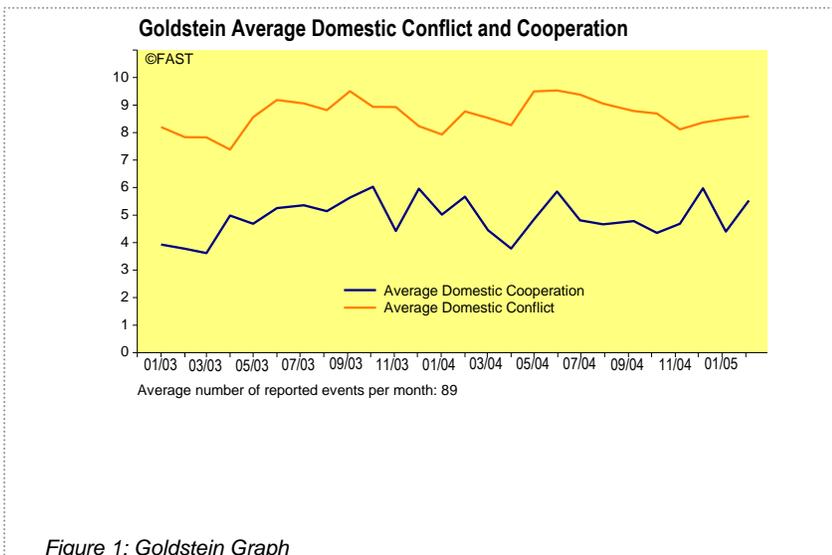


Figure 1: Goldstein Graph

number of neighbouring countries that experience violent conflict (Goldstone, 2008).

As with conflict analysis methods, data challenges are faced here too. For models focused on prediction within an 18-24 month period, annual data is often not adjusted in real time (it arrives late), data may be inaccurate, and for some countries data may be sparse. Indices of state fragility can be used by policy makers to prioritise countries at risk and draw up “watch-lists”. More difficult is the use of state fragility methods to inform programming as this requires a deeper understanding of specific contexts – although more recent indices distinguish between various dimensions of fragility and thus give a more nuanced picture than just an aggregated list. This may give some entry points for policy, programming and resource allocation. An example from the Fund for Peace Failed States Index (see Figure 2) illustrates the priority-setting application of state fragility indices.

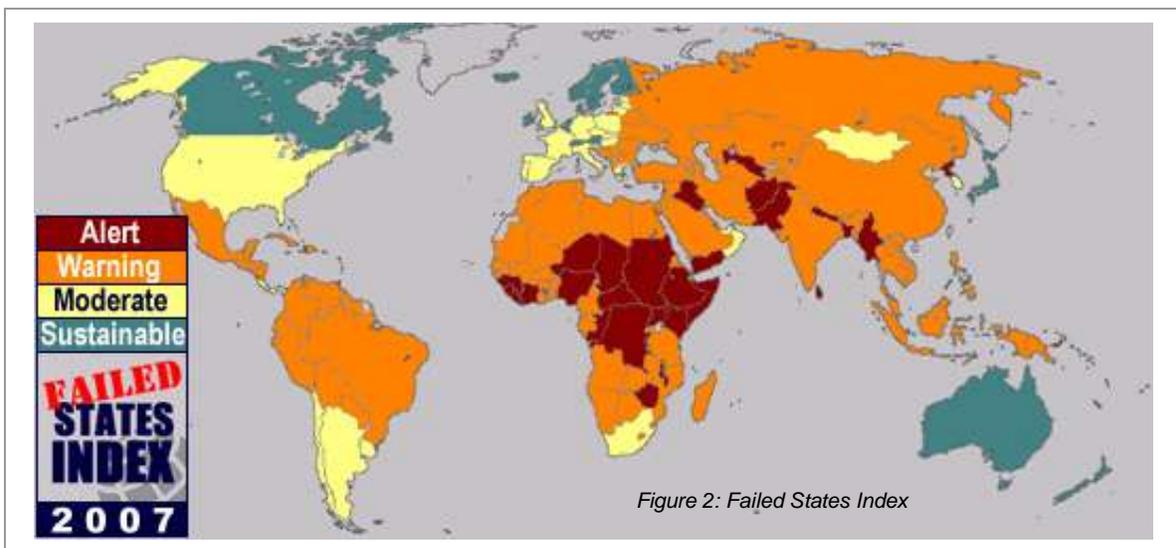


Figure 2: Failed States Index

There are several strengths of quantitative tools and methods:

- Their predictive capacity, particularly related to political crisis and instability, is high (80%+ with some models, such as PITF).
- Their immediate policy value, in terms priority setting and “watch-listing” is significant. The visuals provided (maps, country-lists) are easily understood.
- Models that draw on a larger number of indicators (e.g. CIFP and Fund for Peace) may also provide pointers for programming.

Some of the weaknesses, particularly in relation to data, have been discussed above. In addition, the following should be noted:

- As explained by Goldstone (2008), even the best quantitative models will at times have reduced predictive value, as they “cannot reflect all possible interactions or added effects with factors that are specific to individual countries at a certain time”.
- The graphs, charts, country-lists, etc. in themselves provide little insight to decision-makers into what is happening on ground or what needs to be done. The fact-base of quantitative models provide too little context for guidance on decision-making.

The strengths and weaknesses of these models have led analysts and early warners to combine methods – quantitative, qualitative, and mixed quantitative models. Such a triangulation of methods (and sources) has been attempted by several systems, including FAST and CEWARN.

4.1.3. The Qualifiers - Qualitative Tools for Analysis and Response

Qualitative methods for conflict analysis first emerged in the second half of the 1990s and responded to a need for tools that would enable a better understanding of violent conflict and how to respond. From that point of departure, different development agencies (especially DFID) further advanced these methods to inform how programmes and projects should be adapted in conflict situations. Around the same time, the planning potential of conflict analysis tools was bolstered through the work of GTZ, FEWER/International Alert/Saferworld and others which linked analysis to different planning frameworks. The need for tools to evaluate the impact of different interventions in violent conflict situations led to the development of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) methods (CPR Network, etc.). The most recent step in the evolution of qualitative conflict analysis tools was taken by UNDP (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and UNDP/Indonesia) with the development of a multi-stakeholder analysis/planning process that helps build a shared vision and understanding of obstacles to peace among conflicting parties. In essence, these “Peace and Development Analysis” (PDA) processes use conflict analysis as a tool for response – particularly in post conflict settings (Indonesia, Fiji, etc.).

The qualitative methods developed for state fragility situations are very recent (since 2005). They capitalise on lessons learnt and best practice in conflict analysis to make the immediate link from analysis to planning and strategising. Unlike some of the early qualitative conflict analysis tools that were quite theoretical in nature, current state fragility tools seek immediate operational relevance. For example, the Dutch “Stability Assessment Framework – Designing Integrated Responses for Security, Governance and Development” (2005) provides not only an analytical and strategic framework, but also outlines the required practical process for the preparation of a Stability Assessment Framework. See Table 2 for an overview of tools surveyed.

Table 2: Qualitative Models/ Methods – Violent Conflict and State Fragility	
<i>Violent Conflict</i>	
Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (CPR) Network: Early Warning and Early Response Handbook (V2.3) (2005); Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Handbook (V2.2) (2005); Guide de Diagnostic des Conflits (2003)	United States Agency for International Development (USA): Conflict Assessment Framework (2005); Conducting a Conflict Assessment – A Framework for Strategy and Program Development (2004)
Bush: A Handbook for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (2004)	UNDP: Conflict-Related Development Analysis (2002); Peace and Development Analysis (2003)
Department for International Development (UK): Conducting Strategic Conflict Assessments (2002)	World Bank: Conflict Analysis Framework (2002)
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Germany): Conflict Analysis for Project Planning and Management (2001)	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (UK): Conflict Analysis and Response Definition (2001)
FEWER, International Alert, Saferworld (UK): Development in Conflict: A Seven Step Tool for Planners (2001)	CARE International (USA): Benefits-Harms Handbook (2001)
Clingendael Institute (Netherlands): Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework (2000)	European Commission: Check-List for Root Causes of Conflict (1999); Peace-building and Conflict Prevention in Developing Countries – A Practical Guide (1999); Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment – A Practical Working Tool for Prioritising Development Assistance in Unstable Situations (1999)
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): An Indicator Model for Use as an Additional Instrument for Planning and Analysis in Development Co-operation (1998)	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (UK): A Manual for Early Warning and Early Response (1998)
Fund for Peace (USA): Conflict Assessment System Tool (1996)	
<i>State Fragility</i>	
Canadian International Development Agency (Canada): On the Road to Recovery: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Fragility - A Guide for Effective Development Cooperation in Fragile States (2007)	Department for International Development (UK): Scenario and Contingency Planning for Fragile States (2007); Country Governance Analysis (2006); Drivers of Change (2003)
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands): The Stability Assessment Framework – Designing Integrated Responses for Security, Governance and Development (2005)	Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (UK): Countries at Risk of Instability – Country Strategy Formulation Process Manual (2005)

Qualitative tools were integrated into different early warning systems as they evolved. The target audience, for example, of the FEWER analytical methodology, was its civil society early warning network members. The use of these qualitative tools was complemented by drawing on quantitative methods to bolster the rigour of analysis, for example in the FAST, ECOWARN, and CEWARN systems. In order to help provide options for response, many early warning systems also draw on analytical methods with strong planning elements. Others have also integrated PCIA concepts into their monitoring, looking at how different responses contribute to an improvement or deterioration of violent conflict situations.

As with quantitative tools, qualitative methods are peppered with much (and often confusing) jargon that sometimes conceals the simple thinking behind them. A PCIA tool, for example, basically involves using the findings from a conflict analysis and a project/programme document to answer two questions: (a) what is the impact of a conflict on a project/programme; and (b) what is the impact of a project/programme on a conflict. Through interviews, observations, and data collection and by combining conflict analysis with a “nuts and bolts” review of a given project/programme, a judgement is formed of (past, present, or future) impacts.

The operational value of qualitative methods is relatively high, particularly for development agencies that implement projects/programmes in conflict-affected regions. In fact, respondents from development agencies indicate that qualitative tools serve their purposes better than early warning systems. This is probably due to the easy fit with planning cycles, and the useful applications of these tools to planning and evaluation.

The strengths of qualitative methods for analysis of violent conflict and state fragility (when applied well) are as follows:

- They provide rich contextual information and analysis that can be simple enough for desk officers to absorb and do something with; and
- They often have strong built-in applications to planning and evaluation that help agencies plan and improve projects and programmes.

However, they also have significant weaknesses. Qualitative analyses:

- Are often one-off snapshots of rapidly evolving situations. They are quickly outdated;
- Sometimes oversimplify the complexity of violent conflict and state fragility situations. By doing so, they may mislead and badly inform policy makers and other stakeholders;
- Usually proffer technical solutions to complex political issues. They implicitly may suggest that technocratic approaches can replace required political action;
- Are fundamentally based on personal judgement. If the analyst is unfamiliar with the situation, the likelihood of a poor analysis is significant; and
- Are subject to the same data restrictions and challenges as quantitative methods. Poor or incomplete data leads to bad analysis.

4.1.4. Preliminary Conclusions – Much Progress, But Weaknesses Remain

Significant advances have been made in quantitative and qualitative analytical tools for violent conflict and state fragility. Quantitative methods have strong predictive capabilities, particularly in relation to political crisis and instability. State fragility indices provide easily graspable “watch-lists” and help agencies working on these issues to prioritise focus countries. Qualitative methods provide rich context analysis, as well as ways to plan programmatic responses and assess the impact on violent conflicts of these responses. The more recent qualitative methods for state fragility analysis can provide useful planning frameworks for programmatic responses but are not yet used widely in agencies and more work is required to refine them. Qualitative tools satisfy important analytical requirements among development agencies – particularly in terms of informing programming. Numerous weaknesses persist, nonetheless. Analytical tools fundamentally over-simplify complex and fluid violent conflicts and situations of state fragility. They provide simple snap-shots that are quickly outdated and the quality of analysis suffers from data deficits that characterise many countries affected by conflict and state fragility.

4.2. THE OPERATIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

4.2.1. Overview

Early warning can broadly mean the collection of information to understand and pre-empt future developments. For the purposes of this study, a more restrictive definition has been applied where “early warning systems are those that involve regular and organized collection and analysis of open source information on violent conflict situations. They deliver a set of early warning products (based on qualitative and/or quantitative conflict analysis methods) that are linked to response instruments/mechanisms”. However, in order to show the breadth of existing systems the definition was used more for guidance than for strict selection purposes. Respondents were asked a set of questions on the focus, funding, activities, methodology, etc. of their early warning systems (see Box 3). The surveyed conflict early warning systems are listed in Table 3.

4.2.2. Governmental Early Warning Systems

Most OECD/DAC members and governments surveyed do not have what can be defined as a conflict early warning system. “Early warnings” come through either intelligence services, diplomatic missions in affected countries, or inter-governmental and non-governmental early warning systems. Those that do have early warning systems in place include France, Germany, and the United States. Depending on their purpose and institutional location, these may or may not have a link to national intelligence services.

The purpose of most governmental early warning systems is either to identify and assess threats to national interests and/or to inform crisis prevention and peace-building programmes. Purpose dictates institutional set-up and the methodology used.

France’s *Système d’Alerte Précoce (SAP)* and the US National Intelligence Office for Warning pay particular attention to threats posed by crises to national interests. The French system is located in the *Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale*. The US system is located in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (State Department) and National Intelligence Council. Methodologically, the French system uses a qualitative method and generates monthly update reports on key indicators, while the US system generates a “watch-list” that draws heavily on quantitative analysis. Both systems draw on open source and classified information for their analyses.

The German early warning system is used to inform the crisis prevention and peace-building programmes of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Methodologically, it uses a qualitative indicator-based questionnaire, which also has a quantitative scoring system attached to it. Each year, an assessment using this methodology is conducted by independent consultants of the German Institute for Global Area Studies (GIGA) on behalf of BMZ. Emerging results are reviewed and revised by BMZ country desks to arrive at a final listing of priority countries and directions for preventive programming.

Box 3: Survey questions on early warning systems

1. What is the operational and geographic focus of your early warning system?
2. What is the annual budget for your early warning system and who provides the funding?
3. What are the main activities (monitoring, briefings, report writing, etc.) of the early warning system?
4. What methodology is used (qualitative and/or quantitative – conflict analysis, state fragility, etc.), and what are the main information sources (media, local monitors, structural data, etc.) of your early warning system?
5. Who is your target audience (decision-makers in particular agencies, local communities, general public, etc.) and what warning products (reports, briefs, documentaries, etc.) and frequency of these do you offer? Is there a feedback loop between yourself and the target audience?
6. What are the linkages between your early warning system and early response? Does it provide recommendations for response? Is there a direct connection to specific mechanisms/instruments?
7. If your early warning system cooperates, coordinates activities, or operates in partnership with any other external agencies (governments, multilaterals, NGOs, etc.), which agencies are these and what are the forms of cooperation/coordination/partnership?
8. What do you see as the main strengths and limitations/challenges faced by your early warning system?
9. Are there any success stories or particular impacts that your early warning system has been responsible for?

Table 3: Governmental, Inter-Governmental, and Non-Governmental Early Warning Systems		
Governmental Early Warning Systems	Inter-Governmental Early Warning Systems	Non-Governmental Early Warning Systems
Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale (France): Système d'Alerte Précoce (SAP)	United Nations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCHA – Early Warning Unit; Humanitarian Situation Room (Colombia) UNDP – Country-level early warning systems in Ghana, Kenya, Ukraine (Crimea), Bolivia (PAPEP), Balkans, Kyrgyzstan 	FEWER-Eurasia (Russia): FEWER-Eurasia Network
		ISS (South Africa): Early Warning System
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): Crisis Early Warning System	EU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Watch List 	SwissPeace (Switzerland): Early Recognition and Analysis of Tensions (FAST)
United States Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and National Intelligence Council: Instability Watch List 	AU: Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)	Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow): Network for Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning (EAWRN)
	CEEAC: Mécanisme d'Alerte Rapide pour l'Afrique Centrale (MARAC)	Foundation for Tolerance International (Kyrgyzstan): Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project
	ECOWAS: ECOWAS Early Warning and Early Response Network (ECOWARN)	Crisis Group (Belgium): Crisis Watch
	IGAD: Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)	Foundation for Coexistence (Sri Lanka): Program on Human Security and Co-Existence
	OSCE: Centre for Conflict Prevention	West Africa Network for Peace-building (Ghana): Early Warning and Response Network (WARN) FEWER-Africa (Kenya): Ituri Watch (Democratic Republic of Congo)

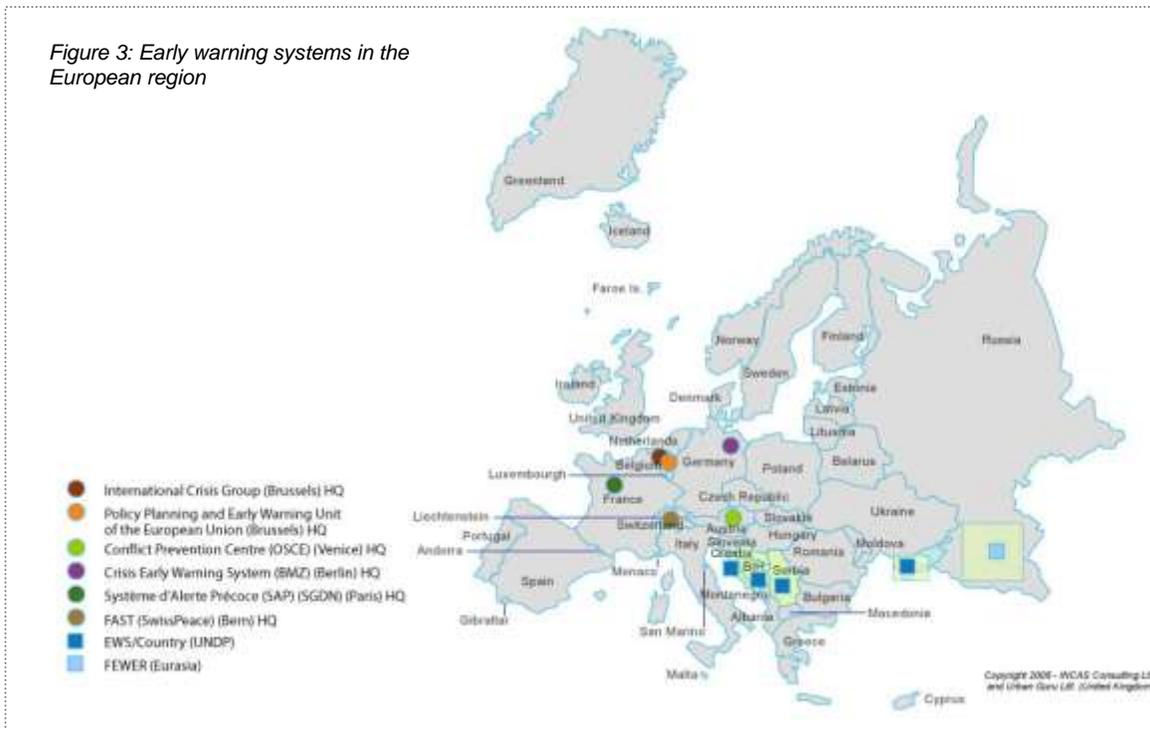
The target audiences for all governmental systems are internal, and involve different levels of decision-makers. Assessments are not usually publicly available. It is therefore not possible to pass judgment on the quality of analyses made or their value as an evidence-base for decision-makers.

The value added of governmental early warning systems, as stated by respondents, is two-fold for the clients they serve:

- A crisis prediction capacity that enables proactive decision-making, and a stronger basis for evidence-based decision-making on countries affected by crisis; and
- Improved programming through systematic country reviews and expert analysis.

The main challenge reported by governmental early warners is about catalysing response. The receptivity of decision-makers in charge of responses is frequently limited.

Figure 3: Early warning systems in the European region



4.2.3. Inter-Governmental Early Warning Systems

A number of inter-governmental organisations (particularly in Africa) have established conflict early warning systems. Broadly speaking, the purpose of these systems is to bolster the different organisations' ability to anticipate crises and initiate preventive measures. Among some of the regional organisations (OSCE, AU, IGAD, ECOWAS, ECCAS), the geographical scope is limited to member countries. The EU has a global remit for the work carried out by the Council's Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit, as does the United Nation's Humanitarian Situation Room. Most surveys of early warning systems will also include SADC on their list. Although some governmental systems have been included despite their intelligence links, the SADC approach is more formalised intelligence sharing than early warning – and therefore has been excluded.

- The UN early warning systems are open-source, especially those operational at the country-level. In New York, the Framework Team meets regularly to discuss countries of concern, share analyses, and formulate inter-agency responses to emerging and/or on-going crisis situations.

The value added of inter-governmental early warning systems is the evidence-base it provides for decision-making, and the priority-setting contribution of “watch-list” products. These systems help inform debates on responses to violence and instability in different countries. Interviewees also stress that a shared problem definition on crisis-affected countries or regions sets the stage for more coherent inter-departmental/agency responses.

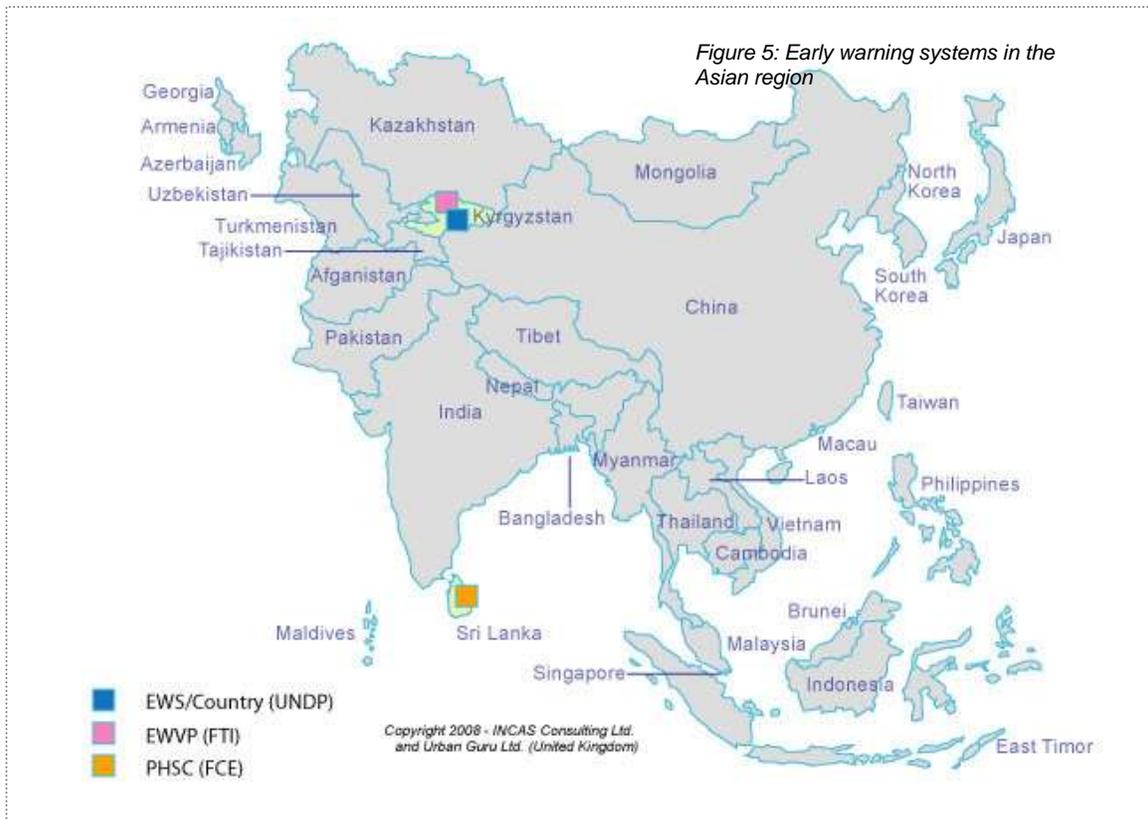
There are numerous challenges faced by inter-governmental early warning systems. These include:

- Member-state sensitivities on monitoring of violent conflict and state fragility, as well as the labelling of a country as “conflict prone” or a “fragile state”. The work of regional organisations and the United Nations is particularly restricted by such sensitivities.
- Political interference and manipulation of analyses prepared is a consequence of the sensitivities of member states when inter-governmental organisations engage in early warning work.
- Restrictions on early warning system coverage affect several inter-governmental organisations. Such restrictions mean that only certain topics (humanitarian issues, pastoral conflicts, etc.) can be covered and that allocations for early warning efforts are controlled.
- Several interviewees have pointed to the difficulty in linking inter-governmental early warning efforts to high-level political and security responses. Part of this difficulty is related to a lack of conviction among higher level decision-makers about the value of early warning.

4.2.4. Non-Governmental Systems

Non-governmental early warning systems differ in purpose and organisation. Some are focused on providing early warning analysis to inform decision-making on conflict situations, without recommendations for response, while others provide recommendations, engage in advocacy, or are engaged in response activities themselves. In terms of organisation, most non-governmental early warning systems deploy staff or local networks in or close to conflict-affected areas. Where local monitors are used, they will report according to standard formats and the information collected feeds into analyses.

For the most part (with the exception of the International Crisis Group), the analytical methodologies of these groups are clear. Several non-governmental systems (e.g. FEWER-Eurasia, Program on Human Security and Co-Existence) use both qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis, as championed by FEWER and the former SwissPeace FAST system. Non-governmental systems use exclusively open source information and information provided by local monitors. Based on these methods and information collected, different products are generated, including briefs, baseline reports, documentaries, briefings, updates, thematic reports, etc.



Early warning systems with a global outlook included FEWER, FAST (both now closed due to funding problems) and the ICG. At a regional level, WANEP/WARN and ISS cover the ECOWAS region and crisis-countries in Africa, respectively, FEWER-Eurasia and EAWARN cover the North Caucasus. At a country-level, Ituri-Watch (FEWER-Africa) covers Ituri in the DR Congo, the Foundation for Coexistence (Sri Lanka) covers the Eastern Province in Sri Lanka, and Foundation for Tolerance International covers Kyrgyzstan.

Fundamental to the non-governmental approach to early warning is a belief that integrated multi-stakeholder responses to violent conflict and political instability are most effective. This is why such systems make their reports broadly available and, in some cases, bring different organisations together to plan joint response strategies. However, the inability to catalyse responses has led several systems (defined as “third generation systems” above) to set up their own response mechanisms and instruments in order to deal with micro-level violence.

Box 4: Lessons from the closure of FAST

In April 2008, the FAST early warning system closed its doors – after a decade of operations, and four years after the closure of FEWER. FAST was recognized by most practitioners as the embodiment of good early warning practice. It was a system that combined qualitative and quantitative analytical methods, worked with civil society groups in the countries it covered to gain field-level information through Local Information Networks. Its reports, the FAST up-dates, Risk Assessments, Trends, etc. had a broad readership beyond its main funder, Swiss Development Cooperation. So why, after 10 years of successful work did FAST close?

Interviews and discussions with FAST staff, donors, and other practitioners proffered the following explanations:

- A birth-defect of FAST and some other early warning initiatives is their alignment to development agencies – as natural partners and donors. These agencies benefit more conflict assessment methodologies, than from early warning reports, to inform their programming. Early warning does not present value added for them.
- The main clients of FAST reports were in foreign ministries, security agencies, regional organisations, etc. – who dealt more with operational, than structural prevention. However, they did not pay for it – and often, the budgets for FAST were in development agencies.
- FAST was not able, like the ICG, to establish high-level relationships with political leaders in donor countries. Rather, working relationships were with mid-level staff in different ministries. Regular turn-over of staff meant that early warning had to be “sold again and again” – not always successfully.

With the closure of FAST and FEWER, the only remaining “global” provider of analyses (beyond regional and national early warning systems) is the ICG. ICG is a well-run organisation and its reports are of high quality. Nonetheless, its constituency and methodology remain unclear. Is reliance on one external provider of information and analysis beneficial for international and regional decision-makers?

The value added of non-governmental early warning is in broadening and deepening the evidence-base for decision-makers on violent conflict situations and state fragility. Broadening, in terms of the range of information sources (beyond diplomatic cables, media sources, intelligence reports) and deepening, in terms of proximity to communities (beyond macro-level reports, etc.). Non-governmental early warning is also less constrained by political sensitivities than inter-governmental systems, particularly when it comes to statements made, issues covered, dissemination, etc. Non-governmental systems that are involved more on the response-side are in some cases able to convene different actors to plan joint responses, or implement micro-level responses themselves.

Non-governmental systems have multiple vulnerabilities. For example, if these systems issue reports on sensitive matters (particularly related to the political economy of conflicts or controversial international policies of big powers) safety of staff may be compromised and the funding base may be affected. At the same time, with few exceptions, most of these initiatives are anyway chronically under-funded. In practice, this means that their ability to maintain analysts and information networks, both essential for “good” early warning is constrained.

4.2.5. Wired to the Bulb? The Warning-Response Link

The warning-response link is often discussed in terms of whether early warning is “wired” to early response – the same way as a plug (early warning) is wired to a bulb (response). Good early warning should be compelling enough to catalyse response. There are not many success-stories available on how early warning has indeed done this. A few are given throughout this report. Indeed, several respondents did identify situations where early warning had yield different and successful responses. For example, success-stories that should be researched and documented further include:

- ECOWARN success in averting crisis in Guinea and Togo through regular warning reports and strong links with response mechanisms.
- Ituri Watch prevention of clashes between communities in the DR Congo by being able to catalyse local responses through early warnings.
- The Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project (Foundation for Tolerance International) alerted the Kazakh parliament and government about potential conflicts along the Kyrgyz-Kazakh (Talas oblast in Kyrgyzstan) that led to preventive action.
- FEWER-Eurasia contributed to the decrease of the number of disappearances in Chechnya through monitoring and humanitarian dialogue.

Among the most often-quoted success story in the annals of early warning is that of the OSCE’s early warning to the crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (see case-study below).

Case-Study 1: The OSCE's Early Warning on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁷

In the late 1990s the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Van der Stoel had closely followed the relationship between the ethnic Macedonian majority and the ethnic Albanian minority in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. His work was supported by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, which dealt with the effects of the conflict in Kosovo.

Mr. Van der Stoel enjoyed a high degree of confidence of both parties thanks to a long-term, balanced and highly professional involvement in regional inter-ethnic relations. He dealt with several root causes of the conflict, including linguistic rights, education, media, participation of minorities in public life, etc. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Albanian language Tetovo University, with donations of five million Euros by the Government of the Netherlands and the European Commission.

As ethnic tension grew in late 2000 and early 2001 and the likelihood of a more violent armed conflict grew, Van der Stoel issued repeated early warnings, including a dramatic statement at the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Acting upon these early warnings, in late March 2001 the OSCE Chairman in Office appointed Ambassador Robert Frowick as Personal Envoy to the FYROM. On July 1 2001 the Chairman in Office appointed Mr. Van der Stoel as Personal Envoy, asking him to "facilitate dialogue and provide advice for a speedy solution of the current crisis".

Simultaneously, the OSCE conducted intensive coordination and soon engaged in close cooperation with NATO, the European Union and later the Council of Europe.

Through this coordinated action the crisis was contained and stability and peace was gradually restored.

However, is the lack of early response a consequence of "poor" early warning? The answer is "yes, partly". A review of the many early warning reports produced by different organisations does raise important questions about depth and quality of analysis. It is also clear that, due to a host of sensitivities and the overall "murky" nature of violent conflict, much of the hidden political economy of violent conflict remains un-assessed. Publishing information and analysis on this carries great personal risk, both physically and reputationally. Yet, such information and analysis is critical for informed responses to violent conflict. So despite some of the reported and claimed successes, there is much scope for improvement – but improvement needs funding.

4.2.6. Preliminary Conclusions – How Mature is the Field?

Early warning systems exist now within governments, multilateral agencies, and NGOs. They play different roles – ranging from giving alerts and catalysing response, to bolstering the evidence-base of decision-making, to serving as response mechanisms themselves. There is consensus on what constitutes a "good" early warning system and this good practice has been operationalised in initiatives such as FAST, FEWER-Eurasia, CEWARN, and ECOWARN to mention just a few (see Box 5). The field, however, suffers from under-investment, as illustrated in the closure of FAST (see Box 4 for discussion). There are also serious questions about the quality of analysis produced by many early warning systems: Do they really cover the real issues? Is the analytical depth sufficient for decision-making? The answer to these questions is probably "no". There is a great need to bolster analytical rigour.

Box 5: Good practice in operational conflict early warning systems

A "good" early warning system is one that:

- Is based "close to the ground" or has strong field-based networks of monitors;
- Uses multiple sources of information and both qualitative/quantitative analytical methods;
- Capitalizes on appropriate communication and information technology;
- Provides regular reports and updates on conflict dynamics to key national and international stakeholders; and
- Has a strong link to responders or response mechanisms.

⁷ Prepared by Marton Krasznai (UNECE, formerly OSCE)

4.3. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

Conflict analysis tools and early warning systems have evolved significantly over the last decade. There is consensus on methodological and system good practice. This good practice has in turn fed into qualitative methods for response planning in fragile states.

Among quantitative and qualitative analytical tools, two conclusions can be drawn. First, there is no “best methodology” or “best set of indicators”. There is basic good practice in quantitative and qualitative analysis and a range of methods draw on this. These are designed to serve the interests of their target institution. Second, the best approach is to combine quantitative and qualitative tools, and sometimes to combine different sets of quantitative methods⁸. This ensures the necessary triangulation required for creating a robust evidence-base for decision-making.

At a systems-level, good practice is clear and has been outlined above. There is also more clarity today, based on application, about the value added of early warning systems. To summarise, early warning systems provide:

- A crisis prediction capacity that enables proactive decision-making;
- A stronger basis for evidence-based decision-making on countries affected by crisis;
- Improved programming through systematic country reviews and expert analysis;
- A priority-setting contribution through watch-list type products;
- A starting point for developing a shared problem definition on crisis-affected countries that sets the stage for more coherent responses; and
- An ideas pool for responses, and sometimes the forum to meet fellow responders and plan joint response strategies.

Having said this, it is clear that conflict and state fragility analysis serves the needs of development agencies better than early warning systems do. This is because conflict and state fragility assessments provide more institution-specific recommendations for programming than what come from early warning systems. The more natural client for early warning systems are political decision-making institutions.

However, the poor quality of analyses, unrealistic recommendations, and biased or ungrounded opinions present in many early warning products means that “poor early warning” still remains an important cause of non-responses to violent conflict.

5. IS EARLY, EARLY? A REVIEW OF RESPONSE MECHANISMS AND INSTRUMENTS

Advances over the last 15 years or so in early and rapid response have been made in the range of institutions, mechanisms, instruments, and processes available to manage violent conflict – and in national, regional, and international willingness to use force in situations of violent conflict. However, more has not necessarily meant better. In fact, the multiplicity of actors and responses means that the problem of late, incoherent, fragmented, and confused response is perhaps greater today than it was at the time of the Rwandan genocide. If the problem was then “that early warning is not wired to the bulb”, today it may be that there are too many bulbs competing with each other and not working when they should.

⁸ See Goldstone (2008) for an excellent discussion of this point.

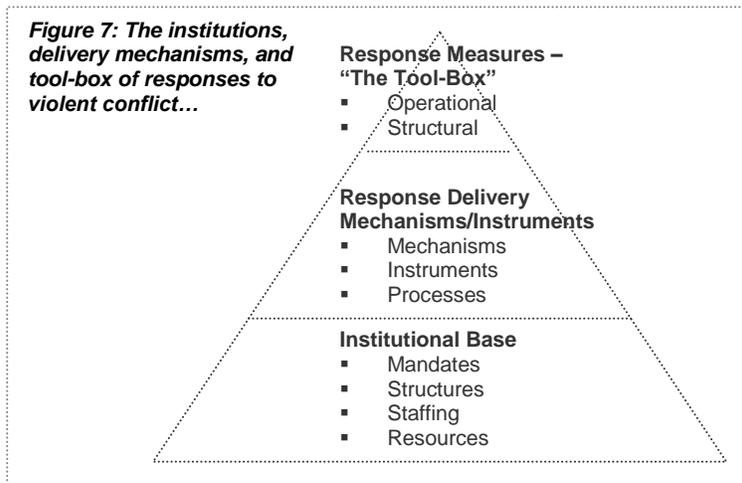
External response capabilities to situations of violent conflict and state fragility have evolved significantly since the genocide in Rwanda and the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s. As explained in a 2005 ICG review of European Union crisis response capacity, since 2002 “much has changed for the better in both conflict prevention and conflict management. Mechanisms then only planned or just introduced such as the Political and Security Committee are functioning well; important new ones such as the European Defence Agency have come on line. The enlarged EU has gained experience with police and military missions in the Balkans and Africa and has just launched its most ambitious operation, replacing NATO as Bosnia's primary security provider” (ICG, 2005). Similarly, capabilities among regional organizations has grown, with stronger mandates, new protocols, additional committees and departments, and increased staffing seen in the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC, and ECCAS.

Beyond the growth of institutional capabilities, much has also been learnt about the different operational and structural prevention measures that can be used as responses to violent conflict (see Table 4 below for sample measures included under both by the Carnegie Commission – and the 2001 OECD/DAC Guidelines on Conflict Prevention for more information).

Table 4: Examples of Operational and Structural Prevention	
Operational Prevention	Structural Prevention
<p><i>Early warning</i> “A systematic and practical early warning system should be combined with consistently updated contingency plans for preventive action. This would be a radical advance on the present system where, when a trigger event sets off an explosion of violence, it is usually too difficult, too costly, and too late for a rapid and effective response.”</p>	<p><i>International laws, norms, and agreements</i> “International laws, norms, agreements, and arrangements — bilateral, regional, and global in scope — are designed to minimize threats to security directly”</p>
<p><i>Preventive diplomacy</i> “Through bilateral, multilateral, and unofficial channels—to pressure, cajole, arbitrate, mediate, or lend “good offices” to encourage dialogue and facilitate a non-violent resolution of the crisis”</p>	<p><i>Rule of law</i> “Four essential elements provide a framework for maintaining a just regime for internal stability: a corpus of laws that is legitimately derived and widely promulgated and understood; a consistent, visible, fair, and active network of police authority to enforce the laws (especially important at the local level); an independent, equitable, and accessible grievance redress system, including above all an impartial judicial system; and a penal system that is fair and prudent in meting out punishment.”</p>
<p><i>Economic measures</i> “Sanctions serve three broad policy functions: to signal international concern to the offending state (and, by example, to others), to punish a state's behavior, and to serve as an important precursor to stronger actions.” “Inducements involve granting a political or economic benefit in exchange for a specified policy adjustment. [...] Examples of inducements include: favorable trade terms, tariff reductions, direct purchases, subsidies for exports or imports, economic and military aid, favorable taxation, granting access to advanced technology, military cooperation, [etc].”</p>	<p><i>Justice</i> “States should develop ways to promote international law with particular emphasis in three main areas: human rights; humanitarian law, including the need to provide the legal underpinning for UN operations in the field; and non-violent alternatives for dispute resolution, including more flexible intrastate mechanisms for mediation, arbitration, grievance recognition, and social reconciliation.”</p>
<p><i>The use of force</i> “Any threat or use of force must be governed by universally accepted principles, as the UN Charter requires. Decisions to use force must not be arbitrary or operate as the coercive and selectively used weapon of the strong against the weak”. “There are three distinct kinds of operations where the use of force and forces — that is, military or police personnel —may have an important role in preventing the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict: post-conflict peacekeeping, preventive deployments, and “fire brigade” deployments.”</p>	<p><i>Sustainable development</i> “Development efforts to meet [decent living] standards are a prime responsibility of governments, and the international community has a responsibility to help governments through development assistance. Assistance programs are vital to many developing states, crucial to sustaining millions of people in crises, and necessary to help build otherwise unaffordable infrastructure.”</p> <p><i>Governance</i> “Transitions to participatory governance, or restoring legitimate governance following conditions of anarchy, may require temporary power sharing. Many forms of power sharing are possible, but all provide for widespread participation in the reconstruction effort, sufficient resources to ensure broad-based access to educational, economic, and political opportunities, and the constructive involvement of outsiders.”</p>

Adapted from Chapters 3 and 4 from the Carnegie Commissions Final Report (1997)

A robust review of capabilities for early and rapid response to violent conflicts and state fragility requires an understanding the institutions involved, the mechanisms, processes and instruments used to deliver responses, as well as the response “tool box” itself (see Figure 7). It also needs to consider good practice and the obstacles to such practice, along with the evidence-base for decision-making – particularly as they present themselves at the level of implementation. Such a



thorough review, however, is not the scope of this mapping. Rather, in order to draw some preliminary conclusions on early and rapid response, this chapter provides: (a) an overview of findings from evaluations of operational and structural prevention; (b) draws from this and other literature some observations on good practice in response; (c) surveys a sample of selected response delivery mechanisms/instruments from different agencies that have participated in this study; and (d) discusses the challenges in the warning-response link in greater detail.

5.1. EVALUATING RESPONSES TO VIOLENT CONFLICT

Evaluation of responses to violent conflict is a growing, but still relatively immature field. However, there are numerous evaluations of responses to violent conflict that tell us how difficult responding effectively to violent conflict really is. As explained by Slim (2006) in a review of mediation efforts, “Third-party mediation in international and non-international armed conflict is highly political, fluid and complex. It involves careful long term engagement in situations where widespread human suffering is common and thousands of lives are at stake. Many armed conflicts are deep and protracted with painful histories of extreme violence, inter-group hatred, oppression, humiliation, profound political suspicion and active involvement of other states.”

Most evaluations of responses to violent conflict tend to have an institutional, sectoral (“tool-box” specific) and/or a country-focus. Useful too is the presence of a range of practice communities that reflect on different elements of operational (e.g. Oslo Forum⁹ – Improving the Mediation of Armed Conflict) and structural (e.g. [conflictsensitivity.org](http://www.conflictsensitivity.org)¹⁰) prevention. There are only a very few publicly available evaluations that deal with *response delivery mechanisms and instruments* – that is the link between institutions and the measures they implement in responses to violent conflict. Among governmental, regional and international organisations, such delivery mechanisms are usually termed “protocols”, “instruments”, “approaches”, or “processes”. Here we will look at some of the broader findings on response and try to draw out identified good practice.

5.1.1. Challenges

Numerous challenges are identified in the literature on responding to violent conflicts. At the same time, practitioners interviewed in the course of this review also shared their experiences. Some summary observations follow:

⁹ See <http://www.osloforum.org>

¹⁰ See <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/>

- The role of evidence in determining response (as opposed to political expediency, budgetary considerations, etc.) remains limited. Its limits are even greater in terms of the sharing of evidence between organisations – a critical pre-requisite for shared problem definition and therefore integrated responses (Fall, 2008).
- *Ad hocism* and limited strategic thinking is prevalent. Many actors do not define or share a clear strategy for supporting peace in violent conflict situations. The absence of such strategic frameworks leads to incoherence and uncoordinated responses. It also has efficiency consequences in the implementation of responses (Austin et al, 2004).
- Sustainability concerns remain unaddressed. How can responses be designed to outlast themselves? Whether related to macro-level strategies for stabilisation, or sector-specific approaches (DDR, disarmament, etc.), how can these be designed and implemented to ensure sustainability? These questions remain largely unanswered (Sriram and Wermester, 2003).
- Stove-piped responses, based on narrow institutional interests and the “hammer seeing every problem as a nail” syndrome have not been overcome. Deep divisions between security and development agencies, and a propensity for “blueprints” in responses to different countries with perceived similar problems remain important challenges (World Bank, 2006)

5.1.2. Emerging good practice?

Whereas it is difficult, and perhaps inadvisable, to draw any broad-brush conclusions from very different fields of work, especially given the specific contexts in which they were undertaken, understanding “good” and “bad” practice is critical for any assessment of existing early/rapid response mechanisms. Some important findings in the literature surveyed and interviews include:

- *Understand the problem, establish the ground-truth.* Easy access to information and analysis of violent conflict places responders today in a far better position than 15 years ago. However, it also creates a problem information overload and sometimes leads to paralysis. Nonetheless, there is no way around the complexity of violent conflict and it is commonsensical that decision-making has to be based on an understanding of the issues at stake. Information overload is just part of the burden of dealing with such issues. What is often lost to agencies outside of conflict areas (and even some operating out of capitals in affected countries), though, is the “ground-truth” (facts or assessments that are confirmed in an actual *field* check). Decisions taken on assessments that are not “ground-truthed” may cost lives or simply feed into mis/dis-information campaigns by conflicting parties.
- *Diversity, flexibility, adaptation, and perseverance.* A diverse package of measures is needed to address the multifaceted range of issues in violent conflict contexts. Rapidly changing conflict environments also mean that responses need to be adaptable and flexible. Research shows that following prolonged and vicious violent conflicts, a sustained effort of a decade or more is needed to give sustainable peace a real chance. As such, in addition to diversity, flexibility, and adaptation, responses have to be sustained over time (Smith, 2003).
- *Planning and strategy.* When a response to violent conflict is considered, attention is often given primarily to what is in the institutional tool-box and to existing capacities (what can we do?) rather than what needs to be done to secure an effective outcome (linking capacities to needs). The frequent absence of a comprehensive strategy that defines the goals of a response and identifies steps to reach them means that the resulting approach remains often fragmented. Addressing this strategic and planning deficit is important (de Zeeuw, 2001).

- *Be conflict-sensitive.* Over the last decade or so there has been a growing realization that responses (humanitarian assistance, development aid, political processes, security measures) to violent conflict sometimes feed conflict rather than alleviate it. This led to the development of different methodologies, including Anderson’s “Do No Harm” (1999) and the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Resource Pack (2003). Ensuring that the risks and opportunities of knock-on effects (positive and negative) of responses on conflict are managed is important. In practice, being conflict-sensitive refers to the ability of an agency to understand the context, understand the interaction between a response and the context, and act upon this understanding (PCIA Resource Pack, 2003).
- *Don’t push technical solutions onto political problems.* Many development agencies (and some peace-building NGOs) often approach violent conflict as something that has clear technical solutions. There is a tendency to overlook the politics of technical actions, muddle or cover political actions with technical ones, or worse, to use technical measures as an excuse not to undertake needed political action. Part of this “overlooking”, “muddling”, and “replacing” is deliberate and flows naturally from engagement in highly sensitive and delicate situations. Although there are issues that require purely technical solutions, blindly pushing technical solutions onto political problems is inadvisable.
- *Be fast, ensure ownership and coordination.* Good intentions and generous promises mean little if they are not translated into flexible resources that address the immediate needs of populations affected by conflict. The loss of valuable time from the moment a pledge is given to disbursement and implementation is explained by internal institutional “supply side” factors (e.g. cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, etc.) and external “demand side” factors (e.g. limited absorption capacity, etc.). Being fast, responding early or rapidly is critical. However, when that happens, it often happens at the expense of local ownership (necessary for sustainability) and coordination (a pre-requisite for efficiency and impact) with other agencies. Finding ways to be fast, bolster ownership and coordination, although important, remain elusive (de Zeeuw, 2001).

5.2. THE SURVEY: EARLY AND RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISMS AND INSTRUMENTS

5.2.1. Overview

The survey conducted as part of this study on early and rapid response systems looked at response delivery mechanisms and instruments. The basic hypothesis is that institutions will deliver better and faster responses to violent conflict and state fragility if they have pre-established mechanisms/instruments to do so. Respondents were asked a set of questions, for example on the focus, funding, institutional home, and delivery timeframes. of their response delivery mechanisms/instruments (see Box 6 for full set of questions).

Many respondents stressed that although they had response mechanisms or instruments, they did not lay claim to these being either early or rapid. Another caveat, is that the survey was focused on political and developmental actors, not security agencies. Hence, security response

Box 6: Survey questions on response delivery mechanisms and instruments

1. What is the operational and geographical focus of the early/rapid response mechanism(s)/ instrument(s)?
2. What is the stated objective of the early/rapid response mechanism(s)/instrument(s)?
3. What is the annual budget for your early/rapid response mechanism(s)/instrument(s) and who provides the funding?
4. Where is the early/rapid response mechanism(s)/instrument(s) located within your agency and what factors (e.g. budget, public opinion, etc.) influence decisions on whether or not it is to be deployed?
5. How long does it take from decision to deploy to actual deployment (shortest timeframe, longest timeframe, and average timeframe) of your early/rapid response mechanism(s)/instrument(s)?
6. If your early/rapid response mechanism(s)/instrument(s) involves cooperation, coordination activities, or partnership with any other external agencies (governments, multilaterals, NGOs, etc.), which agencies are these and what are the forms of cooperation/coordination/partnership?
7. What do you see as the main strengths and limitations/challenges faced by your early response/rapid mechanism(s)/instrument(s)?
8. Are there any success stories or particular impacts that your early/rapid response mechanism(s)/instrument(s) has/have been responsible for?

instruments (often critically important) are not covered here¹¹.

Among OECD/DAC members, response mechanisms were present in the State Department of the USA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom government. Other governments use more reactive mechanisms or rely on inter-governmental organisations for this task. Indeed, among the inter-governmental agencies surveyed, most had or are developing different response mechanisms and instruments. These include several mechanisms in the United Nations, European Commission, IGAD, ECOWAS, and World Bank. It was not possible to survey NGOs comprehensively. However, among those that run early warning systems, several (FEWER-Eurasia, Foundation for Tolerance International, Foundation for Coexistence, and WANEP) have very localised response mechanisms. See the Table 6 below for an overview.

Table 6: Governmental, Inter-Governmental, and Non-Governmental Early/Rapid Response Mechanisms		
Governmental Early/Rapid Response Mechanisms	Inter-Governmental Early/Rapid Response Mechanisms	Non-Governmental Early/Rapid Response Mechanisms
Department of State (USA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conflict Response Fund ▪ Active Response Corps 	United Nations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations Framework Team ▪ UNDP SURGE Mechanism ▪ UNDP Track 113 ▪ UNDP Thematic Trust Fund 	FEWER-Eurasia (Russia): Peace Reconstruction Pool; Humanitarian Dialogue Roundtables; Constructive Direct Action
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada): Stabilisation and Reconstruction Task Force (START) and Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF)	European Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EU Instrument for Stability 	Foundation for Tolerance International (Kyrgyzstan): Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Programme
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands): The Netherlands Stability Fund	IGAD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CEWARN/CEWERU ▪ Rapid Response Fund (under development) 	Foundation for Coexistence (Sri Lanka): Program for Human Security and Coexistence
United Kingdom Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conflict Prevention Pool ▪ Stabilisation Aid Fund ▪ Global Opportunities Fund ▪ Country Offices (Contingency Planning) 	ECOWAS: Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security	West Africa Network for Peace-Building (Ghana): National WANEP Networks
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (Switzerland): Swiss Expert Pool	World Bank: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OP8.00 Rapid Response to Crises and Emergencies 	

5.2.2. Governmental Mechanisms and Instruments

Most governmental response mechanisms and instruments are designed to ensure more coordinated and coherent responses to crises. They are in most cases funding and expertise instruments used to support a range of political, diplomatic, developmental, and security initiatives.

As explained in the Canadian response to the survey, “To enhance the Government of Canada’s capacity for international crisis response, the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) was established in 2005. START’s mission has several components, which include: (a) ensuring timely, coordinated and effective responses to international crises (natural and human-made) requiring whole-of-government action; (b) planning and delivering coherent, effective conflict prevention and crisis response initiatives in states in transition, when Canadian interests are implicated; and (c) managing the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF), a CAD142-million financial resource (fiscal year 2006-2007), used to develop and deliver peace and security initiatives in such areas as human security, global peace support operations, and global peace and security. START, through the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF), supports peace processes and mediation efforts, develops transitional justice and reconciliation initiatives, builds peace enforcement and peace operations capabilities, promotes civilian protection strategies in

¹¹ See the *Compendium of Surveyed Early Warning Systems and Early Response Mechanisms/Instruments* for profiles of systems covered.

humanitarian contexts, and reduces the impact of landmines, small arms and light weapons. The GPSF ensures effective, measurable results in support of Canada's priorities in fragile states."

While expertise instruments are normally managed by one government agency, funding mechanisms normally involve a joined-up-government approach. For example, the UK Government's Conflict Prevention Pool (originally two pools, one for Africa and one global, and established in 2001) is jointly administered by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department for International Development (DFID), and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Canadian (START) approach involves different levels of coordination. The START group:

- Acts as a catalyst or convenor, taking the lead in bringing together all relevant geographic and functional partners in DFAIT and the Canadian government;
- Co-leads crisis management efforts with geographic counterparts, as is the case for most natural disasters and in Haiti and Sudan; and
- Provides targeted policy and program support under the leadership of a country-specific DFAIT division, as in the case of Afghanistan.

There are different links between governmental response mechanisms/instruments and warning. In most cases, finance is guided by country and institutional strategies that are informed by some kind of analysis. The use of funding instruments can also be reactive – responding and providing support to the management of unfolding situations (i.e. on-going crises or conflict situations) according to needs identified by various sources (both internal and external to government). Finally, there are connections between the use of mechanisms/instruments and government conflict early warning systems, fragile states "watch-lists", and intelligence reports.

The value added of governmental response mechanisms/instruments identified in surveys and reviews of the available literature is three-fold:

- A greater ability to coordinate joined-up-government approaches to responding to countries in, or at risk of crisis;
- A reduction in costs associated to peace-keeping by supporting more effective conflict prevention efforts; and
- More rapid, coherent, and informed responses to situations of violent conflict and state fragility.

As mentioned above, most respondents surveyed stressed that their response mechanisms/instruments were not necessarily rapid or early. Indeed, the timeframes involved in the use of these mechanisms/instruments for delivery of response (from the point of decision to use mechanism/instrument to when funding/expertise is provided), were not easily quantifiable. Another challenge is whether these mechanisms/instruments actually deliver on their objectives and value added. As stated in a March 2004 evaluation of the UK Governments Conflict Prevention Pools (CPPs), "It has not been possible to come to a definitive judgement as to whether the additional benefits generated by the CPPs as a whole have been worth all or most of the additional money (around £140 million) that has been spent on them since 2001 [...]. The progress achieved through the CPP mechanisms is significant enough to justify their continuation." (Austin et al, 2004)¹².

¹² It is important to stress here that much has probably changed with the CPP mechanisms since the evaluation was undertaken – these changes remain outside of the scope of this study.

5.2.3. Inter-Governmental Mechanisms and Instruments

There have been significant developments over the last five to eight years in the institutional base, aims, type and range of response measures, instruments and mechanisms available to international and regional organisations. It should also be noted that the purpose of response mechanisms varies depending on the mandate, expertise, membership, and geographic scope of the managing organisation. They are used to deliver responses that cover the whole spectrum of operational and structural prevention. The discussion here will focus on a narrow set of mechanisms/instruments as used by a couple of international and regional organisations. It will also concentrate more on the technical (as opposed to political) mechanisms and instruments.

International Organisations

The United Nations, World Bank, and European Commission are among numerous international organisations with established mechanisms and instruments used to deliver responses to violent conflict and situations of state fragility. Of interest here, among several mechanisms/instruments available to each institution, is the United Nations Framework Team, the World Bank's OP 8.00 - Rapid Response to Crises and Emergencies, and the European Commission's Instrument for Stability.

The United Nations The United Nations' Interdepartmental Framework for Coordination of Preventive Action ("Framework Team") is more of a coordination mechanism for response, than an instrument. It consists of representatives of different UN departments and agencies, as well as of the UN Country Team from the country concerned. The Framework Team is convened when early warning signals are picked up on impending crisis or in on-going crisis situations to define strategic and coherent (political, diplomatic, economic, developmental, and humanitarian) responses.

The World Bank The Bank's Operational Policy 8.00 - Rapid Response to Crises and Emergencies (March 2007) was designed to address major adverse economic and/or social impacts resulting from an actual or imminent natural or man-made crisis or disaster. It is implemented by different groups in the Bank¹³. It can support one or more of the following objectives: (a) rebuilding and restoring physical assets; (b) restoring the means of production and economic activities; (c) preserving or restoring essential services; (d) establishing and/or preserving human, institutional, and/or social capital, including economic reintegration of vulnerable groups; (e) facilitating peace building; (f) assisting with the crucial initial stages of building capacity for longer-term reconstruction, disaster management, and risk reduction; and (g) efforts to mitigate or avert the potential effects of imminent or future emergencies and crises in countries at high risk. OP 8.00 has a global scope and draws together resources from regular IDA-IBRD funding, the Post-Conflict Fund, the LICUS Trust Fund, and the Global Fund for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

*The European Union*¹⁴ The Instrument for Stability has been designed to assist in the prevention of conflict, support political stabilization in post-conflict settings, and help foster recovery following natural disasters. As a financial instrument, it can support "a broad range of initiatives in support of conflict prevention and peacebuilding [...], including confidence-building and mediation efforts, direct support to interim administrations, reform of the security system, support to transitional justice mechanisms, demobilization and reintegration programming, and strengthening of civil

¹³ On conflict-related crises and emergencies, OP 8.00 is managed by the Fragile and Conflict Affected-Countries Group, Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS). On natural disasters-related emergencies, it is the Hazard Management Unit, Social Development Network (SDN) that take coordination responsibility.

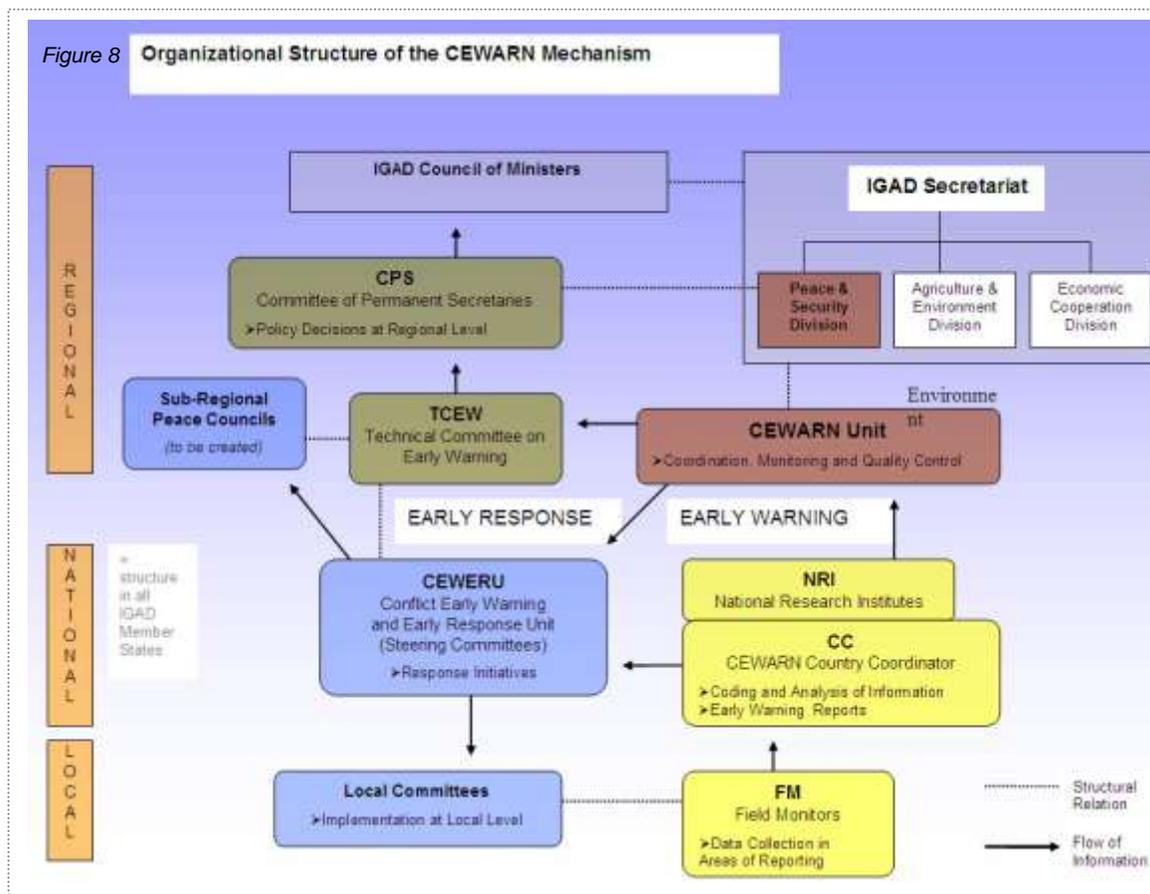
¹⁴ As explained by Banim (2008), with the mainstreaming of conflict and state fragility within different EU instruments, "the entire €6.2 billion (2007 budget forecast) allocated within the Community budget for external actions should be considered in terms of its conflict-prevention potential. Specifically, within this €6.2 billion, €232 million is allocated to the stability instrument and €150 million to the CFSP budget. Separately, €22.7 billion for the period 2008–2013 is available within the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for the 78 African, Caribbean, and Pacific states (ACP). EDF funding typically constitutes 40–70% of ACP national budgets".

society” (Banim, 2008). Measures funded through the Instrument for Stability need to be aligned with European Commission Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programs.

Regional organisations

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, regional organisations today have much enhanced (and growing) capabilities for response. A focus here is placed on the CEWERU mechanism of CEWARN (IGAD) and the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

IGAD The early response component of IGAD’s CEWARN is the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit (CEWERU) (see CEWARN organisation Figure 8 below). Organised at national level in the countries covered by the Karamoja Cluster (Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda) and Somali Cluster (Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia) it involves state and non-state representatives at local and national levels. Its purpose is explicitly to respond to CEWARN warnings – and is to be complemented by Sub-Regional Peace Councils in the near future. The actual modus operandi of the CEWERUs is described in Case-Study 2 on Pokot below.



Case-Study 2: An Early Warning Success Story from CEWARN in Kenya/Uganda

On the 23 November 2007 the CEWARN Field Monitor for Pokot got an alert from the field that around 100 Pokot warriors were preparing to attack the Bukwo Barracks where their animals were located. The Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) in Bukwo had previously recovered these from the Sabiny.

The CEWARN Field Monitor tried to get in touch with the Field Monitor for Bukwo district but failed. He then called on the CEWARN/IGAD Assistant Country Coordinator (ACC) in Uganda. The ACC quickly responded by raising the CEWERU Head at around 23:00 who then got in touch with the UPDF and local authorities in the area. The ACC Uganda alerted the CEWARN/IGAD Country Coordinator and ACC in Kenya about the same. A CEWARN Alert was immediately circulated to the CEWERU Head in Uganda, CEWERU Head, the CC and ACC in Kenya.

When notified, the UPDF and Bukwo district local authorities also got in touch with their counter parts on the Kenyan side about the impending attack by the Pokot warriors. The Kenyan authorities quickly passed on information to the Pokot leaders warning them not to cross the border. They were informed that the UPDF was expecting their attack and that the consequences would be disastrous. The Pokot leaders were advised to be patient as authorities on both sides of the border were trying to resolve the issue peacefully.

The attack by the Pokot warriors from Kenya was successfully prevented – and many lives most likely saved.

Adapted from CEWARN material.

ECOWAS The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security is a vehicle for the ECOWAS Heads of State to respond preventively to gross human rights violations, situations of mass violence and genocide, as well as political crisis and instability. It is also operated by Council of the Wise, and the Mediation and Security Council. It assists ECOWAS to deliver a range of political, diplomatic, and security responses to crises in the West African sub-region, as well as Africa as a whole through the availability of the Stand-By Force for AU missions. Funded mainly by the Africa Peace Facility (EU), ECOWAS, USA, and France, interventions in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Togo and Guinea are cited as success stories in the use of the Mechanism. ECOWAS also runs ECOWARN, and in theory the Mechanism should draw on early warnings to catalyse response. However, according to interviews, this potential remains to be fully exploited.

The value added of inter-governmental (international and regional) response mechanisms/instruments identified in surveys and through interviews is three-fold:

- They provide agreed upon mechanisms for the delivery of a variety of responses (financial, political, diplomatic, developmental, security) to crises, and may enable rapid (and in some cases early) responses;
- They promote more consensus-based decision-making both within the bureaucracy of an inter-governmental organisation and (more importantly) among member governments to a crisis situation; and
- They serve as a resource to help avoid the derailment of developmental investments by crises and conflicts.

The main challenges associated to inter-governmental response mechanisms/instruments, of course, are related to the inter-governmental nature of these institutions and the associated obstacles to response. These obstacles include a lack of political will and sensitivities about state sovereignty. There are also important bureaucratic challenges with cumbersome procedures that undermine the rapid and early delivery of responses. Interviewees have also stressed the limited link between warning and response in inter-governmental bodies. The weakness in this link relates not only to bureaucratic obstacles, but also weak sensitisation of political decision-makers on the value of early warning and evidence-based decision-making.

5.2.4. Non-Governmental Mechanisms and Instruments

Non-governmental crisis response mechanisms and instruments exist at the very micro-level, although regional NGO networks involved in prevention (like WANEP) and global ones (like GPAC) may have advocacy mechanisms (statements of concern, media campaigns, etc.) that are

designed to promote responses among larger actors. It is not the purpose of this study to chart these networks or the response mechanisms/instruments they have. Rather, at the very micro-level and among NGOs that run early warning systems, a brief overview of response mechanisms and instruments is given.

Two types of NGO response mechanisms will be described here: (a) response planning roundtables; and (b) field-level direct responses to violence.

- As mentioned in Chapter 3 above, in 2001 FEWER, WANEP, EastWest Institute, and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre launched a roundtable process that brought state and non-state (local, national and international) decision-makers together to formulate joint strategies for response to early warnings. The purpose was to address incoherence in responses by different actors through joint problem definition and planning, as well as to provide a forum for multi-stakeholder discussion on early warnings as and when they emerged. The roundtable process was piloted first in Javakheti (Georgia) and Guinea-Conakry. Later, it extended to the North Caucasus, became part of the FAST agenda, and was further developed as a concept by other agencies and groups.
- Most conflict prevention NGOs and civil society organisations active in countries affected by crisis and conflict are involved in responding to situations of impending or actual violence. This work has been documented extensively in case-studies by groups such as CDA Inc.¹⁵. Standardised response mechanisms are relatively new but are now often present in NGOs that run early warning systems. These mechanisms will link monitoring of crisis situations to responses (fact-finding, mediation, dialogue) through a set of standard operating procedures. Such procedures for response are often found in “third generation” early warning initiatives as well as in corporate early warning systems (see Case-Study 3 below on the Eastern Province in Sri Lanka).

Case-Study 3: An Early Response from the Foundation for Coexistence in the Eastern Province

On June 18, 2005, communal clashes broke out between Tamils and Sinhalese in the township of Seruvila in the Trincomalee district of the Eastern Province following the killing by unidentified gunmen of a Sinhalese police sergeant who was a resident in the area. Seruvila is a Sinhalese township and its geography is such that road access to the nearby Tamil villages leads through it. Rumours spread that the police sergeant was assassinated by Tamil militants which led to serious restiveness among Sinhalese youth in Seruvila. They assaulted a group of Tamil civilians who were travelling on the road, damaged vehicles and blocked the supplies to the Tamil villages. In retaliation the Tamil youths unleashed violence against the Sinhalese in the border area, including throwing hand grenades. FCE's information center was monitoring the situation on a daily basis and foresaw the escalation of deadly ethnic violence. The information centre coordinated with the early response unit and dispatched two missions of field monitors to discuss the issues with the Sinhalese community leaders and the LTTE local political leadership. Following these discussions, the FCE was able to bring the parties to negotiations where they agreed to stop hostilities and resolve the issues peacefully.

Adapted from FCE material.

The value added of the non-governmental response mechanisms and instruments described here is two-fold:

- They facilitate joint problem definition and response planning among a diverse group of agencies to early warnings; and
- They help deliver quick responses to micro-level crisis situations that may deteriorate into violence and lead to the loss of lives and escalation.

The challenges of non-governmental response mechanisms/instruments are significant. They relate to the small size of the organisations (and limits to convening power, types of measures,

¹⁵ See, for example, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons For Peace Practitioners* (2003) at http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/confrontingwar_Pdf1.pdf

etc.), vulnerability to interference or intimidation by the state or non-state actors, and often the inability of NGOs/civil society organisations to work together for political/personal reasons. One interviewee expressed disappointment, for example, that civil society networks in Kenya had been unable to respond effectively to the post-election violence that affected that country in early 2008.

5.2.5. Preliminary Conclusions – More Does Not Mean Better

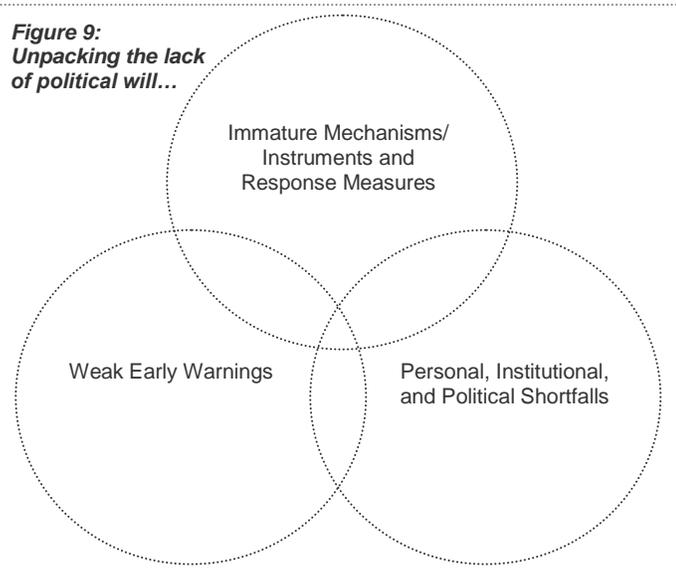
There are a range of early and rapid response mechanisms/instruments among governments, multilaterals, and NGOs. These mechanisms and instruments play an important role in facilitating potentially effective, early, and rapid responses to violent conflict. However, although capacities have increased over the last decade, more capacity does not necessarily mean better responses. Key preliminary conclusions include:

- The links between different early/rapid response mechanisms/instruments and a sound, field based understanding of the issues vary significantly. In many cases, decisions regarding if and how to deploy a mechanism/instrument are not driven by an analysis of what is needed and what works but by other concerns. However, among regional organisations and NGOs that run early warning systems, the use of evidence-based decision-making (caveat: when analyses are sound) seems more widespread.
- Many funding and expertise based mechanisms/instruments have a relatively short time span and are mostly one-offs. They are also frequently “demand-driven”, i.e. used to fund specific requests for assistance or proposals received. There are some cases (e.g. UK Conflict Prevention Pool) where the use of instruments falls within a preventive strategy for a given conflict.
- It is unclear how “early” and “rapid” governmental and inter-governmental response mechanisms/instruments are. The NGOs surveyed, in part due to their small and highly focused response mechanisms/instruments were able to give concrete estimates on deployment timescales. Among agencies (governmental and inter-governmental) with larger and more sophisticated response mechanisms/instruments there was frequently no answer on timescales. Whereas many mechanisms/instruments involve in-house (joined-up-government or inter-agency) coordination, there is little evidence to suggest that the deployment of mechanisms/instruments is coordinated between different governments, multilateral agencies, and NGOs.

5.3. THE WARNING-RESPONSE LINK

It is well-accepted that early warning without an early or rapid response is pointless. An early or rapid response that is ineffective, that does not contribute to the management, resolution, or prevention of violent conflict (or state failure/collapse) is also futile or worse. The last decade has seen important developments in the capability of international and regional institutions to respond. However, there is a significant list of post-Rwanda crises, most recently Kenya and Chad, where early and rapid response has been lacking and where thousands of lives have been lost.

Figure 9:
Unpacking the lack of political will...



Frequently, the absence of response is blamed on “a lack of political will”. The sections above have flagged two elements of this “political will” deficit: weak early warning, and limits to current international and regional response mechanisms/instruments. A third element is a set of personal, institutional, and political short-comings. This third element is discussed here (see Figure 9).

Decision making on how to respond to situations of violent conflict and state fragility is driven in part by personal, institutional, and political factors. It is personal, as individual experience, personal relationships, etc. profoundly affect the decisions on response. It is institutional, as turf battles, personnel turn-over, and budget disbursement procedures to mention some, also determine what choices are made. And it is political, as national interests, the work of advocacy and special interest groups, and special relationships, among other things, have real implications for choices on how to respond to violent conflict and state fragility.

It is important to understand the personal, institutional, and political factors that affect responses to violent conflict and state fragility. Such an understanding not only serves to contextualise the role of early warning and response capabilities, but to identify the basic issues that need to be tackled in efforts to bridge the gap between warning and response. The table below summarises the most salient of these at a governmental and inter-governmental level (although also applicable to NGO decision-makers) as identified in the literature and through interviews.

Personal	Institutional	Political
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time and decision-making pressure ▪ Competing priorities ▪ Personal interest and experience ▪ Knowledge and understanding of situation ▪ Training and analytical skills ▪ Decision-making ability ▪ Risk taking profile ▪ Personal relationships ▪ Personal cost-benefit calculations and accountability ▪ Available information and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institutional and departmental mandate ▪ Budget availability ▪ Turf considerations ▪ Risk taking/averse culture ▪ Personnel turn-over and institutional memory ▪ Decision-making procedures ▪ Available mechanisms and instruments ▪ Accountability considerations ▪ Security of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National/institutional interest and priorities ▪ Alliances and special relationships ▪ Enmities and competition ▪ Party and constituency politics ▪ Media coverage and CNN-effects ▪ Advocacy pressure ▪ Political cost-benefit calculations ▪ Political consensus ▪ Politicisation of information

Drawn from (Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996), Carment, Samy, and Prest (2007), Matveeva (2006), and Nyheim (2003).

The implications of the above table are numerous:

- There are many personal, institutional, and political considerations that affect decision-makers and lead to a focus on what *cannot* be done, or (at best) what *can* be done, as opposed to what *should* be done about violent conflict or fragile states. Context requirements are overshadowed by other influences.
- Institutional culture and capacity play a determining role in whether appropriate decisions are taken and responses follow. Many institutions deter or punish individual risk taking, apply restrictive interpretations on their mandates, have cumbersome and hierarchical decision-making processes, and lack operational response mechanisms and instruments.
- There remains a significant accountability deficit for inaction or poor action in responding to violent conflict and state failure. Whereas some multinational companies have been known to fire employees if inadequate preventive measures led to the loss of corporate assets, few (if any) civil servants lose their jobs when decades of development investments are destroyed by violent conflict.

Together these factors complicate efforts to respond to conflict and state fragility. Additional complications come from the rapid internationalisation of many crises linked to contemporary threat perceptions. There is today far greater international political interest in conflicts that were previously considered marginal (e.g. Beluchistan, Somalia, Northern Ghana). By virtue of additional agendas, more actors and engagement, this internationalisation (with some exceptions, of course) often complicates efforts to respond to conflict and state fragility quickly and effectively.

5.4. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that capabilities to respond to situations of violent conflict and state fragility have evolved significantly since the genocide in Rwanda and the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s. Institutional mandates of response mechanisms have been strengthened, funding has increased, there is a greater range of operational tools, and mechanisms have been refined on the basis of experience.

From evaluations of responses to violent conflict, several “good practice” principles have been drawn by scholars, including: (a) understand the problem, hold the “ground-truth”; (b) ensure that responses are diverse, flexible, and sustainable; (c) invest time in planning and strategy; (d) be conflict-sensitive; (e) don’t push technical solutions onto political problems; (f) balance speed, ownership and coordination.

The review identified numerous important gains from the development of governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental response mechanisms/instruments:

- More rapid, coherent, and informed responses within institutions to situations of violent conflict and state fragility;
- Perceived potential for reduced costs associated to expensive “late” responses to violent conflict and state fragility;
- The promotion of more consensus-based decision-making both within the bureaucracies and political leadership to a crisis situation; and
- They serve as a resource to help avoid the derailment developmental investments by crises and conflict.

However, more mechanisms/instruments have not translated into better responses. The link between warning and response remains weak. This is due to the poor quality of early warning, immature mechanisms/instruments and response measures, along with a range of personal, institutional, and political shortcomings affecting decision making. If the problem was “that early warning is not wired to the bulb”, today there are too many bulbs competing with each other or not working when they should.

6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE

International threat perceptions have changed since the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001. Another mutation in threats is likely over the next decade – involving a mix of repercussions of climate change (water and land scarcity, population displacements), fall-outs from the wars in Iraq/Afghanistan and the war on terrorism, and the transformation of violent conflict into criminalised armed violence, to mention just a few factors. Whether advances in technology, early warning, global response capabilities are likely to place us in a position to effectively manage these threats is questionable.

The future of conflict early warning and response is likely to be driven by a combination of future security threats, advances in technology, and, of course, current warning and response trends.

What does that add up to? What are the implications for current early warning and response systems? This chapter attempts to provide some answers to these questions by offering a brief discussion on future threats to international and regional security, advances in technology, and current trends in early warning and response.

6.1. FUTURE THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Future threats to international security are likely to be a mix of existing threats, their mutations or fall-outs, and emerging as well as unforeseen threats. It is possible to make some observations about the three first, but not on the last. The threats of particular concern to the conflict early warning field relate to climate-change, fall outs from the war in Iraq/Afghanistan and the war on terrorism, and the rise of criminalised armed violence.

Climate-related threats There is an increasing body of literature on how climate change is likely to affect the future of international security. The magnitude of impact depends on what scientific projections one subscribes to. A relatively balanced view is elaborated in the March 2008 High Representative and European Commission report to the European Council, which observed that "Climate change is best viewed as a threat multiplier which exacerbates existing trends, tensions and instability. The core challenge is that climate change threatens to overburden states and regions which are already fragile and conflict prone. It is important to recognise that the risks are not just of a humanitarian nature; they also include political and security risks that directly affect European interests". The main climate related threats identified in the report include: (a) conflict over resources; (b) economic damage and risk to coastal cities and critical infrastructure; (c) loss of territory and border disputes; (d) environmentally-induced migration; (e) situations of fragility and radicalization; (f) tension over energy supply; and (g) pressure on international governance. Excerpts from the report are given below.

***Climate-related Threats to International Security
– High Representative and European Commission Report to the European Council (March 2008)***

i) Conflict over resources

"Reduction of arable land, widespread shortage of water, diminishing food and fish stocks, increased flooding and prolonged droughts are already happening in many parts of the world. Climate change will alter rainfall patterns and further reduce available freshwater by as much as 20 to 30% in certain regions. A drop in agricultural productivity will lead to, or worsen, food-insecurity in least developed countries and an unsustainable increase in food prices across the board."

ii) Economic damage and risk to coastal cities and critical infrastructure

"It has been estimated that a business as usual scenario in dealing with climate change could cost the world economy up to 20% of global GDP per year, whereas the cost of effective concerted action can be limited to 1%. Coastal zones are the home of about one fifth of the world's population, a number set to rise in the years ahead. Mega-cities, with their supporting infrastructure, such as port facilities and oil refineries, are often located by the sea or in river deltas. Sea-level rise and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters pose a serious threat to these regions and their economic prospects."

iii) Loss of territory and border disputes

"Scientists project major changes to the landmass during this century. Receding coastlines and submergence of large areas could result in loss of territory, including entire countries such as small island states. More disputes over land and maritime borders and other territorial rights are likely."

iv) Environmentally-induced migration

"Those parts of the populations that already suffer from poor health conditions, unemployment or social exclusion are rendered more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which could amplify or trigger migration within and between countries. The UN predicts that there will be millions of "environmental" migrants by 2020 with climate change as one of the major drivers of this phenomenon."

v) Situations of fragility and radicalization

"Climate change may significantly increase instability in weak or failing states by over-stretching the already limited capacity of governments to respond effectively to the challenges they face. The inability of a government to meet the needs of its population as a whole or to provide protection in the face of climate change-induced hardship could trigger frustration, lead to tensions between different ethnic and religious groups within countries and to political radicalisation. This could destabilise countries and even entire regions."

vi) Tension over energy supply

"One of the most significant potential conflicts over resources arises from intensified competition over access to, and control over, energy resources. That in itself is, and will continue to be, a cause of instability. However, because much of the world's hydrocarbon reserves are in regions vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and because many oil and gas producing states already face significant social economic and demographic challenges, instability is likely to increase. This has the potential to feed back into greater energy insecurity and greater competition for resources."

vii) Pressure on international governance

"The multilateral system is at risk if the international community fails to address the threats outlined above. Climate change impacts will fuel the politics of resentment between those most responsible for climate change and those most affected by it. Impacts of climate mitigation policies (or policy failures) will thus drive political tension nationally and internationally."

Fall-outs from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq Writing about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is politically sensitive and difficult as analyses are polarized between those who believe these wars were justified, and those who think they were unlawful or have been poorly managed. Most, however, agree that the human and financial toll of these wars is or will be significant both in the short and long-term (Teslik, 2008). In terms of fall-out, or “blow-back”, there is much speculation and also polarized disagreement. Indeed, the nature and level of fall-out from these wars is likely to be determined by the policies pursued by the next US government. For better or for worse, in terms of the global economy, energy supplies, the “war on terror”, credibility of Western democracies, the integrity of international laws and norms, and inter-faith relations, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq will have an impact and influence on future security threat scenarios well beyond the actual theatres of operations.

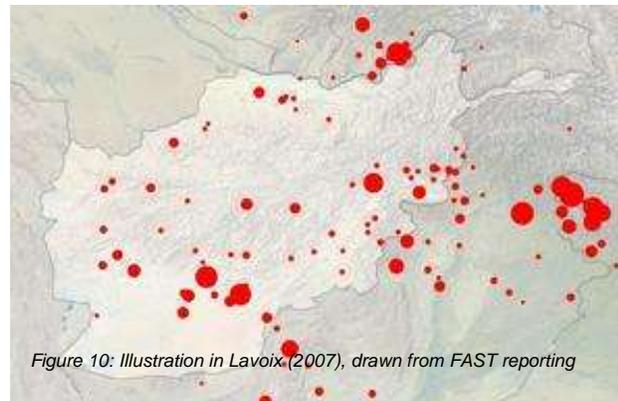
The war on terrorism The fall out of the war on terrorism, also a politically sensitive topic, follows partly from the diversion of political attention and resources away from important global challenges, as well as from compromises made in different parts of the world on accountability and governance. Global challenges include not only those mentioned above and below, but also current and future worldwide financial instability and energy scarcity. Compromises made on accountability of government and governance has meant that groups and regimes responsible for human rights abuses and crimes are given legitimacy and support (e.g. Afghanistan, Ethiopia in Somalia, etc.) (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Knock-on effects of diverted attention/resources and compromised governance are difficult to anticipate, but will be felt regionally and globally.

Rise of criminalized armed violence In many violent conflict situations, grievance is increasingly overshadowed by greed, and violence is becoming an end in itself. Somalia, the Niger Delta, Colombia, Haiti, Chechnya, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan, are all examples of this trend. Approaching such violent conflicts (or situations of armed violence) from a traditional operational and structural prevention angle is probably inappropriate. Engaging with non-state actors that either have no political agendas, or that use politics as a fig-leaf for criminal intent is very different from engagement with groups motivated by grievance. However, in situations where greed dominates, grievance often remains. As more violent conflicts mutate into situations of armed violence, early warning and response approaches must also adapt to facilitate the search for sustainable solutions.

6.2. ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

Emerging trends in conflict early warning can also be seen in the use of new technologies. Google Earth, Geographical Information Systems (see Figure 1 from Afghanistan), and search engines are used more frequently.

Increased communication capacities, particularly with the now widespread use of mobile phones, help to enhance connections between warners and responders – but only where such links are either informally agreed or formally established (see, for example, CEWARN case-study above).



Advances in global navigation satellite systems (GPS, or the European Galileo), combined with those in communication technology, are likely to contribute to improved speed and accuracy in pinpointing the location and nature of violent events in crisis affected countries. They will be of particular importance for early warning systems that operate local information networks, provided that they are able to access the technology.

6.3. CURRENT TRENDS IN WARNING AND RESPONSE INITIATIVES

Arising from the above sections, several trends in early warning and early response initiatives can be identified.

6.3.1. Early Warning Trends

Three trends in the early warning field are immediately visible from the above analysis.

- The future of early warning systems is likely to be driven by regional organisations and NGOs based in conflict affected regions. However, some Northern based initiatives (e.g. ICG) will continue to serve as important analytical sources for governments and multilaterals, particularly now that both FEWER and FAST have closed down. Whether it is in the interest of governments and multilaterals to rely heavily on just a few sources is an important question.
- Development agencies rely more heavily on one-off analyses (conflict and state fragility assessments) to inform programmes than on early warning. This trend is likely to continue and evolve, particularly in the direction of assessments of state fragility.
- Another important trend, which has not been discussed in detail due to commercial confidentiality issues, is the increased use of early warning systems by businesses that operate in conflict-affected areas. These systems mirror third generation ones discussed above and operate at the micro-level, particularly around critical assets and investments. They serve to inform joint actions by community leaders, corporate officials, and government, as well as corporate social responsibility efforts. Early warning systems and risk assessment tools are important additions to security measures for these companies. The screenshot below (Figure 11) of a typical corporate conflict risk assessment tool (names and locations changed) is provided courtesy of INCAS Consulting Ltd.

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Search results:
Cluster 33, High risk, High relevance, Risk responses

Community name	LGA	State	Ethnic Group	Division	Team
ODIMODI	BURUTU	DELTA	IJAW	WEST	TEAM B

Risk responses:
 Response: GMOU expectations management.
 Start date: 05 Jan 2007
 Action party: Save the Niger Delta (SND)
 Staff responsible: Ms Omuko
 Response status: Ongoing
 Impact: TBC

Community name	LGA	State	Ethnic Group	Division	Team
OJOBO	BURUTU	DELTA	IJAW	WEST	TEAM B

Risk responses:
 Response: Mobile police deployment
 Start date: 20 Dec 2006
 Action party: Delta State Government (DSG)
 Staff responsible: Captain Aitiku
 Response status: Ongoing
 Impact: Violence quelled

Data Query

Unit of analysis
Cluster 33

Risk & business relevance
 High risk
 High relevance

Other data
 Scores
 Indicators
 Risk responses
 Notes

Display option
 Quadrant analysis
 Risk summary

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6.3.2. Early Response Trends

In the field of early and rapid response, there are a few noteworthy trends.

- Joined-up-government approaches and inter-agency cooperation is gaining ground. If coupled with further development of early response mechanisms and instruments then this may bode well for international and regional efforts to respond early and rapidly to violent conflicts and situations of acute state fragility.
- Decision-makers deployed to respond to violent conflicts are still under-trained, over-stretched, rotated too frequently, struggling with cumbersome decision-making processes, and remain too unaccountable. This is a situation that is unlikely to change and will continue to disappoint those who hope for effective responses to violent conflict and state fragility.
- Along with the increase in response capabilities (institutions, mechanisms/instruments, and measures), there is now a greater body of knowledge and experience available on the use of these capabilities in situations of violent conflict and state fragility. Much of this knowledge remains within institutions, but there are on-going efforts by groups such as the OECD/DAC to harness good practice. Scaled up lessons reviews at an

international and regional level may be an important contribution to bolstering the cause of early/rapid response.

- The emergence of third generation early warning and early response systems is promising with their potential for more effective regional and micro-level preventive efforts. Greater investments in such systems may yield important results, particularly in terms of lives and property saved.

6.4. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

Early warning and early response will be faced with an evolution of threats over the next decade. These threats will come from the combined impacts on conflict and instability of climate change, the fall-outs from the wars in Afghanistan/Iraq, the war on terror, and the increasing criminalisation of conflict, among other factors. There is little indication of forward thinking, particularly following the demise of global early warning systems such as FAST and FEWER, among early warners of these issues. However, the future relevance of the field depends largely on work undertaken now to be able to understand and provide useful analysis on these new emerging threats.

Technological advancements have played an important role in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of early warning systems. Most inter-governmental and non-governmental systems, however, have not gone beyond the use of email and websites for dissemination, and communication technology for data collection. Governmental and some inter-governmental systems do benefit from access and resources to use satellite and GIS in their analysis and reporting. However, access to technology remains very unequal between systems.

There are several important trends in the early warning community that are important to note. First, with the closure of FAST (and previously FEWER), there is now less open source diversity in early warning analysis at a global level. Exclusive reliance on a few sources, no matter how good they are, is not good decision-making practice particularly on complex issues such as violent conflict and state fragility. Second, development agencies are no longer as enthusiastic about early warning systems as they used to be. Agencies involved in operational prevention remain interested, however, and current early warning systems need to consider how to shift their networking efforts to these actors if they have not done so already. Third, with increased corporate use of early warning and risk assessment tools, there are new partners to bring into the early warning fold.

In terms of early response trends, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, along with work to ensure greater government and inter-governmental coherence, there is a need to empower officials working on conflict and state fragility (through capacity-building, etc.) to do their work well. Second, an increase in response capabilities and experience needs to be bolstered by initiatives to document and share good practice. Not doing so will constitute a missed opportunity. And third, micro-level responses to violent conflict by “third generation early warning systems” are an exciting development in the field that should be encouraged further. These kinds of responses save lives.

Considering the balance between future security threats and trends in technology, early warning, and early response, this study concludes that the early warning and response field is unprepared – and risks losing its relevance.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has reviewed the contemporary history of the early warning field, discussed the range of current early warning tools and operational systems, assessed a selection of early/rapid response mechanisms/instruments, and discussed future directions for the field. So what's the big picture? What does it mean in relation to the critical questions raised in this study? Where is future work required? And what should the OECD/DAC and its members do about it? This concluding chapter attempts to answer these questions.

7.1. WHAT DOES IT ADD UP TO?

Conflict early warning has evolved significantly since its initial conceptualisation, with important contributions from many individuals and organisations over the years. However, can we say today that we are in a position to prevent another Rwandan genocide? We probably cannot. Conflict early warning faces the same challenges as it did 15 years ago. Early response remains elusive, and with it our ability to protect and preserve life in the face of war remains weak.

The conflict early warning field is trying to find a balance between staying relevant to its funders and doing what it is supposed to do but is tilting significantly towards the former, in part because of changes in the geo strategic environment and Northern perceptions of threats. The notion of an open-source, pro-people and pro-peace conflict early warning system is giving way to one with a far more pronounced intelligence dimension.

Advances over the last 15 years or so in early and rapid response have been made in the range of institutions, mechanisms, instruments, and processes available to manage violent conflict as well as in national, regional, and international willingness to use force in situations of violent conflict. However, more has not necessarily meant better. In fact, the multiplicity of actors and responses means that the problems of late, incoherent, fragmented, and confused responses is perhaps greater today than it was at the time of the Rwandan genocide.

Further transformation of the geo-strategic context and perception of threats is certain to occur over the next decade. This is likely to involve a mix of the repercussions of climate change, fall-outs from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the war on terror, and the transformation of violent conflict into criminalised armed violence, among other factors. Whether advances in technology, early warning, global response capabilities are likely to place us in a position to effectively manage these threats is questionable.

The big picture that emerges from this study is that 14 years after the Rwandan genocide, early warning systems still cannot claim to be in a position to prevent situations of mass violence. Part of the reason for this is poor early warning. Another part is that efforts to “wire warning to response” have found growing, but still immature and incoherent response capabilities along with a set of personal, institutional, and political obstacles to response. As such, the international and regional response mechanisms are working rather poorly. With a future filled with new and significant threats, the early warning and response field needs leadership and a vision to guide its development over the next decade.

7.2. REVISITING CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**What is the value of early warning for the prevention of violent conflict and peace-building?
What role does early warning play in prevention?**

The review of governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental early warning systems concludes that these systems provide:

- A crisis prediction capacity that enables proactive decision-making;

- A stronger basis for evidence-based decision-making on countries affected by crisis;
- Improved programming through systematic country reviews and expert analysis;
- A priority-setting contribution through watch-list type products;
- A starting point for developing a shared problem definition on crisis-affected countries that sets the stage for more coherent responses; and
- An ideas pool for responses, and sometimes the forum to meet fellow responders and plan joint response strategies.

What are the most effective early warning systems? Why they are effective and what impacts do they have?

Governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental early warning systems have different purposes. However, it is generally accepted that an effective early warning system: (a) is based “close to the ground” or had strong field-based networks of monitors; (b) uses multiple sources of information and both qualitative/quantitative analytical methods; (c) capitalizes on appropriate communication and information technology; (d) provides regular reports and updates on conflict dynamics to key national and international stakeholders; and (e) has a strong link to responders or response mechanisms.

There are several reported impacts of different systems – including crises averted, lives saved, and informed responses – many of which have been included in this report as case-studies. However, more rigorous evaluations of these impacts is required.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of different methodologies – quantitative / qualitative and conflict analysis / state fragility?

Most analytical methods will serve particular institutional interests and agendas – there is, therefore, not necessarily one method that is better than another. The strengths and weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative methods surveyed are summarised in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods		
	Quantitative Methods	Qualitative Methods
Strengths	<p>Their predictive capacity, particularly related to political crisis and instability is high.</p> <p>Their immediate policy value – in terms priority setting and “watch-listing” is significant.</p> <p>Models that draw on a larger number of significant indicators provide pointers for programming.</p>	<p>They provide rich context information and analysis that can be simple enough for desk officers to absorb and do something with.</p> <p>They often have strong planning and evaluation applications built in.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Unreliable and incomplete data from crisis-affected countries affect reliability of findings.</p> <p>Even the best quantitative models will at times have reduced predictability.</p> <p>The graphs, charts, country-lists, etc. in themselves provide little insight to decision-makers into what is happening on ground or what needs to be done.</p>	<p>Unreliable and incomplete data from crisis-affected countries affect reliability of findings.</p> <p>Are often one-off snapshots of rapidly evolving situations. They are quickly outdated;</p> <p>Sometimes oversimplify the complexity of violent conflict and state fragility situations.</p> <p>Usually proffer technical solutions to complex political issues.</p> <p>Are fundamentally based on personal judgement.</p>

What does it take to really prevent violent conflict? What do we currently know is good practice and what works?

From evaluations of responses to violent conflict, several “good practice” principles have been drawn by scholars, including: (a) understand the problem, hold the “ground-truth”; (b) ensure that

responses are diverse, flexible, and sustainable; (c) invest time in planning and strategy; (d) be conflict-sensitive; (e) don't push technical solutions onto political problems; (f) balance speed, ownership and coordination.

What early/rapid response mechanisms/instruments are available?

There are a range of response mechanisms/instruments hosted by different institutions. However, these response “delivery systems” cannot be dissociated from their host institutions (with their mandates, structures, resources, etc.) or from the operational and structural prevention measures they deliver.

What influences and blocks early response? What are the personal, institutional and political factors at play?

The lack of political will is often cited as the main blocker of early response. This study has sought to unpack “the lack of political will” and argues that it follows from weak warnings, immature response mechanisms/instruments and measures, along with a range of personal, institutional, and political shortfalls. Together, these prevent us from responding in a timely and appropriate manner to situations of violent conflict and state fragility.

7.3. EMERGING QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH NEEDS

A set of emerging questions and research needs related to early warning and early response emerge from the chapters above. They include:

- What are the success stories in conflict early warning? Why were these warnings successful? What can early warning systems learn from these experiences?
- What should the global conflict early warning architecture look like in order to be able to prevent another Rwanda and manage future security threats? What regions need to be covered, by a combination of what types of systems and groups?
- What are the cumulative key lessons learnt in conflict early response – particularly in the involvement of different agencies, mechanisms/instruments, and operational and structural measures?
- What is the true nature of weak political will to respond? What are its constituent parts? And what strategies should be deployed to address them? How can accountability in responses be bolstered?
- What is the “lay of the land” of current regional and international institutions involved in responding to violent conflict and state failure? What does the broad picture - institutional base, response mechanisms/instruments, and operational/structural measures - look like?
- What should the global conflict early response architecture look like in order to be able to prevent another Rwanda and manage future security threats?

7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OECD/DAC

This study concludes with key recommendations for the OECD/DAC – under the headings of technical, institutional, and political ways of supporting effective early warning and early response efforts.

7.4.1. Technical Recommendations

1. Assist in the consolidation of good (quantitative and qualitative) methodological practice for conflict analysis and state fragility analysis.

Consolidation of good methodological practice could involve the organisation of a conflict and state fragility analysis workshop that brings together methods developers to discuss and document good practice. There is a need to do further work on qualitative state fragility assessments. This is an area that is quite new and the DAC may have a comparative advantage here.

Explore also how state fragility indices or assessments can be used to better inform resource allocations. This would entail expanding the OECD FSG work on monitoring resource allocation by monitoring how resources are allocated in relation to state fragility.

2. Define and disseminate quality standards for “good early warning reports” – along with guidelines for implementing them.

Quality standards for “good early warning reports” need to include, as explained by Adelman (2006) the Five Normative Cs (Correctness, Consistency, Coherence, Comprehensiveness, Conclusions that follow logically from premise) along with basic formats for reporting and recommendations for basic research techniques. A “Basic Standards for Early Warning Reporting” should be developed and disseminated both to warners and decision-makers.

3. Ensure that the forthcoming OECD Guidelines on Armed Violence Reduction should include pointers for how early warning systems can promote improved understanding of relevant issues.

The forthcoming OECD Guidelines on Armed Violence Reduction should include a section with pointers for early warning systems to cover effectively this phenomenon – including potential indicators and information sources.

4. Commission a study and organise a conference on the role of technology in early warning and early response.

A study and conference on technology in early warning and early response should focus on existing usages – and how different technological advancements can be used to bolster current initiatives. It should bring together warning and response agencies, along with technology providers.

7.4.2. Institutional Recommendations

5. Ensure that early warning systems target political decision-makers and stay on their radar-screen.

Promote a debate within the OECD/DAC on appropriate funding mechanisms for early warning – to align these initiatives with their primary (political) clients. Also, encourage annual workshops among early warning initiatives that bring together early warners from around the world and regional and international decision-makers.

6. Assess capacities-needs among decision-makers in government and international/regional organisations who deal with violent conflict and state fragility.

Launch a study to look at staff capacities-needs for conflict/state fragility analysis and strategy among OECD/DAC members and partner institutions. Include in the study a survey of existing training courses available. Also, identify poor human resources practices that disempower governmental and inter-governmental officials from engaging in effective early/rapid response.

7.4.3. Political Recommendations

7. Make government and inter-governmental decision-makers more accountable for appropriate and timely response (or the lack thereof).

Undertake regular audits of governmental and inter-governmental responses (along the lines of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda) to violent conflict and state fragility to bolster accountability for response regionally and internationally. A first step could include commissioning an evaluation of responses to the Darfur, Chad, and Kenya conflicts. Also, consider elaborating “A Responsibility to Prevent” doctrine among OECD/DAC members and partners on violent conflict situations and state fragility. Such a doctrine would need to specify the responsibilities of individuals (at both political and technical levels) charged with responding to violent conflict and state collapse among OECD/DAC members and partners. It also needs to involve a political buy-in by relevant OECD/DAC heads of agencies, and of regional and international agencies – and integrated into civil service training programmes.

8. Organise a high-level conference on the warning-response link, global early warning and response architecture – and how these need to evolve to effectively address current and future threats to human and state security.

Organise a high-level conference on the global early warning and early response architecture – and how it is (or not) equipped to deal with current and future threats to human and state security. Focus the conference on regional/thematic coverage of current early warning systems, institutions/mechanisms/measures for response, and how these are able or not to address today's and future security threats.

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