

DISCUSSION PAPER 22-002

Mechanisms for Dialogue: A Contribution to Preventing Civil War Recurrence

Argyro Kartsonaki, Giuditta Fontana, and Stefan Wolff



UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

About the Authors

Argyro Kartsonaki is a researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg with expertise in secession and war-to-peace transitions after civil wars. Giuditta Fontana is a political scientist focusing on institutional designs in peace agreements and postconflict settings, with a particular interest in cultural and educational reforms. Stefan Wolff is a political scientist specializing in the prevention and settlement of ethnic conflicts and civil wars, and in post-conflict state-building in deeply divided societies. Fontana and Wolff are based in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom.

USIP discussion papers disseminate USIP-funded research outcomes or technical policy recommendations intended to solicit discussion and lead to further development and refinement of ideas and proposals, whether research or policy oriented.

Copyright © 2022 by the United States Institute of Peace.

This research was funded by USIP's Grants & Fellowships Program and was supported by the Inclusive Peace Processes and Reconciliation Program in USIP's Gandhi-King Global Academy. These programs are solely responsible for the accuracy and thoroughness of the content. The views expressed in this discussion paper are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Institute of Peace.

Please contact Stefan Wolff at s.wolff@bham.ac.uk with questions and comments.

United States Institute of Peace

2301 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20037

Phone: 202.457.1700

Fax: 202.429.6063

E-mail: usip_requests@usip.org

Web: www.usip.org

Discussion Paper No. 22-002



UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

INTRODUCTION

Civil war is the most frequent form of armed conflict today, with 20 percent of all civil wars resuming within five years after the conclusion of a peace agreement.¹ Over a period of ten years, this proportion increases to 40 percent.² Consequently, understanding the causes of civil war recurrence, and the effectiveness of measures to prevent it, is of critical importance to the lives of people who would be affected by the renewed outbreak of violence, as well as to national and international policymakers, mediators, and negotiators.

To shed light on measures contributing to the prevention of civil war recurrence after the conclusion of a peace agreement, we examined the experience of ten countries: Angola, Burundi, Indonesia (Aceh conflict), Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, the Philippines (Mindanao conflict), Papua New Guinea (Bougainville conflict), and Sierra Leone. These countries experienced at least one instance of civil war recurrence before achieving a peace settlement that ended the vicious circle of violent conflict between the signatory parties of the agreement.

We find that successful peace agreements typically include certain mechanisms that enable the belligerent parties to engage with each other beyond the signature ceremony. We call such measures “Mechanisms for Dialogue” (MfD). They provide continuity in communication between the conflict parties, create a sense of accountability between them and toward mediators, and offer an embedded course of action to prevent civil war recurrence. Given the non-negligible probability that a peace agreement will fail and the fact that we cannot know a priori with certainty which peace agreements will last, we suggest that incorporating contingency plans in peace agreements that proactively mitigate the effects of setbacks can reduce the risk of civil war recurrence. MfDs are one such contingency plan that helps to keep parties engaged and continue negotiating until and after the signing of an agreement. On the basis of our analysis, we argue that: (a) civil war recurrence can be mitigated

¹ Giuditta Fontana, Markus B. Siewert, and Christalla Yakinthou, “Managing War-to-Peace Transitions after Intra-State Conflicts: Configurations of Successful Peace Processes,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 15, no. 1 (2021): 25–47.

² Astri Suhrke and Ingrid Samset, “What’s in a Figure?” *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 2 (2007): 195–203.

if peace agreements provide for MfDs, and (b) MfDs’ beneficial effect may be enhanced if specific types of MfDs are incorporated at different stages of a peace process.

We are not claiming that the text of peace agreements is everything that is important for the success of a peace process, but neither should they be dismissed as meaningless pieces of paper.³ While we recognize the importance of long-term implementation, our point is that when looking at successful peace processes, it is striking that MfDs incorporated in individual peace agreements seem to play a role in holding the process together and in contributing to preventing civil war recurrence. This warrants more reflection on their role in peace agreements and in broader processes of conflict resolution.

In what follows, we explain how we define our main concepts: peace process, success, dialogue, and MfDs. Then we elaborate our research design, including the selection of case studies, the categorization of peace agreements, and our coding. Subsequently, we present and interpret our findings and conclude with policy recommendations and suggestions for further research.

WHAT ARE MECHANISMS FOR DIALOGUE?

Our broad research agenda aims to explore measures contributing to the prevention of the recurrence of civil wars, understood as conflict between a state’s government and a nongovernmental armed actor in the territory of that state.⁴ Civil wars do not capture all forms of violence, but they are the dominant form of violent conflict worldwide. A substantial proportion of civil wars have been terminated in the course of peace processes, understood as “packages of peace agreements which together are intended to ameliorate the same [civil] conflict situation.”⁵ This definition follows established conventions in existing research and also helps to differentiate between

³ There is extensive evidence that the text of peace agreements is a strong predictor of the ultimate success of peace processes. For example, see Virginia Page Fortna, “Scraps of Paper?” *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (2003): 337–72, www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/scraps-of-paper-agreements-and-the-durability-of-peace/70A924CC6B4785C30BADF415244FFA1F.

⁴ Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, “UCDP Definitions,” www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/#tocjump_35469114430361826_11.

⁵ Fontana, Siewert, and Yakinthou, “Managing War-to-Peace Transitions.”

negotiations that have produced peace agreements and those that haven't. Agreement breakdown does not, in our definition, equate to the end of a peace process, provided that subsequent negotiations and agreements continue to address the same conflict.

We regard a peace agreement as successful if no systematic conflict-related violence among the same belligerent signatory parties occurred after the signing of the peace agreement. A successful and final peace agreement is one that managed to bring a given conflict to an end, achieving at least negative peace, broadly understood as the absence of war.⁶ Using the text of peace agreements to analyze peace processes is a minimalist approach in terms of capturing the entirety of a peace process. However, it is consistent with the existing civil war literature,⁷ and it allows us to probe the potential contribution that provisions in peace agreements make to preventing the recurrence of civil wars.

In this paper, we specifically focus on a common but under-researched set of provisions in peace agreements: Mechanisms for Dialogue. We ground our understanding of MfDs in Froude and Zanchelli's definition of dialogue as a facilitated conflict-intervention process that brings together various stakeholders in a conflict or around a problem or concern, to express, listen to, explore, and better understand diverse views in order to transform individual, relational, or structural drivers of conflict.⁸

Dialogue, thus, is a broader concept than negotiations and goes beyond parties' efforts to achieve conflict settlement through a formal agreement. Dialogue, which may take place at different stages of conflicts and peace processes,⁹ is, therefore, distinct from negotiations in that it is a more open-ended communication process between conflict parties in order to foster mutual understanding, recognition,

⁶ Argyro Kartsonaki, "Twenty Years after Dayton: Bosnia-Herzegovina (Still) Stable and Explosive," *Civil Wars* 18, no. 4 (2016): 488–516.

⁷ For example, Christine Bell, Sanja Badanjak, Juline Beujouan, Tim Epple, Robert Forster, Astrid Jamar, Sean Molloy, Kevin McNicholl, Kathryn Nash, Jan Pospisil, Robert Wilson, and Laura Wise, "PA-X Peace Agreements Database and Dataset," Version 6, www.peaceagreements.org; Fortna, "Scraps of Paper?"; Giuditta Fontana, Argyro Kartsonaki, Natascha S. Neudorfer, Dawn Walsh, Stefan Wolff, and Christalla Yakinthou, "The Dataset of Political Agreements in Internal Conflicts," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 38, no. 3 (2021): 338–64; Fontana, Siewert, and Yakinthou, "Managing War-to-Peace Transitions."

⁸ Jack Froude and Michael Zanchelli, "What Works in Facilitated Dialogue Projects," Special Report no. 407 (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, June 2017), www.usip.org/publications/2017/07/what-works-facilitated-dialogue-projects.

⁹ Sofia Sebastián and Jonas Claes, "Atrocity Prevention through Dialogue: Challenges in Dealing with Violent Extremist Organizations," Special Report no. 390 (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, September 2016).

empathy, and trust. These can be one-off conversations, or go on over a longer period of time. Although dialogues can lead to very concrete decisions and actions, the primary aim is not to reach a specific settlement, but to gain a better understanding of the different perspectives involved in a conflict.¹⁰

On this basis, we see MfDs as provisions in peace agreements that enable the belligerent parties to continue engaging with each other beyond the signature ceremony. In some cases, MfDs also resemble inclusion modalities, enabling broader direct representation in peace processes—for instance, through national conferences or commissions¹¹—allowing for the delegation of specific issues to designated bodies that might also include international actors.¹² While we recognize the importance of implementation, this paper represents a first step in a broader research agenda and only focuses on the inclusion of MfDs in the text of peace agreements. The main purpose of MfDs, in our view, is to (continue to) build confidence between the parties: confidence in their ability and willingness to deliver on the agreement they have signed and confidence in the agreement itself.

APPROACH AND DATA

In order to investigate the conditions under which civil wars recur and how a cycle of (repeated) recurrence can be avoided, we built an original data set of “Conditions of Recurrence,” including ten peace processes and their constituent agreements: Angola, Burundi, Indonesia’s Aceh conflict, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, the Philippines’ Mindanao conflict, Papua New Guinea’s Bougainville conflict, and Sierra Leone.

¹⁰ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation in the OSCE: Reference Guide* (Vienna: OSCE Secretariat, n.d.), 10, www.osce.org/secretariat/126646?download=true.

¹¹ Thania Paffenholz, Andreas Hirblinger, Dana Landau, Felix Fritsch, and Constance Dijkstra, *Preventing Violence through Inclusion: From Building Political Momentum to Sustaining Peace* (Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2017); Thania Paffenholz, “Inclusivity in Peace Processes,” United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, February 2015, https://biblioteca.f59.com.br/documentos/UNU_Inclusivity%20in%20peace%20processes.pdf.

¹² Dawn Walsh, *Independent Commissions and Contentious Issues in Post-Good Friday Agreement Northern Ireland* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50772-9>; Dawn Walsh and John Doyle. “External Actors in Consociational Settlements: A Re-Examination of Lijphart’s Negative Assumptions,” *Ethnopolitics* 17, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 21–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2017.1305646>.

We arrived at this list of ten cases by employing a three-step case selection procedure. First, we identified individual conflict situations (hereafter, conflicts) that had been terminated by agreement through the relevant Conflict ID as recorded by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme.¹³ Second, we delimited relevant peace processes using the text of their constituent peace agreements. Each agreement in the peace process either explicitly refers to previous agreements or makes reference to the recurring nature of both the conflict and the efforts to end it, indicating in this way the continuity of the peace process. In the final step, and as we are interested in the conditions of civil war *recurrence*, we only selected those peace processes that had been disrupted by an outbreak of renewed violence at least once. Thus, three criteria were used in the selection of these ten peace processes:

- a) They experienced at least one instance of relapse into civil war after the signing of a peace agreement intended to end the war. Therefore, cases that experienced continuous violence with no intermediate signing of an agreement are not included.
- b) The civil war was terminated with a peace agreement, rather than military victory.
- c) After the signing of the last peace agreement, there was no systematic conflict-related violence among the same belligerent parties who signed the peace agreement. We have not included in our sample peace agreements that were signed after 2015 to allow for at least five years of peace between the signing of the peace agreement and the start of this project.

According to the UN Peacemaker database, a total of 147 agreements were produced in attempts to mitigate these ten conflicts, including prenegotiation agreements,¹⁴ ceasefires,¹⁵ joint declarations,¹⁶

¹³ Therese Petterson et al., “Organised Violence 1989–2020, with a Special Emphasis on Syria,” *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no 4 (2021): 809–25.

¹⁴ We use the PA-X data set definition of prenegotiation agreements, defining them as “agreements that aim to get parties to the point of negotiating over the incompatibilities at the heart of the conflict.” See Bell et al., “PA-X Peace Agreements Database and Dataset.”

¹⁵ Agreements that mainly or wholly provide for the termination of violence without addressing substantive issues to resolve the conflict.

¹⁶ Statements issued jointly by warring parties. They might be performative statements merely announcing engagement in the peace process or more substantial ones announcing agreed measures produced by a round of negotiations.

simple agreements,¹⁷ partial agreements,¹⁸ comprehensive agreements,¹⁹ implementation agreements,²⁰ and other forms of agreement not captured by the above classifications. We coded such a broad set of agreements to capture the full course of the peace process, from the early “reconnaissance” talks to the signing of the final agreement that broke the cycle of recurrence. Although we focused only on successful peace processes, the majority of our units of analysis (peace agreements) consist of unsuccessful attempts to achieve peace. Our sample included only ten successful peace agreements and 137 unsuccessful ones. This gave us the opportunity to also analyze texts of peace agreements for MfDs in unsuccessful cases. A further avenue for research would be to also compare successful and unsuccessful peace processes, examining whether and which MfDs were included in peace agreements signed in peace processes that haven’t managed to bring about peace.

We then carried out a content analysis of all the agreements included in this data set. As part of our broader coding of the Conditions of Recurrence data set, we employed NVivo to code manually all provisions in these peace agreements. The initial coding was inductive, leading us to identify MfDs as a distinct category of provisions. This first round of coding thus gave us a sense of the frequency and types of MfDs in our data set and allowed us to define and operationalize the concept of MfDs, including by developing a more fine-grained understanding of specific types of MfDs, which we then used to guide a second round of deductive coding. The same expert coder carried out both rounds of coding manually to ensure consistency and validity of the coding process.

Our analysis proceeded in two steps. First, we carried out a simple statistical analysis of MfDs in our data set to identify their frequency in the peace processes in Angola, Burundi, Indonesia’s Aceh conflict, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, the Philippines’ Mindanao conflict, Papua New Guinea’s Bougainville conflict, and Sierra Leone. While this analysis is only based on the text

¹⁷ Agreements that lay out a framework to address substantive issues of the conflict, without, however, extensive operational details.

¹⁸ “Agreements that concern parties that are engaged in discussion and agreeing to substantive issues to resolve the conflict, but only deal with some of the issues in ways that appear to contemplate future agreements to complete.” Bell et al., “PA-X Peace Agreements Database and Dataset.”

¹⁹ Agreement that “purports or appears to be comprehensive, as laying out a broad framework for resolving the conflict.” Bell et al., “PA-X Peace Agreements Database and Dataset.”

²⁰ Agreement “aiming to implement an earlier agreement.” Bell et al., “PA-X Peace Agreements Database and Dataset.”

of the peace agreements, and thus says little about the actual implementation of the MfDs, it helps place these provisions on the broader map of civil war literature and policy.

Based on our quantitative analysis, we selected two exemplary case studies for further in-depth investigation: the Philippines' Mindanao conflict and Papua New Guinea's Bougainville conflict. These two cases present two of the longest civil wars. As a result, they not only include all types of MfDs, but also several reiterations of them. They therefore offer a holistic picture of what we mean by MfD. In addition, due to the length of the peace processes in these cases, they encompass the full breadth of different types of peace agreements. Therefore, they enabled us to map different types of MfDs onto different stages of the peace process and onto different types of peace agreements.

MECHANISMS FOR DIALOGUE IN SUCCESSFUL PEACE PROCESSES

The overall findings show that sixty-one out of the 147 agreements examined include MfDs. This represents over 40 percent of the agreements, suggesting that MfDs are a very common ingredient in intrastate peace processes. They are less common than power sharing, but as common as more researched aspects of peace agreements, such as provisions for territorial self-governance.²¹ Their overall purpose—building confidence in the parties' ability and willingness to deliver on the agreement they have signed and confidence in the agreement itself—is reflected in the three broad types of MfD we have identified empirically: Platforms for Engagement, Implementation Reviews, and Dispute Resolution Provisions.

The Three Types of Mechanisms for Dialogue

In our coding, we have empirically identified three types of MfDs: Platforms for Engagement, Implementation Reviews, and Dispute Resolution Provisions. Their frequencies are visually represented in Figure 1.

²¹ Fontana, Siewert, and Yakinthou, "Managing War-to-Peace Transitions."

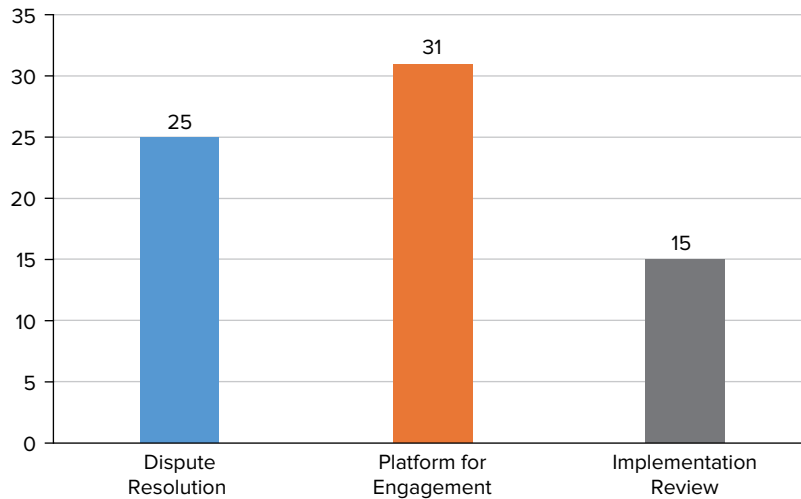


Figure 1. Number of Agreements Including Each Type of Mechanism for Dialogue.

The most common form of MfD is the Platform for Engagement (thirty-one agreements). A Platform for Engagement includes provisions in the text of the peace agreement that create a space for the warring parties to meet again in the future. Such provisions might be quite specific, stating a place and a date, or they can be more vague, expressing the need for further dialogue within a specified time frame. They may include national and regional peace conferences, scheduled negotiations between the warring parties, or flexible arrangements, such as the pledge that “a Conference of National Consensus shall be organised during the interim period, with the support of the Monitoring Committee and with equal representation of the Parties, to enable a detailed debate between the components of the Malian nation on the underlying causes of the conflict.”²²

Next, MfDs may involve provisions related to collectively evaluating the implementation of a specific peace agreement. We call these MfDs Implementation Reviews. While dialogue around Implementation Reviews can be acrimonious, these provisions nonetheless offer opportunities for the parties to foster mutual understanding of each other’s positions. For example, a peace agreement

²² Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali Resulting from the Algiers Process, Algiers, May 15, 2015, 4.

may create a joint commission to review progress in the implementation of the accord periodically, such as when the 2002 Aceh peace agreement provided that “both parties agree to a process of periodic review of the implementation of these understandings.”²³ Other accords may provide more structured opportunities for dialogue between the conflict parties around the implementation of the peace agreement, such as in the Bougainville Peace Agreement: “the autonomous Bougainville Government and the National Government will jointly review the autonomy arrangements every five years and present the report of the review to the National Parliament and the Bougainville legislature.”²⁴ Implementation Reviews, which provide for the collective evaluation of the implementation of a specific peace agreement, were found in fifteen agreements.

Finally, the third category of MfD encompasses provisions in peace accords that encourage dialogue around diverging interpretations of the accord that may escalate into conflict. We call them Dispute Resolution Provisions. In Dispute Resolution Provisions, belligerent parties agree on a course of action to tackle potential disputes in the interpretation of the agreement, so as to prevent escalation and war recurrence. For example, the 2002 agreement between the government of Angola and UNITA stated that “differences in interpretation or implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding are to be submitted to the Joint Military Commission for resolution in a spirit of friendship, tolerance and understanding.”²⁵

We regard Dispute Resolution Provisions as part of a continuing process of dialogue because they stipulate a return to talks to overcome problematic issues that might emerge. They indicate that the belligerent parties are willing and able to resolve their differences through engagement rather than recourse to violence, and that the negotiated agreement includes the tools for its own repair. Dispute Resolution Provisions were found in twenty-five agreements.

²³ Joint Statement by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, Switzerland, May 10, 2002, 1.

²⁴ Bougainville Peace Agreement, Arawa, Bougainville, August 30, 2001, 63.

²⁵ Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Angola and UNITA, Luanda, Angola, April 4, 2002, 12.

Three Types of Mechanisms for Dialogue in Different Types of Peace Agreements

When evaluating their frequency, we found that most agreements that include MfDs only include one type of MfD (52 agreements). Only nine agreements include multiple types of MfDs. This suggests that different types of MfDs may be employed purposefully at different stages of peace processes that tackle recurrent civil war. Thus, we subsequently explored what type of MfD is typically employed at different stages of peace processes by mapping the frequency of MfDs appearing in different types of peace accords in our ten peace processes. The results are visually represented in Figure 2, which shows the percentage of each type of accord including Platforms for Engagement, Implementation Reviews, and Dispute Resolution Provisions.

Our analysis suggests that different types of MfDs are more frequent in different types of peace agreements, suggesting that they are typically employed at different stages of peace processes. Although we find Platforms for Engagement throughout different stages of a peace process, they are most frequent at the early stages, and are included in 55.6 percent of prenegotiation agreements, 25 percent of ceasefire agreements, and 23.8 percent of joint declarations. We argue that this is because Platforms for Engagement help to hold nascent peace processes together,

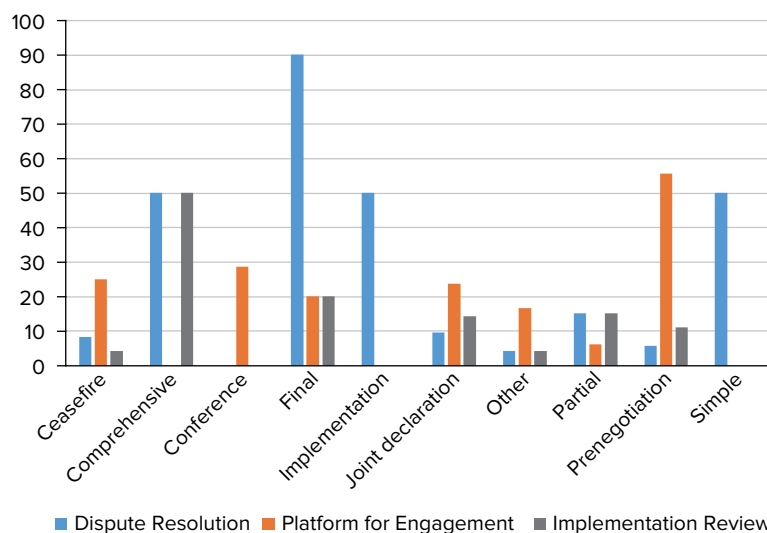


Figure 2. Percentage of Each Type of Agreement Including Platforms for Engagement, Implementation Reviews, and Dispute Resolution Provisions.

cumulatively building rapport between negotiating and mediating teams and providing a sense of continuity in, and beyond, the early stages of a peace process. By keeping conflict parties engaged, Platforms for Engagement may also facilitate the detection and use of ripe moments for peace.²⁶ They provide opportunities for resuming negotiations after the breakdown of a peace process by routinizing and normalizing continuous engagement.²⁷ In this way, they might help to avoid missing opportunities for conflict settlement by allowing parties to reengage in a face-saving way: negotiations are not resumed out of the parties' weakness but because they honor previous agreements.

In contrast, Dispute Resolution Provisions are particularly prominent in agreements at later stages of peace processes and are included in 90 percent of final agreements, 50 percent of implementation agreements, and 50 percent of comprehensive agreements. Based on this, we argue that Dispute Resolution Provisions embedded in peace agreements indicate that conflict parties are committed to terminating the conflict and are willing to resolve problematic issues rather than allow them to trigger a return to violence. Their inclusion also signals a confidence in the parties' ability to reach nonviolent dispute resolution and in the agreement as a set of substantive provisions worth upholding. The fact that almost all final accords include Dispute Resolution Provisions further suggests that while these mechanisms are not sufficient to ensure the prevention of conflict recurrence, they may be a quasi-necessary ingredient for accords that successfully end the cycle of recurrent civil war.

Finally, Implementation Reviews, despite being quite rare overall, are most common in comprehensive agreements. The implementation phase of an agreement is a particularly fragile time, and it is not unusual for a peace accord to collapse then.²⁸ Failure to move forward with the

²⁶ William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments," *Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1, no. 1 (2001): 8–18.

²⁷ "How to Design Peace Negotiations," *Open Democracy*, November 23, 2017, www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/how-to-design-peace-pr/.

²⁸ Suzanne Werner, "The Precarious Nature of Peace: Resolving the Issues, Enforcing the Settlement, and Renegotiating the Terms," *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 3 (1999): 912–34.

implementation of the agreement can increase mistrust between former enemies and cause suspicions that the settlement is being used to buy time for the resumption of military activities.²⁹ Implementation Reviews might be valuable because they can highlight shortcomings in the implementation of the agreement and enable the parties to address obstacles before they escalate and lead to a recurrence of violence.

We suggest that this transition from platforms that enable the continuation of negotiations to more concrete commitments to dialogue as embodied in Implementation Reviews and Dispute Resolution Provisions indicates a continuity and increasing maturity in peace processes. As the commitment of the warring parties to peace increases, so does their desire to prevent the failure of negotiated agreements and their use of MfDs for this purpose. This is particularly evident in the coding for Dispute Resolution Provisions, where we find that that nine out of ten successful final agreements have incorporated such provisions. Unsuccessful comprehensive and partial agreements, in contrast, do not systematically do so (including them in only 50 percent and 15 percent of accords, respectively). This suggests that institutionalized forums and procedures for dialogue among conflict parties, which might be triggered and put to good use if need arises, are particularly beneficial to intrastate peace processes.

A LOOK AT TWO SUCCESSFUL PEACE PROCESSES

In order to illustrate how MfDs evolve within peace processes, we use the examples of Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. It is important to reiterate that peace processes are not linear events; in fact, they progress through cyclical patterns of advance and stalemate, especially when they are punctuated by renewed violence. However, certain types of agreements (prenegotiations and ceasefires) can generally be associated with early stages of a peace process, either at the beginning of engagement by the conflict parties or following a relapse into violence. Conversely, partial, comprehensive, and final agreements occur at a more mature stage of peace processes, where substantive issues are

²⁹ Karl DeRouen, Mark J Ferguson, Samuel Norton, Young Hwan Park, Jenna Lea, and Ashley Streat-Bartlett, “Civil War Peace Agreement Implementation and State Capacity,” *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 3 (2010): 333–46.

debated and potentially settled. The examples of Papua New Guinea and the Philippines illustrate this cyclical pattern of advancement and setback well.

Mechanisms for Dialogue in the Bougainville Peace Process

Papua New Guinea experienced a recurring war over the secessionist attempts of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and various splinter groups including the Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF). Recurring violence lasted from 1988 to 2001. During this period, the belligerent parties signed eighteen accords, including six prenegotiation agreements, one ceasefire, one comprehensive ceasefire, two joint declarations, two partial agreements, and four other agreements before signing the final comprehensive peace agreement (Figure 3). MfDs were variously incorporated into these agreements, as shown in Figure 4.

At the early stages of the Bougainville peace process, we predominantly encounter MfDs establishing Platforms for Engagement. For example, the Honiara Commitments of 1994 stipulate that “the Bougainville Peace Conference shall be convened at a place in Bougainville or at another venue in Papua New Guinea on a date to be agreed by both parties, preferably such date shall be no later than 10th October, 1994.”³⁰ As Figure 3 shows, this frequent use of provisions establishing Platforms for Engagement is highly prevalent in prenegotiation agreements, ceasefires, and “other” accords (largely encompassing pledges for negotiations, unilateral declarations, and joint declarations agreeing on tentative agendas). The fact that these commitments to holding another meeting were repeatedly included in agreements and then followed through suggests that Platforms for Engagement helped to hold the nascent Bougainville peace process together by creating the space for conflict parties to meet and talk again.

In contrast, we detect Dispute Resolution Provisions at most stages of the peace process, including in ceasefires, joint declarations, partial agreements, and comprehensive agreements. For example, in the Honiara Declaration of 1991, signed by Joseph Kambui of the Bougainville delegation and Michael Somare of the government delegation, parties committed to resolve any

³⁰ Honiara Commitments to Peace on Bougainville as agreed by the Right Honourable Sir Julius Chan, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and Mr. Sam Kauona, the Commander of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, Honiara, September 3, 1994, 2.

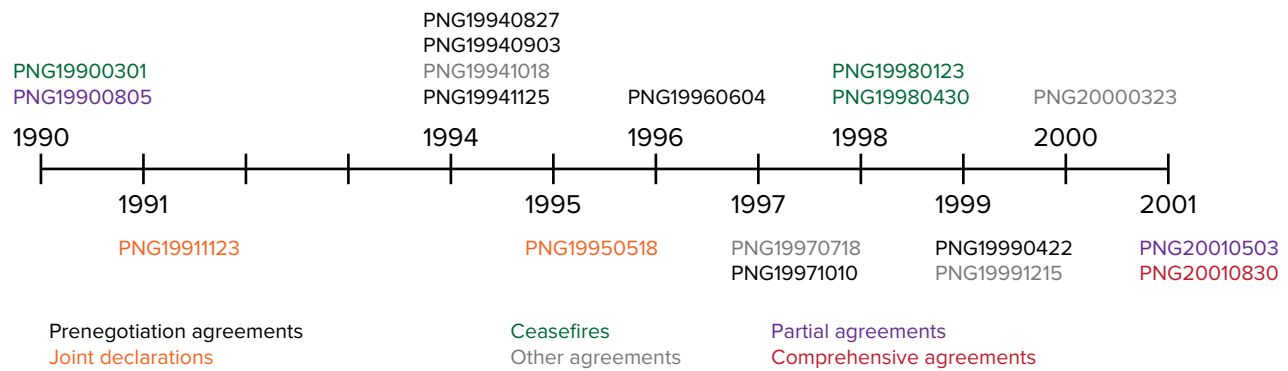


Figure 3. Timeline of the Peace Process in Papua New Guinea.

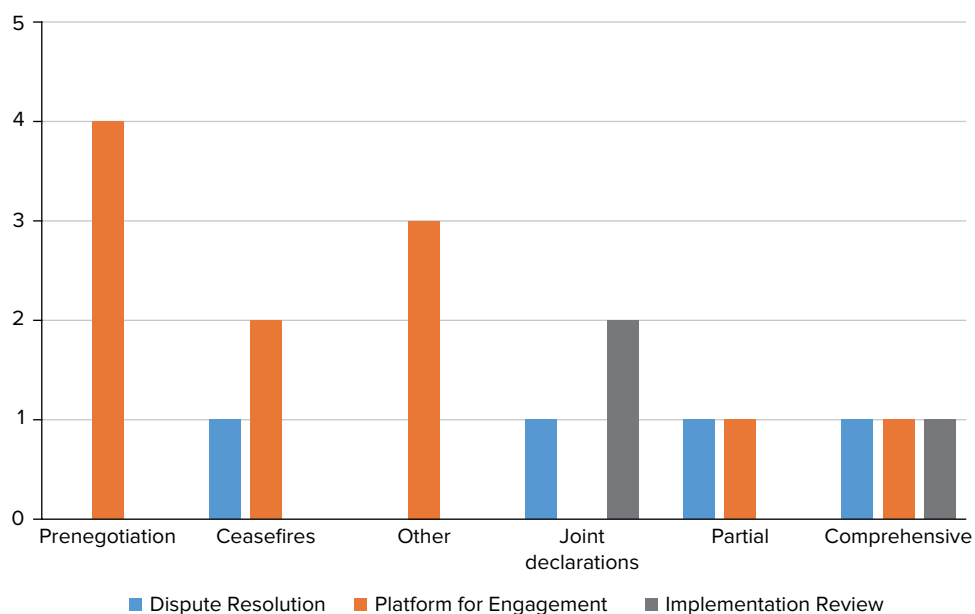


Figure 4. MfD by Type of Agreement in Papua New Guinea.

disputes through consultation and dialogue, and to accept and employ arbitration if necessary.³¹ The peace agreement at that time saw a return to violence. However, each new round of negotiations returned to building on previous achievements, and eventually the final comprehensive agreement incorporated many of the principles and mechanisms first outlined in Honiara.³²

³¹ Honiara Declaration on Peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation on Bougainville, Honiara, January 23, 1991, 6.

³² Peter Sohia “Early Interventions,” in *Weaving Consensus: The Papua New Guinea-Bougainville Peace Process*, edited by Andy Carl and Sister Lorraine Garasu (London: Conciliation Resources–BICWF, 2002), 16–23.

Finally, Implementation Reviews were included at various phases of the Bougainville peace process, but only after the parties had already agreed on some measures. For example, in the Waigani Communiqué of 1995, the National Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Transitional Government agreed that “officials of the National Government and the Bougainville Transitional Government shall carry out detailed negotiations and conclude programmes and projects arising from this Communiqué and those envisaged in the Charter of Mirigini, and report to the next meeting on 29 May 1995.”³³ The final comprehensive peace agreement, signed in 2001, also stipulates the review of the autonomy arrangements every five years.³⁴ The periodical review agreed to in this case stabilized the implementation process and contributed to the attainment of peace in Bougainville.

This overview of MfDs in the Papua New Guinea peace process indicates that peace processes are not linear but move in circles, that progress in negotiations is cumulative, and that relapse into violence does not necessarily undermine previous advancements as long as conflict parties remain engaged in a diplomatic solution. In this sense, MfDs are crucial to attaining peace in recurrent civil wars because they contribute to keeping warring parties engaged until a ripe moment for settlement has been reached, and they facilitate some measures to mitigate the effects of the conflict.

Mechanisms for Dialogue in the Mindanao/Bangsamoro Peace Process

The Philippines experienced a long and violent conflict over the Moro secessionist attempts in western Mindanao (Bangsamoro). The war lasted from 1972, when the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was created, to 2014, when the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF, an MNLF splinter group) signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro.³⁵ Over thirty-two years, the peace process saw the signing of fifty-five accords that

³³ Waigani Communiqué, Port Moresby, May 18, 1995, 3.

³⁴ Bougainville Peace Agreement.

³⁵ We only consider accords finalized before 2015, as explained in the methods section. However, following this agreement, the conflict parties signed several renewal agreements and agreements explaining terms of reference and functioning of bodies agreed in the 2014 peace accord, as listed on www.peaceagreements.org/searchadv?SearchForm%5Bname%5D=&SearchForm%5Bdate_after%5D=&SearchForm%5Bdate_before%5D=&SearchForm%5Bcategory_mode%5D=any&SearchForm%5Bagreement_text%5D=&SearchForm%5Bpeace_process%5D%5B%5D=90&SearchForm%5Bversion%5D=&s=Search+Database. We see them as the

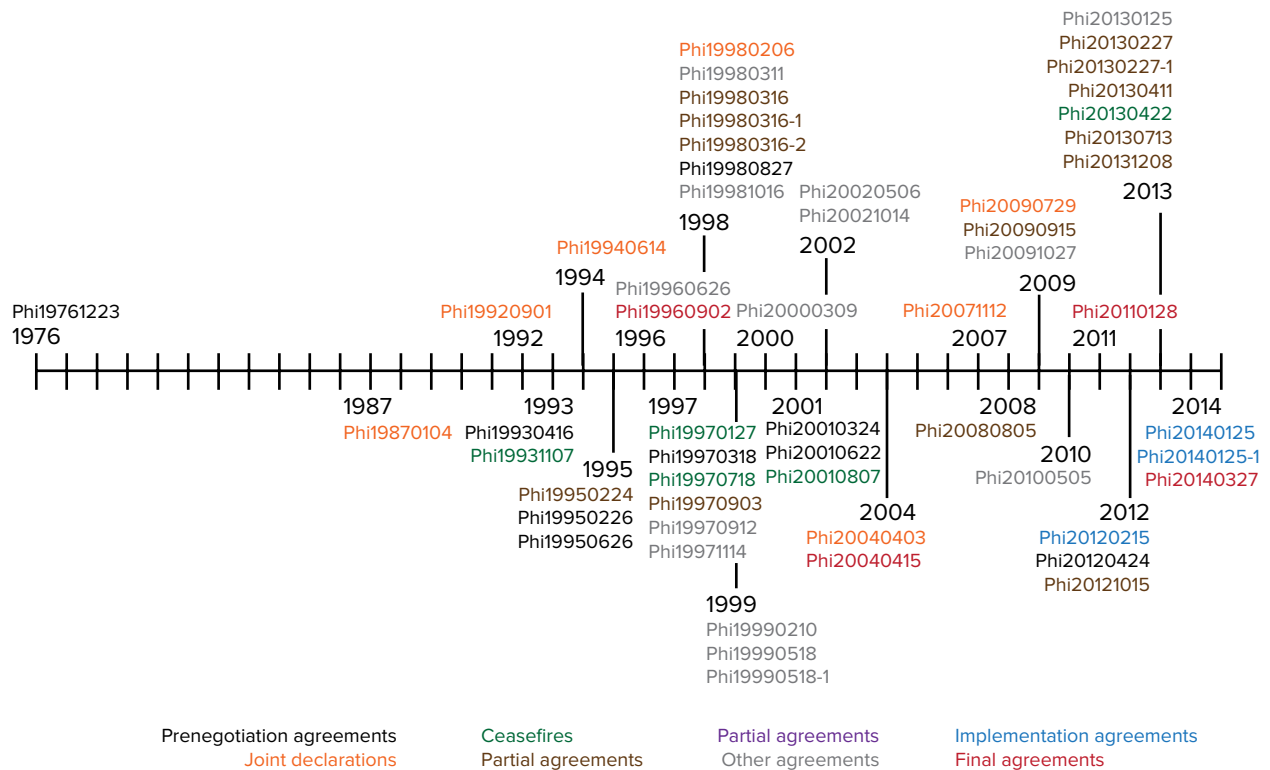


Figure 5. Timeline of the Peace Process in the Philippines.

included five ceasefires, seven joint declarations, nine prenegotiation agreements, thirteen partial accords, four final agreements, three implementation agreements, and fourteen other accords. The timeline in Figure 5 shows the types of agreement and the year they were signed (marked in different colors). Figure 6 maps how MfDs were incorporated into the Philippine peace process.

Similar to the Bougainville peace process, Platforms for Engagement were mostly present in the early stages of the peace process in Mindanao/Bangsamoro (joint declarations and prenegotiation accords). For example, in the Second Oslo Joint Statement, MfDs mapped future scheduled negotiation meetings: “The Parties agreed to hold the next round of formal talks on 26 to 29 April 2004. The foreign neutral venue, agenda and other details of such formal talks shall be discussed and agreed upon by the Chairpersons of the Negotiating Panels in consultation with the Royal Norwegian Government.”³⁶

implementation of provisions for Implementation Reviews contained in the final agreement rather than as separate accords, as parties continued engagement to elaborate on issues that remained unclear.

³⁶ Second Oslo Joint Statement Oslo, April 3, 2004, 5.

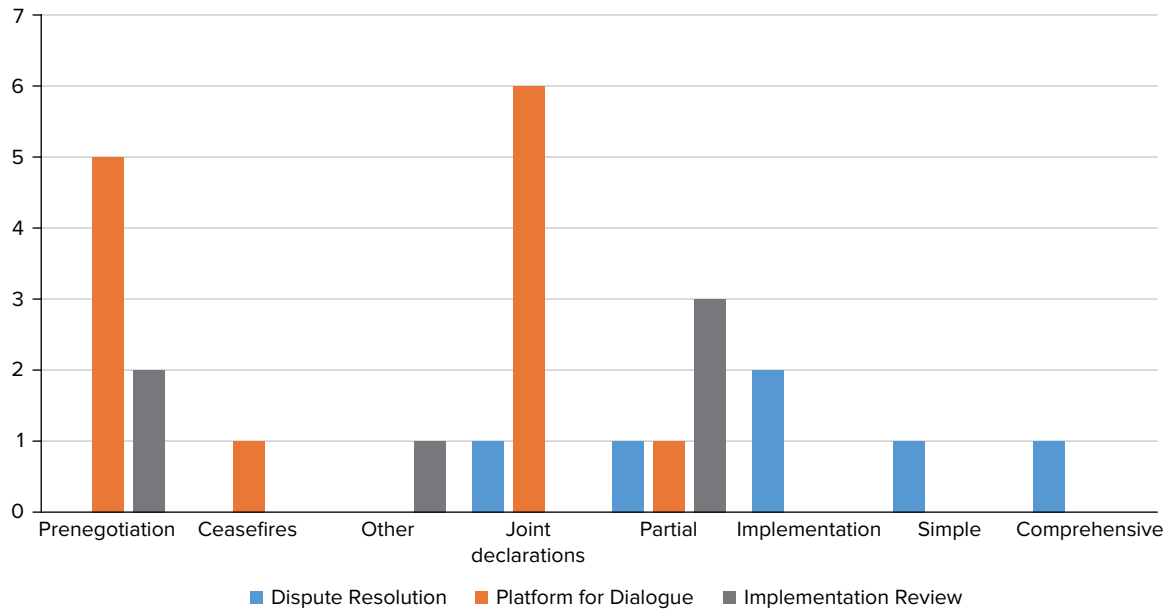


Figure 6. MfD by Type of Agreement in the Philippines.

Platforms for Engagement are also deployed to engage parties on issues of common interest that are not directly tackling the core incompatibility in the Philippines (territorial self-governance for Mindanao). For example, the government and MILF agreed to establish mechanisms to mitigate the “dangers arising in armed conflict areas” by setting up a committee to ensure adherence to international humanitarian law and alleviate human suffering.³⁷ Similarly, an agreed ceasefire between the government and MILF incorporated guidelines on the conduct of elections throughout the country, including MILF-controlled areas. In this agreement, MILF explicitly stated its intention to continue boycotting the elections, so that the accord “is not to be interpreted as MILF’s inconsistency to its standing policy not to take part or meddle in whatever capacity on the government electoral process.”³⁸ In the Philippines, MfDs thus also helped to broaden engagement between the parties on issues beyond the future territorial status of Mindanao, but clearly with intended benefits for the overall environment in which this core incompatibility could eventually be resolved.

³⁷ Terms of Reference of the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) of the International Monitoring Team (IMT), Kuala Lumpur, May 2, 2010.

³⁸ Guidelines for Mutual Understanding between the Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberations Front for Ceasefire-Related Functions during the May 13, 2013, National and Local Elections, Davao City, April 22, 2013, 2.

As in Bougainville, Implementation Reviews are most common in partial accords in the Mindanao/Bangsamoro peace process. For example, the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro stipulates that “at the end of the transition period, the GPH and MILF Peace Negotiating Panels, together with the Malaysian Facilitator and the Third Party Monitoring Team, shall convene a meeting to review, assess or evaluate the implementation of all agreements and the progress of the transition.”³⁹

Our case studies indicate that Implementation Reviews may have a positive effect on the successful termination of the conflict, as they may reveal implementation shortcomings early enough for the parties to address them before the whole attempt to achieve peace is destabilized. Moreover, the Philippines case suggests that Implementation Reviews are more effective in preventing recurrence if they are backed by Dispute Resolution Provisions that allow the parties to deal with implementation shortcomings through a pre-agreed process. In the case of the Philippines, the parties mainly agreed to elevate potential disputes over the interpretation or implementation of agreement provisions to the peace panels appointed with the task to resolve the conflict. For instance, the Implementing Guidelines on the Joint Communique of 2002, which was signed in 2012, foresee that “unresolved matters within the AHJAG [Ad Hoc Joint Action Group] shall be elevated to the GPH-MILF Peace Panels for disposition.”⁴⁰ This suggests that in the Philippines, Dispute Resolution Provisions helped provide opportunities to review those provisions whose implementation was problematic.⁴¹

Similar to the case of Papua New Guinea, the experience of the Philippines illustrates the potential benefits of embedding MfDs in an intrastate peace process. Additional research into the implementation of individual provisions is necessary before drawing clear conclusions, but our case study of the Philippines suggests that different types of MfDs provide a variety of institutionalized procedures for dialogue among conflict parties, which might be triggered and exploited if need arises. Their sequencing in the Philippines’ peace process also suggests that the decision to include

³⁹ Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, Kuala Lumpur, October 12, 2012, 11.

⁴⁰ Implementing Guidelines on the Joint Communique of 6 May 2002, Kuala Lumpur, February 12, 2012, 4.

⁴¹ It is notable that not all agreements that include Implementation Reviews also include Dispute Resolution Provisions, as noted above. In fact, only five agreements include both types of MfDs. In contrast, nine agreements include only Implementation Reviews and seventeen agreements include only Dispute Resolution Provisions. Therefore, the two types of MfDs do not necessarily go hand in hand.

a certain type of MfD in a peace accord responds to the specific context of the conflict but should also be informed by the particular stage of the peace process.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Peace processes are not linear but encounter setbacks and relapses into violence. Hindrances are to be expected throughout every peace process. However, successful peace processes keep the conflict parties engaged regardless of setbacks so as to gradually build up progress. In this light, we argue that peace agreements need to incorporate contingency plans that proactively mitigate the effects of setbacks. We argue that Mechanisms for Dialogue (MfDs) are one such contingency plan. MfDs are provisions in peace agreements that enable the belligerent parties to continue engaging with each other beyond the signature ceremony. The main purpose of MfDs, in our view, is to (continue to) build confidence between the parties; they can be included in the peace agreements to keep parties engaged throughout a peace process, to give a sense of continuity, to negotiate, and to ultimately facilitate a final settlement that tackles the core incompatibilities at the heart of the conflict.

In this discussion paper, we have examined how MfDs were incorporated in ten peace processes that successfully ended recurring civil wars (Angola, Burundi, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and Sierra Leone), with some further focus on the exemplary cases of the Philippines and of Bougainville. In all of our case studies the peace process had collapsed at least once, leading to a resumption of large-scale violence and to a cycle of renewed reconnaissance meetings, ceasefires, and prenegotiations that gradually progressed to the signing of final, successful peace agreements, despite earlier, intermittent war recurrence. A limitation of our research is that it has focused only on the text of the peace agreements rather than their implementation in general or of MfD provisions in particular. While we have offered evidence that the *inclusion* of MfD provisions is part of ultimately successful peace processes, we have not examined in detail the extent of their subsequent practical *use*. Future research should follow up on this question of how and when MfDs are used in peace processes and further test the causal mechanisms that link MfDs to ultimately successful peace processes whose plausibility we have established in this study.

We have identified three types of MfDs in these agreements: Platforms for Engagement, Implementation Reviews, and Dispute Resolution Provisions. The most common MfDs are Platforms for Engagement, followed by Dispute Resolution Provisions, with rare instances of Implementation Reviews. The type of MfD included in the peace agreements varied according to the stage of the peace process: we encountered most Platforms for Engagement at the early stages of the peace process. In more mature stages of the peace process, we found more Implementation Reviews and Dispute Resolution Provisions, and most final agreements included Dispute Resolution Provisions. Our brief analysis of the text of peace agreements in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines provided additional evidence as to this sequencing and as to the beneficial effect of MfDs.

Based on our findings, we are confident that MfDs have a cumulatively positive effect on peace processes. More specifically, different types of MfDs are most beneficial at different stages of peace processes. Platforms for Engagement help hold nascent peace processes together by building continuity and allowing conflict parties to reengage even after apparent setbacks in negotiations. Dispute Resolution Provisions at the final stages of the peace process embed an agreed course of action in case of disagreements on the interpretation of the agreement. Finally, Implementation Reviews, if introduced at mature stages of peace processes, may help to identify, and deal with, problematic aspects of an agreement in a timely manner.