



GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON PREVENTIVE ACTION

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BRUSSELS
DECEMBER 6 - 7, 2010

CONCEPT NOTE

(As of October 19, 2010)

On December 6-7, 2010, the EastWest Institute and partner organizations will convene a Global Conference on Preventive Action that will determine concrete recommendations for institutional change and for action on the ground to assist states, regional, and international organizations achieve their stated policy goal of moving to more effective preventive action.

HOSTED BY
Franziska Katharina Brantner, MEP

FUNDED BY
German Federal Foreign Office

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON PREVENTIVE ACTION

is organised with the support of:



Franziska Katharina Brantner, MEP
Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance



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Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe



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Context

The Global Conference on Preventive Action is the result of a recommendation from the EastWest Institute's International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy. It is the first of a series of biennial meetings to facilitate the move to early and effective preventive action, as envisaged by the Task Force's 2008 paper: "New Initiatives on Conflict Prevention and Human Security". It will connect the traditional security community, development policy decision-makers, and conflict prevention community in order to leverage their collective experience, intelligence and resources for action, with the aim of reaching consensus on priorities and developing targeted recommendations. Task Force members included Martti Ahtisaari, Sadig Al-Mahdi, Lakhdar Brahimi, Kim Campbell, Jan Eliasson, Gareth Evans, El Hassan bin Talal, and Thorvald Stoltenberg.

Problem Statement

States and regional and international organizations have made progress in advancing the conflict prevention agenda since the 2004 High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change and the 2005 World Summit. However, many deficits in the conflict prevention agenda persist. The overarching commitment is there, but time and again in specific situations, the political will, the capacities, or even the institutional mandates for preventive action are not yet commensurate with the challenges faced.

Preventing the outbreak of violent conflict requires a more robust, more flexible, and more variegated set of policy commitments than currently exists from the traditional security community and key development actors, including community and business leaders. Above all, these key players are required to more consciously and effectively link early warning information to good conflict analysis, and deliver the appropriate mix of capacities at the right time.

Preventive strategies are mostly ad hoc in nature, unique to a given conflict, and are rarely implemented in a consistent manner. At the same time, past initiatives and institutional advances towards prevention present a wealth of experiences that should be put to better use in future conflict situations. Decision-makers must be better equipped to take early preventive measures and effectively implement preventive strategies in a consistent and meaningful way. It is equally essential to alleviate the political risks associated with preventive action.

The Global Conference aims to develop an agenda that highlights concrete recommendations for institutional change and for action on the ground. It will specifically address strategies regarding the mobilization of political will, resources, and pressure for positive and sustainable change.

Regional solutions are of great relevance when addressing the challenges associated with preventing conflict. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his 2008 report on the relationship between the UN and regional organizations (S/2008/531), highlighted the need to advance UN cooperation and coordination effort with the regional organizations. The report specifically recommended that the UN Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) work more closely with regional organizations. Most recently, in January 2010, Ban hosted a two-day high-level retreat with the heads of regional organizations to further their burgeoning cooperation in peacemaking and peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

Throughout 2009 and 2010, EWI engaged in a series of regional consultations. These sessions concluded that current institutional capacities and mandates for preventive action are not

commensurate with the challenges faced in all regions. Participants agreed on the necessity of regional solutions and increased attention on a preventive approach. Accordingly, the conference will highlight ways to strengthen regional institutional mechanisms and structures for preventive action.

Objectives

The Global Conference on Preventive Action will determine a Global Action Plan that aims to:

- Renew interest in preventive action and help position preventive action at the forefront of policy discourse;
- Advance recommendations on how policymakers can better mobilize resources for more effective preventive action against a background of increased financial constraints and competition for resources.

Cross-Cutting Issues

In order to deliver on its objectives in a concrete and practical way, the Global Conference on Preventive Action will address the following cross-cutting issues:

- (1) How to generate effective advocacy that increases political will and advances the preventive action agenda
- (2) How to mobilize human and financial resources in a more effective and coordinated manner

Format and Conference Proceedings

A mix of plenary and working group sessions will be used over two days to deliver on conference objectives. The conference will result in a strategy document, or Global Action Plan, that will highlight breakthrough measures, recommendations, and key actions to assist states, regional organizations, and international organizations achieve their stated policy goal of moving to more effective preventive action.

Plenary Sessions

Day 1 will address the challenges faced by key actors and help determine next steps in the development of preventive action in their contexts. Directed by a facilitator, the opening session and four plenary sessions will consist of interactive discussion, debate, and critical thinking among the panelists and participants from the floor. The facilitator acts as a catalyst, asking probing questions that promote candour and discovery among the panelists, and driving participants to ask key questions, impart lessons learnt, and make concrete proposals for action. Each session will: review recent progress; highlight key experiences and lessons; and identify key gaps and propose potential solutions

Working Groups

On Day 2, participants will break into five regional working groups: Asia Pacific, Central Africa, Central America, Southwest Asia, and US/Europe. Under the direction of a chair from one of EWI's partner organizations, each working group will devise practical recommendations for their respective regions. Recommendations will be in response to the plenary discussions from the previous day and will build from pre-existing initiatives of the partner organizations. As such, these strategy sessions will focus on outcomes and concrete actions that governments, regional organizations, civil society and parliamentarians can take, given their current constraints.

EWI and its conference partners will develop the working group agendas through conference calls and regular consultations in the time leading up to the conference.

Conference Details

The conference is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and will be at the European Parliament on December 6-7, 2010. Participation is by invitation only.