



**5th Asian Peace Practitioners' Research Conference, Siem Reap, Cambodia
25-26 November 2016**

Revisiting Reconciliation – Making it real

Concept Note

Out of the numerous reconciliation efforts that have been undertaken in post-conflict societies over the last 50 years, a number of norms and standard processes for how reconciliation efforts 'should' be delivered have emerged and been adopted by national and international stakeholders promoting such efforts. However, there has been a significant shortfall in terms of achieving a satisfactory national reconciliation experience. Why is this the case? Is it because there is a stronger urge in a post-conflict setting to look to the future rather than dealing with the past? Is it because reconciliation needs to happen organically, like it does between friends and families? Can it, in fact, be programmed or organised in a top-down fashion? Is it because we are yet to understand the required social and political attitudes that best enable a successful reconciliation process? Is it because we don't understand how long reconciliation takes?

We know many of the building blocks that are involved in a reconciliation process:

- Reconciliation does not necessary involve forgetting, but mercy and forgiveness.
- Reconciliation interrupts a pattern of events (e.g. a cycle of violence).
- Reconciliation is about mutual education.
- Reconciliation requires time and space for mourning, and for peaceful ways of expressing anger and sorrow.
- Reconciliation requires time for healing and understanding.
- Reconciliation involves an acknowledgment of truth
- Reconciliation is about memory and history
- Reconciliation is about pursuing justice
- Reconciliation is about reparation
- Reconciliation is about survival

We know the building blocks. But it seems that we are yet to understand how they best fit together.



Strengthening strategic interventions into violent conflict with the overall aim of fostering sustainable peace in the Asia region

The Peace Practitioners' Research Conference will bring together outstanding peace practitioners and scholars to re-examine post-conflict reconciliation. Through asking critical questions, we will enrich our theories and practices on how reconciliation can happen in today's conflict contexts.

CONFERENCE GOALS

- *Articulate:* Regional and international experiences of reconciliation processes and practices. What are the key lessons learned? What can be done better?
- *Engage:* Based on the current unfolding of different reconciliation processes, and recognising that no process occurs in a linear fashion, how can the effectiveness of reconciliation practices be evaluated?
- *Refine:* Provide space for important debates to occur.
- *Synthesise:* Produce a summary report on the conference proceedings.

The conference format will be a blend of participatory methodologies and traditional presentations with interactive question and answer sessions. Presentations will cover experiences of reconciliation processes from different post-conflict societies, as well as showcase practical approaches and methods.