New Perspectives on Conflict Resolution:

Civil Society, the People-to-People Peace Process, Sustainable Human Development

Yehudah Paz (Dr.) –chairperson, Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED)

(Rabbi) Hillel said: "Be of the disciples of Aaron; love peace and pursue peace." Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) –the Talmud

By Way of Introduction

In recent times we are witness to the emergence of significant new perspectives on conflict resolution These relate not only to modes and methods of bringing violent conflict to a halt, but also to the movement from truce or cease fire (these being at least partial and temporary cessations of killing, maiming and destruction) towards peace, with all its connotations of broad scope and permanence. Indeed, they go even further and seek to set out conceptual approaches and practical programs designed to create reasonably secure, attractive and constructive alternatives to conflict – in a word to move towards conflict resolution and thence to conflict prevention. Put in another way, they point to ways of moving from violent conflict to the cessation of violence, thence to post conflict co-existence and further to the resolution of conflict. Or, risking slogan-like simplicity, from enemies to neighbors, from neighbors to partners, from partners to friends.

These new perspectives do not seek to replace the conventional modes of conflict resolution which are the province of governments, of political leaders and of international frameworks and which constitute the political processes of conflict resolution. Rather, they constitute yet a further dimension of society's search for effective response to the bitter reality of violent conflict, whose death-laden preeminence in the most recent (20th) century only serves to emphasize its unfailing and seemingly inevitable appearance in all the settings which history comprehends. In this regard it would be well to note that

while we draw warmth from the end of the cold war, the bitter winds of conflict continue to blow, chilly and threatening, in many parts of the world. The UN (1999) marks more that 50 violent conflicts presently taking place in the world; counts the more than 4 million lives lost in them and the more than 30 million refugees they have created (over 85% of the victims drawn from the civilian population). This reckoning does not include conflicts temporarily "on hold" but more or less prone to explosion, or, even more chillingly, of the possible threats of regional scale (or even more extensive) conflicts. Equally, it excludes both the present realities and future potential of violent terrorism. Moreover, a variety of tensions and frictions, within nations and between them, require what may be termed pre-conflict resolution if they are not to degenerate into violence. Global peace may be the order of the day, but peace on the globe is an as yet unachieved goal. Conflict, which is anything but new, is also anything but over.

New Perspectives

All of this insures that the theme of conflict resolution, in all its many forms, will continue to have a seat at the table of human concerns. Here we are also looking at an additional dimension – that of some new perspectives and approaches to the theme. They reflect new perceptions and responses to changing conditions and warrant attention despite the inevitable inner contradictions, excessive optimism, utopianism and other lacunae which new approaches almost inevitably exhibit. More: as the reader will note they echo across a wide variety of geo-political, socio-economic and cultural settings and evoke positive response from (admittedly some) academicians and practitioners, at grass roots, governmental and international agency levels and perhaps most significantly among many whose personal as well as national well being depends – in meaningful measure – on a successful process of conflict resolution. This being so, they may legitimately command our interest and attention.

The most significant of these new perceptions are two: the people-to-people peace process and the link between conflict resolution and sustainable human development.

The centrality of the civil society for each of these is readily apparent. Indeed, both new approaches to conflict resolution reflect and express the emergence of civil society as a major factor in the determination and execution of policy at local, national, regional and global levels.

It should be noted that the term "civil society" is in some measure a not fully delineated concept. Here we take it to mean that wide range of associations, organizations and movements through which people organize so as to advance their interests; satisfy their social, economic, political, cultural and other needs; seek to influence policy or governance in line with their concerns and beliefs and in general act together so as to gain some measure of control over aspects of their lives. Civil society groupings vary in size, scope, longevity,   breadth of concern and involvement in concrete activity. Some are small local bodies, others are global in scope; some have a history stretching back over decades or more, others are yesterday's children; some are single-issue, others propound a variety of ideas or engage in multiple activities. They include the NGO's , trade unions, cooperatives, women's and youth organizations, community groups, volunteer frameworks, small and medium enterprise networks, church-focused bodies, civic associations and more. They are, in so far is practicable and possible, non-governmental, voluntary, autonomous and self-managed; but the measure of all these which is actually achieved varies greatly.

However amorphous, multi-faceted and variant the components of civil society may be and indeed are, they remain distinguishable from the classic power centers of governance and of economic power. Their articulateness about and relevance to issues facing modern society as well as their growing organizational competence, numerical strength and global presence have significantly enhanced their acceptance at a variety of levels. Indeed in such areas as protection of the environment, gender equality, defense of human and social rights and more they are clearly "front and center". Their integration into the systems of governance is a recognized, though as yet not consummated, concern of national and international institutions and government.

The People-to-People Peace Process

Turning first to the issue of the people to people peace process, this new perspective can be summed up along the following lines:

The process of conflict resolution undoubtedly depends on and derives from what is generally termed the "political peace process", that is the initiative and active involvement of governments and of political institutions (national and frequently international and "great power" as well) both at the initiatory stages and on an ongoing basis. This is true of conflicts between nations and also for those between ethnic, religious, tribal and social groups within one country. But we now also recognize the fact that governmental/political agreements, however carefully crafted and however effectively underwritten by international agencies or by major powers cannot, by themselves alone, serve as the creators and guarantors of a long-term process of conflict resolution. Such a process must consist of more than carefully phrased documents or of moving oratory enunciated on impressive ceremonial occasions. It must rest on more than formal agreements and political guarantees. Peace will take root and flourish only in conditions of growing mutual confidence, of deepening mutual understanding and knowledge, of a process of effective cooperation. Moreover, conflict resolution must find concrete and immediate expression in the economic and social realities of people's lives. The achievement of all of these requires direct interaction between broad sectors of society. For this to come about the organizations and institutions today grouped under the heading of the "civil society" (i.e. the voluntary, non-government, people-centered frameworks) must become actively involved in the peace process. What is required is the development of a civil-society-centered people-to-people peace process, parallel to the political peace process carried out by governments and political institutions.

Stages on the Path to Conflict Resolution

One may look at this involvement of the civil society in conflict resolution, this people-to-people peace process, from a number of perspectives. Perhaps the most appropriate would be a focus on what may be termed a three-stage development of the peace process itself and an examination of the role which the civil society and the people-to-people interaction plays in each of them.

The three stages may be termed that of initiation, of peace making and of movement towards conflict resolution. Together, they make up a pattern of growth over time, of expansion of scope, of advance of a realistic hope for permanence. Clearly, all the usual caveats apply here: the separation into stages is essentially analytical rather than purely descriptive and they are not rigidly separated from each other; the process moves backwards and forwards again, so that there is a persistence of early elements in later stages and so forth. Nonetheless, this approach will aid in explicating and understanding our particular interest, namely, the people-to-people peace process and the role of civil society in it.

Stages on the Path to Conflict Resolution: 1 - the Initiatory Stage
The earliest stage in the peace process at which civil society plays a significant role is that which may be termed initiation. In a large number of cases the first effective moves towards dialogue, the earliest willingness to discuss issues where the differences of opinion seemed to be total and where the importance of the issues at stake was deemed so great as to require the exclusion or the total defeat of the "other" came from the non-governmental, civil society sector. The first tentative approaches to dialogue took place in a wide variety of contexts. There were cases where the pioneers were businessmen, others in which academics – from the humanities, the arts and the natural sciences as well as those from the perhaps more immediately related fields of social and political science, history and international relations were involved. Sometimes political-ideological frameworks, at both national and international levels, provided the opportunity and the venue for initial interactions. Often groups and individuals who shared interests or concerns beyond the conflict arena found that their shared commitments set the stage for the initiation of dialogue. Examples would include frameworks dealing with gender issues and women's rights, those concerned with ecology and environment protection, youth organizations, university and research groups, trade unions, cooperatives and others as well. In other cases cultural activity or sports were the settings employed. At first most of these initiatives were largely or even wholly divorced from government or political frameworks. Indeed, they frequently took place in the face of opposition and condemnation

by "the authorities" and many of the protagonists paid with prison sentences (some even with their lives) for their perceived temerity in seeking dialogue. But as, if and when the political climate changed (sometimes influenced by these solution-seeking initiatives) or leaders more open to the concept of conflict resolution gained political power, an alliance (frequently of convenience) was often built between the civil society and the government. The matter frequently proceeded from a see-no-evil, hear-no-evil, hands off attitude through a tentative and growing involvement (for example first "getting full reports" and later "augmenting and channeling" the flow of the dialogue). Further on came the utilization of the civil society channel as a (or the) setting for para-governmental and even near-governmental interaction and finally the adoption of the dialogue initiative by political forces on both sides as "theirs" and the inclusion of at least some of the civil society initiators in the official teams carrying our what had become full scale, formal negotiations. This pattern also gives us indications of possible future roles which civil society can play at later stages of the peace process. At least two elements are worthy of mention in this regard. Firstly, civil society can continue to serve as initiator through further dialogue with its counterparts on the "other" side on issues considered to be too difficult or controversial (particularly in terms of the internal politics of one or both sides) for governments to handle (or to handle publicly) at a particular time. Moreover, civil society interaction may serve as the frame of reference for the development of a new solution (or a battery of alternative solutions) in areas of concern whose sensitivity, weight of history or potential explosiveness makes inter-governmental negotiation difficult or even impossible. Thus civil society can continue to serve as "trailblazer" for political institutions even while formal discussions are underway. Here (and elsewhere as we shall note) this function of civil society acquires particular relevance when the backward-stepping phase of conflict resolution's "two steps forward, one step back" nature is in the ascendancy.

In the peace process "trailblazing" is an ongoing rather than a one-time activity. The growing awareness, acceptance and involvement of civil society's variegated cohorts in this aspect of conflict resolution is an important aspect of the new perspectives.

Stages on the Path to Conflict Resolution: 2 - The Peace-Making Stage

The next stage in the process of conflict resolution is that in which the possibility of peace has become, in meaningful measure, a reality. It may be termed the era of making (rather than merely talking) peace. As such it follows upon the first formalizations of the end of conflict- i.e. the peace treaty, the agreement on new forms of governance or social organization, or the entrance into an era of transition to the above. In so far as this movement from the exploration of possibilities for ending a conflict to an attempt to actually do so is not based on a victor-vanquished relationship ("unconditional surrender") its framework of compromises is, in greater or lesser measure, tentative, fragile and at risk. This is true even when the end of hostilities or of rebellion is heralded by impressive public demonstrations replete with appropriate oratory and when it has garnered wide-ranging international support. What is now required is the creation of a new social, economic and attitudinal reality in addition to the new political reality. In this the people-to-people peace process can be relevant in a variety of ways.

One of the most significant of these is in the deepening of mutual understanding, the enhancement of knowledge of "the other", his society, his culture, his economic needs and no less his aspirations, hopes and ideals. If peace is to begin to become reality than attitudes must change from the dehumanizing "enemy" to the human neighbor. The first steps towards this can best take place within a framework of dialogue, of direct human contact and interaction between broad sectors of society. The civil society components on both sides can provide such a framework.

In general, because the peace process has now taken on some measure of reality, the counterpart components of civil society on both sides of the conflict (whether across national borders or within them) can now begin to undertake concrete joint activities and programs, inclusive of but not limited to discussion and interchange. They can develop joint projects, initiate training activities, undertake cultural programs. In a word they can begin to build a framework of cooperation. This process frequently begins in areas where the problems to be faced are by their nature cross-border ones, such as environmental protection; effective usage of rainfall runoff and reconstituted waste water; prevention of malaria, rabies and the like. Further interaction can develop

between counterpart groups (referred to above) who share a specific, in some measure ideological interest, such as concern with gender issues, with trade unionism, with cooperatives, with youth matters and the like. Common research and academic interests and the familiarity of many academics with trans-national discourse make this a fruitful area for interaction. The world of culture, the arts, music, theater, and dance lends itself to these activities as does the world of sports. Certain areas of concern - for example, health- appear to be of such immediacy as to command a strong moral imperative as regards joint endeavor.

Altogether, across a broad spectrum of interests, concerns and needs including economic and social development (of which more below), education, health, welfare, women's rights, ecology, youth issues, culture and the arts, community development, academic matters and more the people-to-people peace process can function, bringing together components of the civil society from both sides of the (former) conflict in creative interaction. The formal, politically achieved end of conflict makes this kind of people-to-people interaction possible; it, in turn, serves to give the peace process an effective base and frame for broad-scale involvement in that process.

A number of potential problems must be tackled if this civil society cooperation is to succeed. For P2P activity to be effective it ought to be carried out on a basis of real partnership which extends to all significant aspects of the projects. This is often easier said than done, despite all the good will in the world. The economic, numerical, institutional and financial strengths of the civil society partners may be very different, reflecting gaps existing between the nations, ethnic groups or social formations engaged in the conflict resolution process. This is almost inevitable in terms of internal conflict, but is frequently the case in cross-border conflicts as well. This gap and its explication can give birth to cooperation-defeating patronization, frequently heightened by mis-directed and insensitive good will. It can also call forth fears of domination and of unwelcome intrusion not only within the area of joint endeavor but beyond it as well. This, in turn, can lead to a hesitancy about entering frameworks of cooperation or to a desire to postpone such cooperation to some (relatively distant) day when there is a greater measure of equivalence between the partners, which, in turn, may be pushed

even further into the future by this postponement. Civil society institutions aware of these pitfalls will seek to avoid them in a variety of ways. They will insure that joint projects are truly joint – at all levels of leadership and control (including the financial), Cultural sensitivity will extend to consideration of the language(s) used, the venues chosen for project activity, training programs etc., the scope and content of public relations and publicity and so on. In a word the hesitancies and fears which this lack of symmetry engenders must be recognized and responded to as far as is possible.

Similarly, cooperation in the people-to-people framework which is initiated in the early stages of post-conflict reality or in a transition period designed to lead up to a peace agreement may be challenged on the part of one of the participants on the grounds that it constitutes too great a normalization of the relationships between former enemies in view of the early stage of the peace process. This relates, in one sense, to the more general issue of the relationship between the political peace process and the P2P activity, on which more below. But here too, the parties involved must demonstrate awareness and sensitivity. Emphasis can be placed on the fact that progress towards peace, however small scale, opens new specific and delineated areas for legitimate cooperation between former enemies. Even if the movement is at that first stage of "from enemy to neighbor" this already means that things are possible and even requisite which were previously unthinkable. The fact that most civil society formations are sectoral in their concerns will enable them – indeed in many cases will compel them - to engage in what are clearly sector-focused activities; this will weaken, if not always eliminate, the real or perceived danger of too-early normalization.

In truth, normalization is, in some sense, the name of the game, the long range goal of the process of conflict resolution. But its achievement is also clearly related to the advance of the political peace process and obviously cannot be achieved by the people-to-people process alone. But just as the latter contributes significantly to its realization, it is well for participants in the P2P process to be aware that a premature assumption that it has been achieved or an attempt to impose its parameters before their time has come, can be counter-productive.

During this peace-making stage in which the people-to-people peace process with yesterday's enemies is taking shape, there is also an area of internal concern to which the civil society must address itself and that is the broadening and expansion of the peace camp. The critical nature of this activity is most readily apparent in a transition era, in which the first and relatively minor concessions which the peace process requires gradually build up to major ones whose acceptance is increasingly difficult for wide sectors of the population. Inevitably, those fundamentally opposed to the peace process will intensify their opposition as it moves forward; in extreme cases this will include provocative acts, renewed violence and terrorism. This renewal or intensification of violence will also heighten the questioning of the validity of the peace process as such (which is, of course, one of the basic aims of those initiating the violence). For conflict resolution to move forward, the base of commitment to it must expand, so that the final-stage compromises (the most painful ones) are deemed acceptable by the majority of the population, even in the face of escalating violence calculatedly designed to raise doubts as to the possibility of real peace. Civil society can make a special contribution to the requisite broadening of the support for peace. It can serve as a vehicle for the promotion of dialogue with sectors of the population not numbered in the peace movements or in the pro-peace political parties. It can draw those "on the fence" or at the margin as regards the peace process into direct contact and interaction with "the other", with the hope, at least, of shattering the myth of "our enemy forever" and perhaps even of the discovery of some measure of commonality. The people-to-people peace process creates concrete and practical partnerships whose mutual advantages can be made apparent to the "doubters". Many components of the civil society function at some distance from the political parties, thus enabling them to reach out to "doubters" and even to opponents across the barrier of direct political party confrontations. Civil society must utilize all of these and more in undertaking to broaden the base of support for the peace process.

An issue of major significance for the people-to-people peace process at this stage (and indeed at all stages) of advance towards conflict resolution is the question of how it relates to, is influenced by and (hopefully) influences the

political peace process. Some reference to this issue has already been made above, firstly by pointing out that peace is initiated, negotiated, determined and consummated by governments, political institutions, and (sometimes) international partners and agencies and secondly, by reference to the "trailblazing" role which civil society can play in the initiation of the peace process. Beyond that the relationship is an intricate one. Our new perspectives maintain that the political peace process is often unable to insure a full and lasting peace by itself alone and that the expansion of mutual understanding and commitment to shared enterprise which the people-to-people peace process can add constitutes a major contribution to that goal. Further, one notes that the P2P frequently serves to bolster and maintain the thrust towards peace when the political process slows down, grinds to a halt or even slides backward. The underpinning of bottom-up civil society involvement can help maintain the momentum of the process, can foster informal and semi-formal contacts between the parties and can even, in some measure, assist in revitalizing it. But should the political peace process reach an insurmountable impasse or come to a halt for a much extended period of time, this would undoubtedly lead to a major contraction, if not to an actual cessation, of people-to-people activity. There are occasions when pressure is exerted by the political powers on the civil society to slow down or even temporarily withdraw from the P2P, either as a response to political pause or as a ploy in the negotiating process itself. On the other hand, it is often given not only the green light but a good push forward when the political skies are blue. In a sense all of this is inevitable, as both elements are, in essence, aspects of the same march towards conflict resolution. In their polyphonic dialogue the voice of the political peace process is, when all is said and done, pre-eminent and dominant, but the weight of the civil society is not negligible and indeed grows as the concrete as well as the conceptual results of civil society interaction develop. The dialogue between the two is also characterized by what may be termed differences in tempo. "People-to-people" demonstrates a relatively steady and consistent pace of slow advance; the political process is frequently one of rapid advance matched by rapid retreat, of marked ups and downs, of moments of breakthrough and others of despair. The interplay between the two disparate actors is an

important aspect of conflict resolution. Or, if one may use a musical metaphor, it is here that the "basso continuo" nature of the P2P process, as contrasted to the melodic flights (including "ups" and "downs") of the political peace process, becomes most clearly evident and can most effectively make its special contribution to the conflict resolution process.

In looking at the civil society- government relationship one ought to note that in many situations it is not possible to speak of the two as wholly distinct and separate groupings. When one is dealing with the resolution of struggles for national independence or for the recognition of ethnic identity or for major social realignment, what one finds is essentially a spectrum, a continuum linking the wholly political with the almost autonomous. In these circumstances, civil society institutions and organizations in health and education, economics and welfare, culture and youth activity all exhibit some measure of political coloration – and almost nothing is wholly non-political, non-governmental in nature. (Parenthetic note to illustrate the point: in Israel to this day the great majority of football teams are still identified as the "workers" or the "centrists" or the "rightists" from city x or town y, thus anachronistically reflecting a long bygone era in which your ideology determined where you played and which team you supported. Here, even sport was, once upon a time, a political/ideological statement.) As the conditions of struggle and conflict give way to near- peace, the autonomous nature of civil society organizations gains strength. But that is a long process and one should not be over- didactic in characterizing the components of the civil society active in the people-to-people peace process. This perception lends yet another dimension (time) to the "spectrum" definition of the political power-civil society relationship and helps explain the fact that civil society is often very responsive to the way the political wind blows. Yet even in these circumstances there is, in almost all settings, an emergent civil society which gains stature and self-reliance from its role in the people-to-people peace process.

In the long run and in the broad picture, it is the political power which has the last word. But the voice of the civil society is heard, and more-the civil society has a significant role in shaping that word.

Stages on the Path to Conflict Resolution: 3 - Towards Resolution Itself

Our new perspectives have cast light on the role which the people-to-people peace process can play at the initiatory and the peace-making stages of conflict resolution and on the nature of the civil society involvement in it. In moving through these two stages we have, to follow our admittedly slogan-like metaphor, gone from enemy to neighbor and thence towards partner as well. We can now consider elements which might make up the further movement towards full partnership and perhaps even the beginnings of friendship. We may term this the move towards conflict resolution, in its fullest sense. Not surprisingly (for those who have read this far) civil society has a significant role to play here as well.

Characteristics of this stage would include a meaningful degree of permanence and security from the danger of renewed conflict, a high level of effective cooperation between the parties, major attitudinal changes, perhaps even the emergence of formal frameworks of partnership such as regional economic unions or large scale trans-national development projects etc. It is in this context of extensive partnership, over a wide and diverse range of concerns common to the parties that conflict resolution becomes a realistic alternative for former enemies.

One notes that there are those who view the peace process essentially as a permanent framework for the separation of former enemies along the lines of "good fences make good neighbors" (a viewpoint ironically rejected in Robert Frost's much misunderstood poem in which the thought appears). At one level, this might be true, if it were realistically possible (itself a dubious proposition), simply because the parties would not have convenient opportunities for shooting at each other. However, movement towards conflict resolution beyond the cessation of violence cannot grow out of a program of purposeful and deliberate separation. Geographic and economic rivalries (perhaps ethnic and cultural ones too) will still be present and their long-term resolution requires growing cooperation between the parties. The potential benefits such cooperation can produce make its deliberate avoidance a self-

defeating proposition. Moreover, the attempt to make mutual avoidance the standard and content of future interaction rests on the assumption that a high level of mutual hostility will be a most prominent and permanent aspect of the relations between yesterday's violence-utilizing enemies. It does not require a high degree of predictive ability to recognize that if this were indeed to be the case, then this hostility is much more likely to lead to renewal of the hatred-violence-conflict scenario than to the creation of a sustainable scenario of conflict resolution,

Of course, any program of cooperation must take into account the legitimate concern of those involved for the preservation of their identity It must avoid the danger of economic, social or cultural (as well as, of course and by definition, political) domination and/or exploitation and must serve the development needs of all parties. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that conflict resolution is a process of growing and mutually beneficial interaction and not of ever more extensive separation. This being the case, it would be well if we now looked at some of the relevant components of this third stage.

a) On the links between conflict resolution and sustainable human development

We have noted that the recognition of the existence of a significant link between sustainable human development and conflict resolution is one of the most significant of the new perspectives with which we are concerned. Conflict resolution opens a window of opportunity for the rapid advance of sustainable human development across a wide range of social and economic concerns. Some of these are derived directly from the realities of the cessation of violent conflict. For example, in virtually every conflict resolution situation there exists a population which, after years of military or "guerilla" service or of near-marginal existence because of the imminence of violent conflict, now enters a stage in which such normal and "civilian" concerns as jobs, housing etc. become not only realistic but pressing. Indeed, the reality of held-back development now free to move rapidly forward is characteristic of most of the countries and groups moving out of conflict situations. Resources –financial, natural, institutional as well as human, which were once earmarked

for conflict-related use are now potentially available for development. Land areas; infrastructure components such as roads, railways, ports, airports; communication components are more and more freed of the constraints of conflict and can be used for development. Even more importantly, it is vital to recognize the fact that one of the most important aspects of every conflict resolution process is the widely held hope that peace will serve as the basis for a major leap forward in terms of development, of basic needs satisfaction, of enhanced standards of living, of better education, health, housing, food supply and employment. For these, and for other important reasons as well, it should be apparent that sustainable human development is a significant and an integral part of any effective process of conflict resolution. This is true in regard to the resolution of conflicts between neighboring countries, but no less so in regard to conflicts between groups or sectors within one country.

One may note that development expectations are not limited to the realm of the socio-economic, central though this may be. They extend to the process of democratization and to the protection of human rights as well.

The price to be paid for the failure to link conflict resolution and development is a high one indeed. The closure of this window of opportunity leads not only to the loss of a perhaps irretrievable possibility for rapid development, but also to serious endangerment of the peace process itself. Without development, significant sectors of the population, just recently liberated from the conflict situation, may be tempted to turn to crime or to return to the conflict once again. Where people see little change in their lives and in their hopes for their children, the danger of a drift towards the renewal of old hatreds, toward religious fanaticism and nationalistic extremism is all too real Where there is no advance toward development, the slippery path from despair to a return to hatred and from hatred to violence is all too real a threat. The failure to seize the opportunity for development which the initiation of the peace process provides could well constitute a very real base and background for the loss of the peace process itself.

Clearly, development linked to conflict resolution reflects concerns and issues relevant to development per se. This is true in regard to the need to focus on ecologically sustainable development; on the need to give priority to the human-centered aspects of development such as the enhanced satisfaction of

basic human needs for food, shelter, education, health, welfare, culture, employment, (and human rights and freedoms as well), on the need to insure the direct involvement of the civil society and the people's organizations in the development process and more. But attention should also be paid to the special characteristics of development relevant to the transition from conflict to peace.

Post-conflict reconstruction and development will be a central element in the political/governmental peace process and will include a variety of activities and projects carried out jointly between yesterday's-enemies and today's-partners. If the civil society is enabled to fulfill the role of a full partner in this, there are a number of significant contributions which it can make. Some of these are civil society's classic roles, such as insuring, in so far as possible, that development is indeed human- focused and ecologically responsible; that it concerns itself with democratization and the promotion of social welfare; with empowerment of women; with rural as well as urban advance; that it gives priority to HRD (human resource development) in terms of health, education, community building etc. Further, it will seek to insure the inclusion of broad sectors of the population in development through the direct involvement of mass based, grass roots and people's organization in the process. But beyond these classic roles, all of which are of real significance for development, there are specific contributions which civil society can make here, derived in part from the experience gained in the people-to-people peace process.

We had reference earlier to the need to establish truly joint partnerships in civil society peace-building projects. This is equally relevant in terms of large scale development partnerships, whether these are economic or social in nature. Here the weight of asymmetry between the partners may find expression not only in the teacher-pupil relationship but in the employer–employee one as well, for example, in a joint business venture where one partner provides capital and know-how and the other supplies the labor. Such businesses may have some developmental significance, but the danger that they may be perceived (or even may actually be) ventures designed to prosper through the use of cheap labor is all too real and of course all too counterproductive in terms of peace. This commands attention and

continuous, conscious action towards reducing asymmetry and building real partnership.

The focus on empowerment and democracy which are so prominent in civil society's peace building projects is another element of importance for development programs. Similarly, regard for cultural and linguistic elements is also of significance here.

 Intense and lengthy conflict situations are inevitably accompanied by a greater or lesser weakening of democracy, of the guarantees of human rights, of freedoms of expression. In some cases, conflict extinguishes them or prevents their emergence. These are the concerns of a variety of civil society frameworks; their participation in the development process gives hope that this aspect of development will not be wholly forgotten.

Another interesting aspect of the role of civil society in this stage of conflict resolution is that the experience gained in building an effective interlock between the political peace process and the people-to-people peace process can be of direct relevance to the question of how best to involve non-governmental frameworks in development. The issue of on one hand granting the NGO's and civil society the degree of autonomy which is their right and is also a pre-condition for maximizing their contribution, while at the same time building frameworks of constructive partnership between them and governments, is as relevant to post-conflict development activity as it is to the joint endeavor of the political and the P2P peace processes. Experience gained in combining "hands off" with requisite support and joint activity in pursuing peace is clearly applicable to government-civil society cooperation in development.

It is clear that the linkage between conflict resolution and sustainable human development rests not only on the fact that the former makes the latter both possible and requisite. More fundamentally, it is a linkage which rests on a dependence, for failure to move towards development puts peace at risk. Further, here too it is clear that the civil society is more than merely a potential partner. It is a partner whose direct involvement is a critical element for the success of the endeavor.

b) On conflict resolution and attitudinal change

The importance of attitudinal change for conflict resolution has been mentioned earlier. Attitudinal change is of importance for each of the previous two stages. At this third stage of the process of conflict resolution, it is indeed of major importance.

The requisite changes includes the acceptance of the essential humanity of "the other" (de-demonization) and the readiness to treat him and to treat with him not as the enemy (which he was indeed until the peace process began, as you have been his) but as a legitimate partner in dialogue. There must be a mutual recognition that "the other" has needs, aspirations, fears which must be addressed; that his concern with physical security and legitimacy, with acceptance on the basis of equality, with economic well-being and a hopeful future for his children are real and relevant. There must be a mutual recognition and acceptance of concerns relevant to national, religious, ethnic and cultural identity.

A further advance in this changed attitudinal perspective comprehends the fact that "the other" views reality, particularly that reality which is shared by both parties, from a different viewpoint, with different assumptions and different conclusions. In this context, "the truth" about an event consists not only that of the facts as such (to the extent that these can be really ascertained) but equally of the conceptual filters, the presumptions and the historical perspective through which these facts are observed and evaluated. This ability to see shared realities through the eyes of "the other", the ability to comprehend his "narrative", is an important aspect of conflict resolution. If learning is really about broadening horizons and enlarging perspectives, rather than merely accumulating facts, then it is this sort of learning which is requisite for conflict resolution. Civil society, working through the mechanisms of the people-to-people peace process, can play a significant role in furthering this kind of attitudinal change.

Yet another aspect of this process is the understanding that recognition of "the other's" legitimacy – as a human being, as a group, as a viewpoint does not necessarily imply a diminution of one's own legitimacy or of the validity of one's point of view. Recognition that another viewpoint may actually and even legitimately exist does not imply acceptance of that viewpoint. It does however

imply that it must be taken into account. Here, as in other aspects of the peace negotiation, it is necessary to move from a confrontational, all or nothing perception of the situation in which my gain is your loss and vice-versa (win-lose) to one which recognizes that the compromises which lead to conflict resolution (in this case, changes in attitude) can, while preserving a core legitimacy for the views of each party, insure the future of both, thus yielding greater gain for each of them (win-win). Once again, civil society interactions can provide an effective framework for the development of these perceptions.

Yet another aspect of this process of changing attitudes and perceptions relates to the place of history, of the past as such, in the process of conflict resolution. This is a topic which surely commands more space and explication than can be given here. But there are one or two aspects of this matter which might be noted.

In a sense, the initiation of a process of conflict resolution depends on the willingness of both parties to suspend historical analysis and debate (for the moment) and to take the reality presently extant as their point of departure. In this sense they must project their thinking towards what the future can be like rather than seeking to apportion blame (or credit) for how the present came about, particularly when the alternative responses to that query differ with such intensity as to form an almost insurmountable barrier to resolving the conflict. Yet such a suspension can be but temporary. The burden and implications of the past are of such weight – at the personal no less than at the formal and institutional level – as to command attention and to demand response. We ignore history at our peril, not only because, as Gertrude Stein's aphorism would have it, "history teaches that history teaches", but because nowhere is history more real, more current, more meaningful than in the minds of the parties to a conflict, particularly a violent one. One might therefore say that conflict resolution may need a suspension of thinking about history in order to get underway, but it cannot proceed towards its goal without relating to the past. In a sense the readiness to do so, to deal with the relevance of the past and of past experience, to confront the pain, the injustice, the failure and the guilt –all of which lie to some measure with both

sides to any conflict- is the measure of progress, at the human and subjective levels, towards conflict resolution. And the lesson of South Africa in this regard is clear: the greater the injustice and the deeper the pain, the more directly they must be faced if their legacy is to be overcome. The relevance of the frameworks of interaction created by civil society through the people-to-people peace process to this aspect of conflict resolution is abundantly clear.

A Concluding Note

This examination of the role of civil society and of the people-to-people peace process in each of the three stages of conflict resolution and of the importance of linking sustainable human development with conflict resolution has, hopefully, given weight to the contention that these relatively new perspectives are of importance. As noted, these perspectives reflect the changing role and the changing evaluation of civil society in regard to most of the major areas of human concern. Yet here, in the sphere of conflict resolution, this takes on a special significance, because these are issues, which when all is said and done, deal with life and death. Peace making and peace preservation are not easy or simple tasks; attempts to achieve them often fail, or achieve only partial or temporary success. They require patient and persistent pursuit (as Hillel said –see above- it is not enough to love peace, it must also be actively pursued) and this pursuit must rest on the deepest of commitments and must draw on a rich reserve of optimism. But above all, the pursuit of peace requires the effective utilization of all the means and modes which can be of significance for its success. If civil society can be of importance in this regard, than it is legitimate indeed for it to seek the two elements which are requisite if its potential is to be realized – recognition and resources. These are in some measure self- generated, but the scope of this source is a necessarily limited, particularly as regards the latter. To some extend they can be provided by the government/political powers and as we have noted this happens in increasing measure (particularly in terms of recognition) as we move through the stages of conflict resolution. But here too the constraints in regard to resources are severe and the issue of civil society autonomy is often of relevance. Therefore there is an

important role for international agencies and for other nations to play. As outsiders, they function within the constraints which apply to conflict resolution since, at the end of the day, it is the parties to the conflict who must themselves resolve it. But these outsiders do have a role as facilitators, as furnishers of venue and framework, as providers of assistance, guidance and good advice, as guarantors and more. (The future may give them even wider powers in this area, but that is a matter for another discussion.) They also are of major importance in terms of the provision of the resources which conflict resolution requires and of much of the funds needed for the sustainable human development programs. It is therefore of great importance that they include in their agenda support for the people-to-people peace process and for the institutions of civil society which are its bearers.

This article has, hopefully, served to highlight new perspectives on conflict resolution. One can but hope that in addition to increasing knowledge it will also generate increased recognition of and support for them.

"Peace is not an absence of war.
Peace is a virtue; a state of mind; a disposition for benevolence, for
confidence, for justice."
Baruch Spinoza

Yehudah Paz (Dr.) (Kibbutz Kissufim)

Chairperson , Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED)