



BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION

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Changing the United Nations

By Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala

I prefer to use the term 'change' because 'reform' has pejorative implications. There have been attempts to change structures and procedures in the UN in the past and there will be similar efforts in the future. National institutions and even non-governmental organizations have had to make changes from time to time. The curtain can never come down on such change. (...)

The Millennium Declaration adopted in September 2000 identified the shared values of the UN community as Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Tolerance, Respect for Nature and Shared Responsibility. No change can affect these values, which represent powerful forces motivating humankind through history. They provide what might be called the collective legitimation of the UN. (...) There has also been a consensus established that the core areas of the UN's work are in peace and security, human rights and development and that all three of these areas are interconnected and interlaced so that you cannot have one without the other. The budget of the UN must reflect this for the UN's institutions to function effectively. (...)

Amidst the unfulfilled demands for the reform of the Security Council, and especially its enlargement, tensions appear to have grown between the General Assembly and the Security Council. The current debate on UN reform has been seriously complicated by deep-seated concerns that, under the guise of reform, attempts are being made to change the equilibrium that is inherent in the Charter. The need for change is recognized. That, however, should not be an occasion for a struggle for power over the organization by one group of countries over the other. Whether it is a group enjoying the power of the purse or the power

of the majority we need to allow the equilibrium to remain as difficult as it may be. (...)

Another important principle that has to be observed in implementing change is the need for equality as far as the member states are concerned. Changing the UN should not be the object of one country or group of countries. It is the collective wish of the entire membership, and consensus documents vouch for this. Change must therefore benefit all countries. (...)

The role of the Secretary-General (SG) must at all times be impartial and he must not be perceived to be acting under pressure from any side. Nor should his proposals for change be seen as tilting the delicate power balance to one side or another. For this the most painstaking consultations are vital, however time-consuming they may be. We need a transparent and accountable system of running the world's most indispensable multilateral body and we must work hard for it. (...)

We have also seen the innovative creation of new institutions in response to demonstrable needs. The Peacebuilding Commission recommended by the High Level Panel has also now come into being. It represents a synthesis of several bodies in the UN system and augurs well for concrete, coordinated action among the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, different departments within the UN Secretariat, groups of countries such as donors, troop supplying countries in peacekeeping situations and the International Financial Institutions. (...) We must ensure that this body is given the resources to do its job. (...)

In a landmark decision a resolution on a counter-terrorism strategy was adopted by Resolution 60/288 with a Plan of Action. This year the ECOSOC was strengthened by steps mentioned in Resolution 61/16 and the General Assembly revitalization was the subject of Resolution 61/266. More controversially, the new SG proposed the conversion of the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) into an Office headed by a High Representative coming directly under the Executive Office of the SG. The proposal as it was

originally made raised objections especially from the Non-Aligned Group of Countries; and after negotiations, a resolution was adopted supporting the establishment of an Office for Disarmament Affairs with the same budgetary autonomy and integrity as the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and with a High Representative with the rank of Under-Secretary-General. Two years hence there will be a report on the activities of this Office for the General Assembly to review. (...)

There is clearly a great deal of unfinished business in changing the UN to make it the efficient instrument that we all want. (...) There is therefore a desperate need for the staff to be consulted and brought into the process. There is also a need for a better public information strategy to convey what is being done to improve the UN especially since the UN must reach out to civil society and the taxpayers who pay the assessed dues of the member states. (...)

U Thant, the first Asian Secretary-General of the UN said, just before leaving office in December 1971: "...To the impatient voices from all quarters calling for an end to the United Nations and its replacement with a more dynamic and more effective instrument for peace, this Secretary-General can only reply: take care; in today's troubled world there might not be a chance to establish a new international organization—much less one better than the United Nations. Cherish it, improve it, but do not forsake it!"

Thirty six years later, I can do no better than endorse that advice.

Jayantha Dhanapala is a former Ambassador of Sri Lanka and a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General. He is currently Chairman of the UN University Council and member of BICC's International Board. The views expressed here are his own (excerpt of a speech held on 4 June 2007 in Bonn).

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Staff Spotlight



Andrea Warnecke

Andrea Warnecke joined BICC in 2006 as an intern. Since October 2006 she has worked as a Research Assistant at BICC, where she undertook a comparative study of the capacity among the 30 OECD member states for operational conflict prevention. At the same time, she also contributed to a research project on the role of African diaspora communities in the conflict process, commissioned by the North-Rhine Westphalian Ministry for Generations, Family, Women and Integration (MGFFI).

Andrea Warnecke has recently been promoted to a Junior Researcher. In her present work, she focuses on the repercussions of international migration on development and conflict management in Sub-Saharan African states, and on the formation of transnational diaspora networks. In addition, she is currently preparing a research project on the contribution of development actors to UN peace-keeping operations.

Andrea studied history, English and communication sciences in Bochum und Newcastle. During her studies, she worked at the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research (IDG) at Bochum University, where she focused on the structural and societal causes of genocide and mass violence and helped to prepare a teaching module on comparative genocide research. She is also a member of the Working Group of Historical Peace Research.

In her free time, Andrea likes to go hiking and dancing and is also affected by severe Anglophilia. She likes to travel throughout the British Isles, read English books, listen to English music and even enjoys British food.

→ For further information please contact
Andrea Warnecke at warnecke@bicc.de

Capacity-building in Southern Sudan—Part III

In August 2007, BICC embarked on the third phase of its capacity-building activities on small arms control and DDR in Southern Sudan.

Since 2004, BICC has been consulting and training members of civil society and the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) on small arms control issues. Small arms violence continues to plague the people of Southern Sudan despite the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which effectively ended a decades-long civil war between the North and South. Small arms are still held and misused by civilians and armed forces alike, exacerbating inter-ethnic disputes and mistrust. The result is continued insecurity at the local, state and national levels.

Working with a number of local partners, BICC's activities this year can be organized into three inter-related pillars: the first is a professional training of the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SSDDRC) on international best practices and standards for Disarmament, Demobilization & Reintegration (DD&R). The second pillar is sensitization and awareness-raising among members of civil society—including leaders, peace committees, educators, and community-based organizations—on the importance of and need for small arms control. These members can then, and are better able to disseminate the message to their own communities and mobilize widespread support. The final pillar brings these two together by helping to build a national consciousness on peace and disarmament through media and entertainment. Among others, BICC is currently working with the Southern Sudan Artists Association (SSAA) in the production of songs, leaflets and videos that carry the small arms control message for dissemination throughout Southern Sudan. Through these activities, BICC hopes to help promote community security and strengthen implementation of the CPA in Southern Sudan.

This project is generously funded by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.

→ For further information and project details, please contact Elvan Isikozlu at isikozlu@bicc.de

Governing the Gift of Nature—The Resource Conflict Monitor

The cocoa trade from Côte d'Ivoire has played a major role in the four-and-a-half-year armed conflict. Over US \$118 million in revenues from the cocoa trade has flowed into the conflict by funding both the government and the rebel group, 'Forces Nouvelles (FN)', in the North of the country. Last year, the UN expert panel reported that diamonds were still being smuggled out of the country via Mali and Ghana, in violation of the United Nations embargo. Through this trade, the rebels would generate an estimated revenue of US \$9 million–US \$23 million to finance their movement.

Côte d'Ivoire is only one of the countries that unfortunately illustrate the presumed nexus between natural resources and conflict. Numerous other countries—to name a few: Cambodia, Angola, Sierra Leone and Sudan—have been a stage for plunder, fighting, corruption and mismanagement related to natural wealth in those countries. Nevertheless, the negative impact sometimes referred to as the 'resource curse' has not hit all resource-rich countries. Conflict cannot be simply attributed to the occurrence of natural resources and the parties who can benefit from its exploitation. More efforts are needed to look into how governments try to address (or ignore) the use of natural resources and the redistribution of costs and revenues.

The 'Resource Conflict Monitor' (RCM) aims to test the idea that the way in which natural resources are governed determines their impact on civil wars. The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is currently constructing an innovative database of 90 countries with a special focus on three key issues: resource governance, conflict and natural resources. This data will be used to increase understanding of the role of resource governance and to provide development cooperation with new avenues to mitigate the negative effects of natural resource endowment. Moreover, the results will be freely accessible to all interested parties at: www.Resource-Conflict-Monitor.org. Hopefully, this information will assist all parties involved in identifying and supporting viable ways of resource governance that contribute to post-conflict reconstruction and development.

→ For further information please contact Jolien Schure at schure@bicc.de

New BICC Publications

BICC brief 35:

Christine Beeck. 2007. *Re-paving the road to peace Analysis of the implementation of DD&R in Aceh Province, Indonesia*. July.

Ashkenazi, Michael, Christine Beeck and Evan Isikozlu. 2007. *Module on Marking and Tracing Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)*. September.

BICC Konzeptpapier und Länderstudie:
„Early warning - early action“. *Entwicklungspolitische Instrumente zur frühzeitigen Eindämmung von Gewaltkonflikten*. www.bicc.de

forthcoming:

BICC Focus 6:

Helen Radecke. 2007. *Wie ein Phönix aus der Asche? Die Parlaments- und Präsidentschaftswahlen und der Stand der Friedenskonsolidierung in Sierra Leone*. September.

BICC Notes

Peter Croll and Lars Wirkus took part in the "World Water Week" conference in Stockholm (15–17 August 2007), which was hosted by the International Water Institute (SIWI). Peter Croll moderated the panel on 16 August entitled "Under Cover! Revisited Groundwater as an Integral Part of River and Lake Basin Management in Africa".

→ For further information please contact Peter Croll at croll@bicc.de or <http://www.worldwaterweek.org>

As part of the campaign „MITmachen. Mainz und Rheinland-Pfalz gegen Armut und für weltweite Partnerschaft“ on 1 September BICC's Photo exhibition "Millennium Development Goals 2015" was opened in the city hall of Mainz. Speakers were Rüdiger Schlaga, federal states center for political education Rhineland-Palatinate, Roland Horne, ministry of environment Rhineland-Palatinate, and Kurt Merkator, representative of the city of Mainz. Peter Croll gave an introduction to the exhibition which was shown in Mainz until 30 September.

→ For further information please contact pr@bicc.de
<http://www.millenniumziele-mainz.de/aktionskreis/aktionskreis.html>

On 18 September, as part of the series of events "Energy—Resources—Peace: Challenges for a Sustainable Society" (16–19 September 2007) of the North-Rhine Westphalian Foundation for Environment and Development (Nordrhein-Westfälische Stiftung für Umwelt und Entwicklung, SUE), the German Foundation for Peace Research (Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung, DSF) and the German Federal Foundation for Environment (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU), Peter Croll moderated the discussion "Conflicts about Ressource—What role the UN-System can play?" in the City Hall of Bonn.

→ For further information please contact Peter Croll at croll@bicc.de
<http://www.dbu.de/012007>

Bundeswehreinsätze auf dem Prüfstand - Kommentare zum Friedensgutachten 2007

Studientag der Evangelischen Akademie Rheinland in Kooperation mit dem Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)

23. Oktober 2007
11.00 - 18.30 Uhr

Evangelische Akademie im Rheinland (EAiR),
Haus der Begegnung, Mandelbaumweg 2,
53177 Bonn, www.ev-akademie-rheinland.de

1. Podium:

**Legislative Kriterien für Interventionen –
notwendige Kriterien für den Rückzug**

2. Podium:

Afghanistan-Einsatz

3. Podium:

Libanon

4. Podium:

Sudan

Anmeldungen unter
www.ev-akademie-rheinland.de