

*EVALUATION OF THE CONFLICT PREVENTION POOLS
UK GOVERNMENT RESPONSE*

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DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
CABINET OFFICE

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INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

1. The UK Government welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools recently completed by Bradford University at the Government's request. A thorough evaluation of the Pools' unique approach was essential in order to ensure that, two years after their inception, the Pools not only functioned effectively, but actively added value to Departments' individual contributions. In this context, the finding that the progress achieved through the Pools justifies their continuation is particularly important. This document responds to the Evaluation's other key findings and recommendations.

2. In March 2004, on the basis of the conclusions of the Evaluation and the views of Global and Africa Pool officials, Ministers agreed that the Pools should continue as two separate entities, managed by two virtual teams of officials from the FCO, MOD, DFID, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury. They also asked that a review of the links between the peacekeeping and programme parts of the Pools be undertaken, and that the following work be taken forward to improve the Pools' capacity to deliver their objectives:

- More joint, agreed analysis of the causes and dynamics of conflict;
- joint strategies rooted more firmly in the above analysis, and primarily driven by the need to address underlying causes of conflict, focus on where the UK is most effective and leverage the capacity of international organisations;
- tighter financial management, as well as effective monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that funds are spent evenly on well focused activity;
- better education and training of those engaged in delivering the Pools' objectives;
- more use by the UK of expertise in the NGO and international community;
- improved sharing of lessons learned from different Pool strategies and interventions, and
- developing a higher profile for the Pools' work and the specific contribution to UK international policy that they make, both within Whitehall and in wider civil society, the media and Parliament.

3. In some areas, work to take forward these recommendations is now at an advanced stage. The Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), through its Quality Improvement Programme and Strategy Development Exercise, is addressing any analytical and strategic weaknesses in its conflict prevention strategies. The Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) has also made some important changes, including the creation of a network of Regional Conflict Advisors, based in-country, which will provide increased regional cohesion of

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the UK's approach, reinforce strategy and share best practice across the continent.

4. Conflict Prevention will remain an important component of the Government's international policy. The Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools will remain an essential policy making and funding mechanism and will be improved and built upon.

RESPONSE TO KEY FINDINGS

5. The Evaluation has found that **the Conflict Prevention Pools are effective and should be continued**. This is a welcome endorsement of a mechanism which has led to increased inter-departmental collaboration and consensus on conflict prevention policy.

Improving conflict analysis

6. All regional or thematic strategies within either Pool include an assessment of the conflict dynamics at play in their areas of interest to ensure that UK engagement addresses the key prevailing causes of conflict. A number of methods are used to provide this analysis, including the Strategic Conflict Assessment model devised by DFID, a conflict assessment methodology developed by the MOD, and independent work. This flexible approach ensures that the most appropriate analysis tool is used to suit the particular needs of each new strategy; in addition conflict analysis is regularly updated to ensure that the UK's interventions remain accurately focussed. Within the Global Pool, conflict analysis and strategy for key regions, including the Middle East, the Former Soviet Union and India/Pakistan, is being bolstered through a concerted Quality Improvement Programme. In the Africa Pool, a network of regional conflict advisors based in-country has now been appointed to provide extra analysis and advice on possible UK interventions, and a new Africa Conflict Prevention Strategy has been agreed. More generally we continue to review how the process of analysis sharing between the Pool departments can be improved and HMG is considering the merits of establishing an early warning/risk assessment mechanism to increase the timeliness and effectiveness of UK engagement overseas.

Reviewing the geographical organisation of the Pools

7. Following the Evaluation's recommendation, it was judged that, to ensure effective implementation of the UK's policy on Africa conflict issues, in particular in light of the priority that these issues will have in the UK's Presidencies of the G8 and EU in 2005, a separate Africa Pool remains necessary. The good existing co-operation between Departments, the integration of the Africa Pool with wider country policy, and use of supporting Departmental bilateral resources all strengthen the case for the Africa Pool remaining a stand-alone mechanism.

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8. In addition, it is not clear that a single large Pool (which would include Africa) would be more efficient than the current arrangements. In practice, under the present structure, little additional resource is required to run the Africa and Global Pools separately. Pool management arrangements are now bedded down; further change could be disruptive and would have a cost. There is good co-operation in sharing best practice between the 2 Pools, and this can be developed further without a formal merger.

9. The option of breaking up the GCPP into a larger number of regionally based Pools would require discrete budgeting, strategic and Cabinet overview mechanisms to be set up for each new Pool. Considerable additional management and administrative resources would be necessary to achieve this. As such, Ministers have agreed for the Global and Africa Pools to continue as two separate but co-ordinated entities.

Geographic spread of CPP programme spending

10. Ensuring a balance of spending between priority conflicts and regions is difficult. Decisions on the UK's priorities need to take into account the UK's particular leverage in a given conflict, the role played by international organisations or other countries there, in addition to the nature and scale of the conflict itself. In Sierra Leone for example, the UK has a significant stake in the post-conflict reconstruction phase and ACP programme funds have been committed to a long term programme of security sector reform (while other UK programmes and other donors have focused on political or economic issues). Taking these factors into account, and on the basis of advice from country and regional desk officers, posts overseas, and senior officials, Ministers will continue to review priorities for Pool spending on a yearly basis. Following the allocation and spending of resources, more rigorous evaluation of the impact of the Pools' programmes will also be conducted and presented to Ministers each year.

Liaising with the EU and OSCE, and mobilising key international partners and NGOs

11. Co-ordinating UK conflict prevention policy and activity with that of international organisations and partners is a key objective within the Pools. Both the Global and Africa Pools' regional and thematic strategies assess the level and impact of foreign intervention within their area of interest. This is to ensure that UK engagement is targeted where it can make a difference and achieve best effect by, wherever possible, supporting the efforts of other international actors and organisations. The Global Pool is currently studying how to improve engagement and co-ordination with international organisations, including examination of links with the EU and OSCE. Equally, the GCPP thematic UN strategy is being refocused to help improve the UN's organisational mechanisms for, and contributions

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to, conflict prevention. The Government is also working closely with the African Union and sub-regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States to build up their capacity to carry out peacekeeping operations, and the new network of regional conflict advisors will reinforce this work. In this respect it is unfortunate that the Evaluation did not consider the impact of the UK's substantial contribution to increasing the capacity and effectiveness of African peacekeeping capabilities. Both Pools work very closely with NGOs, consulting them both in-country and in London. As a result, projects run by NGOs frequently form part of Pool programmes. This consultation will continue to be developed: the GCPP have meetings planned with key NGOs for summer 2004 and beyond, and the ACP's conflict advisors will also be developing their discussions with NGOs in the coming months.

Increasing staff resources, and improving training of staff

12. The need for extra resources to be devoted to conflict prevention is recognised, and Departments are considering with the Treasury if and how this gap can be filled. The requirement for more staff resources should be seen in the context of recent Government work on efficiency (the Gershon Review) and the importance of minimising administration costs more generally. However, a number of conflict advisors have already been appointed by DFID and the FCO covering a variety of regions, and will provide an important source of expert advice for the Pools.

13. Relevant conflict prevention training is already undertaken by many staff involved in the work of the Pools, but further improvement will be made, including on programme management. The GCPP recently held a strategy managers' conference (to which NGOs were invited) to give those involved in conflict prevention activity the opportunity to share best practice, and to establish a Whitehall-wide network of conflict prevention practitioners.

Creation of a single conflict prevention unit

14. The Africa and Global Pool Steering Teams currently function as virtual units' in managing the Pools, and officials from MOD, FCO, DFID, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury have regular team meetings. The Evaluation correctly identified gaps in the current arrangements which a single self-standing unit might help to address. But the creation of such a unit would have drawbacks: it would detach strategic management of the Pools from the three main Departments, thus decreasing Departmental ownership and reducing contact between Pool administrators and country desks in each Department. In addition there would be change management and opportunity costs inherent in a significant administrative reshuffle of this type. It has therefore been decided that the current management arrangements for the Pools should continue and be developed. These virtual teams will

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continue to have dedicated staff in each Department who will work towards ensuring that the gaps identified in the Evaluation are filled.

Relationship between peacekeeping and programmes

15. Drawing a direct link between Pools' programme spending and peacekeeping savings will inevitably be difficult, and may only be apparent over a much longer term and in a conflict specific context. In response to the Evaluation's recommendation, the Government will be undertaking an internal review of the link between the peacekeeping and programme parts of the Pools which will make recommendations in the Autumn.

PSA target

16. Ministers shared the views of the Evaluation team and the PSA target was revised as part of the 2004 Spending Review. The new target was published on 12 July with the Spending Review and the Technical Note (which describes how success is to be measured) will be published on 30 July 2004. Both will be available shortly through the HM Treasury website (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk).

CONCLUSION

17. Conflict prevention continues to be a key component of the UK's international policy. In the context of increasingly diverse threats to international security, addressing the fundamental causes of conflicts within and between states is essential. The Conflict Prevention Pools will continue to promote inter-departmental policy-making, adding value to HMG's ongoing diplomatic activity, defence relations and development programmes. The programme of work being taken forward should reinforce the Pools' ability to develop and deliver effective conflict prevention programmes.

18. More information on the GCPP and ACPP is available. A brochure entitled "The GCPP: A joint UK Government approach to reducing conflict" was published in September 2003. Copies are available on the FCO internet site (www.fco.gov.uk). A similar publication on the ACPP will shortly be available on the DFID web site (www.dfid.gov.uk).