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Trends and Importance of Discussing Peace and Security in Africa: Tana High-Level Forum

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Executive Summary

This is a policy brief that aims to follow the trends and importance of the Tana High-Level Forum (THLF) discussions and link such discussions to the future trends of African peace and security. The question raised in this paper is: What in the thematic areas so far discussed in THLF serve to further shape policy agendas and what are their contributions in the process of driving more key policy discussions?

THLF has made headlines four times since it started. It has set a continental pace and precedence in bringing African Heads of State and Governments together to conduct informal discussions on African peace and security issues. Behind the objective of THLF lies an African-Centred Solution to peace and security agendas (AfSol).

The relevance in discussing the trending challenges in peace and security in the continent provides a unique forum that draws participants from diverse backgrounds, experience, and expertise. THLF has expanded in scope, number of participants and format and is making substantial deliberation and contributions to the continental and global debate on peace and security.

Key Points

- Africa's modes and mechanisms by which it can strengthen its legitimate institutions need to span beyond the African Union principles of unconstitutional change of governments and the responsibility to protect/intervene. A policy debate that can translate the principles into action should involve the African Union, RECs, CSOs and key personalities to come up with action plans on unconstitutional change of governments and the responsibility to protect/intervene and on extension of presidential term limits. This action plan should be ratified and endorsed by all AU-Heads of State and Governments.

- A policy debate needs to go beyond the connecting age of pluralism amongst Africans - issues concerned with values, ethical viewpoints, cultural systems, and the conflicts among them. The debate is required to come up with an assessment plan that attempts to set up parameters that identify the cultures, values and norms our continental citizens are tending towards today, without ridiculing, understating or overstating that of others.

- It is about time Africans should begin advancing and expanding on their positive aspects of existing interpretation of economic management (macro and micro), diversity management, cost of war and cost of human life; and demonstrate how the harmony of plural living standards is demonstrated in African society. This is to say that a policy debate by academics, researchers, AU officials, institutions and key government agencies is needed to extend the policy debates we already have.

- There is need to engender the debate on AfSol today and for future generations. Likewise address climatic changes in Africa.

Introduction

In its fourth year in a row, the Tana High-Level Forum (THLF) has now set a continental pace and precedence in bringing African Heads of State and Government together to conduct informal discussions on African peace and security issues. Behind the objective of THLF lies an African-led solution to peace and security agenda.[1] The forum has provided relevance in discussing the trending challenges in peace and security in Africa. This unique forum which draws participants from diverse backgrounds, experience, and expertise has expanded in scope, number of participants and format while at the same time continuing to make substantial deliberation and contributions to the continental and global debate on peace and security.

The purpose of this policy paper is to follow the trends and importance of the THLF discussions and how such discussions are linked to the future trends of African peace and security. The question thus is, what in the thematic areas discussed at THLF can contribute to further key policy discussions? It is expected that this policy brief will generate a more consolidation to the already discussed themes at the THLF with those forthcoming themes.

When THLF started in 2012 with the thematic discussions on state fragility and managing diversity[2], it became quickly apparent by 2013 that organized crimes were deeply rooted in Africa. The need to assemble in Tana was to look at the underlying concerns of instability and conflict on the continent and also consider the space organized crimes create. More so, the different modes of human trafficking, trade of illegal drugs, weapons' sales, sexual slavery, organ harvesting, piracy, and illegal natural resource mining were among the main issues of interest in 2013. In 2014, the theme shifted towards bringing to public, the illicit financial flows in Africa and how that can seriously impact on peace and security in the continental mass of Africa. In 2015, it was time to move beyond secularism, a topic that provides different ways of viewing sectarian conflict and the resilient challenges for the African states. Even when some of the thematic discussions were touched upon, there is no doubt that the trends on peace and security in Africa still persisted. Some of them have been obvious while others have "surprised" us.

Apparently and trending, some incumbent leaders in Africa are breaching their own written constitutions, thus causing violence before, during and after elections. The African Union has called this practice "Unconstitutional Overthrow of Own Government".[3]

Some 16 African countries were projected to conduct elections in 2015 and there were expectations that three quarters of them would experience some form of violent confrontations. Other trending peace and security issues of Africa are land and border conflicts, climatic change, scarcity of water and agricultural output, and inequalities in societies especially amongst the youth population. Recently, there have been constant reports about immigration of Africans risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. Women empowerment is amongst the AU agenda to be achieved by 2063. The July 2015 AU Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, discussed the basis for Africa's future development. Some African countries are now considering themselves, as are developmental states. Thus key policy recommendations are required to address these issues.

Trends and Importance of the 2012 THLF – State Fragility and Managing Diversity

Professor Andreas Eshete, in his introductory remarks to the 1st THLF, brought out clearly that Africans have paid dearly for neglecting diversity in the continent.[4] Eshete argued

that the number of costly secessionist wars and the inter-communal violence that have been witnessed in many parts of Africa pitting on ethnic cleavages and ethnic inequalities are well known. Africa is very rich in diversity, and by virtue of any public recognition, Africa's cultures and cultural identities can be seen and felt.[5]

The challenges Africans continue to face can be experienced by the level and degree of neglect of own diversity. Africans have downplayed their recognized value of diversity as a source of pride and richness. The spirit of "I am an African" is yet to be expanded.[6] Diversity has become a tool and source of conflict. Hon. Prof Sam Ongeri,[7] who attended the forum, reported back to the Kenyan people that the forum brought together a wide ranging cross section of African stakeholders, global actors, as well as the civil society and academics involved in the African security terrain.[8] The wide-ranging attendees alone demonstrate how diverse Africa is.[9]

The relevance of the discussion demonstrated that THLF "aimed at promoting dialogue as a fundamental, peaceful and durable means to resolving conflict and demonstrating that diversity is strength, and not a source of conflict."[10]

While talking about state fragility, Dr. Funmi Olonisakin[11] rightly digested the issues by posing critical questions about what fragile states are like. She argued in her four classifications that, "typically, there are four things that the World Bank and the rest of the world and most of us who have tried to critique them would see: firstly, states that do not really efficiently or equitably deliver services; secondly, states that do not monopolise the means of violence; thirdly, states that are not sufficiently democratic; and fourthly, states that rely on patronage systems and are highly corrupt."[12]

Fumni remarks that it is clear that African states rely on patronage a lot and are corrupt. Besides, African countries face crises of authority and legitimacy. Formal civic state institutions in Africa are struggling to command the loyalty and commitment of their citizens. Many countries have many non-state systems that are very much able to purchase the loyalty of citizens and populations.[13]

There are many relevant points made in this thematic discussion and one that stands out clearly is the strengthening of legitimate institutions in Africa. The legitimacy of a state has been peddled forward using the argument relying on building democratic developmental state that also embraces diversity.[14] This is a common trend that most African countries are following. A number of analysts have argued that it is an agenda of the liberal democratic peace, mainly advanced by the United States. This makes issues of African diversity and states fragility a global issue that cannot be limited to African states alone.

The author of "The Advent of Pluralism, Diversity and Conflict in the Age of Sophocles", Lauren J. Apfel, has put it that philosophy has finally caught up with the reality that values and perspectives on truth are plural that conflict between them is endemic.[15] A policy debate can also rely on the fact that Africa today is not just in the first age of pluralism that connects Africans to their diverse backgrounds. In fact, most of the debates about plural societies in Africa that are under examination today are concerned with values, ethical viewpoints, cultural systems, and the conflicts between them. Apfel calls this *moral pluralism*.[16] However, Africa has been practicing and has, in fact, lived to its moral pluralism for many years already.

Probably, the trend we see in diversity management and ethnic conflicts today needs to revisit how Africa's plural societies are connected. Africa has similar supplementary elements of their human

security, shared-values, cultural systems and social norms that are similar. We have witnessed on several accounts that incompatibility between values is not the only level on which Africa's plural societies can be diversified. Today, diversity remains number one reality in Africa, with population, ethnicities, religion, culture, resources, languages, climatic changes, food and a wide land mass. The second reality of Africa can be attributed to conflict through the political manipulation of diversity, even within countries.

The common criticisms Africans should face are that we still have fragmented perspectives on causes of conflict and limited knowledge on coverage of factors of conflict, and that we do not underline the correlation between the factors while we at the same time tend to forget that diversity management only encompasses a single expression of plurality of factors. The tools used to make cleavages are mostly related but not limited to ethnicity, culture, religion, and access to resources like land and water, and socio-cultural inequality.

The tension about diversity is the plural dimensions Africa has for its neglected benefits. Diversity matters on the wider account of what Nyamberega calls intranational diversity management and cross-national diversity management in that both presents different challenges and dilemmas, and each of these matters requires a different set of policies and programs.[17]

There are also methodological errors in following the changing trends in Africa's conflicts, movement of people, climatic change and reduction in shared resources.

Climatic change does affect local livelihood, government policies, pastoral rangelands and conflicts. Majority of Africans rely on rain for agricultural production, sales from agricultural products and water sources. Climatic change has affected rain seasons and makes unpredictability in cultivation cycles. Moreover, climatic change and

population growth are linked, greater expansion of arable land; urban expansion and pastoral areas are sought for, to an extent they exhibit land grabbing.[18] Some countries in Africa are encouraging farmers to grow energy crops for enhanced energy security so as to ensure a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gasses to counter climatic change.[19] While Kyoto treaty[20] has to enter into force, African countries like other 55 states have to ratify, accept and accede the full implementation.

Trends and Importance of the 2013 THLF - Security and Transnational Organized Crime

The transnational organized crimes have their own peculiar nature that threatens Africa to move towards good governance, peace and security. The 2013 THLF identified the production, trafficking and sales of illegal narcotic drugs; the smuggling of unlawful migrants into Europe; human trafficking including abduction, enslavement and organ trafficking; conflicts due to minerals such as diamonds, gold and coltan extracted and sold illegally by insurgents; maritime piracy; unlawful trade in weapons; trade in counterfeit products such as cigarettes; money-laundering and financial extortion and deception.[21] These activities fuel corruption and in some cases contribute to violence.

Some overlapping issues raised in 2013 go back to the 2012 THLF discussions in which lack of strong government institutions, corruption and fragility of states were cited. But what stands out from the 2013 THLF is the lack of contemporary policies and practices against organized crime, and how some may be working and others may not. This debate is still puzzling policy makers as the smuggling of unlawful migrants into Europe and human

trafficking have increased in the last six months. The debates amongst African governments, international institutions, and non-African governments are lacking in their depth.

However, there are agencies promoting policies based exclusively on prohibition and interdiction. These policy promotions are questioned by many African governments on their leniency towards protecting the interests of receiving countries, for example, the European Union immigration policy on migrants into Europe, U.S.-led-war on drugs, the U.S. Dodd–Frank Act of July 2010 (Section 1502), which imposes a strict certification regime on international companies dealing in artisanal minerals from Congo and neighbouring countries, the conflict minerals' campaign in the U.S are few notable ones.[22]

Trends and Importance of the 2014 THLF - The Impacts of Illicit Financial Flows on Peace and Security in Africa

There is a common saying that money talks. But that saying works best when the impact money makes is felt, not when it is illicit, and more so, its impacts on Africa's peace and security.

With alarming figures that Alex Cobham presented at the THLF 2014, Africa's annual losses in recent years are as high as $100 billion, and for many countries the long-term average has exceeded 10% of recorded GDP.[23]

For the purpose of streamlining policy discussions coherent with the other THLF debates, we will focus on Cobham's four main components of Illicit Financial Flows (IFF). Two of these involve hidden transactions with illegal capital: the laundering of the proceeds of crime, and corruption and theft of state assets. The other two involve illicit (and often illegal) transactions, but with legally obtained capital. These are tax abuses (both corporate and individual); and hidden ownership to conceal conflicts of interest and to facilitate market abuse. Together, IFF poses a major threat to effective states.[24]

For its economic background, IFF has already attracted a lot of research and policy discussions which have gone as far as analyzing the personal, community and political levels of (in) security. There are also frameworks that look at illegal capital. An illegal capital framework follows what tends to undermine both the immediate effectiveness of institutions and confidence in them to provide fair and effective rules for markets and for politics. Secondly, Cobham has dissected the debate that the greater the illegal capital, the more IFF characterizes an economy in which rent-seeking plays a major part; and conflict can arise over control of the state and the associated (criminality and corruption) rents.[25]

The context in which IFF is being followed by policy-makers in Africa is also exposing institutions like IMF, WB, and key government ministries. Cobham puts this within the context of "vulnerability to financial secrecy".

Using the vulnerability financial secrecy, actors prone to IFF can be identified from the individuals, domestic businesses and multi-national company groups committing tax and regulatory abuse, and the related professional advisers – tax, legal and accounting. Public officeholders as well as criminal gangs can also be identified.

Despite the many researches, policy guidelines and legal frameworks that have been developed, IFF has remained the major problem. Financial mechanisms deployed to sponsor terrorism, drug-dealing and

other crimes are yet major challenges. Many questions are raised to date about how terrorists finance their activities and how they transfer money. The answer could be more complicated than the many debates, frameworks and policies achieved so far.

Trends and Importance of the 2014 THLF - Secularism and Politicized Faith

The importance of bringing secularism and politicized faith to the debate of the THLF 2014 lies in the fact that it is very close to IFF in its trend. Economic issues regarding finances can be overly camouflaged whenever issues of peace and security become politicized.

The clear trend that policy makers should realize is that secularism and politicized faith have spanned confusion, which have in turn, often spawned a plethora of security threats and challenges with existential implications to the world.[26]

Like in THLF 2012 and 2013, Africa is being hailed for achieving rapid economic growth. On the other hand, some African countries are also going through a series of crises that are the result of blurred boundary line between legitimate exercise of religious freedom and a propensity to politicized faith in a manner that has rendered secular political order vulnerable.[27] There is a fundamental question that can be traced back to the THLF 2012, and that relates to the fundamental values by which African societies operate. Policy debates can, therefore, focus on some of the disturbing trends that light up and penetrate our plural societies for the benefits of politicking diversity.

Africa is still struggling with engendering the society. Gender issues in Africa are taking a centre stage in peace and security. Women and youth are definitely future solutions to Africa's problems.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, there is a general trend in all the four THLF thematic debates that point towards leadership, governance, development, politics, religion and how informed (educated) African society lives in harmony with each other.

While the lecture discussions at the THLF 2012 espouse that a strong active state is essential to muster the political will, consensus and continuity are indispensable for a long-term transformative developmental strategy. The assumption under this argument is that there would be a possibility of an internalized ethic of growth and transformation shared by public officials and the bulk of the population to turn the aspiration of development into an ongoing national undertaking.

Despite the many frameworks and policies IFF debates have attracted, there is "substantial overlap" in the mechanisms used in IFF, regardless of motivation. The opportunity to hide where it exists is likely to be exploited for multiple purposes. For example, then, the legal use by a multi-national of highly secretive jurisdictions may both provide cover for illegal use of the same secrecy and also inadvertently legitimize such behaviour. Identifying illicit flows in a particular mechanism will tend to be insufficient to specify the type of IFF in action".[28]

Tackling politicized faith and secularism is argued to be a collective approach if we can tackle these challenges without compromising the ideals secularism is supposed to serve and without unduly interfering with the freedom of faith in the name of maintaining security. The diverse decision-making

between making a choice on how to cut the financial line of terrorists and taking action needs to be defined. In between, there can exist policy debates that glue many ends together.

❖ Africa's modes and mechanisms by which it can strengthen its legitimate institutions need to span beyond the African Union principles of unconstitutional change of governments and the responsibility to protect/intervene. A policy debate that can translate the principles into action should involve the African Union, RECs, CSOs and key personalities to come up with action plans on unconstitutional change of governments and the responsibility to protect/intervene and on extension of presidential term limits. This action plan should be ratified and endorsed by all AU-Heads of State and Governments.

❖ A policy debate needs to go beyond the connecting age of pluralism amongst Africans - issues concerned with values, ethical viewpoints, cultural systems, and the conflicts among them. The debate is required to come up with an assessment plan that attempts to set up parameters that identify the cultures, values and norms our continental citizens are tending towards today, without ridiculing, understating or overstating that of others.

❖ It is about time Africans should begin advancing and expanding on their positive aspects of existing interpretation of economic management (macro and micro), diversity management, cost of war and cost of human life; and demonstrate how the harmony of plural living standards is demonstrated in African society. This is to say a policy debate by academics, researchers, AU officials, institutions and key government agencies is needed to extend the policy debates we already have.

❖ From the above points, effective contemporary policies and practices that appreciate plural lives, harmony, equitable development and good leadership, on the one hand, and fight organized crime, migrations problems, drug and human trafficking, on the other, should work to earn their own merits by including multiple stakeholders. There is lack of debate from the bottom up that can feed into the top policy decision-making body. It is not enough to interview an immigrant survivor of a boat wrecked by storm in the Mediterranean Sea if he/she will try again to find out that the answers are, "I will try again whatever the cost". African media, CSOs, religious leaders, youths, chiefs, elders, women (mothers), and decision makers should all be part of this debate.

❖ In almost all debates, there is lack of methodology to begin taking actions. Better methodologies need to be discussed in light of developing and applying appropriate tools that can be understood and used in clarifying cleavages of plural factors for managing diversity and conflicts, for example. In today's world of Information Technology, Africa should take advantage of ICT to include and simplify remote and difficult social issues both horizontally and vertically for its continental population. A policy debate from media-savvy, new graduates, ICT literates, and application (apps) and development organisations can assist in making decisions that can link plural factors of diversity on the ground with the national and continental ones.

❖ Africa should begin taking "principles of ownership of African-led solutions to peace and security" (AfSol)[29] seriously. The key to peace and security is dangling around our necks, tied around our wrists/waists, and are fixed on our door keyholes. The debate should aim to equip decision makers with empowerment plan of

action following the holistic approach (steered from the AU and Government levels). The comprehensive approach should be harmonized with the global body (UN) to act as simplified form of governance performance indicators, tracking systems of resources, financial transfers, as well as accountability framework that relies on the knowledge of civil-leader relations, and civil-civil relations. This is one of the many ways to institutionalize some of AfSol principles.

End Notes

[1] http://allafrica.com/stories/201203300488.html (accessed on 30th June 2015)

[2] T. Mbeki, 'I am an African'. Statement at adoption by the Constitutional Assembly of the 'Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill 1996', 8 May 1996, Cape Town. Reprinted in G. Maharaj (ed.), Between Unity and Diversity: Essays on Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1999), pp. 11–15.

[3] The AU Political Affairs Department is trying to find ways of dealing with change of constitution that would either remove Presidential Term Limits or Extend it, to be unacceptable by AU.

[4] Professor Andreas Eshete delivered an introductory remark at the first THLF 2012, opening up for the discussion panels to discuss on the first theme, Managing Diversity.
[5] Ibid.

[6] T. Mbeki, 'I am an African'. Statement at adoption by the Constitutional Assembly of the 'Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill 1996', 8 May 1996, Cape Town. Reprinted in G. Maharaj (ed.), Between Unity and Diversity: Essays on Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1999), pp. 11–15.

[7] Hon. Professor Sam Ongeri, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, made his debut foreign engagement at the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, held between 14 and 15th April 2012, in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

[8] M. Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 43, 4 (2001), p. 661.

[9] http://www.kenyaembassyaddis.org/2012/04/hon-professor-sam-ongeri-attends-the-tana-high-level-forum-on-security-in-africa/ (accessed: 30th June 2015)

[10] http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/05/01/ethiopia-inside-the-tana-high-level-forum-closed-meetings/ (accessed: 30th June 2015)

[11] Dr. Funmi Olonisakin made her introductory remarks at the 2012 THLF Discussion Panels for the second theme on State Fragility (15th April 2012).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Edigheji, Omano (May 2005); A democratic developmental state in Africa? A concept paper; Research Report 105; Centre for Policy Studies; Johannesburg, South Africa.

[15] Apfel Lauren J. (2011). The Advent of Pluralism, Diversity and Conflict in the Age of Sophocles"; Oxford University Press.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Nyambegera, S.M. (2002), 'Ethnicity and Human Resource Management Practice in Sub Saharan Africa: The Relevance of the Discourse of Managing Diversity', International Journal of Human Resource Management, Vol. 13(7). Meles Zenawi: A Reflection Remarks on the occasion of a conference at The Meles Foundation the African Union.

[18] Yanda, Z. Pius and Chipo P. Mubaya (2011) Managing a Changing Climate in Africa: Local Level Vulnerabilities and adaptation experiences; Mkuki na Nyota, Dar es Salam Publishers.

[19] Mwangu, Alex Roland (2014) *Land-grabbing in Uganda: Are pastoralists second-class citizens?* In Gerehiwot, B. Mulugeta (2014) (ed.) *A delicate balance: Land-use, minority rights and social stability in the horn of Africa*, Institute for peace and security studies, Addis Ababa University.

[20] OECD (1999) Action Against Climate Change The Kyoto Protocol and Beyond: The Kyoto and beyond; OECD Publishing.

[21] Summary note on security and transnational organized crime, tanaforum.org, accessed 07th July 2015.

[22] Summary note on security and transnational organized crime, tanaforum.org, accessed 07th July 2015.

[23] Alex Cobham (2014). The Impacts of Illicit Financial Flows on Peace and Security in Africa, Tana High Level Forum, Discussion Paper.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid

[26] Lecture series on Meles, at the THLF debate, 2015

[27] Ibid

[28] Alex Cobam (2014). The Impacts of Illicit Financial Flows on Peace and Security in Africa, Tana High-Level Forum, Discussion Paper

[29] THLF participants, April, 2015

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