

**Proposal for a United Nations Commission
on Peace and Crisis Prevention UNCOPAC**



**Strengthen Prevention
in Pre-War Situations**

**Comment on the Global Action Agenda
for the Prevention of Armed Conflict**

Impressum

Pro UNCOPAC
Am Glockenberg 8b
D - 45134 Essen
Tel./Fax : +49 201 2696730
koordination@pro-uncopac.info

Forum Crisis Prevention
Dr. Werner Schuster-Haus
Kaiserstr. 201
D-53113 Bonn
Tel./Fax +49-228-28970719
Dr. Reiner Steinweg /Austria
reiner.steinweg@liwest.at

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How to Strengthen Prevention in *Pre-War* Situations

Invitation for further discourse and dialogues about peacebuilding and prevention

The “*Global Action Agenda for the Prevention of Violent Conflict – People Building Peace*” contains many good proposals for prevention at civil society level. For the international, i.e. the UN level, the Agenda endorses, without further elaboration, the concept of a *Peacebuilding Commission* and a *Peace Support Unit*, proposed by the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and reaffirmed in his reform programme "In Larger Freedom". By adopting this approach, the Agenda accepts "relapse prevention" – in other words, preventing a reversion to war – in post-conflict societies, along with peacebuilding in failing states, as the overriding priorities of UN prevention.

Pro UNCOPAC does not deny the need for these activities and endorses the Global Action Agenda, which, in our view, is a milestone on our long road towards a shift in favour of prevention. However, Pro UNCOPAC's members and supporting institutions and NGOs prioritise concepts of ***Pre-war Prevention***, also at UN level. Many of the conflicts which took place in the 1990s occurred in regions – such as Europe – which had been free of collective violence for several decades. Early international action could have prevented armed conflicts by peaceful means. We therefore stress the need for further discussion of UN-coordinated non-military early responses to early warning. And since these dialogue-based means require a strong commitment from civil society, we should also discuss how civil society organisations' cooperation with the UN on pro-active crisis prevention could be institutionalised. The Discussion Paper “*United Nations, Civil Society & Preventing Armed Conflict:*

*Institutional Reforms to Strengthen Operational Prevention*¹
provides good starting points and recommendations for this process.

The proposal for a UN Commission on Peace and Crisis Prevention presented in the following pages was developed on the basis of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 2001 report, entitled "Prevention of Armed Conflict", and aims to strengthen pro-active prevention before the outbreak of armed conflicts and wars. The probability that a Peacebuilding Commission will be established in line with the UN Secretary-General's proposal presents a welcome opportunity for us to rethink this first model for an institutionalisation of international prevention which involves civil society in a formal process.

Pro UNCOPAC therefore invites all NGOs, institutions and interested individuals to join us in a critical discourse about possible UN activities in the field of pro-active prevention, with the aim of developing a more transparent and coherent framework for the future. We propose to start with an e-mail discussion process in which various proposals on structures and mechanisms for pre-war prevention and their interaction with a post-war Peacebuilding Commission will be discussed in detail.

Please let us know whether you – and preferably your CSO – would be interested in participating in this process.

On behalf of Pro UNCOPAC and the Board of Forum Crisis Prevention

Linz / Essen July 2005

Reiner Steinweg, Ute Hegener

¹ Dr. Catherine Barnes ♦ 1 February 2005, cathbarnes@gn.apc.org

UNCOPAC: Key Information in Brief

Aims

The Pro UNCOPAC Initiative aims to stimulate a worldwide debate about the establishment of an international body which would be responsible for crisis management, conflict prevention and for coordinating peacebuilding, peace education and research. As a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly, it would consist of leading civil-society figures with substantial relevant experience. The Initiative is thus seeking to contribute to the development of national and international structures which aim to assert and institutionalize civil-society concepts of crisis prevention and constructive conflict management. It also accords with ideas presented by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who called for this type of initiative in his report *Prevention of Armed Conflict* in 2001.

Resources

As part of this process, a **Statute** for a *United Nations Commission on Peace and Crisis Prevention* (UNCOPAC) has been drafted and justified in detail. The Statute provides for civil-society participation in the Commission's election process, whereby UN-accredited non-government organizations (NGOs) would produce a list of suitable candidates who should be respected public figures with appropriate experience. From this list, the General Assembly would then appoint four Commission members from each of the UN regions. The Commission would not represent the NGOs. However, the NGOs would have a right to submit proposals and applications for deliberation by UNCOPAC.

The proposal is currently being distributed in **English, German** and **Spanish**, e.g. via the homepage of Pro UNCOPAC ([www.pro-](http://www.pro-uncopac.org)

uncopac.info). (The texts can also be requested from the Pro UNCOPAC Coordination Office; see below “Contact”).

The Pro UNCOPAC Initiative is keen to cooperate with civil-society organizations and research institutes working across a range of disciplines and is collecting declarations of support from individuals and NGOs. One immediate objective is to inform and establish contacts with all UN-accredited NGOs whose mission includes peacebuilding or alleviating the impacts of war. A longer-term aim is to form a group of governments and civil-society actors (“*Friends of UNCOPAC*”) in order to submit the proposal to the UN General Assembly. Information on the progress of these efforts can be accessed on the UNCOPAC homepage or requested from the Coordination Office.

Functions and competences of the proposed UN Commission

UNCOPAC would

- undertake analyses of potentially violent (ethno-)political conflicts and develop proposals (detailed “recommendations”) on non-military external intervention for the General Assembly and Security Council;
- facilitate early action in order to prevent these conflicts’ escalation into violence;
- regularly review the proposed crisis prevention measures; and
- support and coordinate efforts to promote the further institutionalization of peace education and conflict transformation worldwide.

What contribution can UNCOPAC make?

UNCOPAC recommendations would (1) provide an official *reason* for international non-military “early action” independent of the interests of the governments affected, (2) define the appropriate *date* of action, which at present is always uncertain, (3) provide a well-founded and

well-considered *concept* and consequently, (4) generally enhance the often contested *legitimacy* of early action.

Why now?

In his report „Preventing Armed Conflict“ from June 2001, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan recommended “*that the General Assembly consider a more active use of its powers, in accordance with Articles 10, 11 and 14 of the Charter of the United Nations, in the prevention of armed conflicts*” and encouraged the Security Council “*to consider innovative mechanisms, such as establishing a subsidiary organ, an ad hoc informal working group or other informal technical arrangement to discuss prevention cases on a continuing basis.*” In July 2003, the UN General Assembly responded to these recommendations with a landmark resolution on the prevention of armed conflict, which – although formulated in rather vague terms – nonetheless opens a window for further steps.

What is new about the UNCOPAC idea?

The Commission is a preventive instrument which would formally and regularly operate in conjunction with the 25 or so *early-warning systems and projects* currently in existence. It would focus exclusively on *non-military measures*. Due to the method proposed for its election, it would be an independent body, free from current political or government interests, which would draw on civil-society’s wealth of experience in conflict transformation and prevention. It would adhere rigorously to the principle of *gender balance* at UN level, both within the Commission itself and in its 50-strong staff (at least 40% women or men). Its regular twice-yearly meetings with NGO delegates (on a rotating basis in the five UN regions) and formal reporting mechanism would ensure that civil society is linked to the UN process.

Statute

Draft No. 1 from 2003

UN Commission on Peace and Crisis Prevention UNCOPAC

PREAMBLE

Conscious of

the need to defuse developing conflicts in crisis regions as early as possible through non-military intervention;

the need to consider adequately the complexity of crisis situations and the structures of conflicts, especially in the world's crisis regions;

the increasing importance of civil society in conflict resolution and conflict transformation in the world's areas of crises;

aiming

to prevent the violent escalation of conflicts;

to strengthen peace work, peace education and peace research worldwide;

to expand sustainable participation;

to foster confidence in the UN and its organizations, such that world peace can be promoted,

the General Assembly resolves to establish a UN Commission on Peace and Crisis Prevention (UNCOPAC), and enacts herewith the following statute.

Article 1: Duties

For the promotion of world peace and international security, UNCOPAC will take *preventive* action in advance of potentially violent conflicts. It will initiate and promote measures for the further development of crisis prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It will support steps towards the worldwide strengthening of peace work, peace education and peace research, and will coordinate them at international level.

CHAPTER I: Organization of UNCOPAC

Article 2: Structure

UNCOPAC shall consist of 20 voting members with at least a 40 percent representation of both women and men in order to achieve gender balance.

Article 3: Criteria for the selection of members of UNCOPAC

(1) UNCOPAC members should distinguish themselves through their moral authority, their experience in international cooperation, conflict analysis and crisis prevention, their gender sensitivity and their intercultural competence. They should be persons known for their dedication to democracy and commitment to interdisciplinary and global thinking based on the principle of sustainability. Members should be qualified specialists in one of the fields described in Article 16, paragraph (2) for the scientific staff, or have equivalent civil society competence. During the performance of their duties as members of UNCOPAC, they shall not hold any other political office.

- (2) In every election of UNCOPAC members, it shall be ensured that each candidate possesses the required abilities and that the group as a whole represents all five UN regions.

Article 4: Selection and appointment of UNCOPAC members

- (1) In accordance with paragraphs 3 to 6, the UN General Assembly shall elect the members of UNCOPAC from a list of persons nominated by the specific organizations and institutions defined in paragraph (2).
- (2) All NGOs which are active in crisis prevention, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, human rights, peace education, peace studies or humanitarian aid and are accredited by the UN (or ECOSOC, as appropriate) may propose candidates for appointment to UNCOPAC. These proposals must include detailed information on the biography and activities of the nominees, confirming that they possess the qualifications specified in Article 3.

In cases of doubt, the NGO Committee of ECOSOC shall decide whether a UN-accredited NGO is active in the areas described in paragraph 2.

- (3) At least twelve months prior to the election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall invite the organizations and institutions defined in paragraph (2) to nominate, within a specified period, persons who are suitably qualified to become members of UNCOPAC.
- (4) An organization or institution may nominate a maximum of two persons. It is recommended that before nominating candidates, institutions and associations involved in peace research and peace work be consulted.

- (5) The Secretary-General shall prepare and publish an alphabetical list of all nominees. A shortlist will then be drawn up. Nominations in this round may only be put forward by groups of at least three accredited organizations which may nominate up to three individuals. The 60 persons receiving the most votes through this process shall be deemed to be nominated. If several candidates receive the same number of votes for the last vacant position, the oldest of these candidates shall be deemed to be nominated.
- (6) The Secretary-General shall submit this shortlist, structured according to the five UN regions, to the General Assembly for a vote. Only the persons on this list may be elected. Four candidates must be elected from each UN region. The candidates with the highest number of votes in the General Assembly shall be deemed to be elected. If several candidates receive the same number of votes for the last vacant position, the oldest of these shall be deemed to be elected.

Article 5: Term of office

- (1) The 20 members of UNCOPAC shall be elected for six years. However, ten of the members elected in the first election shall serve for only three years.
- (2) The members whose term expires after three years shall be chosen by lot, to be drawn by the Secretary-General of the United Nations immediately after the first election has taken place.
- (3) The seats which become vacant shall be filled by the same method as is employed for the first election.
- (4) During each election, five persons shall be elected to a reserve list. Persons on that list may only become members of UNCOPAC if a regular member leaves office prematurely.

Article 6: Chair

Every two years, the members of UNCOPAC shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chair from their ranks. The election shall take place in accordance with UNCOPAC's rules of procedure.

Article 7: Privileges and immunities

Upon taking up their posts, members of UNCOPAC shall enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities in accordance with the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities.

Article 8: Cooptation

UNCOPAC may coopt additional advisory members at any time. However, such members shall not be granted a right to vote.

Article 9: Decision-making

- (1) A quorum of 15 members shall be sufficient to constitute UNCOPAC.
- (2) UNCOPAC shall adopt decisions on substantive issues by an absolute majority of its members, and on procedural matters by a two-thirds majority of the members present.
- (3) If in an urgent procedure in accordance with Article 11, paragraphs (5) and (6), the quorum defined in paragraph 1 is not reached or it is foreseeable that a quorum cannot be reached, a proposal by the chair shall be decided on by correspondence within 14 days.

CHAPTER II: The competencies of UNCOPAC

Article 10: Functions and powers

- (1) UNCOPAC may make recommendations to the UN General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General on measures to deescalate conflicts. It may also address recommendations to parties in conflicts. All recommendations must be published.
- (2) If developments are identified as potentially leading to a threat to world peace or to genocide or crimes against humanity, UNCOPAC shall develop proposals on non-military measures which could prevent such developments. While doing so, UNCOPAC shall give the states concerned the opportunity to present their views. The proposed measures shall be forwarded to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Security Council and then be published. The deadlines laid down in Article 11, paragraph (5) and Article 12, paragraph (3) shall be met.
- (3) UNCOPAC shall publish a report on the *implementation* of its recommendations and proposals every six months. These reports shall be integrated into the annual report to the General Assembly in accordance with Article 15, paragraph (1).
- (4) UNCOPAC may despatch a UNCOPAC observer mission or confer the status of a UNCOPAC observer mission on non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- (5) The use of sanctions pursuant to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter shall remain unaffected by paragraphs (1) to (4).
- (6) UNCOPAC shall take general measures for the prevention of violence, especially initiatives for the establishment of additional

research and educational institutions and for the training of peaceworkers, and may coordinate and support such activities.

Article 11: Procedures

- (1) UNCOPAC shall establish ongoing links to early-warning institutions and projects and to the political unit of the Secretary-General of the United Nations through appropriate agreements.
- (2) A permanent group of experts from the scientific staff pursuant to Article 16, paragraph (2) shall work continuously on recording and evaluating the findings of these early-warning institutions and projects.
- (3) If this evaluation reveals any risk of developments as defined in Article 10, paragraph (2) of the present statute, the permanent working group shall inform UNCOPAC immediately in writing. This should describe the anticipated developments, assess the period of time still available for non-military intervention, and present the (perhaps varying) indicators and observation parameters supplied by the early-warning institutions. The staff of the early-warning systems concerned shall be informed of this step.
- (4) In this case, the chair of UNCOPAC shall be obliged to initiate an assessment procedure pursuant to Article 10, paragraph (2) of the present statute. It shall inform the NGOs, as defined in Article 4 paragraph (2), working in the affected region of the start of the procedure and request additional information.
- (5) In especially urgent cases, when the early-warning indicators show that the threat is imminent, the Chair of UNCOPAC must initiate an urgent procedure, which must be decided upon by UNCOPAC within six weeks.

- (6) UNCOPAC may also initiate an emergency procedure if no early warning has been given due to a lack of indicators but a threat as defined in paragraph (3) is evident.

Article 12: The right of application for external organizations

- (1) All organizations and institutions with the right to nominate pursuant to Article 4 paragraph (2), as well as peace universities and peace research institutes shall, in accordance with the following rules, have the right to submit well-founded proposals falling within the remit of UNCOPAC, especially on prevention of violence, or to make applications to UNCOPAC pursuant to Article 10, paragraph (2) of the present statute.
- (2) A proposal or application must be introduced jointly by at least three organizations or institutions.
- (3) UNCOPAC must adopt and publish its decisions on applications falling within the scope of paragraph (1) within three months, and in all other cases within nine months.

CHAPTER III: Cooperation with other institutions and organizations

Article 13: Obligation to provide information

The Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations may obtain opinions from UNCOPAC at any time.

Article 14: Provision of information

To fulfil its duties, UNCOPAC will also rely on the expertise of the NGOs defined in Article 4, paragraph (2). To this end, it shall develop a system of information exchange with these organizations. UNCOPAC

shall maintain continuous contact with UNESCO and UNHCR, as well as with national and regional governmental organizations working in similar fields, such as the OSCE.

Article 15: Accountability

- (1) UNCOPAC shall be accountable to the General Assembly. The organizations and institutions participating in the nomination procedure shall be kept informed through the annual report.
- (2) At least every two years, UNCOPAC will hold a conference, which will take place in a different UN region on each occasion. At this conference, the activities of UNCOPAC and associated problems will be reported, and the requests, concerns, complaints, hopes and ideas of international civil society relating to the functions of UNCOPAC will be heard.
- (3) These conferences will be organized on behalf of and in coordination with UNCOPAC by the cooperating organizations of the host country. All organizations and institutions which have nominated candidates in line with Article 4, paragraph (2) are eligible to send two representatives. NGOs which intend to participate in the next nomination procedure may apply to UNCOPAC for admission, provided that they fulfil the criteria defined in Article 4, paragraph 2. Public lectures and discussions for a wider public should be included.

CHAPTER IV: The Secretariat

Article 16: Secretariat

- (1) UNCOPAC shall be supported in the execution of its duties by a secretariat. This will comprise a scientific staff of some 50 highly qualified experts as well as other qualified staff such as UNCOPAC

may require for the performance of its duties. In addition, every member of UNCOPAC shall have the right to an assistant financed from the UNCOPAC budget.

- (2) The scientific staff should include the following competencies and disciplines:
- peace and conflict research (especially large group psychology, political psychology; research on ethnocentrism and enemy images; international law; peace education; prevention of social violence; good knowledge of early-warning problems and systems, civil conflict resolution; research on peacebuilding and development of peace networks, peace constituencies and capacity-building; security analysis);
 - economics (especially mechanisms and impacts of economic sanctions and international boycotts, transformation of civil war economies and economies of violence, economic levers for the reduction of weapons production and trade, economies of weak resources and their administration, reconstruction of peace economies in post-war regions);
 - minority rights and human rights and the means and ways of guaranteeing them in multi-ethnic societies;
 - media analysis (especially the role of the media in preventing violence and promoting reconciliation).
 - competence in "training the trainers" in the areas of peace education, conflict and conflict prevention, development of peace constituencies, intercultural dialogue; training of qualified peaceworkers for international crisis intervention;
 - experience in the organization of training and research as well as in the area of organizational development;
 - practical experience in international governmental and non-governmental organizations in line with Article 4, paragraph (2).

(3) Members of the scientific staff and other employees of UNCOPAC shall be selected and appointed by the chair of UNCOPAC following public hearings. There must be at least a 40 percent representation of both women and men in order to achieve gender balance. Vacancies will be published. In addition, the Chair may appoint regional experts on a short-term contractual basis to cover specific issues and cultures as required.

CHAPTER V: Miscellaneous provisions

Article 17: Headquarters

UNCOPAC's headquarters shall be located in XXXXX.

Article 18: Financing and budget

The costs of UNCOPAC and its operations shall be covered by the budget of the United Nations as well as by the UN member states. The General Assembly shall decide on the contribution rate of each state. Voluntary contributions from UN member states shall also be requested.

Article 19: Rules of procedure

UNCOPAC shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

Authors of UNCOPAC

Michael Bouteiller, lawyer and former mayor of city of Lübeck; Dr. **Franz Leidenmühler**, Institute for International Law, University of Linz, Austria; **Ingrid Lottenburger-Bazin**, Chair, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Berlin, Germany; Prof. Dr. **Mohssen Massarrat**, political scientist/peace researcher at the University of Osnabrück, Germany, former spokesperson of the German Independent Peace Movement and co-founder of the Coalition for Life and Peace; **Frieder Schöbel**, Board of Braunschweig Peace Center, Germany; Heide **Schütz**, Chair, Women's Network for Peace, Bonn, Germany; Dr. **Reiner Steinweg**, Linz branch of the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Stadtschlaining, Austria, 2001/2002 Acting Director of the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, Germany; **Peter Vonnahme**, administrative judge, Munich, Germany, member of IALANA /International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms.

Organisations and Institutions supporting the UNCOPAC proposal

For about 300 individuals from 15 countries endorsing the proposal see www.pro-uncopac.info

Institution	Place of Business	Agreement submitted by
AGDF Action Committee Service for Peace Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienste für den Frieden	Bonn, Germany	Jan Gildemeister
Association for Peace Research Studiengesellschaft für Friedensforschung	Munich Germany	Dr. Monika Mirus-Küpper
Austrian Peace Services Österreichische Friedensdienste / ÖFD	Vienna /Austria	Wolfgang Schmidt
BSV Federation for Social Defence Bund für Soziale Verteidigung e.V.	Minden, Germany	Berthold Keunecke
Committee for a Democratic U.N. / CDUN Komitee für eine demokratische UNO / KDUN	Nauheim, Germany	Andreas Bummel
EN.CPS European Network for Civil Peace Services	London, GB	Mareike Junge
Fondazione Alexander Langer Stiftung	Bolzano, Italy	Edi Rabini
Forum Crisis Prevention	Bonn, Germany	Heide Schütz, Dr. Regine Mehl
Forum of International Peace Work Forum f. internationale Friedensarbeit eV.	Essen, Germany	Rolf Glöckner
Forum of Civil Peace Services Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V.	Bonn, Germany	Thilo Veenema
German-Czech Forum of Women / Deutsch-Tschechisches Forum d Frauen e.V.	Bonn, Germany	Beate Roggenbuck
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly	Berlin, Germany	Ingrid Lottenburger
Humanistic Union Humanistische Union	Berlin, Germany	Nils Leopold
IA International Alert	London, GB	Prof. Dr. Kevin Clements
IFOR International Fellowship of Reconciliation	Alkmaar, The Netherlands	David Mumford
IFOR International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Austrian Branch	Wien, Austria	Pete Hämmerle

IFOR International Fellowship of Reconciliation, German Branch	Minden, Germany	Holger Klee
International Women's Center / Internationales Frauenzentrum Bonn e.V.	Bonn, Germany	Gabriele Albert- Trappe
IPPNW German Section of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Physicians for Social Responsibility	Berlin, Germany	Frank Uhe
IPPNW Austrian Section of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Physicians for Social Responsibility	Wien / Austria	Dr. Klaus Renoldner
MIR UNO-Decade	France	Ursula Gaudenzi
NEAG Nederlands Expertise Centrum Alternativen voor Geweld	Amsterdam Niederlande	Ted Strop van Meijenfeldt
Pax Christi International	Brussels, Belgium	Paul Iansu
Pax Christi, Austrian Branch Pax Christi, Österreichische Sektion	Linz, Austria	Dr. Meinrad Schneckenleitner
Pax Christi / German Branch Pax Christi, Deutsche Sektion	Bad Vilbel, Germany	Dr. Reinhard J. Voß
Peace Initiative of the City of Linz	Linz/Donau Austria	Mag. Gerda Forstner
Peacemakers. UK Ltd	London, GB	Tim Wallis, Mareike Junge
Peace Research Linz	Linz, Austria	Dr. Reiner Steinweg
SOS Human Rights Austria	Linz, Austria	Dr. Peter Spieler
Stiftung Apfelbaum	Cologne Germany	Hans-Martin Schmidt
Swisspeace/ Centre for Peace-building	Bern, Switzerland	Dr. Albrecht Schnabel
The Youthbridge Initiative	Berlin Germany	Christina Limbird
Women dare Peace Frauen wagen Frieden	Rumbach Germany	Waltraud Bischoff
Women's Network for Peace Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e.V.	Bonn, Germany	Anna-Maria Mayntz

Forum Crisis Prevention at a glance – institutionalisation of Pro UNCOPAC

The purpose and objectives of the newly established association are:

- to foster international understanding and reconciliation,
- to develop structures for non-military international conflict prevention,
- to promote relevant initiatives and institutions, such as the establishment of a UN Commission on Peace and Crisis Prevention (UNCOPAC),
- to support endeavours to strengthen conflict-preventive peace work worldwide, with a particular focus on the aspect of human security,
- to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity.

In accordance with the international community's commitment to maintain peace, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the association works to prevent war, armed force and preparations for such activities.

Genocide and crimes against humanity do not happen out of the blue. As a rule, information is available which indicates that violence is imminent or erupting (early warning). Yet in most cases, the international community has failed to take action until after the violence has occurred. Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo and Sudan are all examples.

Instruments and mechanisms therefore need to be developed and implemented to enable the international community to respond promptly to these crises and conflicts. In this context, we rely exclusively on civilian, i.e. non-military conflict transformation instruments.

We are working pro-actively for the establishment of UNCOPAC – a new United Nations Commission on Peace and Crisis Prevention to be set up by the UN General Assembly on the basis of proposals from civil society.

The Forum has no ideological, party-political or religious affiliations. It aims to fulfil its mandate on the basis of a positive concept of peace. It works with all initiatives, organisations, networks and individuals pursuing similar goals.

Contacts

Addresses :

Pro UNCOPAC

Ute Hegener

Press Speaker + Coordination

Am Glockenberg 8b

D - 45134 Essen

Tel./Fax : +49 201 2696730

koordination@pro-uncopac.info

ute.hegener@onlinehome.de

www.pro-uncopac.info

Forum Crisis Prevention

Dr. Werner Schuster-Haus

Kaiserstr. 201

D-53113 Bonn

Tel./Fax +49-228-28970719

In 2005 in cooperation with Pro UNCOPAC

Board:

Dr. Regine Mehl /Bonn, Germany

Frieder Schöbel/Braunschweig, Germany

Heide Schütz/Bonn, Germany

Dr. Reiner Steinweg/Linz a.d. Donau, Austria

reiner.steinweg@lwest.at

Spokespersons: Heide Schütz and Frieder Schöbel

Sponsored by

Berghof Foundation for Conflict Research, Munich, Germany,

ifa Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Projekt zivik, Berlin,

Germany

Linz, City of Peace, Austria