03
POLICY
BRIEF

PEACEBUILDING IN POST-COLD WAR AFRICA
PROBLEMS, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS

Research and Policy Seminar

Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa
Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS), University of Botswana
Centre of African Studies (CAS), University of Cambridge, England

Gaborone, Botswana, 25-28 August 2009

Rapporteurs: Gwinyayi A. Dzinesa and Elizabeth Otitodun, both of CCR

Editors: Adekeye Adebajo and Mark Paterson, both of CCR

CENTRE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

03
POLICY BRIEF

Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town; the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS), University of Botswana; and the Centre of African Studies (CAS) at the University of Cambridge co-hosted a research and policy seminar in Gaborone, Botswana from 25 to 28 August 2009 on the theme "Peacebuilding in Africa".

The meeting discussed the interplay between local, regional and global forces in relation to peacebuilding challenges in Africa. It focused on six key themes: the theory and practice of peacebuilding in Africa; strengthening the security sector; justice and human rights; gender and peacebuilding; pan-African institutions; and global institutions and ideologies. Case studies were also presented on Central Africa and the Great Lakes; West Africa; Southern Africa; and Eastern Africa. The term "peacebuilding" has gained currency in recent years especially since its entry into public use through the United Nations (UN). Egyptian UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's seminal 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, defined peacebuilding largely in relation to a conflict continuum. Peacebuilding is increasingly seen and understood as a multifaceted concept that includes the process of strengthening the political, security, socio-economic and transitional justice dimensions of societies emerging from conflict.

1. Peacebuilding in Africa: Theory and Practice

Peacebuilding has assumed a significant place on the international agenda since the end of the Cold War. It is particularly important to Africa, where almost half of the 51 UN peacekeeping missions have been deployed in the post-Cold War era. A range of local, regional and global peacebuilding structures and institutions have been established. These include the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Frameworks of the African Union (AU) of 2006 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of 2005, as well as the UN Peacebuilding Commission of 2005. The creation of legitimate and appropriate hierarchies, as well as a division of labour among and between peace-building actors and programmes, will help to facilitate effective peacebuilding.

2. Strengthening the Security Sector

The security environment is central to all peacebuilding initiatives. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants and those associated with armed groups is integral to the creation and maintenance of secure frameworks for sustainable post-conflict reconstruction and development. Context-specific DDR strategies that embrace informal reintegration mechanisms are critical. Security sector reform, which usually follows DDR, is often aimed at strengthening the operational capacity of traditional security institutions such as the army and police. Unfortunately, democratic security sector governance has often not been a priority in Africa, while many African parliaments lack the capacity to oversee the security sector effectively.

> ❛ Egyptian UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's seminal 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, defined peacebuilding largely in relation to a conflict continuum ❜

BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI
Image source - http://images.google.co.za

3. Justice and Human Rights

The promotion and protection of human rights are perceived as being important to peacebuilding efforts, and have become recognised tasks for contemporary UN peacekeeping missions. A human rights approach can promote the establishment of structures and practices to prevent violations of human rights. Such violations can lead to a relapse into conflict. The AU is currently setting up its own human rights architecture alongside the global human rights architecture. The operationalisation of these mechanisms could help to prevent conflict and promote peacebuilding in Africa. The Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) is not a peacebuilding institution in the strictest terms. Its primary mandate is to ensure that justice is done. Peace may be an incidental positive outcome of its cases, but justice is its explicit mandate. The court can, however, through its actions, unintentionally intensify or prolong conflict in countries, such as occurred in Uganda and Sudan.

4. Gender and Peacebuilding

Mainstreaming gender into peacebuilding initiatives is critical to making societies more equitable and just. A gap exists between established normative international frameworks for engendered peace and security – such as UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 of 2000 and 1820 of 2008 on Women, Peace and Security – and their implementation. The inclusion of women in peacebuilding activities could help to unshackle societies from patriarchy and promote a transformative agenda. Such action must also facilitate the addressing of unequal power relations and gender inequality. Women in Africa have "agency"; they cannot and should not be viewed as mere victims. While it is true that they have been subjected to diverse forms of sexual violence, women have also played important roles as peacebuilders in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

5. Pan-African Institutions

The African Development Bank's (AfDB) statebuilding assistance is important in supporting peacebuilding efforts in Africa. Its technical and financial assistance could help to facilitate the recovery of countries from conflict and have a direct impact on local populations. The Bank works closely with the AU to implement and manage projects related to NEPAD. Another potential peacebuilding body – the Pan-African Ministers Conference of Public/Civil Service – has recognised the contribution that good political governance and enhanced public administration can make to Africa's stability and development. The evolving AU and NEPAD post-conflict reconstruction frameworks could also promote endogenous programmes and ownership of peacebuilding initiatives by African actors. It is important to involve African civil society in these peacebuilding efforts, though there is some disagreement on how best to do this.

6. Global Institutions and Ideologies

The creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in December 2005 is important for Africa, as the first four (and, as of April 2010, only) cases to have been listed on its agenda – Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic (CAR) – are all located on the continent. An array of conceptual, structural and operational constraints, however, threatens the Commission's potential to implement programmes that could promote durable peace in Africa. The insistence on neo-liberal frameworks for post-conflict reconstruction and development by the Western-dominated World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) could aggravate tensions and increase the potential for a return to conflict.

Policy Recommendations

The following ten policy recommendations emerged from the Gaborone seminar:

- First, external parties should ensure that national parliaments in Africa have the capacity and authority to regulate and oversee national security institutions and strengthen civil-military relations in a comprehensive and effective manner. A stronger engagement with civil society is also necessary to enhance the capacity of legislatures to deliver in this area;

- Second, African governments must ensure that they adequately understand the obligations and implications of ratifying international justice instruments and making referrals to the International Criminal Court. In this regard, African civil society actors must ensure that African governments are held accountable in this area through such bodies as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights; the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; as well as other AU organs and institutions including the AU's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the Pan-African Parliament, NEPAD, and the African Peer Review Mechanism;

- Third, the decision about appropriate transitional justice mechanisms must be made taking local needs into account, while learning from experiences from other parts of the world. Each country's post-conflict needs are distinct, and transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions and war crimes tribunals must respond to each post-conflict country's specific set of circum-stances in a way that promotes both peace and justice;

‘ The creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in December 2005 is important for Africa ’

UN
Image source - trendsupdates.com/...
/uploads/2009/03/unamid.jpg

- Fourth, the AU and Africa's regional economic communities must identify their own comparative advantage in the area of post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives in order to be able to contribute effectively to the success of peacebuilding in Africa. Lacking the resources of the UN, the World Bank and the IMF, these bodies should prioritise areas such as strengthening state institutions, promoting democratic governance and economic growth, and enhancing socio-economic development;

- Fifth, African governments must deliver on their commitment to implement on the ground international instruments such as UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security in order to support peacebuilding efforts on the continent. With regard to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, a broader definition of "combatant" should be used to encourage women who were general "helpers" of armed forces to participate actively in DDR processes. Considering the prevalence of gender-based violence and the consequent spread of HIV/AIDS in post-conflict societies, DDR programmes should include a comprehensive system to address the psychological effects of violence and conflicts on women;

- Sixth, consideration should be given to funnelling more external financing of post-conflict peacebuilding through the African Development Bank, which in many ways could operate as NEPAD's implementation and financial management arm. Such a process must complement the role of external donors, such as the UN, the World Bank and the IMF, in ways that strengthen African decision-making in peacebuilding processes;

- Seventh, international economic institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF should give countries emerging from conflict sufficient time and adequate resources to address immediate post-conflict challenges before they seek to impose Structural Adjustment Programmes. These external efforts must also be aligned to Africa's peacebuilding structures and institutions such as the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Frameworks of the AU and NEPAD in order to ensure greater African ownership and legitimacy;

- Eighth, the UN Peacebuilding Commission must improve coordination with other UN agencies and work more effectively with African regional bodies and civil society. Although the Commission is mandated to act mainly as an advisory body, there are four key areas that require intervention for effective peacebuilding in Africa: mobilising resources; developing and recommending reconstruction strategies; helping to build political, judicial and administrative institutions; and co-ordinating the activities of important peacebuilding stakeholders;

- Ninth, local involvement in mechanisms such as the UN's Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies and Strategic Peacebuilding Frameworks, as well as the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, should go beyond national governments and the co-opting of self-appointed elites. The aim should be to ensure emancipatory local ownership of these processes. This can be done through greater involvement of civil society and the establishment of new mechanisms for consultation and participation. Such engagement should also go beyond existing state institutions and customary local authority structures, and needs to be linked more closely to existing state structures and external peacebuilders; and

- Finally, it is important for all relevant stakeholders to promote and ensure a better understanding of the hierarchy and power relations that prevail among the wide array of domestic, regional and external peacebuilding actors in order to establish appropriate complementarity, division of authority, and a more effective division of labour for peacebuilding efforts in Africa.