

Webinar Brief

Confidence building measures (CBM) can be effective in advancing the conditions necessary for meaningful dialogue, preventing violence, promoting mutual understanding, enhancing the legitimacy of a peace process, and building sustainable peace. Determining when and how to effectively use CBM is a complex task. Here are some key points raised in a discussion where the Chatham House Rule applied

Highlights and Key Takeaways

- Without a certain level of trust, negotiations between conflict parties are not possible. CBMs can be helpful in building trust to negotiate the more substantive issues the conflict parties are facing.
- Shared environmental interests inherently overlap systems of governance and engagement. Traditional forms of confidence-building measures (CBMs) in this space risk becoming restricted by pigeon-holing them into 'economic,' 'political' or 'military' CBMs.
- Environmental CBMs hold particular value in bridging diverse sectors like the economy, humanitarian affairs, and the military. This is due to the far-reaching consequences of environmental issues, such as water usage, which can significantly affect almost every sector.
- Even though categorizing CBMs is helpful to understanding their potential relevance at different moments in a process from a mediation point of view, it is important to avoid a sectoral outlook on CBMs. Instead, cross-sectoral understanding and links should be reinforced.
- CBMs risk failing if the limitations to environmental peacebuilding are not realized, understood and accounted for in the peace architecture that shapes the process.
- In cases where CBMs are not embedded into a resilient platform of engagement, the limitations to environmental peacebuilding become more probable.
- CBMs that are embedded in a wider institutional framework that uses transboundary environmental issues in the service of peace, enable for diplomatic norms to be sustained through the common framework. This is particularly important for ensuring funding or funding pressure to joint initiatives.
- It is important for CBMs to facilitate local ownership, agency and accountability that enables conflict resolution mechanisms to be further advanced without third-party involvement.
- Trust relationships are more difficult to export than institutional frameworks that support mechanisms of effective CBMs. CBMs that are resiliently embedded into an institutional mechanism enables for trust-building through processes that prioritize relationships but do not solely rely on them.
- Confidence-building measures must substantively be in service to a peace process. If not, CBMs risk being too vague, contributing to power asymmetries between conflict parties, stalling the peace process, or placing more emphasis on trust rather than the key conflict issue.
- The importance of understanding different legal frameworks that CBMs may intersect with.
- To be aware of the different criteria in 'ripeness' for CBMs and to recognize the issue of coherence between conflict parties.
- Guiding criteria to consider for CBM agreements between conflict parties include being context-specific, simple, visible, verifiable, clear in parameters, linked to a substantive process, trans-sectoral, low-cost, not have a predetermined future and have equal impact.
- The importance of ensuring core party consent, consensus and co-design in CBMs. This includes drawing on local norms and integrating all relevant key actors, despite how diverse they may be.

Sources for Further Insights

- For more information on confidence-building measures in a peace process with case study references, refer [here](#).
- For more information on the role of verification technology in potential CBMs [here](#).
- For more information on approaches to local conflict prevention and resolution, refer to the following [1], [2] and [3].
- For more information on the MEDRC Model, refer [1], [2] and [3].