

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of yellow and red felt fabric. The yellow felt is at the top, and the red felt is at the bottom. Several black threads are visible, stitching the two colors together. The text is overlaid on the red felt.

**The UN Review Processes and Current  
Trends in Peacebuilding:  
Bringing Politics Back In**  
Jan Pospisil, PSRP, Edinburgh Law School

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[www.politicalsettlements.org](http://www.politicalsettlements.org)

# Outline



- Political Settlements Research Programme
- UN Peacekeeping/-building: the challenges
- UN Review Processes: an overview
- ‘inclusive partnerships’ and ‘political arrangements’
- A more political UN peacebuilding?



# Political Settlements Research Programme



- DFID-funded research programme on political settlements (*'... the new Holy Grail ...'*)
- RQ: *'How to transform political settlements towards open and inclusive settlements'*
- How to engage politically in war-to-peace transitions?
- [www.politicalsettlements.org](http://www.politicalsettlements.org)



# UN Peacekeeping/-building: the challenges (I/II)



Severe challenges for UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding:

- (over)-stretch of integrated missions approach
- apolitical approach in highly politicized environments
- mixed track record



# UN Peacekeeping/-building: the challenges (II/II)



- 'local turn' away from 'liberal peacebuilding'
- Current academic debates focus on bottom-up approaches (peace formation, peace enablement)
- Hybrid, political engagement necessary (inclusion at various levels)
- Increasing traction in international policy
- UN severely challenged by these ideas, provides the background for review processes



# UN Review Processes: overview (I/III)



- Three reviews in 2015:
- High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO, chaired by Jose Ramos-Horta), report in June 2015
- Report by the Advisory Group of experts on the UN peacebuilding architecture, June 2015
- Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, launched in September 2015



# UN Review Processes: overview (II/III)



Common features of all reviews:

- Importance of building partnerships: within the UN, with regional organisations, member states, civil society
- Realistic mandating ('clear, credible, achievable'), problem of negotiating patterns
- Stronger strategic discussions
- Call for preventive approach ('conflict prevention')
- More political approach



# UN Review Processes: overview (III/III)



- Challenge of ‘compromised’ peacebuilding remains unaddressed
- Global Study: gender inclusion as linear solution, without reflexive recommendations (the more, the better)
- ‘more politically’: but how?





# ‘inclusive partnerships’ and ‘political arrangements’ (I/II)



- Crucial challenge is inclusivity outside the ‘usual suspects’ (member states, regional organisations), particularly regarding civil society?
- Unclear how to integrate civil society and women’s organisations in dialogue, particularly in a challenging international environment
- One option: International Contact Group in Mindanao (but not mentioned in the report)



# ‘inclusive partnerships’ and ‘political arrangements’ (II/II)



- Increasing complexity of conflicts makes more political interventions necessary: *‘While capacity-building, state-building, institution-building and development all demand considerable technical expertise, first and foremost peacebuilding must be understood as an inherently political process’*
- Work with broader ideas of transformation and negotiation (not just track 1)
- Actively engaging with *‘transitional political arrangements’*



# A more political UN peacebuilding? (I/III)



*'UN peace operations must be deployed as part of a viable process aimed at ... settlements ... must be conceived and planned in support of political solutions. Political strategies that underpin peace operations should enjoy the support of a united Security Council, regional entities and others vested in ending the conflict'*

(1) How such coalitions can be achieved?

(2) Is the UN able to implement this at all?



# A more political UN peacebuilding? (II/III)



- The challenge of sovereignty: UN is an organisation consisting of sovereign states: any attempts of circumventing this may backfire.
- Current trend of 'neo-sovereignty': g7plus, neo-authoritarian regimes (Rwanda, Ethiopia, e.g.)



# A more political UN peacebuilding? (III/III)



- Reality check is needed: what is possible to achieve, and what isn't?
- 'do more, do better' (like the Global Study is suggesting) is certainly not going to work
- Scaling-down an option? How and in which direction to develop partnerships?

