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THE PEACEBUILDING ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CENTRAL AFRICA



POLICY SEMINAR REPORT

10 - 12 APRIL 2006, HOTEL SAWA, DOUALA, CAMEROON

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RAPPORTEURS

THELMA EKIYOR AND NORIA MASHUMBA

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	11
1. Seminar Themes and Debates	13
2. Analysis of Conflict in Central Africa	14
3. Civil Society and Collaborative Arrangements with the Economic Community of Central African States	20
4. The Emerging Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Central Africa	25
5. The Role of the United Nations in Central Africa	32
6. Policy Recommendations	37

Annexes

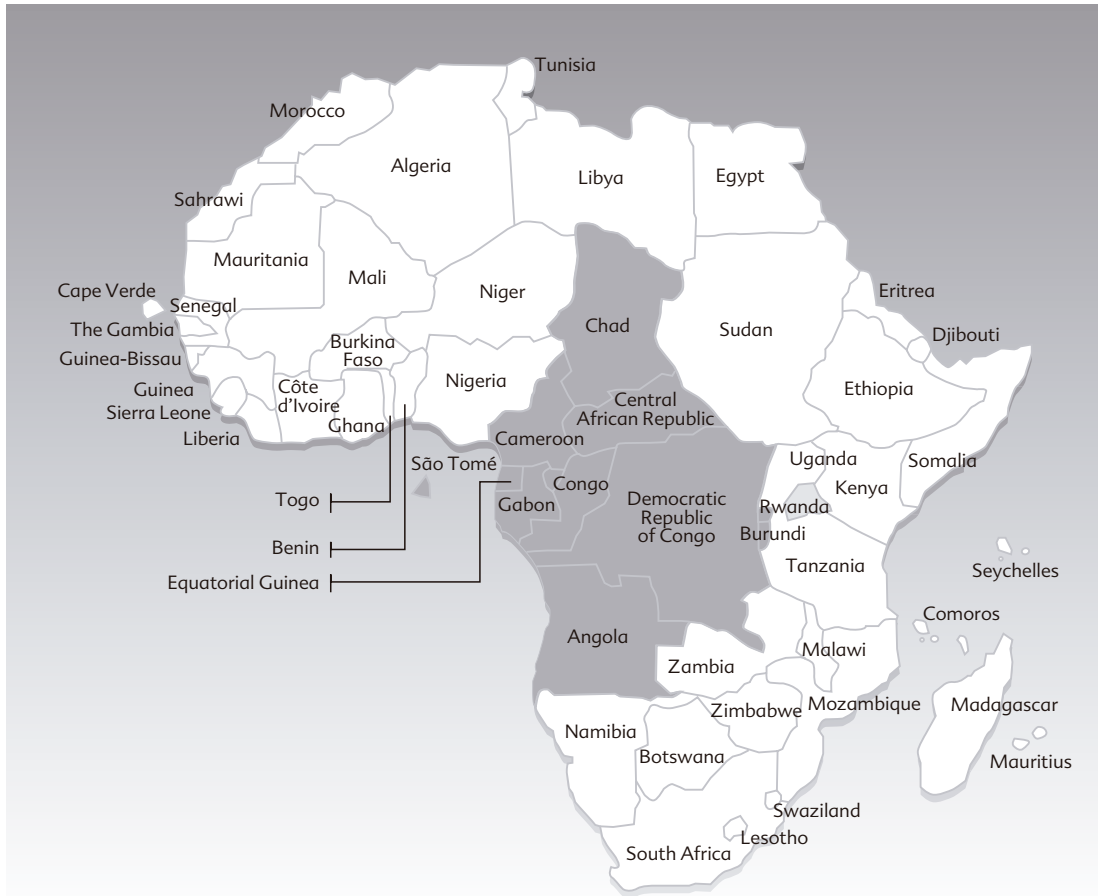
I. Agenda	39
II. Participants	44
III. Acronyms	46

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Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Members



ECCAS member states include Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Príncipe. ECCAS has overlapping membership with the Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC). Some members such as Chad, CAR, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe have dual membership in ECCAS and CEMAC. Angola and the DRC are also members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Acknowledgements

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The Centre for Conflict Resolution

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) is affiliated to the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. Established in 1968, the organisation has wide-ranging experience of conflict interventions in the Western Cape and southern Africa and is working increasingly on a pan-continental basis to strengthen the conflict management capacity of Africa's regional organisations, as well as on policy research on South Africa's role in Africa; the United Nations' (UN) role in Africa; African Union (AU)/New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) relations; and HIV/AIDS and Human Security.

The UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

Based in Yaoundé, Cameroon, the UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD) was established by UN General Assembly Resolution 53/78 of December 1998 and resolution 54/55 of 1 December 1999 as a field Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) at the request of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The mandate of the centre includes building the capacity of sub-regional institutions and civil society actors to respond effectively to human rights and democracy issues in the central African sub-region. The centre became fully operational in 2001 and has established close relationships with ECCAS and civil society actors in central Africa.

The Rapporteurs

Ms Thelma Ekiyor is Senior Manager of the Conflict Intervention and Peacebuilding Support Project (CIPS) at the Centre for Conflict Resolution; Ms Noria Mashumba is a Senior Project Officer at the Centre for Conflict Resolution.

Executive Summary

The sub-regional seminar on “Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention for Civil Society Organisations in Central Africa” was a joint initiative of the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) and the United Nations Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD), based in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The seminar, which was held from 10 to 12 April 2006 in Douala, Cameroon, brought together about 30 key actors in the peace and security field from civil society organisations; representatives of UN agencies based in central Africa and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); and participants from west and southern Africa.

Nine of the 11 ECCAS member states were represented at the seminar. Member states of ECCAS include Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Rwanda: an area with a population of about 120 million people.

The seminar provided an opportunity for civil society actors, representatives of ECCAS and other relevant players to analyse and understand the causes and consequences of conflict in central Africa as the initial steps towards the development of sustainable strategies for conflict prevention and the consolidation of peace in the sub-region. The hosting of the seminar was timely, as a number of ECCAS member states have recently emerged from protracted violent conflicts. Since the 1994 genocide, Rwanda has conducted two elections and embarked on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding initiatives. In Burundi, elections were held in July 2005 and were overseen by the UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB).

The DRC, which has hosted one of the most violent and protracted civil wars on the continent since 1997, has established a government of national unity since 2003 and held its first democratic elections in 46 years in July and August 2006. These are all positive developments for a sub-region that has for long been the theatre of conflicts on the continent. Sustainable peace in central Africa will, however, require the concerted efforts of a strong, vibrant and empowered civil society, as well as a responsive and capacitated sub-regional body.

As ECCAS develops a peace and security mechanism, it is important to interrogate the prospects and challenges of the evolving partnership between civil society and governments in central Africa. Experiences from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) can provide potential lessons for ECCAS.

Analysis of Conflict in Central Africa

Central Africa has been one of the most volatile sub-regions on the continent, experiencing four of the most violent conflicts in Africa in the last decade: in Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and the DRC. Other countries such as Chad and CAR have also experienced chronic instability since the end of colonial rule in the 1960s. Structural challenges such as profound social inequalities, poor governance and endemic corruption have all contributed to instability in central Africa.

The manipulation of ethnicity was identified as a root cause of some of the conflicts in central Africa. The Rwandan genocide, the Burundi conflict and the war in the DRC were all fuelled partly by ethnic tensions. In addition, the rich economic resources of the sub-region have also become a major source of conflict. The vast mineral and natural resources of central Africa are seen by some as a curse for the sub-region. Economic resources have increased insecurity for the majority of the populations of central Africa while benefiting a tiny national elite and external actors. There is a need for better management of resources to address some of the structural challenges – in particular, economic exclusion and poverty – which are increasingly becoming a major source of conflict in some of these countries.

There is also a need for strategic partnerships between sub-regional institutions and the international community in addressing some of the root causes of conflict in central Africa. External actors such as France and the United States (US) which have fuelled some of the conflicts in this sub-region, need to be committed beyond peacekeeping to support post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and to stimulate economic development. Institutions of democracy and governance such as credible and independent human rights and anti-corruption bodies are also essential.

Civil Society and Collaborative Arrangements with ECCAS: A Comparative Analysis with ECOWAS and SADC

The need for structured mechanisms to prevent and mitigate conflicts is critical to achieving Africa's peace and development agenda. Early-warning systems for the early detection and mitigation of potentially violent conflicts are thus a priority for Africa's emerging security architecture. Within these new security arrangements, civil society is becoming an important player, particularly as the causes of conflict are increasingly located in human security challenges such as human rights abuses; economic exclusion; governance and democracy; and gender-based violence.

A core element of Africa's emerging security mechanisms is the emphasis on a holistic approach that calls for partnerships between civil society and governments in promoting peace and development. In central Africa, the conflict prevention and regional integration agenda is complex and rests on two different but overlapping institutions. The Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC), created in 1994 to replace the Central African Economic and Customs Union (UDEAC), is focused on strengthening the monetary and economic integration of its member states. ECCAS, established in October 1983, provides for a wider economic community of 11 members, including the seven countries in CEMAC.

The member states of CEMAC include Chad, CAR, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and São Tomé and Príncipe, all comprising a total population of about 35 million people. In 1983, the ECCAS mandate was broadened to include a conflict prevention and management role. Its security organs are modelled along similar lines to those of SADC and ECOWAS, with a Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) created in 1999 by the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of a Mutual Security Pact in Central Africa. COPAX consists of a Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC); a Defence and Security Commission (CDS); and a Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC). The provisions of MARAC encourage multi-sector collaboration in conflict prevention and management efforts in the sub-region.

A poor resource base and persistent and often divisive conflicts in the sub-region have hampered implementation of the ECCAS early-warning mechanism. The huge disparities in domestic stability and economic development of member states have further complicated the challenges of the institution. The

presence of a strong conflict prevention and peacebuilding institution in the sub-region, working closely with civil society to promote security and stability is imperative.

Consolidation of peace in central Africa will require building the capacity of ECCAS and civil society actors, as well as providing them with the necessary resources. ECCAS must generate its own funding as a sign of commitment to peace, security, and economic development for the sub-region. The international community, which has played a decisive role in promoting peace in central Africa, also has a stake in advancing stability and development in the sub-region.

The Emerging Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Central Africa

Proximity to local populations has afforded civil society an influential position in the development and management of conflict early-warning mechanisms in west and east Africa. Civil society is also increasingly assuming an important role in mediating and negotiating peace agreements across the continent. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious organisations, women and youth in the DRC played a key role in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which ushered in the transitional government in 2003. In Rwanda, Burundi and Angola, faith-based organisations played a pivotal role in bringing warring parties to the negotiating table. However, civil society groups in Rwanda also played a negative role in promoting “hate radio” during the genocide of 1994. This broad spectrum of roles has often led to confusion on what constitutes civil society and its role in building peace.

While acknowledging the critical role that an empowered civil society can play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, civil society's peacebuilding role in central Africa is still evolving. Though to a large extent impacted by the dynamics and political context within different countries, civil society in central Africa shares certain key characteristics with the broad representation of civil society in other parts of the continent. Civil society in central Africa is not a homogeneous group and has tended to operate at the national level, with little interaction across borders.

While civil society in other parts of the continent has made considerable strides towards strengthening dialogue with sub-regional institutions, in central Africa, the civil society-ECCAS partnership is still in its formative stages. However, civil society in central Africa has enormous potential and, if better co-ordinated, experience from its work at the national level could enhance its efforts to engage ECCAS more effectively. The relationship between governments and civil society in central Africa has generally been characterised by tension and mistrust. Constructive dialogue and confidence-building initiatives between these two key actors will therefore be essential. Civil society actors in central Africa have also been involved in the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, sponsored by the UN and the African Union (AU) since August 2004.

The Role of the United Nations in Central Africa

The UN's decision to integrate a peacebuilding component into traditional UN peacekeeping missions in the post-Cold War era was a recognition by the world body of the inherent weakness of existing conflict prevention and management mechanisms. The history of UN interventions indicates that many countries that signed peace agreements in the post-Cold War era relapsed into conflict within five years of concluding such

agreements. The promotion of democracy and strengthening of public institutions of governance, as well as civil society organisations, have thus become an essential component of UN peacebuilding efforts. In central Africa, the experiences of the UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (UNCHRD) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and the initiatives of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) provided useful insights into the UN's initiatives in this important area.

Policy Recommendations

The Douala seminar made five key recommendations covering the areas of:

- Strengthening ECCAS-Civil Society Partnerships in Conflict Early-warning;
- Engendering Peacebuilding;
- Civil Society Relations with the UNCHRD in Yaoundé;
- Civil Society's Collaboration with Intergovernmental Institutions; and
- Civil Society and Democratic Governance.

1. Strengthening ECCAS-Civil Society Partnerships in Conflict Early-warning

The AU's evolving security architecture and its supporting pillars – the sub-regional institutions – acknowledge civil society as a key partner in Africa's peace and security agenda. The various sub-regional organisations are at different levels of operationalising these initiatives. The lack of political will has, in some instances, made it difficult for civil society actors to use the space provided effectively. As ECCAS prepares to implement its peace and security arrangements, it should ensure that an enabling environment is created to support partnerships with civil society organisations within and outside central Africa. It is also imperative for the sub-region to move from reacting to crises to preventing conflicts.

2. Engendering Peacebuilding

In 2004, ECCAS heads of state and government adopted a declaration on gender, as well as a gender policy and plan of action. A gender unit was established at the ECCAS secretariat in Libreville, Gabon. This framework can potentially become a strong advocacy tool for highlighting the important role of gender issues in conflict and post-conflict situations. ECCAS must thus work closely with national gender machineries to ensure that peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding initiatives are properly engendered. Civil society should also mainstream gender into their programmes, projects and activities. In collaboration with the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), civil society should advocate the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, which provide the legal framework for mainstreaming gender into regional peacebuilding efforts.

3. Civil Society Relations with the UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa in Yaoundé

Many civil society organisations lack operational and management capacity to assume an effective role in conflict management and prevention initiatives. UNCHRD, in collaboration with other UN agencies in the countries represented at the seminar, such as BONUCA and UNIFEM, should play a primary role in building the capacity of civil society actors to respond effectively to peace and security issues and to strengthen collaboration with ECCAS.

4. Civil Society's Collaboration with Intergovernmental Institutions

Civil society actors advocating a variety of issues across the social spectrum such as poverty; democracy; governance; human rights; elections; and gender issues have assumed a critical role in these debates. This has created new relationships between civil society and governments which in many instances has been characterised by antagonism, particularly on democracy and governance issues. However, several civil society organisations and governments in central Africa acknowledge that partnership is unavoidable and relevant in the current peace and security discourse. They are therefore exploring possibilities aimed at overcoming these challenges. Lessons and experiences can be drawn from other parts of the continent such as southern and west Africa.

5. Civil Society and Democratic Governance

Finally, civil society has a critical role to play as an oversight institution outside government structures in holding governments accountable, particularly in situations in which the independence of parliaments and judiciaries has been compromised. While interrogating this role, civil society organisations were challenged to engage in continuous self-evaluation and to observe democratic governance practices in their own organisations. Otherwise, these groups will not be able to question governments on these issues with credibility and integrity. Civil society actors should enhance democratic governance practices which include good leadership skills encompassing effective systems of transparency, accountability and democracy, particularly on issues of leadership succession.



ABOVE: Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa, addresses one of the sessions



LEFT: From left: Ms Dorothée Ndoh, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Mr Takwa Zebulon Suiffon, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Abuja; Mr Peter Essoka, Trauma Centre, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in Cape Town, South Africa, and the UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, hosted a three-day consultative seminar and training workshop for civil society organisations in Central Africa on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The seminar was held from 10 to 12 April 2006 in Douala, Cameroon, on the theme, “Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention for Civil Society Organisations in Central Africa”.

The Douala seminar, which brought together about 30 participants from civil society organisations in central, west and southern Africa; representatives of UN agencies in central Africa; and the 11-member Economic Community of Central African States¹ (ECCAS), provided a unique opportunity for the different players to consult on peace and security issues in central Africa and to map out long-term strategies for conflict prevention in the sub-region. Central Africa, with a population of about 120 million people, has been one of the most volatile sub-regions on the African continent. In the last two decades, about half of its member countries have been embroiled in protracted violent conflicts, which have spilled across borders, destabilising the entire sub-region. The civil wars in Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Congo-Brazzaville, and the divisive conflicts in the Great Lakes region involving the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Burundi, have adversely affected socio-economic development in central Africa and left many of its countries among the poorest in the world.

The Douala seminar was particularly timely as a number of countries in central Africa have recently emerged from conflict and are at various stages of consolidating peace. In July 2006, the DRC held its first election since its independence from colonial rule in 1960. Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda and Burundi have also held elections, while CAR, which experienced a civil war and a UN peacekeeping intervention between 1998 and 2000, has been working closely with a UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) since 1999 on post-conflict recovery efforts in the country.

However, with signs of possible civil strife in countries such as Chad, exacerbated by the long-standing crisis in Sudan, it is imperative for central Africa to work towards consolidating peace, while simultaneously strengthening ECCAS. This will require the participation and efforts of all stakeholders, which include a robust civil society, a committed international community and an efficient sub-regional organisation.

ECCAS has already established a conflict prevention and management mechanism for the sub-region that envisages collaboration with civil society in tackling central Africa’s peace and security challenges. However, efforts to implement the mechanism have been hampered by a number of factors, including the instability of the sub-region; lack of resources and capacity within ECCAS; and a fragmented, poorly-resourced civil society. In other parts of the continent, civil society and sub-regional institutions have established viable partnerships that have made invaluable contributions towards conflict prevention and management efforts. Experiences from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) highlighted the advantages and challenges of such arrangements.

¹ The member states of ECCAS include Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Príncipe.



Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa, left; Mr Gounoko Haounaye, Governor of Littoral Province, Douala, Cameroon



From right: Mr Alphonse Barancira, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Mr Jean-François Obembe, Economic Community of Central African States, Libreville, Gabon; Mr Gounoko Haounaye, Governor of Littoral Province, Douala, Cameroon

The Douala seminar explored the different but mutually supportive roles of these critical players, drawing lessons from experiences of other sub-regions and current initiatives in central Africa. The UNCHRD, BONUCA, and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, also provided useful insights into the various possibilities and avenues available to enhance the capacities of civil society and policymakers to respond effectively to the peace and security concerns of the sub-region.

The discussions generated a list of key policy recommendations specific to the organisations represented. Critically, there was consensus on the urgent need for follow-on processes to maintain momentum and commitment to promoting peace and security in central Africa. These recommendations could constitute the initial steps towards the establishment of a more comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in central Africa.

Objectives:

The main aim of the Douala seminar was to gather a cross-section of stakeholders in central Africa to formulate realistic strategies for strengthening collaboration between civil society and ECCAS to prevent and manage conflicts in the sub-region. The seminar also interrogated the role of UN agencies in supporting civil society and governments in peacebuilding initiatives in the sub-region. The seminar focused on the following four key objectives:

- To analyse and understand conflict dynamics from the perspective of civil society in central Africa;
- To assess and develop a comprehensive understanding of the state of peace and security in the central African sub-region, especially in relation to other sub-regions;
- To situate and understand the role of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in ECCAS; and
- To generate debate on the development of a comprehensive civil society plan of action to address peace and security issues in central Africa.

1. Seminar Themes and Debates

The Douala seminar combined oral presentations and plenary discussions with facilitated sessions. The presentations set the tone for discussions on the various thematic issues, while the facilitated sessions provoked reflection and contributions from participants. The seminar discussions focused on the following four key debates:

- Analysis of Conflict in Central Africa;
- Civil Society and Collaborative Arrangements with ECCAS (a comparative analysis with west and southern Africa);
- The Emerging Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Central Africa; and
- The Role of the UN in Central Africa.

This report summarises the seminar discussions and concludes with an outline of concrete and implementable policy recommendations adopted by the participants as a first step towards the development of integrated peacebuilding interventions by civil society actors in central Africa.



TOP: From left: Mr Peter Essoka, Trauma Centre, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Ms Ecoma Alaga, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Accra, Ghana; Mr Jacob Enoh-Eben, Independent Consultant, Accra, Ghana
ABOVE: The workshop in session
RIGHT: From left: Mr Peter Kum Che Mebeng, Network for Human Promotion and Development, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Mr Claude Nkurunziza, Centre Jeunes Kamenge, Bujumbura, Burundi; Mr Dieudonne Munyankiko, Association Modeste et Innocent, Butare, Rwanda

2. Analysis of Conflict in Central Africa

Perhaps due to the intense focus on Africa's Great Lakes region, the central African sub-region – which includes Cameroon, Chad, CAR, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea – is one of the forgotten areas in Africa.

The changing geo-political landscape has also affected the entity called “central Africa”, which has expanded in recent years to include São Tomé and Príncipe, Burundi and Rwanda in an enlarged Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC), which replaced the French-inspired Central African Economic and Customs Union (UDEAC) in 1999. CEMAC merged with ECCAS in 2003. The merger broadened ECCAS' mandate from a focus on integration at its establishment in 1983 to include peace and security issues. Angola, which is also a member of SADC, remained an observer until it officially joined ECCAS in 1999. With its headquarters in Libreville, Gabon, ECCAS has sought to become the conflict prevention and management mechanism of the central African sub-region in 2003, though it has remained largely inactive until recently.

Central Africa has been the epicentre of violent conflicts and civil wars for decades and remains one of the most turbulent of Africa's sub-regions. This area has recorded three of Africa's most brutal and protracted conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. Twelve years after the Rwandan genocide in which nearly one million people were killed, the country has shown signs of recovery. In Burundi, prospects for consolidating peace and democracy increased following negotiations for a truce in July 2006 between the government and the last of the seven Hutu rebel movements in Burundi, the National Liberation Forces (FNL). Peace could bring an end to a war that has resulted in the death of over 200,000 people. However, the arrest of the former president, Domitien Ndayizeye, in August 2006 remains a continuing source of concern.

In the DRC, where an estimated three million people have died since 1997, the elections held in July and August 2006 may bring closure to one of Africa's longest and most complex civil wars that involved seven foreign armies and spanned three sub-regions. However, the conflict issues in central Africa extend beyond Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. Congo-Brazzaville and CAR have also emerged from civil wars and continue to experience tensions. CAR, a country with a history of violent conflict and military coups, has recently experienced open violence in its northern region between rebel movements and government forces. The civil wars in the DRC and Sudan have further complicated the security situation in CAR.

Chad, a key player in the sub-region, is experiencing a rise in well-organised militia groups, attempted coups and an influx of refugees from south Sudan. Cameroon remains one of the most stable countries in the region in terms of violent conflict. But with internal governance issues, the increasingly volatile situation in Chad to the north, and population movements from CAR into the eastern province of the country, there is a possibility of future instability in Cameroon.

The situation in central Africa is exacerbated by the contradiction of endemic poverty in a region with vast natural resources. The wealth in central Africa has created a regionalisation that links various countries to outside interests,² thus creating a milieu in which a variety of networks; shadow actors; private cartels; large

² Ian Taylor: “Conflicts in Central Africa: Clandestine Networks and Regional/Global Configurations”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 30, 95 (March 2003), pp.45-55.

multinationals; and private armies have developed. Consequently, external interests have significantly exacerbated conflicts in the region.

As the international oil market searches for alternatives to Middle Eastern oil, central Africa will remain a major focus of interest for external actors. Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon are all positioning themselves to become key players in the global oil market. The World Bank's Chad-Cameroon pipeline project is an example of the region's growing significance to the international oil market. The project was initiated by agreements dating back to 1988 between Chad and Cameroon and a consortium of private enterprises from the United States – ExxonMobil and Chevron – as well as Malaysia's state oil company, Petronas, with financing from the World Bank and other private financial institutions from Europe and the United States.³ Heralded at the time as the single largest private sector investment in sub-Saharan Africa, the project, which cost an estimated \$4.2 billion, has a pipeline which stretches 650 miles from the Doba basin oilfields in southern Chad to export facilities located offshore at Kribi, Cameroon, in the Gulf of Guinea.⁴ This pipeline has implications not only for the countries involved, but also for the entire region and the international community. Competition between France and the United States over this project is an indication of the region's attractiveness to foreign governments and multinational firms.

The involvement of external actors as key stakeholders in national and regional politics and conflicts is important to understanding security dynamics in central Africa. As economic stakeholders, external actors are critical to any peacebuilding efforts in the region. France's expeditious deployment of troops in Chad to protect the regime of Idriss Deby in the wake of an attempted coup plot in March 2006 is an indication of the strong link between countries in the region and the former colonial power. France also played a key role in providing financial resources to the Inter-African Force in the Central African Republic (MISAB) comprising Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali, which restored peace to CAR following an attempted coup in 1996.

The European Union (EU) has further supported modest peacekeeping operations in the DRC in 2003 – Operation Artemis and the EU Police Mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL), as well as the EU Security Sector Reform Mission in the DRC (EUSEC DR Congo) in 2005. The EU deployed a 1,200-strong rapid response force to assist the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) during elections in July 2006. Despite these efforts, many central Africans complain of double standards by western governments that invested more financial resources in prospecting for natural resources such as oil and diamonds than in assisting African states and civil society to build peace.

Western interests in the minerals and other resources of the sub-region are said to have fuelled and perpetuated some of the conflicts in central Africa. This has led to massive violations of human rights, which some western governments are constantly and contradictorily advocating in their aid policies for the sub-region. The indirect involvement of external actors in central Africa's conflicts has contributed to the creation of "war economies" in the sub-region. Countries rich in natural resources and experiencing civil war or in post-war environments have often encountered economic concerns which exacerbate and perpetuate conflicts. These factors are influenced by cartels, smuggling rings and transnational political connections that have regional implications. We next focus in more detail on two case studies: DRC and Chad.

³ Amnesty International, "Contracting out of Human Rights: The Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project", September 2005.

⁴ Janet L. Guyer, "Briefing: The Chad-Cameroon Petroleum and Pipeline Development Project", *African Affairs*, 101 (2002), pp.109-115; and Scott Pegg, "Can Policy Intervention Beat the Resource Curse? Evidence from the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline", *African Affairs*, 105, 418 (2006), pp.125.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The DRC is a case study of a war economy requiring further analysis to provide a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, which has served to perpetuate conflicts in the sub-region. Understanding the root causes of war economies can provide a basis for the development of effective sub-regional strategies that can mitigate emerging trends in countries such as Chad. As the Congo embarks on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, it is imperative for the country and the sub-region to ensure that factors that fuelled the trend are effectively dealt with. In this regard, the case of Angola, which, though a member of ECCAS, is located in southern Africa, provides useful lessons. Angola experienced a 25-year civil war fuelled by the extraction of oil and diamonds. Angola's ruling *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA) and the *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) rebel group extracted oil and diamonds in collusion with ready overseas buyers, with the proceeds being ploughed back into financing the country's civil war.

The diamond industry in the DRC is one of the largest in the world. In 2003, the country ranked third by volume among the world's diamond producers, with an output of 27 million carats. The country's north-eastern Kivu province hosts one of the most lucrative gold mines in the world. The DRC's eastern Katanga region is rated among the highest copper- and cobalt-producing areas in the world. With shrinking world copper and cobalt production, which has quadrupled the price of both commodities, this lucrative region has attracted the interest of western governments and businesses as well as regional actors, and is fast becoming an area of interest for emerging economic giants such as China and India. A report by Global Witness of July 2006 noted that, in 2005 alone, the DRC officially exported \$390 million worth of copper and cobalt, but the country was losing minerals worth at least \$1.1 billion a year through corruption.⁵

Resources in the DRC have been described as a "curse" for its 55 million citizens, enriching only a few within the country, but many outside. A UN Security Council report of April 2001, which explored the illicit exploitation of resources in the DRC, cites the involvement of private corporations and senior government and army officials from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Zimbabwe and the DRC in the looting of resources from the country.⁶ Other countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Cameroon and CAR are said to have passively colluded in the illegal exploitation by facilitating shipping of the extracted resources through their ports.⁷

The extraction of mineral resources in the DRC has left a legacy of widespread poverty, social inequalities and underdevelopment. The conflict, which has been described as "Africa's First World War", has drawn in seven foreign armies from within and outside the continent, including a myriad of militias and mercenaries, following the 32-year autocratic rule of the western-supported Mobutu Sese Seko.⁸ The impact of decades of violent conflict has been debilitating for the country. A UN Security Council panel found that Rwandan and Ugandan military officers played key roles in the illicit trade of resources across borders. The Security Council report noted that though Uganda and Rwanda have no known production of diamonds, the two countries exported considerable volumes of the minerals, which increased markedly during the periods in which both countries were involved in the DRC between 1997 and 2000.

5 *Digging in Corruption*, Global Witness Report, July 2006 (available at <http://www.globalwitness.org/reports/show.php/en.00095.html> : accessed 18 August 2006).

6 *The Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo*, UN Security Council Panel of Experts Report, S/2001/357, April 2001 (available at <http://www.reliefweb.int> : accessed 18 August 2006).

7 Ibid.

8 Gaston Kalombo, *Election Update 2006*, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1.20 (July 2006), Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), Johannesburg.



ABOVE: Mr Jean-François Obembe, Economic Community of Central African States, Libreville, Gabon

RIGHT: From left: Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa; Mr Gounoko Haounaye, Governor of Littoral Province, Douala, Cameroon; Mr Alphonse Barancira, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Mr Jean-François Obembe, Economic Community of Central African States, Libreville, Gabon

Multinational corporations that provide a ready market for the minerals have also been accused of fuelling the conflict, as some of the profits from the DRC are channelled into the provision of arms for the various militia groups that have operated with impunity in eastern Congo.

Since the coming into office of the DRC transitional government by 2003, the country held democratic elections in July/August 2006 for the first time since 1965. The government must now redirect revenue earned from the country's resources towards rejuvenating the economy and the collapsed public service. However, breaking the cycle of embezzlement, looting, corruption and illicit trade will be difficult.

The lucrative nature of the Congolese conflict has not only drawn in economic stakeholders from neighbouring countries, but also from countries in the west. This has resulted in the globalisation of the conflict,⁹ with various states and actors interested in its outcome. Private corporations such as DARA in Europe, GmbH in Germany, Shanton President Wood Supply Co Ltd of China and Thailand, DARA Tropical Woods in the United States, and others in Denmark, Japan, Belgium and Switzerland are alleged to have colluded with companies in the Congo and Uganda in the illegal extraction of timber from the DRC.¹⁰ An analysis of the conflict in the Congo reveals that international governments and actors have influenced post-Mobutu regimes. A key concern for the country is thus what will happen to the trans-national military and economic networks with interests centred in Kinshasa and extending to Geneva, Brussels, Lisbon, Paris and Washington.¹¹ During the DRC conflict, its government had little control over the country's mining operations, with business relations regulated largely by Kinshasa-based

9 Timothy M. Shaw. "New Regionalisms in Africa in The New Millennium: Comparative Perspectives on Renaissance, Realism and/or Regressions". *New Political Economy*, 5, 3 (2000).

10 *The Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the DRC*. UN Security Council Panel of Experts report. April 2001.

11 Timothy M. Shaw. "New Regionalisms in Africa In The New Millennium".

private individuals who had a stake in these operations. The post-election government will need to move fast with reforms to regain control over this sector to ensure that proceeds from these resources are used to develop the country for the benefit of its citizens.

MONUC was established in 2000 with a peacekeeping mandate to provide support to the peace process in the DRC. Its mandate was extended in 2004, authorising it to protect civilians against physical violence in the Ituri and Kivu provinces.¹² The two regions, which are close to the country's border with Rwanda and Uganda, remained tense even after the signing of the Pretoria Peace Accord in 2002. MONUC is the largest of the UN's 17 peacekeeping missions worldwide and the most costly, with an annual budget of \$1.1 billion.¹³

As at July 2006, the mission numbered 17,692 uniformed personnel, 1,105 police, 733 military observers, 950 international civilian personnel and 1,995 local civilian staff.¹⁴ However, in a country the size of western Europe and surrounded by nine neighbouring countries, the number of peacekeepers has been considered by most observers to be inadequate. In addition to its peacekeeping mandate, MONUC was authorised to deal with a number of critical post-conflict issues. Security Council Resolution 1493 of 2003 extended MONUC's mandate to include support for state authorities in preparing for the holding of democratic elections in the country. The mandate also provides for MONUC to support the transitional government in the demobilisation and disarmament of over 300,000 Congolese combatants.

Reintegration of former combatants is critical in any post-conflict processes. Following the elections in July/August 2006, which cost \$422 million, the country will continue to need financial resources and expertise from the international community for post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. In the past, inadequate support for post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts following the holding of elections have led to a resurgence of even more violent conflict. This was also the case in Angola in 1992. Following the cessation of hostilities and elections, war resumed for another ten years after the results of the elections were contested by Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels. The country is still grappling with the reintegration of ex-combatants and the resettlement of returnees and internally displaced persons almost five years after the end of the war in 2002.

Chad

The current situation in Chad is highly volatile. The country has a history of military *coups d'état* and a putsch was attempted in April 2006. While the potential impact of instability in Chad is not comparable to that of the DRC in the Great Lakes region, the country's status as an oil-rich nation, a "safe haven" for refugees from Sudan's Darfur region and CAR, as well as the country's porous borders, mean that violent conflict could further threaten regional stability. In the oil-rich southern part of the country, armed groups demanding a stake in Chad's oil reserves have engaged the government in bloody skirmishes, causing injury and death to local civilian populations whom the government of Chad have accused of collaborating with the insurgents.

Internal dynamics in Chad are multi-layered. The country is experiencing a social crisis triggered by embezzlement of state revenues during a period in which Chadians expected a rise in their standard of living from the revenue of

¹² See the UN Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Facts and Figures (available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/monuc/facts.html> : accessed 18 July 2006). This budget is for the period 1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

recently discovered oil. Extraction has increased the incidence of corruption and related human rights abuses, adding another dimension to the current unstable environment. As at 2005, Chad was ranked 142 out of 146 countries reviewed by the German-based anti-corruption watchdog, Transparency International. The intricate links between increasing opposition and the conflict in Sudan have further complicated tensions in the country. Accusations are rife of the Chadian government providing sanctuary to Darfur rebels, and Chadian opposition groups are also alleged to have assisted the Sudanese government in Darfur.¹⁵

The growing rebel incursions on the border between Chad and Sudan have intensified Chad's political situation. President Idriss Deby's government has also witnessed a spate of defections to rebel movements located in Darfur. In the 16 years of Deby's term in office, there have been several coup attempts. Nevertheless, in May 2006, he won another presidential term. Governments in the region remain concerned about the security situation in Chad.

Accusations of Chad's role in intensifying the conflict in CAR are another cause of concern for the region. However, the current situation in Chad has led to a rise in civil society activities aimed at mobilising around oil and human rights issues, specifically focusing on the Chad-Cameroon pipeline. Both governments and an international oil consortium have been accused of fuelling corruption and human rights abuses. On other occasions, local civil society organisations have partnered with international organisations to raise international awareness about human rights abuses perpetuated as a result of the pipeline project.

Cameroon has also been in the spotlight for its human rights abuses, which the pipeline project has highlighted. Human rights defenders in Cameroon have come under increasing government scrutiny with rights such as freedom of expression and association curtailed. In light of these developments, civil society groups in neighbouring Cameroon and Chad should develop long-term complementary strategies to advocate increased democratic space, particularly for the media.



From left: Mr Claude Nkurunziza, Centre Jeunes Kamenge, Bujumbura, Burundi; Mr Alphonse Barancira, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Ms Dorothée Ndoh, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé, Cameroon

15 *Chad: Back Towards War?* International Crisis Group Africa Report, III. I. June 2006.

3. Civil Society and Collaborative Arrangements with the Economic Community of Central African States

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) initially envisaged to drive economic and regional integration in Africa's sub-regions have increasingly taken on a new conflict prevention and management role. The AU has called on RECs to play a complementary role in ensuring peace and security on the continent.

RECs have continued their initial economic integration mandate but have incorporated governance, peace and security issues into their portfolios. Among these, ECOWAS was created in 1975 and established a peace and security mechanism in 1999. In southern Africa, the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) of 1980 was transformed into today's Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992. ECCAS was established in 1983 and subsequently adopted a peace and security mandate in 2002. Under the new security arrangements, each sub-regional grouping has made specific provision to address human security challenges and to ensure collaborative partnerships with civil society actors in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. RECs usually seek their legitimacy to intervene in conflicts from the UN before they can take action, particularly in cases where the use of force is anticipated.

The UN and the AU have endorsed this multi-sectoral approach to conflict management, though the primary responsibility for ensuring global peace and security still remains with the UN. Africa's sub-regional organisations are at varying stages of promoting integration through trade, economic development and conflict prevention. A critical issue in this regard is the failure of these organisations to incorporate the participation of civil society into their activities. The Douala seminar explored civil society-government interactions within SADC and ECOWAS to assess whether these experiences can offer any lessons for the ECCAS sub-region.

The Economic Community of West African States

ECOWAS was established in 1975. Its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security was created in December 1999. The mechanism drew inspiration from earlier protocols such as the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression, and the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence. These peace and security arrangements were founded against the background of violent conflicts and ECOWAS' shortcomings in attempts to manage conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire between 1990 and 2003.

ECOWAS established an Observation Monitoring System within its secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, which receives information from four zonal bureaus located across the sub-region, thus creating the most advanced early-warning system on the continent. However, the efficacy of the early-warning mechanism to prevent violence is yet to be proved. In response to the need to address structural issues such as the equitable distribution of resources; the rule of law; the promotion and protection of human rights; and corruption and governance issues, ECOWAS adopted a Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in December 2001.

In seeking to implement some of the provisions of the mechanism, ECOWAS has included an innovative clause which cuts across issues of the sovereignty of states and allows the organisation to intervene in internal conflicts, particularly in cases in which these threaten to destabilise the sub-region. ECOWAS' new mandate also extends to cover cases of human rights abuses and attempts to overthrow a democratically elected government through constitutional means.¹⁶

Commitment to collaborate with civil society organisations is provided under ECOWAS' 1999 and 2001 protocols on security and governance. ECOWAS has made strides in operationalising the provisions for civil society participation. It has established formal collaborative arrangements with a number of civil society organisations such as the Ghana-based West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) to operationalise the ECOWAS early-warning mechanism. On democracy and governance issues, ECOWAS, in collaboration with civil society organisations in its 15 member states,¹⁷ established the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF).

Given the special role that women play in society and increasingly in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, ECOWAS has also undertaken to collaborate with various women's groups through the establishment of a gender unit at its secretariat as well as through the Gender and Development Centre in Dakar, Senegal.

The Southern African Development Community

SADC was created by the Declaration and Treaty of 1992 with "a vision of a shared future in an environment of peace, security, stability, regional co-operation and integration based on equity, mutual benefit and solidarity". The transformation of SADC from SADCC¹⁸ broadened the vision of the institution from one of co-operation in primarily political, defence and regional integration dating back to the Frontline States of 1977,¹⁹ to embracing peace and security issues. Since 1992, SADC has adopted a list of more than 30 protocols to facilitate the realisation of the Common Agenda of the sub-region. At least 25 of these have come into force, though many of the protocols are yet to be operationalised.

Since its transformation in 1992, SADC members have embarked on two interventions - in Lesotho in 1998 (with South Africa leading the mission with assistance from Botswana), and in the DRC in 1998 (led by Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola). Both interventions caused divisions within SADC.

While SADC has made plans for the establishment of a conflict early-warning mechanism, operationalisation has been at a much slower pace to ECOWAS. The Strategic Indicative Plan for the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (SIPO) of 2004 provides the legal framework for civil society participation. Though SIPO was adopted to operationalise SADC's Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, it also aims to

16 Takwa Suiffon Zebulon. 'Civil Society, Sub-regional Organisations and the Challenge of Conflict Prevention in Africa: The Experience of West Africa', paper presented at the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding for Civil Society in Central Africa seminar, 10 - 12 April 2006, Douala, Cameroon.

17 Member states of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

18 The Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) was formed in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1980, involving Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, to co-ordinate economic development and integration in order to reduce dependence on apartheid South Africa. See *The Peacebuilding Role of Civil Society in Southern Africa*. CCR policy seminar report, Maseru, Lesotho, 14 and 15 October 2005 (available at <http://ccrweb.ccruct.ac.za>); and *Whither SADC? Southern Africa's Post-Apartheid Security Agenda*. CCR policy seminar report, Cape Town, South Africa, 18 and 19 June 2005 (available at <http://ccrweb.ccruct.ac.za>).

19 The Frontline States had its origins in the OAU Liberation Committee to harmonise the policies of African countries supporting the liberation struggle in southern Africa.

promote human security issues in very broad terms. There has been much debate on the conceptualisation of SIPO which places human security challenges and provisions for civil society participation in a document designed primarily to address military issues. Civil society participation has been a contentious issue within SADC. Attempts at collaboration between civil society and governments have been a combination of successes in less contentious areas such as research and capacity-building, and tension and mistrust in the areas of democracy, governance and human rights issues.

The Economic Community of Central African States

The volatile conditions in central Africa point to the need for an effective regional conflict prevention and peacebuilding mechanism. ECCAS, one of the five pillars of the AU's evolving security mechanism, has an important role to play in these areas.

Created in 1983, ECCAS was confronted with institutional challenges from its birth, arising from the fact that several of its members also belong to other sub-regional groupings. Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC are members of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes region. Angola and the DRC are also members of SADC, while Chad, CAR, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville, and São Tomé and Príncipe are all members of CEMAC, established in 1999. This has affected the financial stability of ECCAS, as members have struggled to meet their obligations to the institution. The politically divisive conflicts in the Great Lakes region have also delayed operationalisation of the ECCAS mechanism. It was not until 1999 that ECCAS signed the protocol on relations between the African Economic Community (AEC) and RECs, which broadened the mandate of ECCAS to include conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In contrast to ECOWAS and SADC, ECCAS' peace and security mechanism has not yet been tested, notwithstanding the fact that the sub-region has been host to some of Africa's most violent conflicts. However, ECCAS has renewed impetus, prompted by the cessation of hostilities in most of its member states and the much-needed financial support from external sources such as the European Union.²⁰ This could enable the institution to begin to exercise its prevention role in central Africa more effectively.

ECCAS' security organs are modelled along lines similar to those of SADC and ECOWAS and comprise:

- A mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, referred to as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);²¹
- An early-warning system known as the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC), which collects and analyses data for the early detection and prevention of crises; and
- A Defence and Security Commission (CDS) consisting of the chiefs of staff of national armies and commanders-in-chief of police and gendarmerie forces from member states.

The role of the CDS is to plan, organise and provide advice to the decision-making bodies of the community in order to initiate military operations. In line with the arrangements of the AU to establish an African Standby Force (ASF) by 2010, ECCAS is to establish a Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC) to conduct peace missions, maintain security, contribute to humanitarian relief and assist other continental initiatives.

20 European Union. "Tender: Implementation of the Support Programme to the ECCAS Actions in the Field of Peace and Security", issued to TRANSTEC, a Belgian consulting company in June 2006. The tender runs for 42 months, beginning in August 2006. EU support to ECCAS dates back to 2003 when it made proposals to strengthen ECCAS' capacity on condition of a merger of CEMAC with ECCAS.

21 Decision No.9/ECCAS/CHSG/X/02. 17 June 2002.

The ECCAS mechanism encourages multi-sector collaboration with all stakeholders in peace and security issues in central Africa. Thus, Article 4 states that “the coordinator of MARAC shall work in close cooperation with national networks, as well as United Nations Organisations (UNO), the AU, and other agencies which may assist in the accomplishment of his/her mission”.²² These networks, which will facilitate the collection, dissemination and analysis of information, will include governmental and non-governmental bodies, civil society groups, scholars and research institutions.²³ Institutional strengthening is central to ECCAS’ ability to function as the region’s security framework.

The secretariat is severely understaffed, and functional areas such as the gender unit, have only been recently staffed. It is vital that the capacity of the secretariat be strengthened to implement its various protocols and declarations, and in order for COPAX and its other structures, in particular MARAC, to become operational. ECCAS has recognised the need to forge strategic partnerships with key institutions in specialised areas of technical expertise. The organisation has long-standing collaborative arrangements with the UNCHRD, which provides much-needed technical assistance to the ECCAS secretariat in Libreville, Gabon.

It is imperative for ECCAS to strengthen efforts to raise its own resources. This remains one of the major challenges of other RECs and, indeed, one of the reasons for the slow progress in implementing ECCAS’ own security arrangements. For this initiative to succeed, it will require the dedication and commitment of ECCAS member states. Governments usually drive regional integration, and lack of political will is often a threat to such integration. However, leaders often pursue different agendas which can be contrary to the aspirations of regional integration. The war in the DRC and the different motives of member states for pledging support during the conflict is an example of how regional integration can be undermined.

The need and advantages of a hegemonic presence, similar to Nigeria’s role in West Africa and South Africa’s role in southern Africa, was also discussed. Such a hegemon could provide strategic leadership in intervening in conflicts that have regional implications. While acknowledging the drawbacks of hegemons, some of the positive elements such powers can provide include Nigeria sending peacekeepers to Liberia and Sierra Leone, and South Africa’s interventions in the DRC and Burundi.

The indifference and failure of external actors to respond effectively and timeously to some of Africa’s violent conflicts, such as the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the Liberian and Somali conflicts in the 1990s, has lent further credence to the argument for the need for local hegemons.²⁴ The history of conflict management in Africa has revealed that sub-regions with stronger states that are able to play a decisive leadership role in regional conflicts have often fared better than sub-regions without such pivotal states. The Douala seminar thus discussed Cameroon’s potential to be a regional hegemon in central Africa due its size, relative wealth and stability in comparison to other countries in the sub-region. However, Cameroon has been reluctant to embrace this role, possibly due to internal challenges such as poor governance and high levels of corruption. In 2005, Cameroon was ranked 129th out of the 146 countries reviewed worldwide for corruption by Transparency International.²⁵

22 Article 4 of the Standing Orders of the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) of 2002.

23 Article 10 of the Standing Orders of the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) of 2002.

24 Adekeye Adebajo and Christopher Landsberg, “South Africa and Nigeria as Regional Hegemons”, in Mwesiga Baregu and Christopher Landsberg (eds.), *From Cape to Congo: Southern Africa’s Evolving Security Challenges* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp.171-203.

25 See Amnesty International, “Contracting out of Human Rights: The Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project”.

While sub-regional institutions have assumed a key role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding on the continent, they are often confronted by a number of challenges. On paper, these institutions have crafted mechanisms that are innovative and in line with global trends. However, the immediate challenge is to muster the political will to bridge the divide between commitments and implementation. Though all three institutions – ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC – rely on dues from member states, payments are often sporadic and inadequate. Resource requirements will also continue to soar with plans to operationalise early-warning mechanisms and sub-regional military stand-by arrangements. The current practice of relying on external funding to sustain the operations of regional economic communities threaten the long-term viability of these entities. The preferred solution is for African countries to generate more resources to pay for their own security.



TOP: Ms Angèle Kinouani, UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, Bangui, Central African Republic, left; Ms Metimbe Fady Nsimba Mboumba, BP 2112, Libreville, Gabon

ABOVE: From right: Mr Gounoko Haounaye, Governor of Littoral Province, Douala, Cameroon; a personal assistant; Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa; Mr Alphonse Barancira, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Ms Noria Mashumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa



Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa, faces the media

4. The Emerging Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Central Africa

It is now widely acknowledged that civil society plays an important role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts in Africa. Civil society organisations have contributed to various aspects of peacebuilding, ranging from direct practical interventions such as mediation and negotiations, to facilitating reconciliation between groups in conflict.

Such actors have also contributed to strengthening conflict research. In Africa, civil society's proximity to local populations has led to a perception that it represents the voice of the people and fosters democracy. The nexus between civil society and democracy is, however, complex. While the existence of civil society does not guarantee democracy, it is unlikely that a viable democracy can be sustained without a vibrant and independent civil society.²⁶

An important debate centres on what constitutes civil society and which organisations and groups fall under this heading. In southern Africa, an overview of civil society was conducted which classified this group within the broad contemporary definition that includes registered charities, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, business associations, NGOs, coalitions and advocacy groups.²⁷

Historically, two prominent groups were identified: trade unions and faith-based organisations. Faith-based organisations – in particular, churches – have a long presence in southern Africa, dating back to the colonial era. They played a pivotal role in nurturing liberation movements, which brought about the demise of colonial rule. Trade unions were also a powerful mobilising force which was critical in the fight against colonial rule. Civil society has evolved over the years, with the influence of the wave of democracy that swept across southern Africa after the demise of colonial rule, to include a wide range of community-based organisations, professional associations, social movements, research institutions and advocacy organisations.

In the field of peacebuilding, the diversity of civil society has enabled it to perform a multiplicity of functions. Thus, these groups are involved in:

- Humanitarian issues;
- Research and documentation;
- Training and capacity-building;
- Post-conflict initiatives such as demobilisation of ex-combatants;
- Trauma-healing and gender-based issues; and
- Advocacy work.

²⁶ Dwayne Woods, 'Civil Society in Europe and Africa: Limiting State Power through a Public Sphere', *African Studies Review*, 35, 2 (September 1992), pp.77-100.
²⁷ See CCR, 'The Peacebuilding Role of Civil Society in Southern Africa'.

Civil society in southern Africa has also assumed some of the traditional functions of the state such as service delivery. Since the opening up of space by governments in the area of peace and security, civil society has also assumed a role in this field. It has, however, not been easy for civil society to establish a strong presence in this area, and most organisations have been confined to capacity building, research and norm-setting. Efforts to seek direct engagement with governments in peace and security issues have often caused tension and mistrust.

In central Africa, the role of civil society is still evolving. Though shaped to a large extent by the dynamics and political context of the different countries in the sub-region, these groups share characteristics with the broad representation of civil society in other parts of the continent. Countries in central Africa are at various stages of conflict, peace, post-conflict reconstruction and democratic consolidation. Thus, civil society's work in these countries has been influenced, to a large extent, by the environment in which it operates. In CAR, for example, violations of human rights during the country's recurrent civil wars led to a proliferation of human rights NGOs. In the DRC, the political environment of the Mobutu Sese Seko era between 1965 and 1997 led to the development of civil society with some characteristics of political parties. Most civil society organisations in central Africa operate at the national level and do not often have trans-national partnerships. Consequently, they tend to work in isolation and often do not share expertise and experiences. The impact of this mode of operation is apparent in the strategies employed by various civil society organisations in their work with ECCAS.

The lack of consultation among these groups often leads to the duplication of initiatives and a lack of continuity. Civil society in central Africa is yet to develop strategies for optimising its potential to promote regional peace and security. In other parts of the continent, civil society has embarked on developing networks or coalitions to overcome some of these structural and operational challenges. Civil society in central Africa can draw lessons from these experiences and adapt them to the requirements of the sub-region. In CAR, more than 200 NGOs working in the area of human rights have established a team to co-ordinate their activities; some of these groups have actively contributed to the drafting of CAR's new constitution. Such examples should be replicated at the regional level.

Civil society's relations with governments in central Africa have historically been marked by suspicion and mistrust. For example, in Chad, the history of armed uprisings as the main means of accessing power and the widespread problems of corruption and mismanagement of funds have given rise to criticisms of governments by civil society activists.²⁸ Civil society organisations have also been vocal on the potentially negative impact of the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project on human rights in the region. Concerns centre on the fact that the project could exacerbate human rights violations in both countries and cause governments to suspend their obligation to protect the rights of their citizens.²⁹ Examples were given of the exploitation of communities in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta that has led to persistent instability and human rights abuses in the area.

While acknowledging the distinct roles of government and civil society in central Africa, dialogue between civil society and government is central to consolidating peace. The conditions in central Africa require a holistic approach to peacebuilding in which civil society and governments can play distinct but complementary roles. In CAR, gross human rights violations have been part and parcel of civil wars that engulfed the country over the last two decades and were a catalyst for the establishment of many human rights NGOs – particularly women's

28 C. Carlsson. "Non-State Actors In Chad: Turning Natural Partners Into Effective Allies". Economic Centre for Development Policy Management in Brief. Maastricht, 2003 (available at <http://www.ecdpm.org> ; accessed 22 June 2006).

29 Amnesty International. "Contracting Out of Human Rights: The Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project".



From left: Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa; Ms Jennet Kem, UN Development Fund for Women, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Ms Metimbe Fady Nsimba Mboumba, BP 2112, Libreville, Gabon

groups – operating in the country. These organisations are making progress in strengthening relations with the government in CAR. Chadian civil society is also exploring possibilities for strengthening partnerships among civil society organisations and encouraging constructive dialogue to build confidence between the government of Idriss Deby and civil society.

Various challenges face civil society actors in central Africa. Many leaders in the sub-region have autocratic tendencies. As a result, the state often seeks to influence the operations of civil society, co-opting some actors to act on behalf of its interest or frustrating the efforts of organisations that criticise the weaknesses of governance structures and human rights regimes. In Cameroon, critics have accused the government of using strategies such as “divide and rule” to penetrate civil society. In the DRC, the political context has influenced the structure and character of civil society. Many of these groups have borrowed the structure of political parties and governments. In terms of governance, some civil society organisations have leaders who make unilateral decisions on rules and procedures for their operations.

Civil society will not have the moral ground to criticise governments for poor governance if its own internal systems are questionable. These groups need to ensure that their governance structures are democratic and accountable to protect their credibility and integrity. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue process of 2002, in which many civil society organisations were co-opted into transitional government structures, illustrates some pitfalls for civil society in central Africa. While it is necessary to forge partnerships with governments, it is also imperative for civil society to remain independent.

The church in central Africa is a vibrant component of civil society that has made its presence felt in peacebuilding initiatives across the sub-region. This important institution has played an influential and stabilising role in conflict and post-conflict situations in a number of ECCAS countries. In particular, the Catholic Church in Angola has played an important role in peace and reconciliation efforts. In 1999, three church umbrella organisations – the Council of Christian Churches of Angola (CICA), the Angolan Evangelical Alliance (AEA) and the Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé (CEAST) – established the Inter-Ecclesiastical Committee for Peace in Angola (COIEPA), encompassing Protestant and Catholic churches, to address issues of reconciliation.

Angola's Catholic Justice and Peace Organ also played a key role between 1994 and 2000 in bringing UNITA and the MPLA government to the negotiating table in an attempt to bring an end to the country's 25-year-old civil war.³⁰ In Chad, church-led civil society activities date as far back as 1957. In the DRC, church groups such as the Catholic Church and the Justice and Peace Commission have been involved in post-conflict processes.

The emerging role of civil society in the context of the processes leading to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue that accorded civil society the opportunity to influence peacebuilding in the DRC was also discussed. In December 2002, Congolese civil society, armed groups, and the government signed the landmark L'Accord Global et inclusive in Pretoria, South Africa, which laid the foundation for the current transitional process in the DRC. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue was a forum organised by the international community within the framework of bringing peace to the DRC after the fall of the Mobutu regime in 1997. The process sought to inculcate a new culture of inclusiveness in the Congo's political landscape. This was a unique process as it was the first meeting of all Congolese political stakeholders in the aftermath of the unstable transition that began in 1991.

The outcome of the Inter-Congolese process provided useful lessons. In particular, these experiences highlighted some of the challenges that civil society still needs to learn in seeking to participate in future peacebuilding processes. In the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, civil society was seen as a neutral third party between the government and armed groups. Civil society comprised diverse associations of women, journalists, trade unions, NGOs, teachers, lawyers, the youth and faith-based organisations. Their objective was to bring together conflicting parties to the dialogue table. This mediating role led to the participation of civil society in the Congo's government of transition from 2003. Civil society was also given the responsibility of supervising oversight institutions, which included:

- The Independent Electoral Commission;
- The Human Rights Commission;
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- The Anti-Corruption Commission; and
- The Media Commission.³¹

Civil society was mandated to play a watchdog role, ensuring protection and representation of the broader citizenry in the governance process. The outcome of the process was, however, largely discouraging. Civil society came to the negotiating table as separate entities. The lack of cohesion opened the door to competition among the organisations, with different groups seeking to drive their own parochial agendas. Consequently, the majority of the civil society actors formed alliances with strong opposition political parties, thereby abdicating their independent role. Civil society thus became both player and referee and it was impossible to be impartial under these circumstances. This, no doubt, compromised the position of some civil society actors, and has threatened the viability of civil society in the Congo.

30 Patrick Molutsi, "Civil Society in Southern Africa", in Baregu and Landsberg (eds.), *From Cape to Congo*, pp.159-170.

31 Claude Kabemba, "Perspectives on the Role of Stakeholders in the DRC's Political Transition", Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), *Occasional Paper*, 26, November 2004.

The Role of Women

Wars in Africa sometimes have their origins in entrenched patriarchy and, as such, the practices contained therein are often discriminatory and oppressive to women. Generally, in most African societies, women are still viewed as second-class citizens and often do not form part of high-level decision-making processes. Consequently, the outbreak of conflict often exacerbates gender relations and women are either severe victims as well as, in some cases, unwilling combatants.

Women's groups, associations and networks are a vital part of civil society in central Africa. Many groups play critical roles in building peace during conflicts as well as in post-conflict situations, for example in the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda. Women's groups have been involved in grassroots efforts aimed at rebuilding the economic, political, social and cultural fabric of their societies. However, women and girls are often excluded from all formalised peace processes, including negotiations, the formulation of peace accords, and reconstruction efforts.

At the international level, several instruments have sought to enhance the role of women in peace and security issues. These include the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, which introduced the element of women's involvement in decision-making; the Beijing Platform for Action of September 1995, which made significant contributions to the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes; and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000, calling for the inclusion of women in all spheres of peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and the protection of women and girls in armed conflicts. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 1999 specifically addressed the role of women in armed conflicts on the continent, the right of women to peace, and the right of women to participate in political decision-making.

As is the case in most parts of Africa, implementation of these instruments is a challenge that requires further interrogation. Many male-dominated civil society organisations are unaware of the existence of most of the international instruments specific to women, not least Resolution 1325 and the Protocol to the African Charter. Furthermore, attempts to engender peacebuilding are seen as "women's issues", which often undermine these efforts.

Other factors that hinder full implementation of these instruments range from lack of political will by governments, lack of awareness of the instruments among stakeholders, and poorly resourced strategies for implementation. While governments have the primary responsibility of ensuring the full engendering of peace and security, a lack of commitment and capacity by governments often create the space for civil society to act. Thus, as central Africa operationalises its peace and security mechanism, it is critical that the needs of women and girls are placed at the centre of policy-making and implementation efforts.

The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region

With the cessation of hostilities in Rwanda and Burundi and elections in the DRC, prospects for peace in the Great Lakes region have increased. Rwanda and Burundi have made progress in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts. However, both countries still face challenges that have the potential to lead to further tensions. Rwanda has been commended for its efforts to address structural issues such as the inclusion of women on the political landscape, though it still has to deal with the root causes of ethnic tensions that

precipitated the 1994 genocide. The efforts at reconciliation marked by the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in November 1994 and, later, the local gacaca courts in January 2001, have increased ethnic tensions.

In the DRC, the signing of the Pretoria agreement in July 2002 brought more stability to many parts of the country. However, peace remains precarious and is threatened by the volatile provinces of Kivu and Ituri. The conflicts in this part of central Africa have been complex and difficult to resolve due to their tendency to spill over borders, as well as to destabilise three of Africa's sub-regions – east, central and southern Africa. Various groups of external actors from within and outside Africa have also become embroiled in the conflicts, pursuing varying interests.³² These complexities served as the basis for the UN and the AU to host the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in November 2004.

The conference was organised on the basis that the conflict in the DRC had regional dimensions and because the people of the Great Lakes are so interlinked socially, economically, culturally and linguistically that instability in one country can spread to the rest of the sub-region. Solutions to the conflicts and instability in each country can therefore only be effectively addressed within a regional framework.³³ These initial processes date back to 2003 and were co-ordinated by the UN, the AU and the core group of countries comprising Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Angola, CAR, Congo-Brazzaville, Sudan and Zambia.

Outside this core group, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and representatives from the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region³⁴ and international and regional partners, also participated. The purpose of the conference was to develop and adopt a regional approach to peacebuilding, giving priority to four thematic areas: peace and security; democracy and "good governance"; economic development and regional integration; and humanitarian and social issues. The final outcome of the conference was a Stability, Security and Development Pact consolidating the four thematic areas.

Civil society organisations, which included women's groups, youth, regional NGOs, trade unions and faith-based organisations, participated in the regional preparatory committees of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region established at the national level and at thematic meetings. To influence the process, civil society in the core group of countries convened a consultative conference in September 2004 in Arusha, Tanzania, to adopt a harmonised regional approach for participation at the conference. The civil society conference endorsed the initiatives of the UN/AU to host the conference, but reiterated the need for governments in the sub-region to honour their commitments to implement peace agreements as well as the proposed Stability, Security and Development Pact. Civil society from outside the core group of countries also organised seminars, bringing in useful perspectives to enhance the preparatory process.

The first Summit of Heads of States and Governments on the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes was held on 19 and 20 November 2004. The conference

32 The United Nations, Belgium, France, the United States, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad and Uganda have all been involved in some form in the Great Lakes conflicts at different stages. See Gilbert M. Khadiagala (ed.), *Security Dynamics in Africa's Great Lakes Region* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2006).

33 Report of the UN Secretary-General on *Preparation for an International Conference on the Great Lakes Region*, S/2003/1099, November 2003 (available at <http://www.reliefweb.int> : accessed 22 June 2006).

34 This included a group of 28 countries from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), ten international organisations, and three African countries, including Nigeria, South Africa and Gabon.

adopted the Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region (the Dar es Salaam Declaration). The report of the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to the Security Council of January 2006 described the Declaration as “the first regional and comprehensive political document in which all leaders jointly commit(ted) to transforming the Great Lakes region into an area of peace, security and development”.³⁵ The Declaration is a “roadmap” providing policy priorities for the development of issue-specific protocols and a programme of action. In the follow-on phase, the Nairobi summit had been scheduled to take place in December 2005 but was postponed due to various transitional processes, including the elections of July 2006 in the DRC. In the next phase, members are expected to upgrade the Declaration into a legally binding Security, Stability and Development Pact.

Since the adoption of the Dar es Salaam Declaration, a Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee was given a mandate to oversee the process of implementation. Measurable draft programmes of action have thus been developed for each thematic area. In the area of peace and security, the priority is to craft a protocol on mutual defence and non-aggression. In the area of democracy and governance, there are plans to establish a regional centre to promote democratic governance.

Several meetings have been held to discuss the integration of these issues into the main themes of the conference. Member states have also committed to work closely with UN agencies, UN peacekeeping missions – notably MONUC and the UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB) – and other sub-regional institutions in the development and implementation of the pact. Implementation and effective monitoring of the process will be critical to bringing about the desired objective of durable peace in the region. Scepticism has, however, been expressed that the inter-governmental process will have only limited impact in calming the conflicts in the Great Lakes. Regional leaders must still assume their responsibilities in ensuring regional security.



Ms Jennet Kem, UN Development Fund for Women, Yaoundé, Cameroon



Ms Bernadette Sayo Nzalé, Organisation for Compassion and the Development of Families in Distress, Bangui, Central African Republic, right; Professor Gerard Balanda, University of Kinshasa, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

35 Report of the UN Secretary-General on the *Preparations for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region*. S/2006/46 of 25 January 2006, p.2 (available at <http://www.un.org/Docs6> : accessed 22 June 2006).

5. The Role of the United Nations in Central Africa

In December 2005, the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council created the UN Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission seeks to adopt an integrated approach to the UN's role of conflict prevention and management. It is envisaged that UN peacekeeping missions will integrate a peacebuilding component that will include an extended UN presence to monitor post-conflict recovery efforts.

This will focus attention on consolidating peace through institution-building and strengthening; human rights promotion and protection; and sustainable development in countries in the post-Cold War era emerging from conflict. This decision is a recognition of the inadequacies of existing UN mechanisms for conflict prevention. The UN estimates that, in the post-Cold War era, roughly half of all countries that emerge from war relapse into violent conflict within five years of signing peace agreements.

The history of some of the UN's efforts to resolve conflicts in Africa bears testimony to this. Recent episodes include Angola in 1992 and the tragic consequences of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. In Angola, the 1991 Bicesse accord between the government and UNITA ended hostilities and paved the way for transitional processes, including the holding of elections in 1992. After UNITA refused to endorse the results of the elections, the country relapsed into an even more brutal conflict, which claimed the lives of 300,000 people in two years. In Rwanda, the Arusha Accord of 1993 was followed by the genocide of 1994 that resulted in nearly one million deaths.

Following are the experiences of BONUCA and the UNCHRD, based in Yaoundé – one of the few cases of UN integrated peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic

CAR was one of the four territories of the French Equatorial African “empire”. The country gained independence from colonial rule in 1960. Thereafter, successive corrupt and despotic leaders, such as Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa, ruled the country. CAR has experienced chronic instability marked by widespread human rights abuses and poor governance practices. In addition to its own problems at home, the country has suffered the effects of the spillover of the DRC conflict, the war in Sudan and the long-standing border dispute with Chad. Chronic political instability and poor governance have impacted negatively on socio-economic development, making CAR one of the poorest countries in central Africa. Profound social inequalities have also fuelled the recurrent civil unrest in the country.

In 1996, CAR experienced a political crisis precipitated by widespread discontent over the poor socio-economic conditions in the country. Members of the armed forces who were disgruntled over non-payment of salaries led a rebellion. President Ange-Felix Patasse appealed to Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali to mediate. Their successful intervention led to the signing of the Bangui Agreements on 25 January 1997. This was followed by the establishment of MISAB in January 1997 with a mandate to implement the agreements and – critically – to oversee peacebuilding initiatives.

The UN authorised MISAB's presence in CAR eight months later and established and deployed the UN Mission in CAR (MINURCA) in April 1998, based largely on soldiers from MISAB. Its mandate included:

- Peacekeeping activities;
- Supporting the government in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, including the provision of technical advice in preparation for national elections;
- Training of the national police; and
- Restructuring of CAR's security forces.

MINURCA maintained its presence in CAR for almost four years and was replaced by BONUCA in February 2000.

BONUCA was established with a specific human rights mandate to follow on the initiatives of MINURCA. Its primary mandate was to support the government's efforts to consolidate peace and national reconciliation; strengthen democratic institutions; and facilitate the mobilisation of international political support and resources for national reconstruction and economic recovery.³⁶ BONUCA was also tasked with:³⁷

- Assisting national efforts to consolidate democracy and reconciliation;
- Monitoring the security situation in the country;
- Contributing to the strengthening of capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country;
- Monitoring security sector reforms, including the restructuring of the armed forces and the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- Continuing police training programmes initiated by MINURCA; and
- Supporting the efforts to promote an integrated approach to the development and implementation of post-conflict peacebuilding programmes aimed at national reconstruction, economic recovery, poverty alleviation and "good governance".

In the field of human rights, BONUCA conducts activities which include observation and investigations of human rights violations in CAR. It also plays a critical role in advocacy through a well-established information unit. The unit has partnered with various radio stations in the country to sensitise the public about its mandate, its activities, the UN system, and international human rights principles. This is done through weekly and monthly broadcasts that have been designed to reach all social groups in CAR.

The UN mission holds workshops in CAR's provinces on human rights and local communities, and on international humanitarian law for village, district and religious leaders. The mission has also established a platform for women and youth which it uses to access a multiplicity of NGOs relevant to its work. BONUCA has provided support to civil society organisations, in particular women's groups, which have organised themselves to seek dialogue with the government. The mission has made progress in contributing to the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on Women and Peacebuilding of 2000 through the development of a programme to package and disseminate its contents. Through its collaboration with women, BONUCA has also empowered them to take an active part in politics.

36 UN Secretary-General's address to the Security Council, S/1999/1235 of 10 December 1999 (available at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/field/docs/BONUCA-MANDATE.doc> : accessed 22 June 2006).

37 Ibid.

Successive repressive regimes in CAR hampered the development of a vibrant civil society movement in the country. However, the political developments in the period after 1996 have encouraged civil society activities, though their operations are still hampered by a lack of resources and expertise. BONUCA is working closely with civil society organisations to address these capacity constraints.

The mission's role in central Africa is a test case for the UN system in its efforts to implement comprehensive peacebuilding strategies. While the work of BONUCA should be applauded, its effectiveness is largely dependent on the political will of the government and the commitment of the international community to ensure that political and socio-economic reforms are properly implemented. Much remains to be done, particularly following the systematic violations of human rights during the 2003 civil unrest that ousted former president Ange-Felix Patasse.

There is also a need to address inter-connected regional issues that could impact negatively on the security and stability of CAR. The unstable situation in countries such as Chad, the civil war in Sudan's Darfur region, and the precarious peace in the DRC all have the potential to destabilise CAR. Proposals have been made for a holistic strategy that will address the problems of CAR in conjunction with other regional issues such as the proliferation of small arms and the presence on its territory of armed groups such as the *Front de Libération du Congo* from the DRC.

The UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

The UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 53/78 in December 1998 and Resolution 54/55 in December 1999 to establish a sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy – the UNCHRD – in central Africa in Yaoundé, following a request from ECCAS. The UN centre strives to contribute to the development of a culture of human rights and democracy in central Africa for the prevention of conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace and development. The centre's mandate includes:

- Training staff from government and civil society working in the field of human rights;
- Strengthening the capacity of sub-regional networks working on human rights and democracy issues;
- Building sub-regional capacities to integrate human rights into peacebuilding, peacemaking, and peacekeeping initiatives; and
- Dissemination and public awareness of international human rights instruments.³⁸

In operationalising its mandate, UNCHRD has adopted a comprehensive approach, collaborating with all parties that play key roles in the promotion and protection of human rights. The centre has established relationships with civil society groups, individual governments, ECCAS and UN agencies located in Burundi, Congo and CAR. UNCHRD became fully operational in March 2001.

The centre is also involved in a number of initiatives to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations to play an effective and complementary role in promoting human rights, democracy and peacebuilding in central

³⁸ UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa terms of reference (available at <http://www.unchr.org/english/countries/field/yaounde.htm> : accessed 18 July 2006).

Africa. In this regard, UNCHR conducts training programmes and also provides technical and advisory services. Through its efforts, the number of civil society networks has grown and the capacity of the media continues to increase, enhancing knowledge and understanding of human rights issues in the sub-region.

UNCHR and other UN agencies in central Africa seek to play a leading role in building the capacity of civil society actors to respond effectively to peace and security issues. The centre should maintain a database of beneficiaries, which can be useful in securing additional resources from other stakeholders to sustain these initiatives. Capacity building can also focus on training civil society organisations to use international and regional human rights instruments. The UN and AU seek to interact and contribute to human rights initiatives at such forums. Empowering civil society could help facilitate the transfer of knowledge on human rights to ordinary citizens. Civil society is responsible for disseminating such information to ordinary citizens in local languages. UNCHR should also continue its role of forging constructive partnerships between civil society and ECCAS.

UNCHR has a small-grant programme aimed at financing the promotion and protection of human rights initiatives. Project proposals and applications for funding are submitted to a UN committee in Geneva, Switzerland, in charge of small grants. These proposals must include the following three elements:

- The descriptive part of the project including title, context, justification, objectives, expected results, indicators, activities, strategies, timeline, beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation;
- A financial element, which is the budget in a specific format of cost per activity, human resources, travel, contracts, training, equipment, communication; and
- A legal element, comprising a funding agreement to determine the rights and duties of the parties and including the amount allocated, mode of transfer, uses and justifications, narrative and financial reports.

Civil society organisations involved in human rights work should maximise the opportunity provided by these grants. An excellence award programme is carried out by UNCHR to enhance the advocacy and lobbying capacities of distinguished civil society actors in central Africa. Participants are selected once a year, depending on the availability of resources. Selected persons must be proficient in English and French, and take part in the annual session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and the sub-commission for the promotion and protection of human rights. These individuals are entitled to an allowance covering travel costs, living expenses and insurance for the period of their stay in Geneva.

UNCHR also assists other actors to strengthen their capacities in human rights and knowledge of the UN system by offering internship programmes. The target groups for this initiative are university students, civil society organisations and civil servants in Cameroon and other countries in the sub-region and from outside the continent. The internship is for a period of three months, during which interns are entitled to a monthly stipend, transportation, lodging, medical insurance, and research allowance. The intern gets an attestation and submits a report at the end.

In the area of democracy and conflict prevention, UNCHR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ECCAS in 2002 to provide technical support. The UN Human Rights Office has worked with ECCAS in the design of a legal framework for information management on the freedom of movement of people in the sub-region. Since its transformation into a conflict prevention and management entity in 1999, ECCAS has been unable to achieve its security ambitions due to financial constraints and instability in the sub-region. As most of its member countries are in the process of consolidating peace, ECCAS must operate at full capacity to

contribute to peace and security efforts in the sub-region. Regional governments must also be willing to allow ECCAS to play this role.

UNCHRD works closely with other UN agencies in the sub-region in the promotion of democracy and conflict prevention. From 2003, the centre assisted BONUCA in processes leading up to the holding of the May 2005 elections in CAR. Specifically, the office worked closely with BONUCA during the holding of a political dialogue that was initiated to address political tensions arising from the 2003 coup in CAR. In Cameroon, UNCHRD also works closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNIFEM, and the UN Country Team (UNCT) in promoting human rights and democracy.



ABOVE: From left: Mr Boniface Ngum Tegha Mua, Journalist, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Mr Peter Essoka, Trauma Centre, Yaoundé, Cameroon; Mr Jean-Baptiste Talla, Justice and Peace Commission for the Association of Episcopal Conferences of the Central African Region, Yaoundé, Cameroon

RIGHT: Ms Ecoma Alaga, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Accra, Ghana, left; Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa



6. Policy Recommendations

The Douala seminar made five key recommendations covering the areas of:

- Strengthening ECCAS-Civil Society Partnerships in Conflict Early-warning;
- Engendering Peacebuilding;
- Civil Society Relations with the UNCHRD in Yaoundé;
- Civil Society's Collaboration with Intergovernmental Institutions; and
- Civil Society and Democratic Governance.

1. Strengthening ECCAS-Civil Society Partnership in Conflict Early-warning

The AU's evolving security architecture and its supporting pillars – the sub-regional institutions – acknowledge civil society as a key partner in Africa's peace and security agenda. The various sub-regional organisations are at different levels of operationalising these initiatives. The lack of political will has, in some instances, made it difficult for civil society actors to use the space provided effectively. As ECCAS prepares to implement its peace and security arrangements, it should ensure that an enabling environment is created to support partnerships with civil society organisations within and outside central Africa. It is also imperative for the sub-region to move from reacting to crises to preventing conflicts.

2. Engendering Peacebuilding

In 2004, ECCAS heads of state and government adopted a declaration on gender, as well as a gender policy and plan of action. A gender unit was established at the ECCAS secretariat in Libreville, Gabon. This framework can potentially become a strong advocacy tool for highlighting the important role of gender issues in conflict and post-conflict situations. ECCAS must thus work closely with national gender machineries to ensure that peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding initiatives are properly engendered. Civil society should also mainstream gender into their programmes, projects and activities. In collaboration with UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), civil society should advocate the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, which provide the legal framework for mainstreaming gender into regional peacebuilding efforts.

3. Civil Society Relations with the UNCHRD in Yaoundé

Many civil society organisations lack operational and management capacity to assume an effective role in conflict management and prevention initiatives. UNCHRD, in collaboration with other UN agencies in the countries represented at the seminar, such as BONUCA and UNIFEM, should play a primary role in building the capacity of civil society actors to respond effectively to peace and security issues and to strengthen collaboration with ECCAS.

4. Civil Society's Collaboration with Intergovernmental Institutions

Civil society actors advocating a variety of issues across the social spectrum such as poverty; democracy; governance; human rights; elections, and gender issues have assumed a critical role in these debates. This has created new relationships between civil society and governments, which in many instances has been characterised by antagonism, particularly on democracy and governance issues. However, several civil society organisations and governments in central Africa acknowledge that partnership is unavoidable and relevant in the current peace and security discourse. They are therefore exploring possibilities aimed at overcoming these challenges. Lessons and experiences can be drawn from other parts of the continent such as southern and west Africa.

5. Civil Society and Democratic Governance

Finally, civil society has a critical role to play as an oversight institution outside government structures in holding governments accountable, particularly in situations in which the independence of parliaments and judiciaries have been compromised. While interrogating this role, civil society organisations were challenged to engage in continuous self-evaluation and to observe democratic governance practices in their own organisations. Otherwise, these groups will not be able to question governments on these issues with credibility and integrity. Civil society actors should enhance democratic governance practices which include good leadership skills encompassing effective systems of transparency, accountability and democracy, particularly on issues of leadership succession.



Participants in the sub-regional workshop seminar, "The Peacebuilding Role of Civil Society in Central Africa", 10 - 12 April 2006, Douala, Cameroon

Annex I

Agenda

Sunday 9 April 2006

19h00 Welcome Cocktail

Day One Monday 10 April 2006

Presentations, Case Studies and Thematic Discussions

08h00 – 09h00 Registration and seating of participants

09h00 – 10h00 Opening Session

Welcome and Introductions

Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Mr Alphonse Barancira, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, Yaoundé

Mr Jean-François Obembe, Economic Community of Central African States, Libreville
His Excellency, M Gounoko Haounaye, Governor of Littoral Province, Cameroon

10h00 – 10h30 Tea Break

10h30 – 11h00 Preliminary Session: Centre for Conflict Resolution and the UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

Introduction of participants

Presentation of seminar programme

11h00 – 12h00 Session I: Conflict Prevention and the Potential Role of Civil Society in Central Africa: A Comparative Analysis with West Africa and Southern Africa

West Africa: **Mr Takwa Zebulon Suiffon**, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Liaison Officer, Economic Community of West African States Secretariat, Abuja

Southern Africa: **Ms Noria Mashumba**, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Discussions

12h00 – 13h00 Session II: Civil Society and the Nexus between Human Rights and Conflict Prevention

Civil Society and Advocacy for Human Rights and Rule of Law in Peace Processes: The Case of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue

Professor Gérard Balanda, University of Kinshasa, DRC

Civil Society and the Prevention and Repression of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity

Professor Alain-Didier Olinga, Institute of International Relations of Cameroon, Yaoundé

Discussions

13h00 – 14h00 Lunch

14h00 – 15h00 Session III: Women and Peace Processes

Gender and Peacebuilding

Ms Jennet Kem, United Nations Development Fund for Women, Cameroon

The Role of Civil Society in Implementing International and Regional Frameworks on Women, Peace and Security

Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Women's Networking for Peace: Practical Experiences from West Africa

Ms Ecoma Alaga, Regional Co-ordinator, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Ghana

Discussion

15h00 – 16h00 Session IV: Case Studies: National Experiences with reports by participants from:

- Burundi
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Rwanda

Discussions

16h00 – 16h30 Tea Break

16h30 – 18h30 Session V: The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Peace Processes in the Central Africa Region

The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Mr Alphonse Barancira, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Yaoundé

National Case

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic's Support to Human Rights NGOs in the context of the National Reconciliation Process in the Central African Republic

Ms Angèle Kinouani, UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, Bangui

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' support to Civil Society
Mr Nouhoum Sangaré, Associate Human Rights Expert, UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, Yaoundé

18h30 – 20h00 **Launch of Centre for Conflict Resolution Seminar Reports**

1. *The Peacebuilding Role of Civil Society in Southern Africa*, CCR Policy Seminar Report, Maseru, Lesotho, 14 and 15 October 2005
2. *Women and Peacebuilding in Africa*, CCR Policy Seminar Report, Cape Town, South Africa, 27 and 28 October 2005

Presenters: **Ms Thelma Ekiyor**, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Ms Noria Mashumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Day Two **Tuesday 11 April 2006**

Conflict Analysis and Mapping of Civil Society Capacity

09h00 – 09h30 Synopsis of discussions from previous day (Rapporteur)

09h30 – 11h30 Session VI: Root Causes of Conflicts

Training Session facilitated by the Centre for Conflict Resolution

Group work on causes of conflict in Central Africa

Discussions

11h30 – 12h00 Tea Break

12h00 – 13h00 Session VII: Conflict Analysis - Approaches

Discussions

13h00 – 14h00 Lunch

14h00 – 16h00 Session VIII: Assessing Capacities and Sharing Experiences of Civil Society Organisations in Central Africa – Reports by Central African Economic and Monetary Union countries

- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Congo-Brazzaville
- Equatorial Guinea

16h00 – 16h30 Tea break

1630h – 17h00 Discussions

Day Three Wednesday 12 April 2006

Planning and Policy Recommendations

09h00 – 09h30 Synopsis of discussions from previous day (Rapporteur)

09h30 – 11h00 Session IX: Planning and Policy Recommendations at National Level (plenary sessions involving all participants)

- Civil Society
- Human Rights Non-governmental Organisations
- Women's Organisations
- Development Organisations

11h00 – 11h30 Tea break

11h30 – 13h00 Session X: Planning and Policy Recommendations at Sub-Regional Level (plenary sessions involving all participants)

- Civil Society and Non-governmental Organisations
- Human Rights Non-governmental Organisations
- Women's Organisations
- Development Organisations

13h00 – 14h00 Lunch

14h00 – 15h00 Session XI: Rapporteurs’ Report and Way Forward

Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Ms Noria Mashumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

15h00 – 15h30 Adoption of final documents by all participants

15h30 – 16h00 Tea break

16h00 – 17h00 Closing session

20h00 Farewell Cocktail

Annex II

List of Participants

1. Ms Ecoma Alaga
West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
Accra
Ghana
2. Mr José Esono Andeme
Amanecer de Africa
Malabo
Equatorial Guinea
3. M Jean-Louis Amougou Atangana
University of Yaoundé
Yaoundé
Cameroon
4. Professor Gerard Balanda
University of Kinshasa
Kinshasa
Democratic Republic of the Congo
5. Mr Alphonse Barancira
UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and
Democracy
Yaoundé
Cameroon
6. Mr Patrice Bendounga
Association Tchadienne pour la Non violence
Moundou
Chad
7. M Deta Chancy
UN Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and
Democracy
Yaoundé
Cameroon
8. Ms Thelma Ekiyor
Centre for Conflict Resolution
Cape Town
South Africa
9. Mr Jacob Enoh-Eben
Independent Consultant
Accra
Ghana
10. Mr Peter Essoka
Trauma Centre
Yaoundé
Cameroon
11. Mr Gounoko Haounaye
Governor of Littoral Province
Douala
Cameroon
12. Ms Jennet Kem
UN Development Fund for Women
Yaoundé
Cameroon
13. Ms Angèle Kinouani
UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the
Central African Republic
Bangui
Central African Republic
14. Ms Noria Mashumba
Centre for Conflict Resolution
Cape Town
South Africa
15. Ms Metimbe Fady Nsimba Mboumba
BP 2112
Libreville
Gabon
16. Mr Peter Kum Che Mebeng
Network for Human Promotion and
Development
Yaoundé
Cameroon

17. Mr Boniface Ngum Tegha Mua
Journalist
Yaoundé
Cameroon
 18. Mr Dieudonne Munyankiko
Association Modeste et Innocent
Butare
Rwanda
 19. Ms Marie-Louise Balagizi Munyerenkana
Pax Christi
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Annex III

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Title
AU	African Union
BONUCA	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic
CAR	Central African Republic
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Union
CDS	Defence and Security Commission
CIPS	Conflict Intervention and Peacebuilding Support Project
COPAX	Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission in Kinshasa
EUSEC DR CONGO	European Security Sector Reform Mission in the DRC
FOMAC	Central African Multinational Force
MARAC	Central African Early Warning Mechanism
MINURCA	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic
MISAB	Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the DRC
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ONUB	United Nations Mission in Burundi
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference
SIPO	Strategic Indicative Plan for the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security
UDEAC	Central African Economic and Customs Union
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCHRD	United Nations Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNITA	Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola
WACSOFF	West African Civil Society Forum
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

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THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S SECURITY

THE UNITED NATIONS, REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND FUTURE SECURITY THREATS IN AFRICA

The inter-related and vexing issues of political instability in Africa and international security were specifically focused on at this policy seminar, held from 21 – 23 May 2004 in Claremont, Cape Town.



WHITHER SADC?

SOUTHERN AFRICA'S POST-APARTHEID SECURITY AGENDA

The role and capacity of South Africa as Chair of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) were focused on at this meeting in Oudekraal, Cape Town, on 18 and 19 June 2005.



SOUTH AFRICA IN AFRICA

THE POST-APARTHEID DECADE

The role that South Africa has played on the African continent and the challenges that persist in South Africa's domestic transformation 10 years into democracy were assessed at this meeting in Stellenbosch, Cape Town, from 29 July - 1 August 2004.



BUILDING AN AFRICAN UNION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECS), NEPAD AND CIVIL SOCIETY

This seminar in Cape Town from 20 – 22 August 2005 made policy recommendations on how the AU's institutions, including NEPAD, could achieve their aims and objectives.



THE AU/NEPAD AND AFRICA'S EVOLVING GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

The state of governance and security in Africa under the AU and NEPAD were analysed and assessed at this policy advisory group meeting in Misty Hills, Johannesburg, on 11 and 12 December 2004.



HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN SECURITY:

AN AGENDA FOR AFRICA

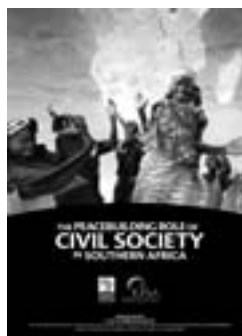
The links between human security and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa, and the potential role of African leadership in addressing this crisis were analysed at this policy advisory group meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9 and 10 September 2005.



A MORE SECURE CONTINENT

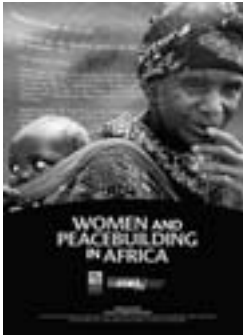
AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE UN HIGH-LEVEL PANEL REPORT, A MORE SECURE WORLD: OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

African perspectives on the United Nations' (UN) High-Level Panel report on Threats, Challenges and Change were considered at this policy advisory group meeting in Somerset West, Cape Town, on 23 and 24 April 2005.



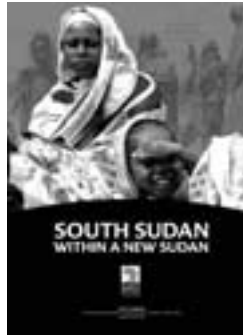
THE PEACE-BUILDING ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This meeting, held in Maseru, Lesotho, on 14 and 15 October 2005, explores civil society in relation to southern Africa, democratic governance, its nexus with government, and draws on comparative experiences in peacebuilding.



WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA

This meeting, held in Cape Town on 27 and 28 October 2005, reviewed the progress of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Africa in the five years since its adoption by the United Nations in 2000.



SOUTH SUDAN WITHIN A NEW SUDAN

This policy advisory group seminar on 20 and 21 April 2006 in Franschhoek, Cape Town, assessed the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 5 January 2005 by the Government of the Republic of the Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A).



HIV/AIDS AND MILITARIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This two-day policy advisory group seminar in Windhoek, Namibia, on 9 and 10 February 2006 examined ways of supporting and strengthening the government of Namibia's role as chair of the SADC Organ.



HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

This two-day policy seminar on 26 and 27 June 2006 took place in Cape Town and drew on knowledge and expertise on the scope and response to HIV/AIDS in South Africa and southern Africa.



AIDS AND SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA:

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

This policy and research seminar, held in Cape Town on 27 and 28 March 2006, developed and disseminated new knowledge on the impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa in the three key areas of: democratic practice; sustainable development; and peace and security.



AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

This meeting, in Maputo, Mozambique, on 3 and 4 August 2006, analysed the relevance for Africa of the creation, in December 2005, of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and examined how countries emerging from conflict could benefit from its establishment.



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