

Launch of the
'Foundations for Peace' Network

Tuesday 27th June 2006
UN Church Centre
777, UN Plaza
New York

Launch report / Speakers contributions

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The Foundations for Peace Network is a new and unique international network established to ensure that the crucial efforts of indigenous foundations engaged in local peacebuilding and social justice work are recognised, valued and promoted.

Event running order:

- 11.00am **Welcome and opening remarks:**
- Sithie Tiruchlevam**, Chairperson, FFP Network
Trustee, Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust, Sri Lanka.
- 11.10am **Supporting indigenous peacebuilding work:**
- Barry Gaberman**, Senior Vice-President,
The Ford Foundation, New York
- 11.25am **Local efforts – the contribution to peace:**
- Oscar Rojas**, Executive Director
Fundación AlvarAlice Colombia
- 11.40am **The importance of indigenous, independent funding**
- Avila Kilmurray**, Director,
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
- 11.55am **Culture, caste and identity work**
- Martin C Macwan**, Trustee and Secretary,
Navsarjan Trust and Dalit Foundation, India
- 12.10pm **The need for, and importance of, institutional structures in
peacebuilding:**
- Tim O'Connor**, Consul General of Ireland, New York.
- 12.25pm **Launch closing remarks**
- 12.30pm. **Refreshments and lunch**

The Foundations for Peace Network

‘Indigenous funders promoting the value of local peacebuilding’
was successfully launched in the
UN Church Centre on 27th June 2006.

Foundations for Peace (FFP) is a global network of independent, indigenous funders working to advance equality, diversity and inter-dependence in areas of entrenched and persistent communal* conflict with a history of, or potential for, violence. It respects religious and ethnic diversity and is politically non-partisan. The founder members are the Community Foundation of Northern Ireland, Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust Sri Lanka, Abraham Foundation New York/Israel, Dalit Foundation India and Nirnaya, India.

Foundations for Peace (FFP) believes that conflict and tension cannot be resolved by violence and that long term sustainable solutions can only be achieved through peaceful means.

It is the **FFP Network’s** view that peace building must come from within the community, society or country affected to ensure its longer-term sustainability. It is here that independent indigenous Foundations play a constructive role, without a vested interest, in providing resources for bridge building among the different communities.

Formation of the Network

As a result of a series of meetings, the first being initiated by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) in Portaferry/Northern Ireland in 2003, followed by meetings in Leuven/Belgium, London/UK, Colombo/Sri Lanka, Derry/Northern Ireland, and Hyderabad/India in 2005, Foundations for Peace, as it became known, developed a Charter covering its goals, values, objectives, strategies and membership criteria. This Charter recognizes that while peace building must be essentially local, it benefits from transnational perspectives and experience.

Vision

Foundations for Peace envisions a pluralistic and inclusive society across the world that respects human rights and dignity and in which conflicts are resolved through peaceful means.

Mission

Foundations for Peace seeks to develop a network of independent, indigenous funders that share their unique insights and experience in working locally to advance equality, diversity and inter-dependence in areas of entrenched and persistent communal conflict. The Foundation for Peace Network is committed to peacebuilding as a long-term investment.

Goals

Foundations for Peace has three strategic goals:

1. To draw lessons from and share models of good practice in peace building that have been implemented within and between local communities.
2. To promote and advance public policy to support equality, diversity and inter-dependence nationally and internationally.
3. To inform, promote and thereby increase the flow of philanthropic funds to support indigenous peace building Foundations across the globe.

Values

Foundations for Peace has:

- A commitment to peace and non-violence.
- Respect for human rights, equality, diversity and interdependence.*
(* As set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948).*

**Welcome and opening remarks:
Sithie Tiruchelvam, Chairperson of the Foundations for Peace
Network.**

Sithie opened the event and welcomed all of the guests and members. She outlined the origins of the Network and spoke of its development to date and future aspirations. She spoke of the importance of this day as the first key public step taken by the Network and was heartened by the quality of the turnout for the event.

She pointed out that all of the member organisations are working daily with conflict situations in their own countries including open hostilities, fractured peace processes, the abuse or denial of human rights and social injustice/exclusion issues.

She emphasised the importance of the role of civil society in all of these situations and the need for indigenous / locally based funders/ foundations to be supported on an international basis to deliver local peacebuilding work.

She also spoke of the importance of local Foundations meeting together in the Network for the purposes of sharing experiences, learning from each other and developing inter-country partnerships and projects to enhance learning. The need to develop policy and practice as a result of this learning is critical and the importance of sharing these lessons with others in the international framework is crucially important.

The Network requires financial and political support if it is to deliver on its goals. It will work to raise awareness of the need for support for local peacebuilding work among the wider philanthropic community as well as the United Nations and other International Human Rights organisations.

She welcomed the speakers and encouraged the audience to listen and to participate in the question/answer sessions as each speaker concluded.

The events – the Launch and the Conference – had been organised in the main by the Network Secretariat, the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, and Sithie thanked them on behalf of the Network for their efforts in bringing the day to fruition.

***Supporting indigenous Peacebuilding work:
Barry Gaberman,
Senior Vice-President of the Ford Foundation.***

It is a privilege to be here to say a few words on this very important occasion. Not too long ago, I was part of Track II discussions on U.S.-India sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society. Inevitably, the discussion turned to India/Pakistan relations. The diplomats bemoaned the lack of contact that they had with their counterparts across their common border. It made me reflect on the fact that that was not the world we live in as civil society actors, for us there is plenty of contact across these borders.

It also made me think about the unique contribution institutions of civil society can make in so many areas -- often contentious areas, such as peace-building. And reinforced in me, the notion that one of the most important missions of foundations -- perhaps their primary mission -- is the support they give to the institutions of civil society. We all know what these institutions do

- They provide services, often to the most marginalized among us.
- They educate us throughout our lives.
- They do independent policy analysis to keep policy makers feet to the fire.
- They engage in advocacy to give voice to those whose demands are seldom heard.
- And they enhance our enjoyment and strengthen our identity through artistic and cultural expression.

Yet these instrumental aspects are not what truly is most important about the institutions of civil society. There are several generic aspects that these institutions of civil society have in common, and I want to mention one in particular. We live in complex times -- and must always guard against the concentration of power and the abuse of power that follows. The traditional separation of power into legislative, executive, and judicial is not enough anymore. An independent press helps, but it is still not sufficient. It is here that civil society as a whole, in its generic role, adds another layer or safeguard against the abuse of power.

Now, civil society was always there, but what is different about this historical period is that the institutions of civil society are conscious of being a part of a sector and the linkages that reinforce them and make them able to exercise the soft power of their influence.

A danger we face, however, is that there are competing views about what the role of foundations in society should be. One view -- starting with theory and going to practice -- suggests that foundations should essentially support the status quo. It is not easy to dismiss this view because it has a strong intellectual underpinning that essentially states that governments do not confer the benefits of tax preferences on institutions that turn around and question the legitimacy of their programs. Be that as it may, when you start

with practice and build to theory, you get a very different picture. So let me recount the practical attributes of foundations that lead to this counter view.

- **First**, because of their accountability structures, foundations can take risks in a way that is difficult for institutions responsible to the public or for for-profit institutions that must meet a bottom-line test. In other words, these are institutions that can afford to fail.
- **Second**, foundations can take on sensitive issues that public institutions will often step away from. This was the case with the early development of contraceptive technology in the United States, for example.
- **Third**, because foundations are not governed by the tyranny of the bottom-line as are corporations, they can take on activities that are not sustainable with only earned income and that require a certain measure of subsidy.
- **Fourth**, an important, but often overlooked role of foundations is to help sustain services desired by a particular segment of society, but where there is neither the level of demand or the consensus necessary to make it a government priority.
 - This is particularly the case in diverse ethnic and racial societies.
- **Fifth**, foundations can afford to think long term and recognize that the solutions to many complex societal problems are multi-faceted and take time.
 - There are few silver bullets.
- **Sixth**, foundations have the capacity to be flexible and to incorporate mid- course corrections to their programmatic efforts in a way that is difficult for the larger bureaucracies of the public sector.
 - Seventh**, related to this attribute is the point that foundations can act rapidly.
 - The 2001 response to 9/11 was a case in point as are the more recent responses to the tsunami in South and Southeast Asia, Hurricane Katrina, and the earthquake in Pakistan.
 - In fact, in a strange way, both man-made and natural disasters often prove to be a catalyst to the growth of the civil society institutions supported by foundations.
- **Eighth**, foundations can often test innovative and new initiatives or demonstration projects that, if successful, can be brought to scale.

- **Ninth**, foundations can fund independent policy analysis as a check on the claims of the public sector.
- **And finally**, foundations can fund advocacy organizations, a function not always looked on kindly by the public sector.

These are ten attributes that seem particularly important to me, but I'm sure most of you could come up with additional attributes.

What emerges from the attributes I have suggested is a dynamic picture of foundations and the institutions of civil society that they support.

- It is a picture of a sector that goes beyond just the provision of services, important as that is, to one that challenges the status quo in society.
- It does this by analyzing programs to see if they deliver on their promises.
- It does this by suggesting new and innovative ways to deal with complex issues.
- It constantly holds us up to the yardstick of fairness and a level playing field.
- And it gives voice to those that tend to go unheard in our society.

I would submit to you that these attributes and the larger picture it presents of the role of foundations in society make it imperative that the work of peace-building be supported.

***Local efforts – the contribution to peace building:
Dr Oscar Rojas
Director, AlvarAlice, Colombia***

AlvarAlice Foundation is a non for profit Colombian civil society organisation created in 2003 by the four Garces Echavarria siblings with the mission of promoting peace through interventions in the areas of education, health, civic action, income generation and peacemaking and peace building initiatives.

In this context, the Foundation has set forth a series of programs and activities that use restorative justice¹ as a strategy for approaching entrenched conflict and violence affecting victim, offenders and communities in both urban and rural areas of Colombia.

Let me briefly refer to some relevant features of the Colombian armed conflict, to the mechanisms that the Colombian state has developed in order to address demobilisation, disarmament and reinsertion of ex-combatants, and to the various activities carried out by AlvarAlice in order to contribute to a more equitable and peaceful Colombian society.

The Colombian Conflict

The Colombian armed conflict began half a century ago. It started as an uprising of a peasant guerrilla against the Colombian state. The first illegal armed group adopted the name of Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and was a Marxist led movement heavily influenced by the Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union Communist state. From the start to now the FARC has evolved to become an organisation that resorts to terrorist attacks such as bombings, massive killings, kidnappings and that obtain most of its funding through both drug trade and extortion. The FARC is currently the largest guerrilla in Colombia with an estimated of 15 thousand combatants distributed in more than 50 fronts throughout the country.

The second illegal armed group called the National Liberation Army (ELN) originated as a movement with deep roots among intellectuals and university students, with a strong Marxist-Leninist influence and Cuban support at the beginning. This guerrilla group is the second largest in the country with an estimated of 5 to 8 thousand members amongst combatants and urban militias.

The third illegal group is the so-called Self Defences of Colombia (AUC) also known as paramilitaries. They began operations in the early 80's with support from landowners affected by the extortions and kidnappings of the guerrillas in rural areas. It's considered that the paramilitaries had some initial support from the Colombian Army. According to information gathered during the

¹ Restorative Justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.

recent demobilisation process, the number of combatants and supporting militia of this group is over thirty thousand.

The Colombian conflict is fuelled by the drug trade, whose earnings provide these groups with resources estimated in about three to four billion US dollars in the last five years. There have been more than seventy thousand killings in the same period and about three million forced displaced people, which led the UN to consider the Colombian conflict as one of the worst humanitarian crisis of the world.

The Justice and Peace Law

To confront the challenges emerging from the armed conflict the Colombian government enacted the Justice and Peace Law (Law 975, 2005) under which members of illegal armed groups may obtain some benefits if they disarm, contribute to dismantling their criminal organisation, confess their crimes and commit to repair their victims.

Those leaders and combatants that are convicted should pay sentences of no less than 5 and no more than 8 years if they fully comply with the criteria mentioned above along with the requirements of truth telling and reparations to victims. According to a recent sentence issued by the Constitutional Court, which by the way endorsed the Law, in sentence dated May 12th, those convicted should repair the victims by returning not only their illegally gotten assets, but also with their own legal resources.

The National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation (NCRR)

The Justice and Peace Law created the National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation (NCRR) conformed by representatives of victim's organisation, civil society entities engaged in peace building activities, and top government officials. This Commission was charged with the responsibility of supporting the demobilization of the illegal armed groups, overseeing that the victim's dignity and rights are respected, fostering the appropriate social reinsertion of ex-combatants and the complete dismantling of their criminal organisations. It is also its responsibility to promote social and productive development activities among victims, communities and ex-combatants in different regions in the country, where the National Commission will be supported by Regional Commissions for restitution of property and goods.

AlvaAlice's Role, The Restorative Justice and Peace Initiative

Let me briefly refer to AlvaAlice's role in the context of the Colombian conflict. The Foundation adopted in 2003 the so called Restorative Justice and Peace Initiative that set forth different activities and programs as follows.

Based on the rich experience with restorative justice (RJ) in Northern Ireland and South Africa, the Foundation supported RJ work in urban settings as a means to address youth to youth violence amongst gang and militia members in the Aguablanca District of Cali, one of the poorest neighbourhoods. The

support provided is two fold; funding and technical assistance to a community based organisation called Fundacion Paz y Bien (Joy and Peace Foundation), which conducts the work with more than 500 youths and 300 forced displaced families.

The International Symposium

As a result of this work, the Foundation led the convening of the International Symposium on RJ and Peace in Colombia in February 2005. The purpose of this gathering was to place the RJ concept in the national agenda and to facilitate the exchange of experiences of both national and international programs using RJ for peace building, conflict resolution and respect to victim's, without leaving aside the rehabilitation of offenders.

The Symposium had an attendance of over 1500 people among them the South African Nobel Peace Prize Archbishop Desmond Tutu, four other well known South African's who played an important role before and during the transition from the apartheid to the new democratic South Africa. The event also had other important international speakers, and top government officials headed by President Alvaro Uribe, who led a panel discussion with Archbishop Tutu and other international experts. In the context of this panel, a proposal emerged to invite the guerrilla leaders to come to South Africa to get them acquainted with the processes of the peace accord and the achievements of the new peaceful South Africa.

The Symposium had broad media coverage and achieved the intended effect of putting the RJ concept in the national agenda, highlighting its potential as a tool for peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.

The RJ and Coexistence Centres

To further expand the RJ work carried out in urban settings, the Foundation led a coalition of civil society organisations that assembled an ambitious proposal to develop RJ and Coexistence Centres in urban and rural areas of south western Colombia. This US 3.5million dollar project supported by USAID, the Colombian private sector and civil society organisations, planned to move the RJ strategy to 5 new neighbourhoods in Cali and to ten towns in south western Colombia, plagued with paramilitary and guerrilla groups. The project also aims to develop an innovative approach to teach RJ and alternative justice models in 5 Law and Political Science's Schools of the country. The activities include productive development and micro credit programs in the communities benefiting from the project.

Second Track Diplomacy

To push the RJ initiative forward the Foundation invited the Colombian Vice President to visit South Africa. A well planned agenda was drafted that included meetings with key members of the S.A. TRC, the President and Vice President, and businessmen who played a decisive role in both the peace process and the creation of the new democratic institutions. As an unintended

result of this trip the Colombian government decided that the Vice President should not chair the NCRR, and appointed a civil society representative instead.

Mass Communication and Pedagogy

In order to keep the momentum achieved by the Symposium and as a pedagogical endeavour, the Foundation moved to publish four hundred thousand (400,000) newspaper inserts with the most relevant documents and interventions of the Symposium that circulated on a weekend in July 2005 in the four leading newspapers of Colombia, with an estimated coverage of two million people.

In an academic effort the Foundation is about to publish in early August 2006 the proceedings of the Symposium that could be used as a reference to those interested in RJ and other alternative justice models.

Capacity Building of the NCRR and Others

In an effort to build the capacity of the NCRR and public officials who have to deal with issues of justice and peace under the newly enacted law, AlvarAlice together with the Vice President's office and with the support of Tinker Foundation, organised a 3 day seminar with members of NCRR, the high Colombian Courts (Supreme Court, Judiciary Council), Peoples' Advocate's Office and the Attorney General's Office. A specific agenda was drafted for members of civil society organisations working with human rights and international humanitarian law issues. The workshops were conducted in November 2005 and led by 2 former South African TRC members Fazel Randerer and Mary Burton.

Reparations Workshop

Reparations to victims are a critical issue of any peace process if it is to succeed. To address this issue in the Colombian context AlvarAlice organised another seminar directed to members of the NCRR, and to public officials and civil society organisations working with the government bodies responsible for the provision of services to victims, forced displaced people, and also in charge of programs for the reinsertion of ex-combatants. This seminar led by the international expert on reparations, Alexander Segovia, also had the contribution of 7 CSO's that presented their experiences in peace building, communitarian reparations and social development programs.

After this event the NCRR decided to hire Dr Segovia as an external advisor to the Commission on issues of reparation and reconciliation.

Contribution to Public Policy

It is worth mentioning that as an important result of the Symposium, a specific reference to RJ processes included in the Peace and Justice Bill, which was at that time, under discussion in the Colombian Congress.

Additionally, AlvarAlice worked a draft on restoration procedures based on our experience in the application of RJ, that was included by the government in the Statutory Decree, 4760 of 2006, issued to rule the implementation of the **Justice and Peace Law**. **The final version of the Decree stipulates the following:**

“When the NCCR deems it necessary, to undertake restorative programs oriented to the human and social development of the victim’s, the communities and the offenders, with the objective of restoring social links that allow reconciliation processes to take place, may be implemented with the collaboration of the National Government, local authorities, civil society organisations, religious organisations and international cooperation organisations and they may be operated by Peoples’ Advocate’s Office or civil society organisations authorised by the Government, the Justice Houses or the Coexistence Centres, among others.”²

Restoration Centres

Concerned by the huge task involved in the processes of reparation and reconciliation, and the amount of work awaiting for NCCR and the Regional Bodies, AlvarAlice proposed to the Commission the establishment of Restoration Centres as a means to deal with the load of victims, ex-combatants, displaced people, and the communities where both victims and demobilized individuals are to stay. An integrated team of experienced social workers, psychologists, counsellors, judges, teachers and other professionals will be supporting the work with victims, community and ex-combatants in three main areas: restoration, income generating activities and educational endeavours. Particular attention will be paid to the mediation processes between victims and perpetrators to allow for events of reparation and achievement of reconciliation.

The Restoration Centres are a step further than the current Coexistence Centres mentioned earlier, and will be set up close to the Justice Houses of which there are 32 spread throughout Colombia.

The NCCR has issued an endorsement to the Restoration Centres proposal and we are working together in the fund raising activities with both the national and the international community, to establish six pilot Centres in 2 regions located in south western and north eastern Colombia.

Final Comments

To sum up I must say, that AlvarAlice’s peace building efforts have their roots in the local level where it had been working together with community-based organisations to foster peaceful resolutions of conflicts, and application of restorative principles to victims and offenders. From the local level and using a bottom-up approach, the Foundation moved forward to support capacity

² Justice and Peace Law Statutory (Decree 4760, 2006) Article 21, Numeral 5.

building processes of key actors in the public policy making arena. To make all this possible, private sector donors and international cooperation agencies, and with government officials and congressmen, to help shape favourable public policies towards reparations of victims and reconciliation.

The importance of Indigenous, independent funding.
Avila Kilmurray
Director, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland

On behalf of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, I want to share with you the importance of the Foundations for Peace Network for independent locally based foundations working in divided societies.

We all work in contexts that either are, or have been, characterised by violence and conflict. Situations where, in the normal run of things, people take sides – you are posed with the choice:

- *'Are you one of us? or are you one of them'?*
- *'Are you with us? or are you against us'?*
- *'Are you a believer? or are you a traitor to the cause'?*

Firstly, as funders working for peace-building we must work, as far as possible, with all sides. Working with none, or just one, is not an option, but we end up in an often very lonely place, in the middle, so we need Foundations for Peace as a point of peer support.

Secondly, as locally based funders, we are an integral part of our own fractured societies. We live with our funding decisions on a day to day; month to month; year to year basis. We have nowhere else to go.

Our individual grantees may end up as victims of violence; they may end up in prison as combatants; they may even end up as Government Ministers – that is the nature of the societies in which we work.

Peacebuilding is long-term in nature, and we as funders must stick with it. We need support in order to both build our endurance and share the often frustrating and difficult job of peace-building. 'Foundations for Peace' gives us that crucial support.

Thirdly, building peace and extending human rights and social justice in the niches of opportunity that exist in our societies takes innovative and imaginative grant-making.

For example - cross community based arts approaches can often be the most effective in dealing with the most sensitive and controversial issues, and, as funders, we are often in a position to bring our grantees together across the ethnic, religious, caste, and gender divide, but this often entails risk-taking.

When we, as funders, take risks for peace, (that may be politically unpopular at home) we need peer exchange to put our risk-taking in perspective. Foundations for Peace also gives us that.

Finally, FFP offers us opportunities for networking, not just as a funder, but for example

- linking our grantees to do joint work or share experiences i.e. our Ballymena Youth Bank group helped to set up a similar project in the Balkans),
- working on a thematic basis across very different countries that share the experience of violence, whether it's working to try to change attitudes, to foster tolerance, or whether it's looking at opportunities to draw teenagers away from joining paramilitary groups.

Foundations for Peace gives us the opportunity to work together on a range of issues and projects.

So if you can help us to develop the Network through information, funding, resources or contacts, please do, we need it.

Thank you.

Culture, caste and identity work.

Mr Martin Macwan,

Director, Navsarjan Trust, India and founder member of the Dalit Foundation, India

I am delighted to be here with my dear friends and colleagues from the movement of strengthening peace and social justice as a way of life.....

As Barry would say, some students finish their homework in the school bus, I too did it on the long flight from India, a rare occasion when one is at peace.

On this very important occasion, I have been given an opportunity to share our experiences and work on culture and identity in the context of caste. Personally I have been engaged in the Indian and south Asian Dalit Movement for 26 years through institutions such as Navsarjan and the Dalit Foundation and I have lived the life as a Dalit a little longer.

Today I have more to tell you other than the life stories of how almost 200 million - that is 20 % of the Indian population and another 40 million people in South Asia are treated as untouchable, impure, unclean, menial, sub-human and lesser human beings on the basis of their birth into a particular caste. This figure is quite significant because it amounts to a little more than 3 percent of the world's population.

Today I am going to tell you more about the story of change, although slow in progress but irreversible in culture.

In my childhood when I worked at the age of eight along the side of my grandmother in the farms of the so called upper caste I was poured drinking water from above in my small folded hands that were considered untouchable. Today across the castes, people want to shake hands with me. It is not that I have a new pair of hands but I have worked hard to establish a cultural value that only the living ones can shake hands and not the dead.

At the age of 20 when I started working with the rural masses I witnessed that no one dared to prevent the upper caste men entering the house of the untouchable and sexually exploit women. Those who protested were deprived of employment, credit and often beaten up and even killed. Today those atrocities have reduced considerably because the community have lost their fear. They have decided to protest in place of submission. Most importantly, they no longer believe that the way of life of the upper castes has to be followed.

Dalits were angry and pained that they were not allowed to enter the temples like the blacks in the United States of America. Those converted to Christianity, Islam, Sikhism or Buddhism too faced discrimination. Today many of them are not eager to enter those temples and places of worship because we have asked people to think not as how bad the people of upper

castes are but to think whether can there be a God where all human beings are not treated as equal.

The systems in which we live today, the social, economic, religious, cultural, judicial and political are far too incompetent to bring about a global social order of justice and equality, the preconditions of peace. Because they have a common value and belief as their basis that fundamentally all human beings cannot be equal. An infected system of governance cannot be the instrument of social change.

We have learnt from our experience of the Dalit movement that while all programs of actions such as economic empowerment, political participation, advocacy, social welfare, literacy and many others are important, they cannot bring about social justice while our belief system remains unchanged.

Despite 56 years of constitutional rule in India where untouchability and discriminations based on caste, race, religion, language and sex has been banned as illegal, they continue unabated. Dalit children are still seated separately in schools and Dalits continue to have secluded housing colonies, temples, churches, burial grounds and drinking water wells.

I learnt with great pain that even within the Dalits there are sub-castes who treat each other as higher, lower or untouchable. The women are treated lesser human beings than the men. And I understood the reason why caste system remains unchanged over 3000 years, every Indian extends cooperation to it and strengthens it.

In the last five years we have strengthened in our work area a campaign of non-cooperation with the caste system. We are aiming at creating a new identity and a value system. We hold that an identity of an 'untouchable' is different than that of a 'Dalit'. A Dalit is not one who is born in a particular caste but it is a moral position of the people who believe in equality.

I can not describe my joy to you when I walked on foot for 100 days with many of my friends and colleagues in my villages with this message and saw over two hundred thousand people, men and women across castes having water and tea in the same cup in the place of segregated cups that they were used to.

The program prompted children to protest their segregation in the schools which forced state to take legal action against teachers and village administration. All these were done not on hating others but through self-introspection.

Unfortunately our work and programs provide very little space for reflection and self search. As it happened in the case of the Indian freedom struggle or in the case of the fight against apartheid it was believed that transfer of political power would make the social reforms as if a natural fallout. We all know that this is not the case.

To our experience there are areas where we need to invest more, not merely material resources but the process of thought and pedagogy.

We have learnt that by ignoring to work with children through education we have suffered immensely both in qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of the Dalit movement. Since our belief systems are embedded in socialization, children from very early age internalize the very values and beliefs that we seek to reject and not co-operate with. Unfortunately education has been understood only as classroom literacy and the responsibility to impart the same has been left only on teachers and the state. The educational system that discourages value of protest and development of scientific and rational thought has actually become the nurturing ground of discrimination. Our school curriculum and what is offered to children in the name of value education needs a serious re-look.

The second area of critical intervention required is in the area of spirituality. The major reason of caste system becoming a strong institution lies in the fact that the caste system has been passed as a religious institution. The same applies to all other forms of discrimination. To me, being atheist does not necessarily mean non-spiritual.

Today it is the sectarian religious fanatics who dictate to the world the definition and interpretation of 'rights', 'justice' and 'good human beings'. Whether we wish it or not, our youth today in total absence of direction, fall victim to this fanaticism.

The process of globalization actually is a disguised economic order that aims at strengthening unequal social and political order. It wants to destroy the cultural arena which bound communities together in homogeneity which also made the protest against social evils possible.

I would like to end with a positive note that a process of introspection shall not only make us better agents of social change but also make our work more meaningful.

Thank you.

The need for, and importance of, institutional structures in peacebuilding.

Tim O'Connor

Consul General of Ireland, New York

I am delighted to be here as part of the launch of a very important initiative. I compliment all of the partners involved in the Foundations for Peace Network. I think it is a terrific and timely idea and every credit to the democratic way you have gone about organising yourselves. Being the official representative of Ireland in New York, I do hope, however, you will forgive me if I go slightly parochial and make special mention of the Community Foundation of NI and its leader Avila Kilmurray, and her colleagues Monina O'Prey and Elaine Canavan and indeed the whole team at the Foundation. Avila personally has played a most significant role in the development of the peace process in Northern Ireland, as has in recent years the Community Foundation itself. We are very proud that it has played a valuable part in the establishment of the Network.

Just to show that we are not always about being parochial, can I also pay direct tribute to the gracious Chairperson of the Network from Sri Lanka, Mrs Sithie Tiruchelvam and the rest of the fine team from around the globe that goes to make up the Network.

A wise person recently observed that "Experience is something you have – just after you needed it". I feel a bit like that today. In the 12 months since I have been here as Consul General, my focus has been on Irish-US relations and working with this amazing City of New York - that space which gathers the rest of the world into one village - and with Irish America, one of the great tribes within that village.

The world of Peace Building in formal terms for me belonged to a previous life that I lived back in Ireland. But it was a very rich life and one that has meant a huge amount to me personally. I have been a public servant in one form or other since November 1972, and joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1979. From 1986 to 2005, I had the privilege of working either directly or indirectly on the Northern Ireland situation for the vast majority of those years. No doubt like my colleague, David Cooney, now our distinguished Ambassador to the UN, who also worked on the Northern Ireland issue during many of those years, I regard it as a great privilege and good fortune to have had the opportunity as a Southern Civil Servant to work on the defining issue of our country in modern times (By the way thanks to David for the very fine Reception last night to pre-figure this launch, at which we also heard a most interesting presentation from the former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, as well as fine contributions from Slavica and Patrick from the Network).

This occasion today, therefore for me is a return to a labour of love, to be able to spend some time listening and talking about Peace Building, based on our experience in the Irish context and I thank Sithie, Avila, Ami, Santosh, Oscar, Martin and the whole Network for that chance.

Being Irish we like to sing our songs by ear as well as by music, so I want to depart slightly from what I am billed to talk about and instead focus on a theme particularly close to my heart - the role of institutions in the Peace Building process;

Nelson Mandela once said “your being small will not help the world”;

I think in some ways that defines what has been going in Ireland for the last ten/12 years. After decades, centuries even, a decision was taken by society - however haltingly, however incoherently, however reluctantly - to make a new beginning. A beginning that would not have us being small and seeking only to protect and promote our own side, case and community, but rather require us to in words of John Hume, the Nobel Laureate, to acknowledge and embrace difference and diversity;

At the heart of the historic conflict in Ireland – and you will find this to be true of most conflicts world-wide – has been that basic dynamic that Hume captured so simply, yet so profoundly: a refusal to acknowledge the validity – existence even – of another side or group;

And by definition, as Hume also defined, the solution would lie in embracing that acknowledgement and finding ways to reflect, respect and live diversity and difference;

Enter the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998.

The Good Friday Agreement at its heart addressed three core sets of relationships – those within Northern Ireland, those between North and South on the island of Ireland and those between Ireland and Britain. In essence, those were the relationships at the heart of the historic conflict in one form or another. The analysis was that any solution had to be based around a new beginning on those ancient co-ordinates of mistrust and mutual hostility.

The outcome of the Agreement was a comprehensive framework addressing many aspects of the conflict and I am happy to talk about those afterwards if anybody wishes. But a key piece was a new institutional architecture reflecting those three core sets of relationships. The key concept was partnership. So in Belfast you had established a Parliamentary Assembly comprising 108 members drawn from all traditions, but with particular focus on the two main traditions of Nationalism and Unionism. In parallel with that, and accountable to it, was an Executive or Cabinet, which again was to be structured on a basis of partnership – or in the words of a new phrase coined “parallel consent”, ie all major decisions required the consent of the two major traditions. Or in still other words, a power-sharing Administration. There was also to be a Civic Forum, comprising representatives of the social partners – business, trade union, voluntary sectors – which would be a consultative mechanism in terms of wider society within Northern Ireland.

So much for relations within Northern Ireland. The Agreement also provided for new institutions in the second category of relations – those between North and South on the island. In sum, there were two main features here. Firstly, an overarching North/South Ministerial Council bringing together Cabinet Ministers or Secretaries as you call them here from Dublin and Belfast to take forward co-operation to mutual benefit between North and South on the island of Ireland; and secondly a set of new Agencies operating in different sectors which would function on a single all-island basis and report to the North/South Ministerial Council. I was the first Joint Secretary or Joint Chief Staffer of that Council, a post I held for 5 and a half years and I would like to come back to that in a moment.

The third category of relations – Strand 3 as it was called in the Agreement – was those between Ireland and Britain and here the Agreement provided for the establishment of a new British/Irish Council which would promote “the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands”. Membership of the Council was to comprise representatives of the British and Irish Governments and within the UK, of the various devolved Administrations (eg Scotland Wales etc, and, of course, Northern Ireland). Side by side with that institution was a new British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference which would be the forum in which the British and Irish Government would manage co-operation between each other given the importance of that relationship.

All of these new institutions came formally into being on 2 December 1999. A number of them continue in full flow to this day, but in October 2002, because of issues to do with trust in the wider political process, the internal Northern institutions – the Assembly and the Executive – were suspended by the British Government and remain so till today, although as we speak a major effort is underway, sponsored by the British and Irish Governments to have the power-sharing institutions in the North back up and running by this November and we wish them and the parties well in that critical task.

I want to speak briefly about the institutions that I know best in the new architecture – the North/South Ministerial Council and the cross border bodies. Happily, the Bodies have continued in being throughout the period of suspension and have been doing great work across a range of sectors.

A brief bit of background. In the almost 80 years between the creation of two states in Ireland from 1922 to 1998, there had been very little serious cross-border co-operation. It would be an exaggeration to say none – but certainly when one considered the context of two small jurisdictions sharing a land border and many common challenges and opportunities, nothing remotely approaching the scale of its potential. The reason for this was simple: the political context necessary for co-operation to take place simply did not exist. Yet we all knew intellectually and instinctively the scale of opportunity that existed if we could but get at it.

That was the challenge facing us in December 1999, as the fledging new North/South institutions began their life. I am happy to report that in the

intervening almost seven years, they have more than justified the hopes we had for them. The Bodies or Agencies, which are spread across sectors such as Tourism promotion, trade promotion, food safety, inland waterways and so on, have done a great job in harnessing the latent potential in their areas for mutual benefit.

Today there are almost 800 people working in these Bodies and with a much larger number still connected into them through their networks. Several of them are overseen by Board of Directors drawn from the private sectors North and South and these Boards, which I believe are one of the hidden success stories of the Agreement, have done a terrific job in setting aside past difference and getting on with the practical task of realising the mutual benefits available from co-operation.

The Bodies are accountable to the North/South Ministerial Council. The Council which functioned fully and effectively from December 99 to Oct 02, has not met since Oct 02 because of the suspension of the Northern institutions, so alternative oversight arrangements are in place whereby the Bodies report on a temporary basis to the British and Irish Governments. This is not perfect, but in fairness has, through goodwill and good co-operation all round, worked relatively satisfactorily in the circumstances. However, we all look forward to the hopeful restoration of all of the institutions by November of this year, so that the work of the North/South Ministerial Council can function to its full potential, as envisaged in the Good Friday Agreement.

The core point that I want to make in terms of today's discussion is that the lessons of our experience in Ireland is that an institutional dimension is vital to effective peace-building, at state level, and within the voluntary and ground levels.

My conclusion after working at, if you will, coalface level for several years, is that an organic approach is not sustainable. Some kind of institutional structure is essential in order to enable actors who come from different sides of various divides to work together on the practical issues that face any society, such as economic development, better jobs, better education, better infrastructure, safer food, cleaner water and air and so on.

For societies coming out of conflict these issues have an extra edge. You are supposed to talk about more and better jobs, safer food, better infrastructure with people who were previously across the divide, and frankly were seen as your enemy or at the very least folk you could not trust.

Institutions provide both a hand-rail within which a modicum of trust can be built and a structure by which the practical things that need to be done can be achieved.

And so for instance Tourism Ireland Ltd, the new cross border body charged with marketing the whole island of Ireland, whereas previously there were two separate bodies doing that – one for the North, one for the South – has built over the last five years an enviable track record for itself in terms of

demonstrating that one plus one = two for both sides. Despite a difficult global climate for tourism, post 9/11, increased travel costs etc, Tourism Ireland has been instrumental in delivering very significant increases in the numbers of tourists visiting Ireland, North and South. In regard to the North, the increases have been particularly dramatic.

The Board of Tourism Ireland is drawn from both parts of Ireland and both major traditions. But they have set aside historic differences in order to realise the tangible benefits available to both jurisdictions by pooling resources and strengths and selling the magical qualities of the whole and beautiful island of Ireland (I am not charging for this plug, as this is included in my salary).

A lot of the work involved in such co-operation is routine, to some dull and therefore is mostly below the radar screen. It does not grab the headlines in the same way as a row between political opponents does. But in my view it is extremely important work.

[By the way, one could argue that most conflict situations have the character of manic depression. Drama is a key ingredient. Emotions swing from high optimism about a breakthrough to deep pessimism because of the latest setback. In fact, it could be argued that healthy peace processes need long doses of boredom, whereby essential but routine work can be carried on and given the priority it deserves!]

Equally, in terms of local and ground level, an institutional dimension is vital. The Community Foundation of Northern Ireland itself has done terrific work in that regard, as have a range of other bodies working at the coalface.

In that regard, another cross border body is worth mentioning. The Special European Union Programmes Body (we go in for poetic titles) was set up under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement to, as the name suggests, oversee very important programmes for promoting peace and reconciliation funded by the European Union. One of these programmes, the Peace Programme, has operated at real grass-roots level in Northern Ireland and the Border counties between North and South. I know that the Community Foundation of NI has been a very important and valued partner of the SEUPB in this work.

Again the SEUPB and the Community Foundation have demonstrated the importance of the institutional dimension for peace building. By being close to the ground, and with large grass-roots input, they ensure that the programmes devised at macro level can achieve their intended purpose, namely to make a meaningful difference to the lives of people at ground level and deepen peace and reconciliation in a tangible way.

As I say, I argue strongly that that cannot be done by organic and ad hoc means alone. The sustainability is just not there.

In making the case for institutions, it is only right to acknowledge the contribution to peace-making and building by two great institutions of the last half century – the European Union and the United Nations. The EU in particular with its wide spread of structures covering the bread-and-butter issues of living, such as farm prices, free trade and so on, has made a huge contribution in terms of turning a continent previously convulsed by war and death into a model of co-existence and mutual respect.

Could I also endorse in passing a key point made last night by Avila – namely the importance of complexity in peace-building and conflict resolution. My mantra to my colleagues in the Secretariat of the North/South Ministerial Council was that our job is managing complexity. We get up every morning and we manage complexity. And that's a positive. Because it is in the complex steps of peace-building that the space is built for people to make the moves they need to make. So I say let's get with the programme – embrace complexity!

I want to move now to a number of brief closing points. The First is that in Ireland, we have benefited hugely from the input and generosity of the international community – the United States, the European Union, Canada and Australia and New Zealand (who at various times were great supporters for instance of the International Fund for Ireland) and, of course, South Africa (thank you Ashley) – and without that help there would be a serious question mark about whether our Peace Process could have succeeded – or at minimum would have taken much longer.

By the same token, it is the view of the Irish Government that as we move forward we need to find ways to give back to the international community. If from our experience of our process – including our set-backs - there are ways in which our process can contribute to conflict resolution elsewhere, then we should do that. We feel that in Ireland, we are building an interesting institutional model, including in terms of the governance and efficiency challenges involved in emerging-from conflict situations and we would like to think that this gives us something to offer elsewhere, a responsibility we are keen to discharge. This is a view strongly held by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern, and indeed our Taoiseach/Prime Minister Bertie Ahern. Working through the international institutions, in particular, the United Nations and the European Union, we want to play the fullest role we can going forward. In that regard, under the direction of Ambassador Cooney, we look forward to working particularly closely with the new Peacebuilding Commission, which we see as a very important new institutional development.

Second lastly, I want to summarise the three conditions which I think are necessary in order to have sustainable cross-border co-operation – or indeed co-operation between previously hostile groups:

First the political context must exist in order to enable the co-operation take place;

Secondly, there must be agreement between both sides that there are practical, tangible benefits to each from co-operating together;

And thirdly, some institutional structure is necessary in terms of the implementation of that co-operation.

If any one of these three conditions is missing, sustainable co-operation will not prove possible.

My very last point is simply to congratulate again the Foundations for Peace Network on the initiative they have taken in creating themselves. Ambassador Cooney and President Robinson said last night that the Network was filling a gap that needed to be filled – namely a greater involvement at grass-roots and ground level. I totally agree with that. The challenge for all of us is sustainability. How do we ensure that even after we have jumped the important hurdle of making peace that we can sustain it, not just for one year, but for five, ten, a generation – and so that ultimately a return to conflict becomes unthinkable. I am arguing that institutions – the right institutions - are critical to that process. That is why I congratulate the Foundations for Peace Network on joining the global family of institutions.

I therefore wish the good ship Network if not plain sailing – for that would be too tall an order – at least a fruitful voyage.

Thank you.

Foundations for Peace Pre-Launch Reception with distinguished guest speakers:

Mary Robinson; Former President of Ireland and UN Commissioner and now Director of the Ethical Global Initiative;

The Irish Ambassador to the UN, David Cooney;

and Irish Consul General Tim O'Connor.

This pre-launch event was sponsored by the Irish Ambassador to the UN and took place the evening before the formal launch. 65 guests attended and participated in a discussion on Global Human Rights and Social Justice issues. Two of the Network members gave inputs to the event and they are presented below.

Slavica Stojanovic

Director, Women's Reconstruction Fund, Serbia

I shall highlight two points.

Whoever we are in the room now, we live in times when there is no excuse for wars any more.

Since we have been left with the legacy to mend, clean, heal, do we contribute to global knowledge on wars and war systems?

I live in a country which, from its antifascist background, turned to fascist politics. There are tendencies of people who talk about reconciliation in that political context, to like the category of civil wars. Without much trouble they have founded the concept of a "third way", so they don't need to confront the past, they simply achieve future oriented policies. Since I disagree very much, I say: war criminals could be tried by computer by now. (If it is common knowledge that 80% of refugees will never come back, there is a clear intention of ethnic cleansing once actions of banishing people start.) Since I don't see the "third way" activists here, I would turn to further warnings.

I think that we have to be very clear:

- not to introduce wrong or weak systems;
- not to undermine progressive and protective structures.

Talking from local experience, under European and global influences, there are favorable concepts, which turn out to be risky and harmful if taken non-critically, separate from human rights and other systems.

I will list them to see how they resonate:

- * Multiculturalism
- * Religious rights
- * Tolerance/diversity/identity

- * Reconciliation
- * Civil wars
- * Security
- * Reproductive health
- * Mainstreaming

I saw each of them used in the patchwork of ethno-fascism and within solidarity and mutual understanding of various fundamentalists.

The problem is that these are highly accepted and recommended neutral policies in which, I suppose, most of us have to breathe.

Thus we need to look thoroughly/meticulously to all the programs, concepts and funding.

Being privileged with experience, we can favor responsibility, critical thinking and bold standing to contribute to building global public sphere.

Second point is a short reminiscence of the most vigil part of populus from where I come.

A good example, women activists (among them most feminists, a number of lesbians) – women activists in Serbia were promoters of progressive thinking and doing before the war, during the war, and still they stays in the aftermath. These are our allies. I want to remind all of us, in times to come, to build further on what was proven in the last decade:

The solidarity that women activists achieved globally, how dynamically they exchanged knowledge and gave support to each other when building women's human rights system.

That value we have to cherish and protect against rising fundamentalisms ad conservatism which is nowadays reality.

Thank you.

Corporate Social Responsibility - The Role of Businesses in promoting peace, human rights and equity
Patrick Canagasingham, Executive Director,
Neelan Tiruchelvam Fund, Sri Lanka.

Speech content :

- NTT – brief overview
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the context of promoting peace and human rights
- Case Study – Sri Lanka;
 - obligations for non-state actors, e.g. corporate sector
 - Opportunities
 - Constraints
 - Way forward

- NTT opened its office in July 2001
- A Sri Lankan grant-making body devoted to sustaining Neelan Tiruchelvam’s activist-intellectual legacy by stimulating and supporting projects to promote;
 - *Peace*
 - *Reconciliation*
 - *Human Rights*
- *Project Implementers*
- *The Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Asia Foundation, USA, Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation (FLICT)*
- *Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University*
- *International Conflict Research Centre, University of Ulster*
- *McGill University, Canada*
- *Sri Lankan Business Community (Ceylon Chamber of Commerce)*
- *Foundations for Peace Network*

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

“Those entrusted with the direction of any business enterprise have power over people, make decisions that shape the economy, the society and the lives of individuals within that society for long times to come”

- Peter Drucker

“The private sector through good citizenship can play an important and positive role in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction”

G-8 Foreign Ministers' Initiatives on Conflict Prevention, Rome, 18-19 July 2001

“I believe there is a real need to move the debate forward on the value of an authoritative and comprehensive statement of the responsibilities of companies in relation to human rights”

Mary Robinson - Opening Remarks at The 2003 Business and Human Rights Seminar, 9th December 2003, London.

The Sri Lankan Case Study Positioning

- Conflict is bad for business;
 - *Destruction of infrastructure*
 - *Loss of Skilled workforce*
 - *Reduction in FDI*
 - *Prohibitive security/insurance costs*
 - *Loss of markets*
- Expanding peace = expanding markets, and expanding markets = greater profits for business

Sri Lankan Business Community

- Business community realizes the long-term benefits of peace*
- Desire to be involved in peace-building*
- Lack capacity & understanding to get involved in peace-building*

** Peace through Profit: Sri Lankan Perspectives on CSR, Jan. 2005; International Alert*

CSR Fund for Peace

- NTT proposition to the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce; social investments
- In October 2005, the NTT & the CCC signed a MoU;
 - Jointly established the CSR Fund for Peace
 - Agreed to mobilize and share resources to promote peace & human rights

Challenges

- Not a legal requirement;
 - Ethical/right thing to do
 - Voluntary
- Responsibilities of businesses in regards to human rights;
 - According to the traditional HR doctrine only States have HR obligations
 - socio-economic rights Vs civil and political rights
 - Businesses do not necessarily see the co-relation between peace & human rights
- Not willing to financially invest in peace

Way Forward

- Raise awareness of the significance of CSR to promote peace & human rights in Sri Lanka
- Forge consensus on concepts and methods of CSR that can be strategically deployed in Sri Lanka

- Develop action plans based on desired outcomes
- Mobilize resources for the implementation of CSR standards and practices across all sectors of industry in Sri Lanka
- Impress upon the CCC to promote CSR Reporting in regards to Peace and HR

Critical Success Factors

- CSR is important to all types and sizes of enterprises in Sri Lanka: not just the few large publicly-listed companies but also unquoted private companies and family firms, State-owned enterprises and agencies, SMEs, local subsidiaries of multinational companies, and also micro-enterprises
- Enhance and increase support for the building of national institutional and human capacities to implement CSR
- The need to mobilize domestic resources to promote CSR as opposed to being donor driven
- Compliment NOT Compete
- Identify and develop timeframes and stakeholders to implement above

Thank You

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