POLICY PAPER

28 February 2014

HOW CAN THE PEACE PROCESS BE TAKEN FORWORD?

Insider Peacebuilders Platform (IPP)

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PEACE MEDIA DAY

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On February 28th, 2013, the conflict in the Deep South of Thailand entered a new phase. After nearly a decade since the escalation of violence in 2004, the Royal Thai Government represented by the National Security Council (NSC) and the most powerful resistance movement group, the National Revolutionary Front (BRN), signed a general consensus document on a *Peace Dialogue Process*. It came into existence with the active support of the Malaysian government, which took the function as a facilitator. Even insiders were taken by surprise and critics were quick to point at various shortcomings, which they expected would derail the process sooner or later. However, the dynamic of the peace process has widened space for the discussion of contested political issues relating to the southern conflict organized by both government agencies as well as civil society groups inside and outside the southernmost region. This development has produced a conducive atmosphere for peaceful conflict resolution.

Since the formal peace dialogue has begun, the parties met three times for official plenary meetings in Kuala Lumpur in March, April and June and a few times in bilateral meetings with the facilitator. While the media and public opinion responded rather positively at the beginning, they became increasingly sceptical when the peace dialogue seemed to have no, or limited, impact on the reduction of violence and the parties appeared to talk more to their audiences and the general public than to the other side. This scepticism reached some kind of climax during and after Ramadan. While the *Common Understanding* on the *Ramadan Peace Initiative* issued on July 12th by the Malaysian facilitator looked quite promising at the beginning, it was abandoned later and contributed to disappointments on both sides.

Both parties expressed their intention to take the peace process forward. Both sides have expressed their willingness to explore every opportunity and channel to bring about

peaceful political settlement. The BRN has demonstrated its commitment by providing a written clarification on the five-point demand, which it has requested the Thai government to accept "in principle" before holding further talks. The Thai government has also tried hard to sustain the formal dialogue track, although it currently seems to be locked in stalemate. Attempt to arrange a new round of dialogue has failed for the past seven months. One of the most crucial factors is the political crisis in Bangkok sparked by massive demonstrations against the government of Yingluck Shinawatra, – deemed as a proxy for her brother and self-exiled former leader Thaksin Shinawatra. Yingluck dissolved the Parliament amidst growing pressure from protestors. The anti-government demonstrators' ensuing campaign against the 2 February elections made the results inconclusive. Nobody knows how long it will take to form a new government. The protracted political crisis in Bangkok has unprecedentedly led to the declining credibility of several key political institutions. It appears that the Patani-Malay movement also has internal dispute over a decision to engage in political negotiation with the Thai government. The formal dialogue track has not been officially halted as no message has been sent through the facilitator – a channel of communication agreed by the two dialoging parties. While the current environment does not seem to be conducive to holding peace talk, we strongly believe that it would be resumed – if and when the political situation in Bangkok becomes more stable. A stock-taking exercise is therefore crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of the future peace process.

We would like to use this opportunity to reflect on the current situation, to analyse the challenges for all parties involved, and to propose ideas how the peace process can be taken forward effectively. We are a group of peace activists and scholars who are convinced that, as demonstrated in Northern Ireland, Aceh and Mindanao, it is possible to develop a multi-stakeholder trajectory towards peace and justice for all people affected.

The first section in this Policy Paper summarizes the assets of the current peace process and its shortcomings. In the second section, we analyse eight critical issues, which hamper peace efforts in sub-national conflicts like in the Deep South.The third section discusses our recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of the peace process.

1. WHAT ARE THE ASSETS OF, AND OBSTACLES FOR, THE PEACE TALKS ?

The *General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process* signed in February 2013 is the first document, in which the Thai government and the Patani-Malay movement explicitly declare that they are prepared to explore the possibilities of a political solution to the conflict. For this purpose, the Thai government has acknowledged the BRN as "one of the stakeholders" for this process and provided their representatives with a safety guarantee, while the BRN agreed that this should happen "under the framework of the Thai constitution". In addition, both parties agreed on having Malaysia as a facilitator.

We have identified **seven assets** of the peace dialgoue so far**:**

(1) Based on information communicated to the public, it is credible that a significant number of representatives of the BRN, PULO and BIPP are **supportive of genuine peace dialogue**. The expression of solid commitment of the armed groups to such a process is an important factor that could lead to a successful settlement.

(2) The acknowledgement of **Malaysia as facilitator** ensured that one of the stakeholders of the conflict, due to its territorial proximity, was brought on board with the obligation to serve as a third party. While there are reservations on both sides vis-à-vis the impartiality of the facilitator as well as their rather controlling approach, the very presence of this third party helped ensure that the process kept its momentum in critical situations.

(3) The **composition of the dialoguing panels** was kept flexible in order to increase their inclusivity without questioning the mandate of the two entities, which had signed the consensus document. There are also indications on both sides that the composition might be changed in the future in order to accommodate certain organizations and areas of expertise needed to enhance the effectiveness and outreach of the process.

(4) The BRN representatives could demonstrate that they have a **channel of communication with their leadership** body, known as "Dewan Pimpinan Parti" (DPP) and

that it has significant command and control over those engaged in military operation on the ground. Statistics shows that attacks against civilians have significantly reduced after the Thai government had requested the BRN during the first meeting in March 2013 to avoid soft targets and city areas. Moreover, the number of attacks sharply dropped during the first ten days after the dialoguing parties agreed on 12 July 2013 to reduce violence during the Ramadon. Unfortunately, the violence was heightened again after the BRN condemned the Thai government for violating the deal.

(5) The **discourse** on the transformation of the Southern conflict has been significantly **"politicized"** through the BRN's YouTube videos as well as through an intensified public debate on various "solutions", including autonomy and *"Merdeka"* (a Malay word for independence), something difficult to imagine only a few years ago. The widening public space for discussing politically-sensitive issues has motivated Malay Muslims to speak out more actively and radically. While some perceive this as rather negative and emphasize its unconstitutional character within the Thai constitution, the experience from other peace processes shows that this can be a helpful step to move towards a serious and genuine dialogue, in which the parties do not hide what they would like to see as their preferred outcome. What we have learned from successful peace processes is that at the end all parties have to make concessions and be willing to compromise.

(6) **The reduction of violence during Ramadan** offered a first opportunity to move towards publicly-visible steps of de-escalation. While the agreement seemed to have worked at the beginning, it got derailed later and triggered reciprocal complaints as to whom to blame for its failure.

(7) While both sides expressed their mutual frustrations and disappointments, **they are willing to proceed with the process**. This may be the most encouraging element of this peace initiative: Notwithstanding the immense difficulties and meagre outcomes so far, both sides realize that they have to move towards a negotiated settlement sooner or later because neither side has the possibility to achieve a decisive military victory. Some politicians also argue that taking this conflict into ASEAN Economic Community scheduled for 2015 would create a severe disadvantage for the Thai state.

The **shortcomings** of the peace process so far can be summarized in **nine points:**

(1) One of the key concerns raised from the beginning was related to the **inclusivity of the parties** at the dialogue table: How far did the panels really represent all the important power holders, which could ensure that any decision would be successfully implemented? On the government side, this related particularly to the role of the military in the peace dialogue. While the army did not have the central role in determining the government's position at the table, certain decision would require its consent, such as the reduction of troops in the South. As for the BRN side, the question is whether those disagreeing with the peace talk would make any move to derail –if not destroy— the process.

(2) The ways the two panels have engaged with each other demonstrated a fundamentally **different understanding of the essence of the conflict and its transformation**. While the government side understood the peace dialogue first and foremost as an effort to reduce and terminate violent incidents (also called "negative peace"), the Patani-Malay movement emphasized primarily the need to acknowledge the deeper historical and political roots of the conflict and to develop an agenda for a political transformation (also called "positive peace").

(3) Both sides expressed **frustrations with the way the other side communicated their interpretation of the peace talks** to their audiences and in the public arena. The BRN was disturbed that details from the closed door meetings were mentioned in public as well as the repetitive emphasis on "non-negotiables" in the talks. The Thai government was shocked and upset when the BRN came out with strong demands on the internet without revealing any previous information through discreet channels. In other peace processes, it is known that a common understanding among the parties on how to handle the communication about the talks vis-à-vis the public as well as their own constituencies is a critical issue for the success of the talks. On the one hand, all peace processes need some confidential space to build trust and confidence between the interlocutors. On the other hand, they also need public space to inform the people affected from the talks about what is going on to prevent them from becoming suspicious. This balancing act between

confidentiality and publicity takes time and requires the parties and the facilitator to develop a common "Code of Communication".

(4) So far, the peace process is a **rather narrow engagement comprising only a very few representatives.** It is also a rather fragile sequence of relatively short meetings between two panels with a very disparate composition. The communication between the two sides is officially channelled through the Malaysian facilitator and the advisory mechanisms are still strictly separated between the two sides. No joint support mechanisms were put in place and the topic of a peaceful settlement of the conflict has not been put on the national agenda what is needed to achieve a broad based consensus. Public support or participation in the peace process remains rather limited.

(5) The attitude of the public and the media are largely unfavorable to the peace process. The **main indicator for success** and failure of the process in the view of the media and the public is understandably the **number of violent incidents**. In this respect, the overall number of incidents has slightly decreased during the first months of the dialogue process and a shift took place from so called "soft" to "hard targets", But this has not led to a marked positive perception of the peace process in the public perception and media reporting. Unfortunately, the latest developments also indicate a re-escalation of the violence.

(6) All of the challenging factors mentioned so far have led to a widely shared **scepticism in the Thai mainstream society** about the prospects of the peace process. This attitude is also fed by the media, which largely present this process from the perspective of who are the *"winners"* and *"losers"*. Besides, the media often portrayed the talks as being dominated by the BRN team, while the government side seemed to be on the defence. Among the Malay-Muslim population in the Deep South, the attitudes are understandably much more diverse. Undoubtedly, there is a significant section being highly sceptical, particularly because they have yet to see what the Thai government would be willing to concede when it comes to negotiations on a political settlement.

(7) Moreover, a large number of the **minority Thai Buddhist and Thai-Chinese populations in the Deep South are concerned** about the outcome of the peace process. They are afraid that it might endanger their freedom and security in the region. Some of them resent the government´s willingness to establish dialogue with a movement responsible for the death of many Buddhists. Many fear the impact on their communities, should substantial autonomy or decentralization be accepted by the Thai government for the predominantly Malay-Muslim region.

(8) Experiences from successful peace processes demonstrate that success does not only depend on leaders´ political will, commitment, and preparedness to make concessions, but also on the strong **support from their respective constituencies**. So far, these peace constituencies are rather weak on both sides of the divide, although civil society actors in the Deep South have publicly endorsed the process and are progressing towards the establishment of a greater public awareness on the process and its purpose.

(9) Finally, from a substantive point of view, the question is raised as to how could a **genuine compromise** which takes into account the interests, needs and fears of all stakeholders and parties, look like. As mentioned above, all successful peace processes are based on some kind of mutual concessions.

After Ramadan, the attention of the peace dialogue moved towards five demands, which the BRN had handed over to the Malaysian facilitator, the NSC panel, and made public in a You Tube video in April 2013. The reason was that the organization requested to receive an official response before the next round of talks take place. This request triggered a long debate on the legitimacy and legality of these demands.

We think that it is helpful to review these demands in the broader context of issues, which have come up in many other peace processes between states and resistance movements asking for **self-determination** for ethno-national groups in sub-national conflicts.

2. EIGHT CHALLENGES FOR PEACEMAKING ON SUB-NATIONAL CONFLICT

Eight challenges which have so far emerged in nearly all peace processes dealing with sub-national conflicts between states and ethno-national groups asking for self-determination are:

(1) How to select and legitimize the parties involved in the peace talks?
(2) How to determine the role and functions of third parties in peace processes?
(3) How to envision the participation and support from other actors besides the third party?
(4) How to deal with radically different opinions, particularly on the political settlement of the conflict?
(5) How to address issues of justice and reconciliation?
(6) How to deal with differences within the parties engaged in the peace talks?
(7) How to achieve reliable agreements at the beginning of the peace process, when the level of trust is extremely low?
(8) How to deal with the lack of political stability at the national level, which has negatively impacted the peace process in the current situation of Thailand?

The first five points on this list relate to the five demands from the BRN. We have reframed them to emphasize that they indicate basic challenges, which are worth clarifying independently from what the BRN wants to achieve. Our argument is that the Thai government as well as all other stakeholders can also profit from clarifying these questions. The two additional points on internal differences and on achieving the first agreement under conditions of high mutual mistrust are also of direct relevance for the case of Southern Thailand.

(1) How to select and legitimize the parties involved in the peace talks?

While the government and key government institutions are naturally the representative of the state for all peace talks, the selection of the non-state actor or actors is more challenging. From a realpolitik perspective, it is obvious that states prefer to engage with those who command the violence on the ground and who can claim with some

plausibility that they "represent" a significant section of their constituency. At the same time, they might consider to bring other actors on board to divide the opposition under the label of "inclusivity". Vice versa, the resistance or "liberation" actor has an interest in claiming an undivided representation to ensure that they are not played off against other competitors on their side.

To get the peace talks started, the parties have to find some kind of compromise on this topic. The experience from other peace processes shows that the more **inclusive** the process is, the more promising and the more **legitimacy** the participating parties can claim vis-à-vis their constituencies. This requires internal negotiations e.g. between the BRN, various PULO factions and other groups. It also requires an effective participation of people on the ground and organized civil society. Finally, it is important that the resistance organizations develop capacity of their own political wings , which can at one stage take over the talks when it comes to the details of a sustainable and just political settlement.

A crucial guideline is to take into account that peace processes will eventually be successful when they obtain the support of a majority of the people on both sides of the divide.

(2) How to determine the role and functions of third parties in peace processes?

In the last twenty years, third parties have played an increasing role in helping settle international as well as sub-national conflicts. Third parties can play various roles. They comprise discrete shuttle diplomacy, good services for back-channel meetings, witness and monitoring functions as well as the organization, design, and moderation of dialogue and negotiation meetings. Sometimes, it might include drafting agreements. Textbooks often describe "pure mediation" as the involvement of a completely neutral, interest-free actor with no power. In most cases, mediators are more effective when they have stakes in the settlement of the conflict but are nevertheless accepted by both sides as sufficiently balanced.

The dialoguing parties could negotiate which roles the third party should play. In some cases, it is also useful to adapt its role to the changing needs of the process. While experts and diplomats like to distinguish the roles of **facilitators** and **mediators,** their profiles *de facto* have a strong overlapping. Instead of arguing about the title of the third party, it makes more sense to agree on substantive TORs, which are acceptable to both sides. This might also include the creation of a small group of supportive third parties such as in the case of the International Contact Group (ICG) in Mindanao. Some of them function outside the official talks (see challenge no 3).

(3) How to envision the participation and support from other actors besides the third party?

The request for participation by other actors besides those directly involved in the peace talks is mainly driven by three factors: The first one comes from people directly affected by the outcome of the talks, particularly those living in the contested region i.e. the Malay-Muslims, Thai-Buddhists and Thai-Chinese living in the Deep South. Their request is highly legitimate because they have to live with the outcome of the talks. Their support is vitally important to make the agreement just and sustainable.

A second factor relates to the question of how to make a peace process robust and lead to an agreed political settlement. This requires first and foremost a strong **political will** from both sides to commit with this process, notwithstanding hurdles and difficulties. However, it also means to create a sound **multi-track peace process,** which helps broaden and deepen this process beyond the official talks. Peace processes, which only rest on high level talks every other month, are very vulnerable to all kinds of misunderstanding and disturbance. It is therefore crucial to generate several channels of communication, dialogue and interaction between the parties and stakeholders, and to find effective ways to give voice to the people on the ground to express their expectations and needs from the peace process.

Another helpful element is to establish a sound **infrastructure for peace support** to underpin the political and social efforts for a new political settlement. This can comprise

support structures of experts and advisors on both sides as well as by the third party. It should also include independent organizations and institutions to provide common and "safe" spaces for all parties and stakeholders. This tool has become increasingly popular in many peace processes in the last ten years. Peace Secretariats and Peace Resource Centers are examples of such infrastructures. The purpose is to bring professional expertise into the process, to get inspiration from experiences and lessons learned from elsewhere, and to enhance the joint problem-solving skills of all parties and stakeholders.

Now, these efforts require particularly the mobilization, participation and qualification of **insider peacebuilders** and of a sound **peace constituency** from all sections of the society and polity. But there is also a third factor, which hints at the relevance of some kind of **outside participation.** This request often comes particularly from resistance movements engaged in peace talks, such as the BRN in the case of Thailand. It is driven by the perception that they have to balance the overwhelming power of the internationally recognized state with some kind of international participation and witness functions.

Many states are reluctant to allow this kind of "internationalization" but their attitude often changes when it comes to the implementation of agreements. They realize that it is in the interest of the states to ensure effective monitoring. Before that happens, it is in the interest of both sides to empower the insider mechanisms as much as possible.

(4) How to deal with radically different opinions?

One of the basic experiences at the beginning of all peace processes that try to address protracted conflicts is that both sides, particularly the state-side, are astounded, if not shocked, by the fundamentally different opinions on the conflict, its history, and the principles to transform it. The section 4 of the five requests put forward by the BRN, dealing with the issue of the "sovereignty" and "self-determination" of the "Patani Malay nation", is a good case in point. . It is obvious that any kind of understanding or compromise on this contentious topic will take time.

In other peace processes faced with similar situations, one can learn that this request should be first viewed as a **claim for recognition, respect and dignity** of the community at stake. Instead of immediately focusing on issues of governance, it makes more sense to explore creative intermediate steps to express this recognition, respect and dignity. Acknowledging the local language, culture and history with significant and visible measures can contribute to this. Another possibility is to establish a joint working group to improve the mutual understanding on why the parties are looking at their conflict from such radically different perspectives.

A general lesson from resilient peace processes is that whenever parties faced with stalemates, "non-negotiable" issues, mutual frustrations and the temptation to declare the process as a failure, it is advisable to take a step back and focus on how to **improve the process** instead of getting stuck on one substantive issue. Many of the peace processes on sub-national conflicts such as those in Northern Ireland, Aceh or Mindanao had to struggle with similar challenges. At the end, they all found intelligent solutions to accommodate the needs and concerns of the main parties involved.

Politicians and parties who have engaged in protracted peace processes often report that, at the outset of the talks, they could not imagine how to compromise on some essential positions. It was the long-term engagement with the other side, a deeper understanding of the issues at stake, and the painful experience of joint problem-solving that prompted them to review their positions and think about alternatives. Some of them also observed that it was helpful for effective peace talks to shift the focus time and again between the long-term objectives and the small compromises, which the parties could immediately achieve together. In other words, it is wise to "zoom" regularly between the contested visions for the final settlement and the incremental agreements to de-escalate the conflict on the ground.

(5) How to address issues of justice and reconciliation?

In the BRN list of requests, this point relates to the release of all "political prisoners" to pave the way for a new relationship with the Thai state. The space for accommodating

this request is obviously limited due to legal and other restrictions. However, incremental progress is possible and seems already to be underway. Independent from this particular BRN request, all peace processes will at one stage be confronted with several issues of justice and reconciliation: How can the communities re-build their society after massive destruction of human life? How can justice be restored and healing for the victims take place? How can the perpetrators of gross human rights violations on all sides be brought to justice and how can impunity be brought to an end? How can an environment for reconciliation be created?

There are many ways parties in other cases have answered these questions, which mostly are full of dilemmas as to how to balance the need for bringing the perpetrators of (former) violence on board for the peace process, the need for a new beginning, and the need to acknowledge the past. The international discourse emphasizes in this context at least two basic requirements. It may not solve these dilemmas but at least offer some ways to accommodate them.

The first one relates to **restorative justice** i.e. the effort to address the needs of the victims of violence and injustices by seeking truths, acknowledging their losses and trying to repair at least some of the harm they have experienced (and sometimes also those of the offenders to take responsibility for their actions). This process has somewhat been undertaken in the Deep South. The second one relates to the creation of safe spaces for **sharing and listening to the narratives** relating to the very personal experiences of the people in the conflict. This approach has led to many initiatives for the establishment of "Truth Commissions". But this approach is only feasible when there is already some kind of basic understanding on the political settlement of the conflict.

(6) How to deal with differences within the parties engaged in the peace talks?

There has never been a peace process that has not been challenged by internal differences on one or most likely on both sides of the divide. It is also quite common that peace efforts are challenged by groups that are excluded from the process, criticize the way how the process is organized, and object in principle to the effort to find a peaceful

settlement. All three groups are sometimes described as "spoilers", but only those opposing the principle of peaceful negotiation deserves this name.

From a "realpolitik" perspective, peace processes rarely start in a way that all conflicting groups agree on moving from a violent conflict to some kind of peaceful political settlement. More often than not, a key motive is that one party takes the initiative to gain advantages vis-à-vis their opponent in their own "camp". Therefore, peace processes consist in many cases of a strange mix of efforts of inter-party de-escalation and intra-party rivalry at the same time.

Additionally, what also happens at the beginning of many peace processes is a wave of **politicization**. While many groups previously did not dare to talk in detail about their grievances and demands, they begin to see the need and opportunity to speak out. Other stakeholders, who have been more content with the situation, are concerned that any new political settlement might be to their disadvantage. This has also happened in the Deep South and it is necessary to find creative ways to engage with this politicization in a constructive way.

Lessons learned from elsewhere is that in these situations principles of peacemaking should not only be applied to the talks between the parties, but also within the parties. It means that one should find intelligent ways for **inclusivity** and for **common spaces of participation**. This must not necessarily mean to create all-embracing mechanisms like "National Dialogues" It can also be organized as several layers of consultations and participation as we will outline it in section 3.

(7) How to achieve reliable agreements at the beginning of the peace process, when the level of trust is extremely low?

As outlined in the first chapter, the majority of people is likely to assess progress in a peace process largely according to the reduction of violence. The widespread disappointment with the more progress on "negative peace" is therefore understandable.

The background to this challenge is that there are fundamental **security-related fears on both sides**.

The military is concerned that the Thai state could make political concessions to the BRN without ensuring that the movement gives up its armed struggle. The BRN is concerned that, they would have no leverage to achieve any significant concessions from the Thai state after giving up the armed struggle. This is a classic dilemma in many peace processes. One often- used method to address this dilemma is to involve the armed forces from both sides in the process in an adequate manner and encourage them to work out a sequenced process of trust- and confidence building measures as well as steps of de-militarization and ensuring mutual security. This has to be undertaken in parallel with progress on political issues.

Another way to look at this challenge is to be aware that peacebuilding in sub-national conflicts dealing with claims for self-determination requires small **steps towards "negative" and "positive" peace** in parallel. The latter steps can be particularly effective if they address issues of recognition, respect and dignity e.g. in the realms of language, culture and education.

(8) How to deal with the lack of political stability at the national level, which has negatively impacted the peace process in the case of Thailand?

The leadership and political will of dialoguing parties in pursuing the peace process is a fundamental factor for the success of the peace process. The political crisis unfolding in Bangkok in recent months has shaken Thailand's political stability. This has raised a question among the circle of the Patani-Malay movement as to how the peace dialogue would be carried out under this circumstance. The anti-dialogue voice within the Patani-Malay movement has gained more weight in light of unresolved national crisis.

The massive demonstrations in Bangkok were triggered in late October by the ruling Pheu Thai party's attempt to push through the controversial Amnesty bill, which would let former Prime Minister Thaksin to escape a two-year jail term on a conflict-of-interest

conviction. The political rally, led by the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), also called for the government to be overthrown and demand an immediate political reform before returning to the normal democratic path. Yingluck was forced to dissolve the Parliament amid growing protest and the PDRC campaign against the 2 February election made the polls inconclusive. To date, the lack of quorum makes it impossible to open a parliamentary session and vote for a new prime minister. Hence, a new government cannot be formed. The stalemate in Bangkok has unavoidably affected the peace process as the meeting between the government side and the BRN had to be postponed indefinitely. The BRN's requests for parliamentary endorsement of their demands could not be undertaken, while the country is governed by a caretaker government and had no legislative body.

In February 2014, the violence has risen sharply and many soft targets e.g. children, women and religious figures, have fallen victims of attacks. Both sides appear to have been engaged in tit-for-tat killings. Such incidents have heightened tension among people living in the region. This bears similarity with experiences in conflict zones elsewhere that the level of violence tends to rise after peace talks have been stalled.

In this context, the peace dialogue is urgently needed to be resumed. It is vital to highlight the impacts of intensifying attacks on all groups and stakeholders in the conflict, particularly on unarmed civilians. We would like to take this opportunity to call on all parties in the national conflict to cooptate the southern peace process within their common agenda. Political parties, a new government, or particularly champions of political reform should include this issue as an essential part of their policies. Putting the peace process on the national agenda will significantly enhance the confidence on this undertaking among members and supporters of the Patani-Malay movement, which will, in turn, encourage them to make a serious commitment to this process.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: BROADEN AND DEEPEN THE PA(T)TANI PEACE PROCESS AND BUILD A SOUND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ITS SUPPORT

In light of the assets, shortcomings and the principal challenges, we would like to propose three clusters of recommendations:

(1) For the future Track-1 peace talks including the engagement of the Thai state, the Patani-Malay movement and the Malaysian facilitator;
(2) For the Multi-Track expansion of the peace process, and
(3) For the establishment of an infrastructure for peace support.

(1) FUTURE TRACK-1 PEACE TALKS

- The two dialoguing partners, NSC and BRN, as well as the Malaysian facilitator should consider establishing **Peace Secretariats** with a small number of professional staff, who are encouraged to interact and communicate with each other regularly to work towards a common understanding of the challenges ahead.

- The two dialoguing partners and the Malaysian facilitator should consider establishing mixed **issue-centered working groups** to deepen the mutual understanding of all contested issues and to work on options for common ground in a step-by-step manner on critical issues such as new governance structure, education, language, culture, fact-finding of violent incidents, and other challaenges ahead.

- The two dialoguing partners and the Malaysian facilitator should consider to **expand the length of future meetings** so that both parties would have more time for discussion. Moreover, they should also agree in advance on a more detailed agenda and work together towards a **common roadmap** sequencing the issues at stake.

- The two dialoguing partners and the Malaysian facilitator should agree on a common **Code-of-Conduct concerning the communication and media work** outside of the confidential peace dialogue sessions. For example, the issuance of joint statement must be mutually endorsed and solely announced by the facilitator. The statements should be written in Thai, Malay and English.

- The two dialoguing partners should consider changing the nature of the talk **from dialogue to peace negotiation** with a mutually-endorsed mediator. Besides, the process

should include observers and witnesses, which could be representatives of neighboring countries or international organizations that are recognized by both partners.

- Representatives of the two dialogue parties should hold **intra-party dialogues** among various groups and agencies within their own sides so as to come up with a more unified stance ahead of the scheduled meetings.

- The two dialoguing partners should encourage the creation and nurturing of **Track 1.5 dialogue processes** for the purposes of exploring new ground for compromises, helping to break deadlocks and providing a safety-net for the Track 1 process, which will time and again struggle with crises and obstructions.

(2) MULTI-TRACK PEACE PROCESS

- The various civil society organizations should collectively explore how they could improve the public awareness of the peace process. One practical proposal is that various CSOs could initiate and organize regular **Public Peace Forums** on their own , but they should coordinate on the timing and issue-orientation so as to ensure an effective outreach and complementarity. The CSOs should also attach importance to working with local and national media as a means to increase public understanding of the peace process.

- **Academic and educational institutions should** enhance the complementarity of their activities on providing knowledge about peace processes.

- Local and national media should provide **coverage of the peace process in a serious and sustained manner,** which would greatly contribute to an effort to make this undertaking a national agenda. In order to promote peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society, it is vitally important to open political space for people from all walks of life, particularly the minority Thai-Buddhists and Thai-Chinese, to express their opinions and concerns vis-à-vis the peace process.

(3) INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE SUPPORT

- Apart from the infrastructures for peace support, which should be established on the Track1 level such as the Peace Secretariats, the joint issue-centered Working Groups, it is crucial to establish inclusive structures on the Track 2 and Track 1.5 level. One concrete initiative is the academically-based **Peace Resource Center** with outlets in Pattani and Bangkok. The purpose is to provide all parties and stakeholders with knowledge about the state-of-the-art of peace processes, to create a "safety-net" by inviting people from all stakeholders to contribute to inclusive solutions, and to monitor the peace process and organize "peace polls" to help assess the opinions of people on the ground. Besides, the Centre would also consider producing media to promote peace.

- Establish **community-based peace committees** in order to raise awareness and knowledge of the overall peace process among local people as well as to create local dispute mechanism so as to prepare for future conflict transformation.

- Establish a "**Council for People's Dialogue**" that will function as a common space for all groups and stakeholders to express their views and discuss any contentious issues in relations to the discussion in the Track 1.