1   Starting points for a Swedish strategy

The aim of this work is to furnish a basis for a Swedish international conflict prevention policy capable of practical application through the implementation of operational measures.

The Government has stated its intention of strengthening Sweden's role in the prevention of armed conflict. A study on conflict prevention (DS 1997:18) was conducted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and circulated for comment to concerned authorities, institutions and non-governmental organisations. The present strategy and action plan were drawn up by the Ministry on the basis of the resulting material. Other studies and more recent government communications relating to conflict prevention have also been taken into consideration (see Appendix 2).

The present work opens with a definition and delimitation of the concept "conflict prevention". This is followed by an analysis of the international arena and a short background presentation of Swedish interests. The section dealing with the action plan begins with a description of five target areas and concludes with a detailed discussion of the alternatives for action available in these areas.

What is conflict prevention?

The emergence of differences and conflicts is a natural, and not necessarily negative phenomenon. What is essential in the present context is to find and apply means and methods for the peaceful handling of conflicts and thereby prevent them from escalating into violence.

Conflict prevention refers primarily to measures that can be implemented before a difference or dispute escalates into violence, or to measures for preventing violence from flaring up again after the signing of a peace agreement, cease-fire or similar document. It also refers to measures designed to counteract the spreading of conflict into other geographical areas.

The emphasis on prevention does not mean that measures cannot or should not be taken during an armed conflict. In practice, a clear delimitation between conflict prevention measures and measures aimed at settling on-going armed conflicts is not always possible, or even desirable.

Preventive measures include both long-term and short-term initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of violent conflict. Prevention assumes a readiness to respond directly in critical situations, whether through mediation or by other means, and the ability to apply long-term structural measures aimed at dealing with the underlying causes of armed conflict. Examples of the latter include democracy development programmes, schemes designed to promote wider recognition of minority rights, long-term assistance programmes, macroeconomic measures, disarmament initiatives, economic integration and trade policies.

Thus, conflict prevention includes activities which address both the underlying causes of conflicts and their symptoms. In practice, it is not always possible to make a clear distinction between short-term measures (often called preventive diplomacy) and long-term measures (often referred to as structural prevention). Nor would it be appropriate to concentrate on one approach to the exclusion of the other in an actual conflict situation.

Central to the concept of conflict prevention is the need to link initiatives to a specific risk situation — imminent or distant — in which armed conflict is likely to break out. Failure to do so involves the risk of all foreign policy being classified as conflict prevention, with the concept losing all political significance as a result.

Thus, in order to be considered conflict preventive, a measure aimed at improving the position of a minority language must be linked to a situation where a minority has indicated that there is a serious problem in this respect — and where there is a genuine risk

of conflict. Situations where water is in short supply is another example. Scarcity of water alone will not necessarily lead to armed conflict in a given region. Prevention measures would only be justified if the shortage were to coincide with other conflict-generating factors so as to create a real risk of armed conflict.

A situation presenting a risk of armed conflict is actually the product of a combination of factors that reinforce each other in various ways in a conflict-generating process. It must be emphasised that every risk situation and conflict is unique, which means that every preventive measure must also be unique, especially with regard to its composition, but also in terms of its scope, duration etc.). This assertion does not of course ignore the existence of numerous general conflict-generating factors, or the fact that different preventive initiatives may incorporate a number of similar components.

The acquisition and development of knowledge about the underlying causes of conflict, the creation of common normative systems and the application of preventive methods must also form part of any conflict prevention strategy. Of great importance are the design of effective instruments for international co-operation and the development of other diplomatic techniques necessary to achieve practical and sustainable results leading to the resolution of conflict.

In recent years, the field of international conflict prevention has seen an influx of new players. A host of international organisations and institutions have either fundamentally changed or come into existence in recent years (particularly since the end of the Cold War). The last few years have witnessed the emergence of numerous private organisations and institutions dedicated to mediation, crisis management, etc. These perform a wide variety of often specifically preventive tasks. Generally speaking, however, only states and intergovernmental organisations have the necessary resources to prepare and implement a full range of measures. Preventing the escalation of armed conflict often calls for co-ordinated efforts by states able to apply vigorous political pressure, backed up by an effective military capability. For an action to be recognised as legitimate, the rules of international law may require

that the external player be either an intergovernmental organisation or a government. In other respects, NGOs clearly play an important role in conflict prevention, primarily through fact-finding, analysis and early warning.

2   The international arena

Large segments of the world's population live in democratic societies remote from scenes of domestic armed conflict. Since the end of the Cold War, the world has seen fewer acute, great power conflicts and more crisis hotbeds capable of escalating into prolonged conflicts, with military violence and human impoverishment as a significant component. In recent years, international interest in conflict prevention has grown considerably, reflecting mounting awareness of the immense human and economic cost of armed conflict.

Furthermore, armed conflict often places a heavy burden on those who contribute in different ways to alleviating its effects. For example, the annual cost of international activities in the former Yugoslavia alone is estimated at US$ 9 billion. A number of international organisations have increasingly been focusing attention on the need to create conditions for effective long-term measures aimed at preventing the outbreak of violent conflict between and within countries.

This growing interest in conflict prevention is also a result of the new, extended powers of governments and NGOs to act in intrastate conflicts — especially in the post-Cold War era.

Among the distinguishing features of present-day internal conflicts are the questioning and/or disintegration of state authority, the fact that some players profit from war and seek to prolong conflicts, and the fact that civilian populations are often used as targets in the fighting. Humanitarian relief missions may be thwarted and their supplies treated as booty. Legal recourse against the players behind such acts is problematic, partly because their position under international law is ambiguous.

These conflicts pose particularly testing problems for conflict prevention. How can peace be made more attractive than conflict? How can those who destroy peace be brought to book? Thus it is not only the causes of conflict and the numerous players involved that must be known and understood; the same applies to the forces for peace and — in the case of many present-day warlords — the fear of peace.

Problems relating to the role, responsibilities and limitations of external players, basic principles of sovereignty, peoples' right to self-determination and the responsibilities of local leaders have come to the fore in connection with the latest developments in Kosovo. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's report, The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, provides further food for thought in this connection. Global patterns of conflict have clearly changed since the end of the Cold War. Of the 101 armed conflicts around the world between 1989-1996, only six have involved hostilities between one state and another. The remaining 95 conflicts were internal. What is more, 80% of the people directly affected by these conflicts were civilians.

Today, effective security policy is predicated increasingly on co-operative methods designed to prevent armed conflict and forestall new security threats such as environmental problems, organised crime, terrorism, economic breakdown and refugee problems. Security is nowadays based less on military deterrence and more on the assumption that states will adhere to established norms and mutually agreed restrictions. It is also based on confidence building transparency in military affairs, arms control and disarmament. We are seeing the gradual development of an extensive, in-depth dialogue in this area, not only between countries but also between governments and NGOs in civil society. However, events in the Balkans have shown that acting from a position of military strength plays an important part in projecting a credible threat of the use of force while exercising a stabilising effect on developments.

The technology and information revolution has ushered in a new and growing media-oriented generation of voters and political leaders. The media are of decisive importance to the

understanding of events and processes. They can enlighten people and actively contribute to early awareness of conflicts. Conversely, they can play a highly destructive role in a conflict situation, using propaganda to fuel animosity and hatred.

There is ample scope — and, indeed, a great need — for the creation of better preconditions for close and responsible co-operation between governments and other players in society, aimed at successful conflict prevention and a closer association between the cultures of the many different institutions involved. If military, civilian and political culture are to act more effectively on the basis of common values and implement necessary changes, they must seek closer and better collaboration with one another, the economy and the media.

Thus, one of the most important challenges in the area of conflict prevention is the development at international level of political instruments and control mechanisms to manage globalisation. Though its manifest benefits — integration, economic growth and social development — generate favourable conditions for the achievement of peace, democracy and cultural progress, globalisation calls for a stronger international, political, economic and ethical framework.

The UN, which was conceived for the very purpose of conflict prevention, can now act with greater freedom following the partial resolution of the deadlock between the superpowers in the Security Council after the end of the Cold War. However, developments during the Kosovo conflict suggest a weakening of UN crisis management capacity and clearly emphasise the importance of a further strengthening of its conflict prevention capability. By reforming the organisation and increasing the focus on conflict prevention, the UN's former and present Secretaries General have created a basis for more effective action.

The European Union (EU) is a peace project in its own right; its extensive network of interlinking ties and commitments makes war between member states practically unthinkable. Moreover, its gravitational attraction on membership applicants and candidates for co-operation is a beneficial influence in itself. By contributing to the development of democracy, a set of common norms and

economic interdependence, this attraction offers considerable potential for conflict prevention.

More importantly, the EU itself has immense potential as a player in the sphere of conflict prevention, with its economic resources, capacity for exercising political influence and a broad repertoire of preventive measures. It is these assets that enable the EU to work for long-term structural change aimed at conflict prevention. Enhancement of the EU's foreign and security policy capability with a view to implementing conflict prevention measures aimed at avoiding subsequent military action is a priority interest for Sweden. However, successful diplomacy is also contingent on a military component.

The conflict prevention capability of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been significantly enhanced by the adoption of the 1975 Helsinki Document at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the Charter of Paris of 1990 and the Helsinki Decisions of 1992. This new potential capacity has been reinforced by the growth of a broad, integrated security concept that facilitates security-building measures in the economic, social, legal and cultural spheres as well as in the traditional military and political sense.

NATO co-operation with many European countries through Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) has created new scope for joint action in military peace support activities, including prevention. The Treaty of Amsterdam Treaty gives the EU powers, within the terms of the Petersburg Tasks, to mandate the Western European Union (WEU) to implement measures aimed at preventing and mitigating armed conflicts and thereby supporting common EU foreign and security policy.

The emergence of sub-regional forms of co-operation such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council affords further scope for the prevention of conflict through co-operation.

3   Sweden's interests and actions

Seeking means to prevent violent conflict has long been a cornerstone of Swedish policy both on the domestic front and in the international arena. This policy, the fruit of long, cumulative experience, has not only led to greater economic wellbeing and social harmony in our country but also to peaceful relations with the outside world. Swedish foreign policy is based on the conviction that we contribute, through international co-operation, to the establishment of common norms for international relations and human rights — and thereby to greater security. For a small, militarily non-aligned state, safeguarding international law and international co-operation are especially important concerns.

A range of political and legal instruments drawn up by global and regional co-operation agencies provides us with the levers we need to create common international norms and institutions. A central pillar of this endeavour is the United Nations. The work of the Council of Europe is vital to the development of democracy and the rule of law in our region. The CSCE and its organisational successor, the OSCE, which has adopted a broad approach to the task of linking security and co-operation, is yet another example of important activities and institutions through which Sweden contributes to the work of improving security and preventing armed conflicts. Nordic co-operation has proved an eminently suitable and invaluable platform for strengthening the common security of our region. With EU membership, our joint endeavour to create a wider community of values and deepen regional co-operation has acquired a new dimension. This is of crucial importance to our security. Participation in European military and political crisis management within the WEU and, in particular, co-operation with NATO and other partner countries in the EAPC and PfP have led

to what in some respects may be regarded as a new role for Sweden in the European defence community. Co-operation between Baltic rim countries is another recent addition to Swedish foreign policy. That its effect on collective security has been considerable is thanks in no small part to measures aimed at generating involvement at local level on the part of NGOs, authorities, companies and politically elected representatives.

Sweden has a long-term interest in contributing to Europe's collective security — a security based on conflict prevention and capable of sustaining democratic development, economic growth and social wellbeing. Co-operation within the EU is most important for Sweden in this respect. Our policy in the Baltic region is another example of how different short- and long-term measures can have preventive effect, and it promotes continued stability in a region where the radical changes that took place there could have led developments in a different direction.

Direct participation in international conflict prevention has become a accepted, integral part of Swedish foreign policy. While Sweden's contribution has consisted primarily of military and civilian peace support measures based on mandates from the UN Security Council and implemented in co-operation with the UN, the OSCE and, more recently, NATO, our commitment to conflict prevention has also involved diplomatic mediation in a number international and internal conflicts, the provision of bilateral and multilateral development assistance and support for or participation in the EU's diplomatic and political initiatives. In international fora, moreover, Sweden has been a vigorous advocate of international law and the introduction of common rules of trade, investment and economic co-operation. Sweden's efforts have often contributed to the successful management of impending or ongoing violent conflicts by helping to mitigate their harmful impact and promoting more positive patterns of behaviour.

Viewing the issue from a long-term, structural perspective, four factors emerge as primary contributors to conflict prevention and peace building:

- The development of democracy and human rights. Democracies look for security through co-operation. A developed

democracy is the most effective defence against instability arising from social change.

• Economic and social equality and socially and ecologically sustainable economic development contribute to security, stability, participation in the political process and belief in the future. Inequitable societies are often unstable and conflict-prone.

• Economic interdependence of people and countries in close proximity with one another. The favourable development of any party in a co-operative economic relationship must be in the interest of the other participant(s). The EU is perhaps the most obvious example of security through co-operation.

• Transnational co-operation structures help prevent conflicts by providing frameworks for managing conflicts of interest, by enhancing knowledge and understanding of the other party and by creating common norms and values.

These perceptions play a seminal role in shaping Swedish policy.

.1   A goal-oriented action plan for conflict prevention

The present action plan outlines five objectives for continued Swedish action in the field of conflict prevention. Though different in character, the goals — which are not set out in any order of priority — overlap to a degree. Those areas of activity requiring concrete definition for early implementation are presented first. The measures are concentrated in areas in which Sweden has considerable previous experience.

As well as covering ongoing activities, the plan sets out specific proposals for future action. It thus provides a framework for existing conflict prevention in the Foreign Service while pointing the way to the work that lies ahead. Together, the measures outlined are aimed at bringing about a gradual change in attitude and a new approach. Their implementation will be part of the day-to-day work of those bodies responsible for foreign, development assistance and security policy. The plan is intended as a guide for the Foreign Service in all conflict prevention work and for all Swedish authorities active in international organisations and other fora.

However, the measures presented in the action plan also form part of an international agenda now being discussed in the context of other countries' foreign, assistance and security policies, in international organisations and in national and international NGOs. They constitute a link in an emerging culture of conflict prevention to which the Swedish government is prepared to contribute with realistic ideas, material resources and political resolve.

The commitment of the Foreign Service in conjunction with the efforts and activities of other Swedish players should ensure that the action plan contributes to long-term changes in the approach to conflicts and their management. Sweden's extensive experience in international mediation, disarmament, development and other peace supporting activities and the widespread international confidence Sweden enjoys in many parts of the world provides a sound basis

for the realisation of the plan. Sweden's strong commitment to international co-operation and the primacy of international law are important contributory factors.

The five main goals, discussed in greater detail in Section 3:2-6, are as follows:

To promote a culture of prevention

This goal is focused on strengthening the will and preparedness of the international community to actively prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts. It also aims to increase awareness of the humanitarian, political and economic imperatives of conflict prevention. It should clarify possible areas for early action. A strong culture of prevention should also contribute to highlighting conflicts that are less acute on the political agenda and thus stimulate the willingness of international players to intervene on common grounds. Such a culture promotes security based on common interests and values.

To identify structural risk factors

It is important to identify the causes of conflict, such as economic stagnation, inequitable distribution of resources, undemocratic political systems, weak social structures, suppression of minority rights, flows of refugees, ethnic tensions, religious and cultural intolerance and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other weapons. Such a focus creates better conditions for early action and measures to address the root causes of armed conflicts.

To develop the international system of norms and strengthen its implementation

This applies to the rule of international law and interstate relations and to the development of democracy and human rights. Armed conflicts are often preceded by human rights violations. Respect for national sovereignty must not stand in the way of necessary

international action to prevent humanitarian catastrophes or serious human rights violations in intrastate conflicts. Decisions regarding international military intervention must, however, be made by the UN Security Council in the absence of consent by the parties in conflict. Tightening the regulations for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and the general reinforcement of international humanitarian law are both important objectives. This applies especially to intrastate conflicts and includes the protection of humanitarian missions.

To strengthen the international institutional framework and its preventive instruments

This refers to the optimal use of diplomatic, political and military resources for conflict prevention measures. Here, emphasis is placed on the importance of improving methods for the development of knowledge, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention strategies, action plans and instruments. It includes the expansion of the role of the UN and better use of its tools for conflict prevention. By reinforcing the capacity for action and ensuring better allocation of responsibility within the UN system, the EU, international trade and financial institutions, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the WEU, and NATO and its co-operation agencies such as the PfP, the EAPC and other regional organisations, new and transformed co-operative structures can be developed for more effective conflict prevention.

To strengthen Sweden's capacity for international conflict prevention activities in different policy areas (foreign policy and security, trade, migration and development assistance)

This should be articulated in the shaping of policy as well as in organisational and budget developments. The links between different policy areas and overarching views elaborated. The conflict prevention perspective must become more integrated with development co-operation. Improved Swedish capacity will also develop through increased co-operation with NGOs. For example,

co-operation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and research institutes should be developed around methods for conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy. Improving Swedish capacity will involve the acquisition of knowledge and expertise in co-operation with national and international players in order to develop a wide diversity of preventive measures.

.2   A common culture of prevention

The notion of a common global culture of prevention is rooted in a normative view of the moral correctness of preventing and averting armed conflict. A culture of conflict prevention must be linked to norms, values, traditions and actions and based on principles of international law. The development of a common culture of prevention would serve to strengthen the political will of the international community and pave the way for efforts aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation and re-emergence of violent conflicts. A historical comparison may be found in the international efforts to create a common approach to fighting mass poverty in developing countries during the 1970s.

The creation of the United Nations in 1945 was the result of a common understanding that armed conflicts must be prevented. As we have seen, however, efforts to prevent armed conflicts often materialise too late (or not at all). Consistent efforts aimed at increasing awareness that conflict can be prevented is therefore essential. The political will to act must be encouraged. Instances of concrete action and co-operation have emerged before in response to a common awareness of the need for prevention. Examples include the creation of the UN peace-keeping forces, negotiations and agreements on disarmament and arms control, the construction of the multilateral trade system GATT to promote world trade and avoid conflicts in this sphere, multilateral monetary and financial co-operation for the prevention of crises and conflicts in the economic sphere and, more recently, the development of international environmental co-operation. These five cases exemplify the interactive development of cultures capable of devising and implementing measures that have successfully averted threatening situations.

The same development principles apply to a culture of prevention; such a culture should as a matter of course be capable of acting in response to early warning signals, of acquiring knowledge relating to the underlying causes of conflict, and to

devise suitable instruments for dealing with threatening situations. It is a matter of possessing the awareness and preparedness necessary to help ensure that measures are implemented in good time. Such measures can be structural in character and relate to areas such as economic assistance, democracy development, human rights, creation of institutions, disarmament, trade policy or financial efforts. These measures can be implemented in conjunction with other, more urgent diplomatic undertakings such as mediation, conciliation, observation etc.

In a common culture for conflict prevention, governments can co-operate closely with private organisations, churches, companies and other representatives of civil society. While support for the long-term systematic acquisition of knowledge relating to the causes of violence and armed conflict is of immense importance here, there is also a need to develop the knowledge and skills to deal with impending conflict in a timely manner, which in turn entails specific training programmes in peace support and humanitarian activities for civilian and military personnel.

Vital experience can be gained by evaluating conflict prevention efforts. Support for research and other investigative work aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding of the causes of conflict as well as improving methods of conflict resolution on the one hand, and working for the dissemination of research results and findings on the other are part and parcel of promoting a culture of prevention.

Not least important as a potential factor in the development of such a culture is the media. By covering news and spreading information and knowledge about preventive activities, the media can contribute to a better understanding of the importance of a preventive approach, and thereby help build up a common culture of prevention.

.3 Structural risk factors

It is often difficult to identify and distinguish the risk factors behind the escalation of a particular conflict. Why do some conflicts become violent and not others? Understanding the relationships between risk factors is not of course a straightforward matter. Though no two armed conflicts are ever alike, violent outbreaks rarely occur suddenly or without warning. In most cases, they are presaged by developments or circumstances such as discrimination of minorities, a deteriorating human rights situation, refugee movements, economic stagnation and/or growing gaps between rich and poor, and supply problems. Political leaders acting in narrow self-interest often assume prominent roles. Economic self-interests on the part of ruling elites — oil, diamonds, lumber, illegal arms trade, drug trafficking etc. — are often a complicating factor. Countries that have seen recent strife are potential sites for new outbreaks. Demographic changes may eventually alter the balance between different population groups, giving rise to new political situations.

Although globalisation has brought greater general wellbeing, it has also led to a dramatic decline in wellbeing in certain areas. Growing income disparities within and between countries has also contributed to heightening the risk of conflict. This, combined with the challenge to traditional values that globalisation often entails, creates a breeding-ground for political and cultural extremism. While the tensions that develop are often expressed in ethnic or religious terms, the underlying causes are economic, i.e. related to the locus of economic power, and political, i.e. concerned with real participation in the exercise of power.

Another risk factor which must be considered in the context of conflict prevention is poverty. Of the 45 poorest countries in the world, over half have had their social and economic base further eroded by wars and other forms of violence in the last decade. Poverty does not necessarily generate conflict, but conflicts almost invariably lead to greater impoverishment. The

relationship between poverty and conflict needs to be further analysed and defined with a view to developing appropriate counter-measures.

Pressure for change tends to arise in countries suffering from highly inequitable resource distribution coupled with severe discrimination and marginalisation of certain social groups. This pressure is resisted by groups wielding economic and political power. Corrupt governments with little aptitude for managing economic resources — including development assistance — or promoting social and economic wellbeing can aggravate the situation. Where society lacks the mechanisms for handling tensions by peaceful means, violence will never be far from he surface.

In the Government communication "The Right of the Poor — Our Common Responsibility" (SKr 1996/97:169), poverty is defined as lack of security, capacity and opportunity. The document further emphasises that access to social, economic and political resources is basic to the ability of poor people to alter their circumstances. Tying this broad view of poverty — and the fight against poverty — into the new security concept brings the connection between the war on poverty and conflict prevention into clearer focus.

In certain situations, improved conditions for the poor can prevent violent conflict. However, experience gained in development assistance work shows that the relationship between conflict and poverty is not always a straightforward one. In certain circumstances, activities aimed at improving conditions for economic development can themselves create conflicts. The conflict prevention perspective, with a focus on the complex nature of the causes of conflict, should therefore be reinforced, just as the causes of poverty were once a central issue in development assistance work.

Sweden should therefore lay greater emphasis on a holistic approach based on an analysis of factors such as distribution, access to resources, power relations and gender relations. This applies to Sida's development co-operation work and to the activities of relevant multilateral organisations including international financial institutions. World Bank and IMF activities in

connection with so-called watch lists and their pilot projects in conflict prevention both deserve special attention.

Civil society — the culture of democracy — must be strengthened. Weak societies carry a significant risk of conflict. Many societies today face growing pressure for change — economic, social and cultural. However, rapid transformation entails an even greater risk of conflict. Marginalised groups who feel culturally, politically, economically and socially discriminated against or are dissatisfied for other reasons, are increasingly in evidence.

Most conflicts normally represented as 'ethnic' can be traced to fundamentally inequitable distribution of resources combined with discrimination and/or violent treatment, resulting in the division and/or marginalisation of one or more groups. The ethnic factor is highly susceptible to exploitation by unscrupulous leaders, as demonstrated by events in the Western Balkans, the African Great Lakes region, etc. In times of radical economic and political change, such leaders can foment a sense of insecurity in people and exploit this in order to promote their own or others' personal interests.

Activities affecting "internal" security, i.e. support for social welfare programmes and processes relating to the development of civil society, are often allocated significantly fewer resources than those involving external security, i.e. the military, or paramilitary, sector. Activities aimed at promoting harmonious transformation take second place to efforts designed to maintain the existing social order. High or rapidly growing military expenditure may indicate a growing risk of conflict within a state or region. These issues are the subject of on-going dialogue in international fora, a complex and delicately balanced process where the sovereign right of each state to determine its own defence policy must be taken into account. For the process to be effective, greater transparency is needed in the field of military expenditure, specifically with regard to the latter's share of the national budget.

Success in managing change at both national and individual level is contingent on a range of factors. These include levels of education and training, knowledge and expertise, the ability of

institutions to function properly and the degree to which civil society is developed. Openness, civic trust and a strong sense of community as well as functioning networks and institutions in the political, economic and social spheres are important elements in a society's ability to handle major transformation processes. Such a capacity is a basic condition for the peaceful development of society. Young people are important players in this development and the prospective bearers of preventive culture. Democratic norms, strong formal and informal associations and organisations are important ingredients in social development. Increased economic interaction can help strengthen civil society in states around the world. Contributing to the dissemination of democratic values is a task for which Swedish organisational culture is particularly well equipped.

Governments and organisations must be especially alert to the need for conflict prevention in times of radical political and economic transformation. In this connection, it is particularly appropriate that Sweden is now reviewing its existing policies, drawing conclusions from its experience to date and formulating a coherent strategy for the role of democracy in conflict prevention.

There a pressing need for support for further research and policy development in areas relating to society's capacity for change and how this can be enhanced. The IDEA handbook on Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict is a valuable instrument in this connection and should be followed up. Efforts should be made to find ways of strengthening existing instruments and methods for managing conflicts involving minorities. The experience garnered by the OSCE Commissioner on National Minorities should be made use of and forms of self-government and ways of preserving multicultural and multiethnic societies further developed.

Counteracting religious and cultural intolerance is another urgent task. Tolerance, plurality and a sense of security in one's own culture and identity are essential to security in the broad sense and are major factors in conflict prevention. These questions have been the subject of increased attention in the post-Cold War era. As societies grow in complexity and global interdependence deepens, the preconditions for active social

participation change. While cultural factors such as ethnicity and religion have become increasingly important to many people's political identity in large parts of the world, continued secularisation is moving modern societies in the opposite direction, affirming individual rights and rendering ethnic and religious identities increasingly irrelevant. It is on this point, where the rights of the secularised individual encounter those of the religious or ethnic group that many conflicts are centred.

Ethnic and religious concerns can be used to fuel social and economic conflicts. History gives us numerous examples of conflicts whose aims and objectives have been couched in religious and ethnic terms. Political leaders can use religion or ethnicity to assert the exclusiveness of one group at the expense of another and as a mobilising force to build and strengthen their own political base among the local population.

Conflicting tendencies are surfacing in the wake of globalisation between fundamentalists who regard their traditional tenets as absolute truth and divide humanity into believers and unbelievers, and people whose religious tradition provides a basis for tolerance and reconciliation with those of different faiths and cultural persuasions. When religion becomes a carrier of "cultural provincialism" by emphasising the exclusiveness of one group at the expense of another its influence becomes politically destructive and highly inflammatory.

To help counteract religious intolerance and the dangers it represents, recognition and support should be extended to the ecumenical movement and inter-religious dialogue. Sweden has traditionally played a prominent and vigorous role in the ecumenical movement. Acting on the example of Nathan Söderblom, the Swedish Church has in recent years organised a series of conferences involving churches active in the Baltic region. Closer dialogue and greater understanding between churches and faiths can help reduce the risk of a potentially hostile politicisation of religion.

In the course of the development of modern society, tension between religious and secular authorities has contributed to the strengthening of universal values such as democracy, pluralism and

human rights. The premise that the value of the individual takes precedence over collective rights and must accordingly be safeguarded first is fundamental to the protection of human rights. By bringing into prominence central questions of ethics and human values, by emphasising individual accountability, by endowing hope for the future with deeper significance, and by stimulating openness, tolerance and reconciliation in encounters between cultures, religion can provide an important, constructive contribution to conflict prevention. Sweden's commitment to the project of intercultural dialogue (the Euro-Islamic Project) is an example of an attempt to bridge cultural and religious differences. The Swedish Institute now established in Alexandria will become an important forum for the exchange of ideas in this field.

Issues such as contrasting views of history and the significance of human values in the struggle against threatening forces, intolerance and racism should be given greater recognition in conflict prevention and be placed on the agenda of the UN and other international organisations. Basic values such as respect for life, freedom, justice and equality, care, integrity and respect for others are common to all dominant belief systems. By deepening and extending our knowledge of other cultures and religions and intensifying cultural exchange we can help make these common values more evident. By elucidating historical conditions from many sides and in the light of our common values, we can promote greater mutual understanding.

The media has a crucial role in the formation of public opinion in this context. However, the positions taken up by governments and NGOs also play a significant part. We need to know more about the impact of religion on political developments. Common interests and values must be safeguarded by free and independent media concerned with more than highlighting divisive factors. From a conflict prevention perspective, this approach should be self-evident to politicians, diplomats, journalists and other moulders of opinion and players in civil society.

Another structural risk factor is the on-going globalisation of technological expertise and conventional weapon production, a development that is leading to the further proliferation of

increasingly powerful and precise weapons systems. Stopping it is one of the biggest and most difficult tasks in the area of conflict prevention. Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in June 1998 brutally underlined the **importance of expediting ongoing efforts to bring about the abolition of weapons of mass destruction**.

The goals of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must be vigorously pursued. Weakened control over nuclear material and technology in the former Soviet Union has intensified the threat of proliferation. The risk of terrorists or other criminal groups gaining access to fissionable material for weapons purposes is very real. Accession to a multilateral limitation agreement is not an absolute guarantee that international non-proliferation norms are being observed. There is a disturbing tendency in certain countries to give greater prominence to nuclear weapons in their defence planning in order to compensate for weakened conventional forces, and — in breach of international undertakings by nuclear powers on so-called negative security guarantees — to regard them as a legitimate form of retaliation against the use of biological and chemical weapons.

A resolution drawn up by Sweden and six other states setting out a trajectory for achieving the goal of a nuclear free world has been gained a hearing at the UN. The aim of the resolution, which calls for continued efforts to extend agreements on non-proliferation, the nuclear test ban and the non-use and eradication of nuclear weapons, is to enhance respect for existing conventions.

Efforts to counter threats from chemical and biological weapons, which are significantly cheaper to produce than nuclear weapons, must be intensified. Procedures such as human genetic code mapping can add to the threat potential of these weapons, especially when these are used to terrorise civilian populations. It is important that the current international negotiations in Geneva on a verification system for biological weapons be concluded successfully and result in a strong, effective instrument. The threat of biological weapons is growing as a result of rapid development in the field of biotechnology. Universal adherence to and full

implementation by all parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which came into force in 1997, is of vital importance.

There is a need for tighter control and limitation of small arms, the immediate causes behind most of the casualties and human suffering in present-day conflicts. Estimates attribute about 90% of all deaths and injuries to small arms. They also show that about 80% of the victims are civilians.

Conventional weapons have been the subject of increased attention in international disarmament work in recent years. An important step was taken with the 1997 Ottawa Landmine Convention, which calls for a universal ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The influx of conventional, and above all light, weapons into conflict areas as well as large destabilising accretions of such weapons serve to exacerbate tensions and fuel violence. The proliferation of small arms hinders humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts significantly and seriously threatens the reconstruction and reconciliation processes following peace agreements. Illegal trading in small arms is a particularly serious problem.

The problems associated with small arms is acute. Efforts must be made to reduce the present accumulation of large amounts of small arms in certain regions and to prevent new stockpiling. This will require forceful, co-ordinated efforts at national, regional and global level.

Swedish endeavours to minimise losses and injury caused by small arms should be concentrated primarily in four areas: strengthening international norms established through political agreements or articulated as legal principles; promoting transparency with regard to military production and the transfer of weapons; improving legislation and controls with regard to the illegal transfer of weapons; and the inclusion in peace agreements and peace support efforts in post-conflict situations of provisions and measures on disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration of combatants.

Sweden's contribution to the work of restricting and controlling the use of small arms should be made under UN auspices and within the framework of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy

collaboration. The problem should also be addressed in the context of ongoing efforts to strengthen the OSCE's capacity for conflict prevention and crisis management. Swedish support for research and development assistance projects involving small arms should also form part of this task.

.4   The international normative system and its application

Extension of common security as a long-term strategy for the prevention of armed conflict implies respect for stable and universally accepted norms of international law and effective compliance monitoring.

The growth of international law in the post-war era has led to a well-developed normative system for the regulation of inter-state relations. However, despite success in giving formal expression to respect for human rights, efforts to ensure compliance with norms governing relations between states and their own citizens have been beset by problems. Events in the post-Cold War era have contributed to a clearer definition of needs and increased opportunities for creating normative systems on a pan-European basis. Such systems are essential if we are to avoid "a new generation of conflicts" and ensure peaceful resolution of disputes.

The OSCE is the most obvious example of a security structure based on the premise that states have responsibilities not only towards one another but also vis à vis their citizens. They are also responsible for ensuring that human rights and the principles of democracy are upheld in all member states. The development of democracy, democratic institutions and procedures for managing transitional conflicts is also crucial in securing predictable and friendly relations between states. Normative work continues within the OSCE on the basis of the European Security Charter.

Stability and a normative base, **the essential preconditions for a climate of conflict prevention are in turn contingent on success in enhancing respect for human rights and international law**. There are also grounds for continued development of common norms and systems for regulating international initiatives to protect the victims of conflict. The special character of internal conflicts highlights a number of new problems relating to norms and their application. Their solution is an urgent

priority. The difficulty of dealing with players behind the scenes by legal means, due, among other things, to the ambiguity of their position in international law, poses a special problem. Another problem is the issue of irregular troops and their obligations in respect of human rights and humanitarian law.

Human rights (HR) violations and the escalation of violence create a vicious circle. Today's violations — resulting, for example, in mass movements of refugees — generate tomorrow's armed conflicts. A rapidly deteriorating HR situation is often an early warning of imminent conflict. Efforts to strengthen human rights can have long-term confidence-building effects as parties jointly work their way out of a conflict.

Enhancing knowledge of and respect for human rights through effectively supervised training initiatives, monitoring activities and the inclusion of an HR dimension in practical peace-building efforts must therefore be a central operational objective. The HR apparatus disposes of extensive information which could be used more systematically for early warning purposes. Increasingly frequent reference to HR aspects in connection with the management of conflicts by the Security Council can also give greater weight to the provisions of international law as these apply to internal conflicts.

In certain circumstances, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law amount to a "threat to international peace and security" and may justify early action in the interests of violence prevention by the international community. Gross violations of human rights even in times of peace should be brought within jurisdiction of the Permanent International Criminal Court.

To further reinforce respect for human rights and international law, HR monitoring should become a normal part of peacekeeping operations and other field missions affecting transitional regions where there is a risk of conflict. HR monitoring should also occur in conjunction with peace support activities and reconstruction work.

Steps should be taken to facilitate the exchange of experience between the UN and the OSCE, as well as between these and other regional organisations. NGOs can play an important role in

the implementation of human rights; their position in international law as it relates to conflicts should be clarified.

Self-determination is in certain cases — though by no means always — the best solution to problems arising in connection with national minorities or indigenous populations. While there is generally a case for strengthening protection for the individual, a strong democratic system with a developed civil society can provide more effective safeguards. Well-functioning multiethnic and multicultural societies not only demonstrate the viability of alternative solutions but also provide examples of legal arrangements capable of sustaining autonomy and self-government within existing borders. The work being carried out at the departments of Peace and Conflict Research and Multiethnic Research at the University of Uppsala deserves particular attention.

Measures for the protection of the civilian population in war should be strengthened. Always particularly vulnerable during armed conflicts, civilians have increasingly become a target in themselves. The number of internal refugees has risen sharply and the right to unobstructed access by humanitarian players is an issue of growing urgency. Steps must be taken to develop methods for inducing parties in conflict to respect existing rules. Humanitarian activity has been extended through intensified international efforts to counter the use of land mines and child soldiers.

Preventing violations goes hand in hand with recognition of the risk of "collective trauma," which can generate a string desire for revenge on the part of the defeated party. Since the end of the Cold War, ethnic conflicts and demands for independence by minorities have been in increasing evidence. Disputes involving identity, often ethnic or religious in origin and frequently fuelled by historical trauma, are particularly hard to solve.

Breaches of humanitarian law, like crimes against human rights, must always be prosecuted. The preventive impact of an effective legal system in this area is obvious. Each and every individual is responsible for the crimes he or she commits. The commission of crimes should be prosecuted at national or international level.

Existing regulatory systems should be extended and enhanced. The Permanent International Criminal Court will have powers to act in the grey areas that arise when crimes are committed in regions without state authority or where states refuse to acknowledge the existence of an internal conflict. The prompt establishment of the Court should be vigorously supported.

The lack of monitoring of humanitarian law is a problem. The possibility of using the UN system for this purpose should be examined. The commission established under Article 90 of the additional protocol to the Geneva Convention (The Article 90 Commission) should be supported and if possible developed.

The humanitarian consequences of armed conflict must receive more attention. The possibilities offered by humanitarian diplomacy should be developed and made full use of. The humanitarian consequences of economic and other sanctions should be made clearer.

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and regional and sub-regional organisations must become more actively involved in the conflict prevention agenda. Steps must be taken to develop methods for the dissemination of information on human rights and related principles and their implementation among irregular armed groups participating in conflict. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines must be given wider application and increased support. Mine clearance, vital to the prevention of individual fatalities and mutilation in civilian populations, is an important part of a set of issues calling for substantial efforts on the part of the international community.

Not least important, the UN's role in the humanitarian and political sphere must be strengthened. A common policy and specific measures, such as care for children in armed conflicts, must be developed and implemented. However, it should be borne in mind that humanitarian efforts may sometimes be at variance with conflict management, as for example when armed groups exploit relief intended for refugees. This issue should also receive

attention. The risks associated with the politicisation of humanitarian assistance call for special vigilance. There is also a need for clearer co-ordination of the EU Commission's humanitarian policy measures and initiatives, including a clear connection between conflict management and humanitarian action.

Conflicts in a democracy are always visible. This fact combined with its ability to give institutional form to conflict management processes makes democracy itself a method for the prevention of violent conflict. Democratic states constitute a security community for the effective prevention of conflicts between states and a basis for the peaceful solution of internal tensions.

Processes of democratisation during a transition from authoritarian systems can bring latent conflicts to the surface. To avoid violence in such cases, people need both the will and ability to resolve disputes by peaceful means. It takes time to change attitudes to violence and promote the development of a democratic culture. Respect for government by law and for the practices and procedures of representative bodies, healthy interaction between government and other sectors of political life and an impartial administrative apparatus are all essential ingredients of the transformation process. However, democratisation can also come to a halt or be distorted. Those involved in conflict prevention must therefore be on their guard against tendencies to use democratic institutions and decision-making bodies are used for anti-democratic purposes and the selfish advancement of one social group, as in the case of the former Yugoslavia.

Promoting democracy is a central goal in Sweden's co-operation with other countries in development assistance work. Support for the development of democratic institutions are particularly important in a conflict prevention perspective. The significance of corruption-free governments and administrations for achieving political stability and development of wellbeing should be emphasised. Sweden should also develop support efforts in areas such as legislation, parliament and the judiciary, political institutions, the conduct of elections, public administration, decentralisation and local democracy, a democratic school system, free and independent

media, institutions of civil society and the organisation of political parties.

We should seek to develop expertise in areas of which we have particular experience such as democratic associations in civil society and the organisational and procedural techniques for running them, ombudsman institutions and matters relating to public access, democratisation of institutions within the judicial system and local democracy. We should participate in international efforts aimed at developing support for democracy, specifically in relation to elections and electoral systems, the development of political parties etc. This should be done through the OSCE, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Council of Europe, the International IDEA and other organisations.

Efforts to promote democracy within IDEA's sphere of operation include normative and operational work. This breadth of activity should be made full use of in joint Swedish or international conflict prevention efforts. Especially important in this connection is the development of government support for co-operation with NGOs to strengthen civil society.

It is important **to focus on compliance with peace agreements in the period immediately following an armed conflict**. A cease-fire or peace agreement does not constitute a guarantee of lasting peace. Many places, not least Africa, have seen a resurgence of violence in a deteriorated form after peace agreements were concluded. Therefore, the period immediately following a peace agreement — a time when societies are particularly malleable — should be used either to build a new common norm system or review the existing one, and to strengthen that society's own conflict prevention mechanisms and institutions for peaceful change. While representatives of civil society should of course be brought into the mediation process, the military and the police should also be given positive roles as participants in the reconciliation process.

Pilot projects involving so-called strategic frameworks for reconstruction in, for example, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, should be supported. Electoral systems and institutions that develop

and supervise democracy following a war should be developed and adapted to local conditions. Through its participation in the peace and reconstruction processes in the Middle East, the Western Balkans region, Southern Africa and Central America, Sweden has gained valuable experience in a number of areas, including the co-ordination of activities forming part of an overall regional design. Humanitarian measures, diplomatic crisis management and economic assistance can be combined with forward planning of long term joint reconstruction efforts.

In connection with reconciliation efforts, special attention should be given to demobilisation and reintegration of armed groups, measures aimed at children and young people, mine clearance, small arms and their disposal, respect for international humanitarian law and human rights in conflict prevention, etc. The possibility of establishing special reconciliation institutes with a view to strengthening peace processes should be studied.

.5   The international framework

The 20th century has seen the establishment and growth of an extended international structure, a comprehensive framework designed to deal with problems which could give rise to different kinds of international armed conflicts. Its objective has been to establish rules and procedures within co-operative structures for managing threatening problems in a range of areas. This framework has continued to grow, giving rise to specialisation in different problem areas and geographical regions.

From a conflict prevention perspective, a major problem with this framework is that accords and conventions entered into are not being observed. Another serious problem is the lack of sufficient instruments for intervening effectively and in time to prevent outbreaks of violent conflict. The framework, therefore, needs to be strengthened by improved co-ordination, clearer allocation of responsibility, improved analysis and assessment, more effective working methods and in some cases new instruments.

The United Nations' foremost task under its Charter is the maintenance of international peace and security, in other words, the prevention of war. The organisation's unique strength derives from its political legitimacy and global membership. The UN perform key tasks across a broad spectrum with the aid of an extensive arsenal of conflict prevention instruments. The work of the Security Council has grown more difficult in recent years due to the domination of the agenda by civil wars and because current interpretations of the principle of sovereignty hinder activities in countries whose governments are unwilling to take part. Meanwhile, the co-ordinating role of the UN in complex catastrophes has grown in importance.

Through multifunctional peace support forces, which also include police activities, mine clearance, supervision of elections, etc., the UN has developed an extensive armoury of measures for the promotion of collective security, the very basis of its Charter. Although such efforts are often directed at managing or resolving

on-going armed conflicts rather than preventing them, it should also be possible to use them for preventive purposes. While it may well be possible, in the new security policy environment, to continue along this road, the will to act on the part of affected members states is a crucial determinant. At times, governments may lack the actual capacity to deal with internal conflicts, and like other players, they are sensitive to encroachments on their sovereignty. Respect for the principle of sovereignty should be combined with the ability to act in complex situations with a view to creating conditions for consultation and problem-solving at an early stage.

Preventive diplomacy should be used to help resolve acute confrontations and in conjunction with measures aimed at long-term prevention of armed conflict. The UN Secretariat's resources for preventive diplomacy should be increased so that problems can be tackled from within a long-term perspective. Shorter-term operations preceded by early warning of impending crisis require the development of 'a ladder of prevention'. The ladder is partly based on Chapter VI, Article 33 of the UN Charter and provides a range of methods for peaceful conflict resolution. Existing methods, such as negotiation, mediation, fact-finding missions and the deployment of peacekeeping personnel of various kinds, should be strengthened and further developed. The use of conciliation and arbitration should be encouraged, as should the referral of disputes to an international court of justice. This highly developed ladder of prevention must be based on the principle of proportionality which states that preventive action must be proportional to the intensity of conflict. Such a ladder can facilitate diplomatic action in the different phases of a conflict and in different international fora.

New conditions favouring the use of the UN system in conflict prevention were established at the end of the Cold War. Increasingly, states share a common view as to what constitutes good governance and development. However, action has been hindered by concern on the part of many member states that peace support and conflict prevention constitutes a potential threat to national sovereignty. Efforts should be made to ensure early integration of the conflict prevention approach with economic and social development work. UN development programmes for long-

term financing can help clarify and contribute to a better understanding of the link between development work and security. This aspect is currently being addressed by members of the DAC working group on conflict, peace and development.

While it is true that the United Nations faces a political and financial crisis of significant proportions, its abridged capability is not always the only, or indeed the largest, obstacle to achieving compromise solutions among parties involved in a potential conflict. The international community has failed to intervene with resources adequate to the situation even where conflicts have been known to be latent or acute. This may stem from a failure to present clear alternative courses of action due to a lack of capacity or a lack of resolve on the part of leading member countries to set aside the necessary resources (cf. Section 3.2: "A common culture of prevention"). The UN requires additional resources for the Secretariat and other measures for strengthening the organisation's ability to act in conflict prevention.

Measures can be given greater impact by pooling the resources of the UN and the financial institutions (the Security Council, Secretariat, HR agencies, development funds and programmes) and concentrating them on conflict prevention activities. Greater effectiveness can be also be achieved by focusing support on early warning and early action systems, which promote information exchange within the UN system and between the UN and governments and NGOs.

The UN's existing contingency system should be further developed and a mobile command capacity created with a view to strengthening the organisation's rapid response capability. The capacity and political resolve for preventive military action as instanced in Macedonia (UNPREDEP) should also be developed. Of immediate concern in this context is the strengthening of the Swedish contribution to the rapid reaction force (SHIRBRIG) and the special Nordic response force (NORDCAPS).

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was a forerunner in the development and application of a broad security concept as the basis for conflict prevention. The organisation is active in both military arms control

and confidence-building activities, and in matters relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The organisation also deals with economic and environmental issues important to security.

The OSCE has at its disposal a number of tools, many of which were created and developed in recent years. Its Secretary-General/Chair can play an active role at any stage of a conflict. The Secretary-General's/Chair's personal representative is a highly flexible 'instrument' capable of adapting to specific situations. Through its permanent representations (presently in 11 countries) the organisation can monitor situations on the ground and intervene in the early stages of situations that could lead to armed conflict. A new function is the civilian police mission, as used in Eastern Slavonia, where the OSCE took over an assignment from the UN. A preventive military observation mission has been planned for the area in and around Nagorno Karabach (in Azerbaidjan). Due to disagreement among the parties, however, this has not yet been put in place.

The OSCE is currently moving towards a policy in which greater importance is attached to activities in the field. The result is the creation of yet another European tool with "eyes and ears," and capable of acting in both the short and longer term. Missions carried out in several parts of the former Soviet Union and the Balkans, including Kosovo, are instances of a new type of multifunctional operation in which the full breadth of the OSCE can be deployed in managing an acute conflict.

The work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), pursued in a large number of conflict areas or areas harbouring a risk of conflict has been highly successful. An evaluation of the Commissioner's activities should form a basis for the development of the OSCE's own work, and for the possible transfer of his experience and observations on minority issues to other international organisations. Efforts should be made to find ways of putting the OSCE's experience in other areas, including arms control, military security, confidence-building efforts and the development of democratic institutions, to even better use in other organisations such as the UN, the Council of Europe, etc., and in other regions.

The application of OSCE instruments and ways of using them more effectively and systematically, or even supplementing them, are currently being assessed and explored in connection with work on a new European Security Charter. An evaluation of the OSCE's field activities, its co-operation with the Secretariat, the Secretary-General/Chair, and other international organisations should also be carried out with a view to further improving the effectiveness of the organisation.

The European Union's conflict prevention potential should be better utilised. The EU was founding on the proposition that that increased integration promotes democracy, welfare and stability. This idea has made a historic contribution to a peaceful, co-operative social order. The large number of areas embraced by this co-operation is the EU's chief potential asset in a conflict prevention perspective. Including the bilateral undertakings of member states, the EU is responsible for over half the world's official development assistance and takes in over 100 countries. Work within the economic union (the first pillar) has a security-enhancing effect of great importance to participating countries.

It has often proved difficult to implement the EU's full potential for conflict prevention and to establish a clear conflict prevention perspective in development assistance work. Efforts should be made to improve co-ordination and solidarity between the supranational and the intrastate areas in EU's pillar structure so as to ensure clearer, more uniform and better co-ordinated external operations. This applies to relations between policy areas such as trade, development co-operation, agriculture, migration, jurisprudence and the common foreign and security policy.

Sweden has actively contributed to the enhancement of the EU's crisis management capability. Thanks to a Swedish-Finnish initiative, the Amsterdam Treaty stipulates that humanitarian, peacekeeping and peace-making efforts — the so-called Petersburg Tasks — are to form a key element in security co-operation, which should be developed jointly with the Western European Union. As an observer in the WEU, Sweden is entitled to take full part in these activities as well as participate in the planning and decision-making with regard to our own contributions. There

are grounds for exploring the possibilities of using the Petersburg Tasks to strengthen our common foreign and security policy for crisis management and conflict prevention. An intensive debate on the issue is currently in progress.

The Unit for Political Analysis and Early Warning, to be established in the Council's General Secretariat under the terms of the Amsterdam Treaty, will enhance the Union's ability to apply conflict prevention measures at an early stage and initiate crisis management operations. By pursuing an in-depth dialogue with participating countries on conflict prevention, good governance and human rights, on the basis of the common foreign and security policy, the Unit should serve to strengthen the political dimensions of development co-operation. Broader co-operation involving players in the civil society sector can provide a basis for strengthening popular participation in the processes of development and democratisation. Common strategies and other instruments, such as special representatives, can help enhance the Union's influence potential in threatening conflict situations.

The Council of Europe is a key player in the advancement of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as basic to the peaceful solution of disputes in Europe. It carries conflict preventive work by establishing norms and principles and monitoring their compliance, and by advising and supporting member states. Its activities have acquired increased importance in recent years with the accession of 22 new countries from central, eastern and south-eastern Europe.

The organisation's political and historical identity as "the ombudsman of democracy," has grown along with its membership. This has served to extend and enhance its role as a player in long-term conflict prevention. Important tasks from a conflict prevention perspective include monitoring compliance with commitments on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, supporting efforts aimed at preventing ethnic conflicts, and improving co-operation with the OSCE and EU in the development of democratic institutions.

The strengthening of regional and sub-regional co-operation, a prominent feature of the post-Cold War era, opens up

new possibilities for conflict prevention. The UN Security Council has an over-riding, fundamental responsibility to uphold international peace and security and is the only institution able to impose coercive measures, such as sanctions or military action, against the will of the involved parties. However, according to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, it is the duty of member states to try to work for a peaceful resolution with the help of regional organisations where these exist.

As custodians of certain common interests, regional organisations often have a good insight into the causes of conflicts. They may have more knowledge (than the UN, for example) concerning the possibilities and limitations of preventive co-operation in a given context. The people of a region or sub-region often have a strong sense of solidarity. The prestige of regional leaders can be used to good effect, and there is often a common value system among member countries which is very important to this activity. At the same time, however, there is a risk that regional organisations may be used by larger states to further their own interests. Some regions lack effective regional agencies. Particular importance should be attached to the role of the UN in such areas. Other regional organisations should be given the opportunity of benefiting from the experiences of European regional co-operation.

Peace processes in Central America and Southern Africa demonstrate the importance of adopting a common approach, shared in this case by United Nations and regional and sub-regional players, in order to achieve durable peace. This and other experience from theatres like the Middle East and Nagorno Karabach, should be used as a basis for international programmes for conflict management and good governance. Such programmes can in their turn provide a basis for the development of a future international regulatory system for regional conflict prevention.

Co-operation between Baltic and Baltic Rim countries is another, and in some respects very different example — and one which happens to be of vital interest to Sweden. Pent-up need for contact and exchange, great economic potential, strong historical ties, and deep-rooted popular commitment to the future of their societies endows this sub-region with special potential. Co-

operation is rapidly strengthening common interests, identities and norms in these countries. However, substantial welfare and normative disparities remain, as do tensions, primarily between Russia and the Baltic Seaboard countries. The Kaliningrad region is at risk of becoming an isolated island of poverty and social degradation with a high conflict potential unless action is taken to put social and economic development on a par with that of the whole Baltic region. Welfare disparities on the borders between future EU members and neighbouring countries in the east are also a potential source of conflict. There is thus a need for major direct and indirect conflict prevention measures on both a regional and bilateral basis even in our own immediate neighbourhood.

The promotion of civil security is another concern requiring active regional co-operation. Collaboration between border and coast guards, police and customs, another essential activity with long-term effects, boosts confidence, enhances combined effectiveness and generates conflict preventive effects. The possibilities of setting up an international steering group to co-ordinate support for civil security in the new democratic states on the other side of the Baltic Sea should be looked into.

Military crisis management capacity must be strengthened. The UN Peacekeeping force in Macedonia (UNPREDEP) was a successful first example of a purely preventive UN mission involving troops; it should serve as a model for similar operations in other regions of conflict. Another type of operation was conducted under the auspices of the PfP in Albania. The new role played by military forces in recent years constitutes a new and important instrument in global crisis management. The development of multifunctional peacekeeping operations is of central importance to UN efforts to adapt to modern types of conflict. The difficulties involved in mobilising resources from member countries for a rapid response capacity in an acute crisis situation and in co-ordinating political, military, humanitarian and civilian components are problems that must be solved.

Security-threatening situations can arise suddenly, even in Europe. Increasing efforts are being made in the OSCE, NATO, the EAPC, the WEU, and the EU to build an international military

crisis management capability. Sweden is currently developing its capacity to contribute to such efforts in accordance with the provisions of international law.

The creation of the EAPC in 1997 broadened the scope for security generating co-operation between NATO members and non-aligned states in Europe. The EAPC has an important confidence-building effect on states with very different historical and political backgrounds. The Council provides the political framework for expansion and intensification of co-operation between NATO and a wide number of PfP countries in fields not relating to their own territorial integrity, such as crisis management capacity. Joint exercises, measures aimed at improving democratic control of military resources, civilian preparedness, emergency and rescue services, defence-related environmental problems, nuclear energy safety, co-operation in matters of defence equipment and research and other practical matters form part of this co-operation and indirectly contribute to the prevention of armed conflict.

EAPC can also be used for consultation and participation in the decision-making process of PfP Partners who take part in NATO-led peace-promoting operations. At the Washington Summit in April 1999, a Political-Military Framework was established that giving such rights to partners contributing forces. The Framework ensures that troop-contributing partners will have the right to supply officers to the staffs of NATO-led operations.

Through continued co-operation with other countries on the improvement of the Multi-national UN Stand-by Force High Readiness Brigade, SHIRBRIG, and with its own national rapid reaction unit, SWERAP, Sweden can contribute to the creation of an effective tool for UN military operations aimed at conflict prevention. The joint development of a Nordic-based rapid response capability within the framework of NORDCAPS co-operation will materially enhance the effectiveness of Sweden's contribution. Sweden, Finland and other interested parties are actively exploring the possibilities of developing multifunctional activities within the framework of the common foreign and security policy. The WEU's potential with regard to peacekeeping, peace creating, and humanitarian activities is similarly being investigated.

Better use should be made of the capacity of international economic organisations and financial institutions to influence countries' and borrowers' development planning in such a way that conflicts, which often arise in the process of economic development, are handled peacefully. The World Bank, the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and regional development banks can play a key role in the prevention of armed conflict. Steps should be taken to improve co-ordination and increase co-operation with other players aimed at peace prevention.

By developing central banking and tax systems, the World Bank can play a key part in post-conflict reconstruction. It also has a co-ordinating role to play in national programmes for mobilising resources from private and public sources. Moreover, under the Bank's new operating guidelines, it is free to review the loans — from a conflict management perspective — of countries attempting or about to emerge from ongoing conflicts.

Banks have increasingly used negotiations over future loan programmes to raise questions about the economic viability of political and social systems and to contribute to the strengthening of legal and democratic institutions. The opportunities available for initiating conflict prevention in accordance with current guidelines for good governance should be used fully and a conflict prevention perspective worked out in all development banks. The need for a global view of conflict prevention should be emphasised.

By tightening up the common regulatory system for world trade, conditions that could give rise to violent confrontation can be avoided. Although the WTO may be the 'quietest', it is also an effective long-term international agency, highly instrumental in the development of conflict preventive wellbeing.

The OSCE can contribute by lending an economic dimension to conflict through its ability to integrate economic aspects and security matters. Pertinent areas include welfare development and sustainable economic growth.

International dispute settlement mechanisms should be used more often. Although many legal mechanisms that form part of international co-operation are rarely or never used today, their very existence can have a restraining influence: one party may be

deterred by the fact that his opponent can resort to procedures for dispute settlement in international law. Scope for mechanisms of dispute resolution based on international law has increased since the end of the Cold War. Such mechanisms could also be used in ethnic conflicts, especially those of a territorial character. Broad use of existing mechanisms also serves to enhance and consolidate the existing normative system.

It should be possible to make better use of the International Court of Justice's inherent potential for bringing about peaceful resolutions to conflicts. This could be achieved if parties referred disputes to the court on a more regular basis, or if the UN Security Council had wider powers to recommend that disputes be referred to the Court, in compliance with Chapter VI of the UN Charter. The Secretary General should also be given greater powers to request advisory opinions from the Court. Furthermore, the OSCE's so-called Stockholm Convention should be activated and adapted more closely to the latest developments affecting potential conflicts in the OSCE area.

.6   Sweden's capacity

A distinguishing feature of the Cold War period was its statistical approach to the meaning of security and how it was achieved. The sheer scope of the superpower conflict virtually eliminated causes of conflict other than those linked to a military threat. Sweden meanwhile consistently worked for an approach characterised by the understanding of the need for common security. Increased attention to regional and especially intrastate conflicts and instability in recent years has resulted in a wider discussion of strategies for promoting development and security. A new approach by individuals, governments and organisations involved in international peace efforts is needed. Present-day intrastate crises and conflicts require specialised expertise on the part of external players — state, intrastate and not least the voluntary (NGO) players.

If Sweden is to actively contribute to the development of ideas and methods in this sphere, the Swedish Foreign Service and International Development Cooperation Agency must be assured access to top-class and, in some respects, new expertise. A change in attitude must be brought about. The many new problems that have come to the fore in connection with internal conflicts make it a matter of urgency to co-operate across a broad front with a range of research institutions. There is a new need as well as new opportunities for collaboration between Swedish and international NGOs.

Research and training in conflict prevention and crisis management in countries and international organisations alike are currently undergoing rapid expansion. At the same time, however, forces within the various cultures, from development assistance to humanitarian to military peace support, are pulling in different directions. Territorial rivalry and departmentalisation of work are not uncommon. New forms of co-operation are required, both within Sweden and externally between Swedish and international aid donors, to develop knowledge and methods based on analysis of the experience of the players concerned.

The current report "International Conflict and Crisis Management — a Common Task for Many Partners" singles out a number of knowledge-related measures that should be considered if Sweden is to further strengthen her capacity to act in conflict prevention. Of special importance is the creation of cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary education and training fora in which concerned authorities, organisations and relevant international players can develop and exchange knowledge and expertise.

Over the years, a great deal of knowledge about practical peace work has been accumulated by Swedish popular movements. It is important that this knowledge be made use of via effective fora for co-operation with the public sector. Skills and expertise within the development assistance sector is of central importance in conflict prevention.

The conflict prevention perspective should be integrated into development co-operation work. Most of the countries receiving development assistance from Sweden have recently experienced serious internal conflicts or have problems with political stability. They are often countries in transition, moving towards democracy. Corruption is often a problem. Conflict prevention and management must be present as a self-evident component of Swedish development assistance, either bilaterally through Sida or through NGOs and multilateral development organisations. Just as environmental considerations are today part of the basis of normal development assistance planning, conflict analysis should also form a natural part of the preparatory process. This applies both to long-term co-operation and humanitarian assistance. In this context, Sida's strategy for conflict prevention and management within humanitarian assistance is a welcome contribution.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in consultation with Sida and other relevant agencies, should take steps to develop risk evaluation criteria for bilateral and multilateral development co-operation as well as guidelines and methods for conflict analysis to be used when drawing up country strategies, country surveys, key documents, project preparations, studies, etc.

In addition, a new working method should be developed for humanitarian assistance. This should allow for broadly based co-ordination with other available instruments, including diplomacy. Greater emphasis should be placed on the analysis of and the lessons to be learned from large-scale conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes.

Efforts should be made to develop a common perspective for all participants in peacekeeping activities in all the various conflict areas. While military aspects have often predominated, effective solutions require an integrated approach to peace creation and development. The same of course applies to the handling of refugees.

Co-ordination with NGOs should be expanded. Popular movements, non-profit organisations, free and independent media and a pluralistic party system are central elements in a civil society capable of assimilating and resolving conflicts. Popular movements and NGOs have gained increased importance in recent years, partly because it is easier for them to act in undemocratic environments where individual governments may not want to get involved for varying reasons. Moreover, NGOs can be on the spot quickly when complex catastrophes occur, already in co-ordinated with local organisations. Swedish popular movements have acquired their experience from operations in some hundred countries.

Although NGOs and popular movements are currently active in a number of areas including monitoring developments, analysing facts and influencing public opinion, more direct preventive efforts are limited. In some cases the quality of assistance has been poor. In recent years, a number of new NGO types have been established; some of these have lacked clear objectives and thereby legitimacy. There are also signs that 'business activities' have intruded into this sector, a development which had led to calls for a code of conduct and accreditation. The problem is presently being studied at the UN and within more established international NGOs. This work should be supported.

A study should be undertaken, in collaboration with popular movements and NGOs, of their capacity to contribute to conflict

prevention and co-ordinate with Swedish authorities, international state supported and non-state supported organisations. Consultation procedures for use between these organisations and state authorities should be developed. Support for capacity development undertaken by players in civil society, including training, needs to be developed and questions concerning efficiency, effectiveness and evaluation systems studied. Also important in this context is the survey on the co-ordination of education and training for international assignments mentioned earlier.

Broader and more **frequent exchange between authorities and research institutions** should also help boost Sweden's capacity for conflict prevention. Intrastate conflicts often generate new problems for researchers and the results can often be applied to development co-operation and methods for conflict prevention. An understanding of the effects of assistance measures in a conflict situation can be enhanced through research. It is essential that research be done on causes of conflicts and the psychological factors significant to a conflict resolution situation. Methods for use in conflict prevention can be developed, especially within preventive diplomacy, by highlighting factors that affect the capacity of a society to change, such as group behaviour, the behaviour of individuals in conflicts, judicial proceedings, etc.

Another important field for research includes paradigmatic economic and historical shifts and the increased risks of social conflict in transitional socio-political systems. This should include the development and adaptation of democratic procedures to different environments and relationships. Collaboration between civilian, political and military components in peace support activities should be further developed in conjunction with academic and military research institutions.

There is a need for a more developed from of co-operation — possibly in the form of a research council — involving Swedish universities and research institutions such as the universities of Uppsala, Gothenburg, Umeå, Linköping and Lund; Sida, the National Defence Research Institute, the National Defence College; and private institutions like the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and SIPRI.

On-going research programmes involving the universities of Oxford and Uppsala are expected to shed light on a range of problems and issues relating to institutional improvements and methods and mechanisms for conflict prevention. The results of this work could provide a basis for the development of Swedish policy in the field.

By making an inventory of valuable lessons learned in peace and reconstruction processes, chiefly in the Middle East, Nagorno Karabach, the Western Balkans, South Africa and Central America, we can shed light on problems such as the UN's role in conflict management, the co-ordination of UN agencies and international financial institutions, the balance between government support and NGOs and, finally, the importance of the regional connection, contribute to more effective efforts in the future.

The organisation of the Foreign Service should be strengthened in the interests of more effective conflict prevention. A significant proportion of the work of the Foreign Service is already related in one way or another to conflict prevention, crisis management and reconstruction work in complex environments. A large number of players in the political, humanitarian, police and civilian sectors, among others, work in close, constant collaboration. This calls for interdisciplinary knowledge, understanding and co-ordination within the Service, all within a rigorous conflict prevention perspective.

Efforts should be made to develop co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Development Assistance Agency, national security authorities and academic institutions on the one hand, and as mentioned earlier, public research agencies and NGOs on the other. For the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, conflict prevention calls for new knowledge, new skills and changes in attitudes, the rapid development of new methods and interdisciplinary activities. Organisation, including allocation procedures, may need to be modified in a number of respects. Changing needs and the increasing demand for knowledge concerning conflict prevention require further skills and expertise enhancement, including education and training. These needs should be taken into account when recruiting new staff.

Sweden's work in the field of conflict prevention must take place through the joint efforts and commitment of all the constituent elements Sweden's foreign policy. Balancing between different activities such as humanitarian or long-term assistance, refugee reception, peacekeeping forces, confidence building efforts, mediation and civilian prevention efforts occur all the time and will be required increasingly. Without better, across-the-board co-ordination Sweden's peace prevention work will be unable to keep up with the pace of development.

Special emphasis should be laid on methods and capacity development in the field of preventive diplomacy and crisis management. Here we should benefit from the experience of Swedes who have been active in international prevention diplomacy and crisis management for many years. We should also make better use of our knowledge of human behaviour in conflict situations, accumulated in the course of an on-going dialogue between researchers and diplomats in the fields of psychology and diplomacy. The development of implementation methods for a ladder of prevention can contribute to more systematic conflict prevention efforts throughout the international community.

Co-ordination in project form between relevant units at the planning and realisation stage of conflict prevention should be improved. The units should also be guaranteed expert assistance in the field. Special attention should be given to incorporating the conflict prevention perspective in the units' future action plans, where appropriate. The units should intensify their contacts both with NGOs and research institutions in this field. Special managerial responsibility for conflict prevention should be established within the respective operational departments — European Security Policy, Global Security, Global Cooperation, EU Affairs, International Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy, and International Law and Human Rights. Support for the departments in the form of supra-departmental expertise and information about methods, etc. is also needed. In addition, senior ministry officials should be provided with special assessments and early warning information, principally of a supra-departmental character. Such a resource should meet the need for

on-going contacts with Swedish and international research institutions, support for education and training in the Ministry and for further analytical work outside the Foreign Service. A small secretariat should be established within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for this purpose and linked to the Policy Planning Unit (PPU). A special budget should be drawn up for activities such as seminars, reports and other activities aimed at strengthening the capability of the Ministry in this area.

A special steering group should be appointed within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to provide the it with a decision-making basis for a unified policy of conflict prevention embracing all relevant policy areas. On important concern would be to promote a culture of prevention within the Ministry as a whole. Other responsibilities would include follow-up activities in connection with the action plan, dealing with proposed measures and co-ordinating activities to ensure unity of action in conflict prevention throughout the entire Foreign Service. The group would also be expected to take a stance on support proposals for projects and research assignments, mainly of a supra-departmental character, in the conflict prevention field. These activities would be financed through ministry appropriations. The group would consist of representatives from the operational departments GS, GC, IC, EP, MAP and FMR and, depending on the agenda, representatives from relevant geographical units. Representatives from other ministries and authorities concerned with conflict prevention should be allowed to participate in the work on an ad hoc basis. The group should be chaired by a senior officer from the Ministry (for the present the Deputy State Secretary. The group would be assisted in its work by a secretariat.