

Instructions for simulation:

Below are four possible models for including civil society in the peace talks. This document is meant to represent the knowledge you've gained through your professional experience. You may use this document to strengthen your arguments in support of a more inclusive peace process. **This document is for your eyes only**, please do not share it with anyone.

1. Direct Representation at the Negotiating Table

- Through direct representation civil society representatives can **have a seat at the negotiating table** either on their own or as part of another actor's delegation. Representatives can be elected, selected by the negotiating parties, nominated by certain civil society groups, or selected by the mediation team.
- Direct representation is the most direct form of participation. It gives civil society the same status as the main conflict parties as participants at the peace table. However, civil society actors do not always have the same decision-making authority as the main conflict parties. Direct representation may mean a seat at the table, but may not provide civil society actors with decision-making power.
- Direct representation is appealing to civil society as it allows them to be in a position to directly raise issues and can support increased sustainability and broad social buy-in of the peace agreement.¹

Advantages: Increase the legitimacy and representativeness of the peace negotiations; can create a larger buy-in to the peace process on the part of different constituencies

Challenges: Will significantly disrupt agreed upon process structure; too many voices can make consensus difficult; civil society must have sufficient expertise or preparation; can suffer from competition and lack of cooperation among civil society

To incorporate this into the Danaanian peace talks, civil society would need to form a unified delegation or join the AFD/government delegations.

¹ UN Women, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence", Pg. 7

2. Official Consultative Forums Parallel to Negotiations

- **An official consultative forum takes place parallel to formal negotiations.** The mediator and main conflict parties endorse the forum, allowing it to act as a consultative body to the negotiation process.
- The forum's mandate can be specified by the mediator, the main conflict parties, supporting international groups, or by civil society (e.g., to provide input on specific technical issues; to advise on the agenda)
- In most cases, the consultative forum follows the same agenda as the official negotiations but it can also add issues to the negotiation agenda.
- In order to ensure civil society input, regular formal or informal communication has to take place between the mediator or main conflict parties and the civil society forum.

Guatemala (1994-1996): The 1994 Framework Accord for the Resumption of Negotiations established an Assembly of Civil Society (ACS). The ACS was a **formal, non-binding civil society advisory group**, with representation from 11 sectors: women's organizations, business groups, trade unions, religious groups, indigenous peoples, academics, political parties, media, human rights organizations, research centers, and development NGOs. ACS was able to review and endorse the final language of the peace agreement but had no veto power over it. The ACS was mandated to discuss and form consensus positions and recommendations on 6 out of 7 substantive negotiations topics (all except the military/ceasefire arrangements). The group presented recommendations regularly to negotiators, who adopted most of the suggestions; despite their non-binding role, most of the recommendations were incorporated into the final agreement.

Advantages: Avoids the problem of having too many actors at the negotiation table; an opportunity to include a broad set of perspectives to give the process more legitimacy; creates an official forum for civil society to debate key issues

Challenges: Civil society has no decision-making authority and can be easily sidelined; if membership is not carefully crafted, forum could perpetuate the elite nature of the peace process

To incorporate this into the Danaanian peace talks, the mandate and membership of the forum would need to be determined, particularly mechanisms for selecting members and ensuring broad representation.

3. Official Observer and Technical Support at the Negotiations

- Civil society groups are granted official observer status by the mediator and negotiating parties. This is the most common approach of direct civil society involvement in peace negotiations.
- Observers are **allowed at the negotiating table however are not permitted to speak or vote** during the process.
- Civil society representatives can be brought in to provide “technical support” on a specific issue, to advise the mediator and/or the parties.
- Observer status can also give civil society insight into the process, which can be helpful in the implementation phase (see Model 4). Civil society actors involved in the process can take on a critical monitoring and oversight functions and support the implementing body of the peace agreement.

Uganda (2007): Toward the end of the Juba talks between the Ugandan government and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), two women’s coalitions from Uganda were granted official observer status without the power to speak or vote. They did, however, provide technical support to the UNIFEM gender adviser to the Secretary General’s Special Envoy to the IRA-Affected Areas in Uganda. The gender adviser was able to influence the Special Envoy and the negotiating parties to include a gender lens in their negotiations, as well as aid the women’s coalition in conducting community consultations and developing gendered protocols for each piece of the developing peace agreement. Unfortunately the final peace agreement was never signed by the LRA².

Advantages: Creates the least amount of disruption to agreed upon process structure; observers have direct access to the negotiators and the negotiating parties; civil society’s recommendations are seriously considered and often implemented in the final agreement; observer status can be leveraged into involvement in implementation phase

Challenges: Observers have no decision-making power in shaping the final agreement; only a few groups will be granted observer status

To incorporate this into the Dunaanian peace talks, the mediator and parties need to agree on which parties will be allowed observer status. This selection process is crucial for making their participation meaningful. Observers will have to decide whether to push their own agenda or to develop strategic alliances with other civil society groups.

² UN Women, “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence”, Pg. 9

4. Monitoring of Peace Agreement Implementation

- Inclusion of civil society is not limited to participation in the peace talks. Civil society can also play a significant role in the implementation of the resulting peace agreement. This role can include but is not limited to: monitoring the implementation of various elements of the peace agreement (e.g. disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of IDPs) and serving as technical advisers to the transitional government tasked with implementation. Civil society actors can advise mediators and the parties when needed and form alliances with other observers to facilitate the agreement.
- If civil society is not represented at the table when the agreement is being designed, they are less likely to have a role in implementation. Civil society's involvement with implementation is ideally combined with their participation in the talks either through direct representation, official consultative forums or as observer and provider of technical support.

Liberia (2003)³: Civil society played a vibrant role in Liberia prior to the war in 1989. The peace process, having lasted longer than expected (from 1989-1996) and culminating in the 1997 elections also limited civil society's access to decision makers as many government officials were untrusting of them. This was compounded during President Charles Taylor's administration as he did not allow existing civil society groups to participate in the peacebuilding process. After the second Liberia war and President Taylor's resignation in 2003 civil society successfully fought to be included in the Accra Peace Talks in September 2003. Civil society groups initially intended to play an oversight role during the implementation of the peace process. However, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement designated Liberian civil society organizations with formal representation on the legislature and executive branches of the National Transitional Government of Liberia. This designation created some conflicts of interest, as many civil society organizations functioned in a dual role, with constituents and the government expecting them to monitor the implementation of the agreement from within the government. Ultimately, this led to division within civil society and created confrontation with the warring parties and political parties as they competed for government posts.

Advantages: Formally recognizes civil society/civil society often plays this de facto role; leverages civil society's role as a third party actor able to act as a watchdog; civil society often already has experience monitoring the government or other institutions

Challenges: Civil society actors must have the funds and access needed to be an effective watchdog; civil society may not have the resources and clout to truly hold parties accountable

To incorporate this into the Danaanian peace talks, a concrete role for civil society must be determined in the peace agreement. This would best be drafted in coordination with civil society actors during the peace process.

³ Samuel Atuobi, "State-Civil Society Interface in Liberia's Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," (paper presented at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra Ghana, November 2010).