

Democratic Progress and Regress:

How can Elections in Africa Nurture Human Security and Better Livelihoods?

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The fallacy of many governments, analysts and policy makers has been the tendency to focus on elections while ignoring other political realities. In 2011, 27 countries in Africa held vital presidential, legislative and local elections. In the year 2012, 25 countries are set for the polls. In some ways it is remarkable that regular and multi-party elections are held; they constitute essential ingredients for good governance, the rule of law, the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, and development. Yet, despite the watershed significance of elections, more than two-thirds of countries in Africa remain fragile. Their democratic dividends and prospects for peace and development continue to elude millions, and subject many more to protracted social violence and authoritarian governance. How can we connect elections with socioeconomic conditions in Africa? What is the missing link between elections, human security and development?

Introduction

Africa is not at peace. Fragile countries and armed conflict pose major challenges to good governance, human security and development. Tragically, all 54 countries in Africa are characterised by some degree of conflict over political and civil rights, employment opportunities, and access to social and economic services. These conflicts may be based on social class, ethnicity, religion, region or some combination of these factors. This situation causes direct threats to human security and

generates major drawbacks to progress towards the attainment of peace, good governance and better livelihoods. At the political level, it has almost become normative to institute elections to find a political framework for peacelessness. In the year 2011, an unprecedented number of national elections were conducted in 27 countries in Africa, far more than in any other continent, representing vital presidential, legislative and local elections. The year 2012 is also set for national elections in 25 African countries. However, elections alone do not make a democracy and promote a culture

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of peace and development. Rather, democracies have electoral and non-electoral dimensions.¹ How can we connect elections with socio-economic conditions in Africa? What is the missing link between elections, human security and development?

Key concepts and analytical framework

The following preliminary remarks serve to explain why three separate topics in this paper are addressed together. Conflict and peace are omnipresent conditions of human existence. The link between elections, security and development is therefore an important domain. It is customary to consider stability as typical, and instability as an atypical condition, because most societies experience failing statehood as abnormal and disruptive of structural and social relationships. It is therefore not inappropriate to treat the subjects of democracy and human security together in considering sustainable development. It is a fact that strengthening state institutions and improving their capacity to provide security and development, based on principles of good governance and the rule of law, are essential to entrench lasting peace and improve living standards of citizens.

Basically, fragile states can be defined as countries that lack essential capacity and/or will to fulfil four critical government responsibilities, (i) fostering an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth; (ii) establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent, and accountable political institutions; (iii) securing their populations from violent conflict and controlling their territory; and (iv) meeting the basic human needs of their population.² Notionally, they are not failed states. They are simply not capacitated to respond to the needs of their citizens. Their resources are generally drawn away from the development and human security needs that can consolidate democracy.

Democracy as a concept virtually defies definition.³ There is no single archetype for democracy, no single unique set of institutions distinctive of democracy. However, as used in this paper, the term refers to a system of government which embodies, in a variety of institutions and mechanisms, the ideal of political power based on the will of the people.⁴ This notion describes a political system that is representative of and responsive to citizenry. Within this framework, three essential conditions are requisite for

political democracy: (i) existence of competition; (ii) participation; and (iii) respect for civil liberties. Fundamentally, democratic elections are the basis of the authority of any representative government. Democracies are based on the decentralisation of authority, as opposed to authoritarian systems wherein decision making is concentrated in the hands of a few and authority is unchallengeable. In democracies citizens participate in making government decisions. As a result, citizens hold their leaders accountable for their public actions.

The question of *security* has long since been an integral feature of the broader international peace-building and integration agenda. Traditionally, security was narrowly defined as the protection of territorial integrity, stability, and vital interests of states through the use of political, legal, or coercive instruments at the state or international level. According to Barry Buzan, this perception subsequently reduced the complex notion to a mere derivative term, a synonym for power.⁵ In the 1990s the concept was broadened to provide a suitable framework for proposing multidimensional and integrated solutions to complex social problems in development and respect for human rights. While there is no single definition of the term, the consensus of the new discourse asserts a broader and more holistic framework of security which incorporates a shift of focus from a state-centred to a people-centred approach. Throughout this paper, the term is used broadly to: (i) denote the means for assessing the root causes of fragile states; (ii) propose adequate policies for resolving social violence; and (iii) provide the means for building sustainable peace and development. Human security therefore deals with the capacity to identify threats, to avoid them when possible, and to mitigate their effects when they do occur. In addition, it means helping victims cope with the consequences of the widespread insecurity resulting from a derailed process of democratisation, human rights violations and massive poverty and under-development. Despite the analytical problem of introducing too many variables that may not necessarily link together in this operationalisation, the approach is interesting in that it introduces the notion of cross-sectoral heterogeneous security complexes, as well as addressing the social aspects of security and how people or societies construct and/or 'securitise' threats from the individual and society to the state and sub-region.

Development typically refers to the processes and strategies through which societies and states seek to achieve more prosperous and equitable standards of living. The concept is also an area of controversy in terms of distinction between

economic growth and sustainable development. Despite this controversy, there is a general consensus that whereas economic growth defines quantitative intensification in terms of goods produced, the idea of sustainable development adds a qualitative dimension to the process, so that the end result adds value and improves the quality of life of the citizens. In this article, the term is employed to denote the processes of achieving a stable democracy that promotes the qualitative economic well-being of its citizens in an equitable, compassionate and environmentally sustainable way. Although this definition revolves on contextual political participation, human security and distribution of and access to resources, it is significant in that it recognises development as an iterative process and an end in relation to the material and immaterial dimensions of welfare and safety.

In generic terms, therefore, democratisation may be understood as a process by which a country adopts a democratic regime.⁶ Essentially, the notion denotes a process of gradually introducing more participatory politics, including elections and the creation of a civil society supportive of tolerant, pluralistic politics through adherence to constitutionally enshrined rules of the game.⁷ Democratisation in a positive sense thus involves bringing about the end of an undemocratic regime, inauguration of a democratic regime, and then consolidation of a democratic system. Thus the process presupposes a transition between regimes, that is, a phase of change and/or transformation from one state to another along a democracy continuum. This notion underscores an inherent and pragmatic element of change, not only in the technical understanding and conduct of the election, but also in terms of non-electoral dimensions such as transformation in emotion, attitude, behaviour and contradiction, based on people's mutual acceptance of past violence and hurt within themselves and between themselves and the other.

Essentially, there are three general tasks any regime must undertake to become consolidated, namely: (i) democratic deepening, which involves making formal structures of democracy more liberal, accountable, representative, and accessible to all citizens; (ii) political institutionalisation, which involves strengthening formal representative and governmental structures of democracy

so that they become more coherent, complex, autonomous, and adaptable and thus more capable, effective, valued, and binding; and (iii) regime performance, which describes the ability of a regime to consistently generate positive policy outputs to build broad political legitimacy and response to eventualities over time.⁸ Accordingly, a democracy is consolidated when it is made stable, vibrant, efficient and accountable. For that reason, the process is complex and iterative and takes into account the national conditions which often rely upon power sharing.⁹

Therefore, seen from an academic point of view and in order to promote development and 'do no harm', regular elections constitute a key element of the democratisation process and accordingly are essential ingredients for good governance, the rule of law, and the maintenance and promotion of human security and development.

Africa: general synopsis

Since the period of decolonisation, more than two-thirds of countries in Africa have been the epicentres of significant ethno-political tensions; for example, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Congo DR, Kenya, Egypt, Burundi, Rwanda, Nigeria, Mauritania, and Sudan. Ethno-political conflict describes complex forms of protracted social turmoil that are: (i) between identity groups that feel that their basic needs for equality, security and political participation are not respected; (ii) essentially about access to state-related power, often in the form of asymmetric conflict between government and insurgent group(s); (iii) not easily understood without various types of international linkages affecting the course of events; and (iv) often based on deeply rooted antagonistic histories.¹⁰ As mentioned earlier, all 54 countries in Africa are fragile. The most significant contributing factor to the continent's fragility is the legacy of colonialism. This history fomented strained and rivalry-prone social and cultural relationships between community groups. The magnitude of protracted social turmoil remains the largest and most complex part of threats to peace, democracy and development.

Table 1 Index of state fragility in Africa

Rank	Country	Overall Score	Economic	Political	Security	Social Welfare	GNI per Capita
1	Somalia	0,52	0,00	0,00	1,37	0,70	226
2	Congo, DR	1,67	4,06	1,80	0,28	0,52	130
3	Burundi	3,21	5,01	3,46	2,95	1,43	100
4	Sudan	3,29	5,05	2,06	1,46	4,59	810
5	Central African Republic	3,33	4,11	2,90	5,06	1,25	360
6	Zimbabwe	3,44	1,56	1,56	6,81	3,84	350
7	Liberia	3,64	3,39	3,91	6,01	1,25	140
8	Cote d' Ivoire	3,66	5,23	2,12	3,71	3,56	870
9	Angola	3,72	5,42	2,67	5,32	1,45	1980
10	Sierra Leone	3,77	5,04	3,87	5,43	0,76	240
11	Eritrea	3,84	3,09	2,78	7,01	2,48	200
12	Chad	3,90	5,80	2,42	6,18	1,21	480
13	Guinea-Bissau	4,16	4,72	0,89	3,96	7,07	n/a
14	Ethiopia	4,46	6,14	4,03	5,91	1,75	180
15	Congo Republic	4,56	5,08	2,77	6,45	3,95	1100
16	Niger	4,60	5,45	4,69	7,33	0,94	260
17	Guinea	4,67	5,00	2,64	7,43	3,61	410
18	Rwanda	4,68	5,33	4,26	6,62	2,51	250
19	Equatorial Guinea	4,77	7,51	1,73	7,95	1,91	8250
20	Togo	4,80	4,78	2,68	7,38	4,38	350
21	Uganda	4,86	5,78	4,55	4,89	4,23	300
22	Nigeria	4,88	5,39	3,51	5,37	5,24	640
23	Cameroon	5,12	5,78	3,09	7,54	4,07	1080
24	Comoros	5,20	4,24	4,20	8,18	4,20	660
25	Zambia	5,23	5,08	4,59	8,15	3,11	630
26	Mauritania	5,30	6,23	4,34	6,38	4,24	740
27	Djibouti	5,31	5,05	3,69	8,21	4,29	1060
28	Mozambique	5,32	5,60	5,33	8,35	1,98	340
29	Swaziland	5,33	5,57	3,65	8,28	3,80	2430
30	Burkina Faso	5,51	6,30	4,87	8,30	2,59	460
31	Malawi	5,60	5,68	4,83	8,11	3,77	170
32	Madagascar	5,65	5,24	5,95	7,65	3,76	280
33	Kenya	5,65	5,77	4,72	6,95	5,15	580
34	Gambia	5,79	5,26	4,54	8,29	5,06	310
35	Mali	5,85	6,33	6,16	8,49	2,43	440
36	Lesotho	5,88	4,59	6,40	8,35	4,18	1030
37	Tanzania	5,94	6,38	5,41	8,08	3,89	350
38	Algeria	6,07	6,83	4,27	4,04	9,13	3030
39	Sao Tome Principe	6,17	4,86	5,77	7,95	6,12	780
40	Gabon	6,18	6,51	3,93	8,36	5,94	5000
41	Senegal	6,28	6,38	4,86	7,68	7,47	1200
42	Benin	6,36	6,25	5,82	8,51	4,86	540
43	Egypt	6,50	6,34	4,09	6,55	9,03	1350
44	Namibia	6,66	5,21	7,26	8,93	5,23	3230
45	Ghana	6,72	5,92	7,02	8,44	5,48	520
46	Libya	6,80	6,84	2,45	8,12	9,77	7380

47	Morocco	7,11	6,77	5,50	8,01	8,15	1900
48	Botswana	7,27	6,59	8,41	9,29	4,78	5900
49	South Africa	7,50	6,89	8,07	7,72	7,33	5390
50	Cape Verde	7,96	6,60	8,46	9,49	7,30	2130
51	Seychelles	8,23	7,33	6,54	9,52	9,55	8650
52	Mauritius	8,79	7,34	8,49	9,67	9,68	5450
53	Western Sahara	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
54	South Sudan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Adapted from Rice, S.E. & Patrick, S., 2008, pp.39–42

Note:

1. A basket score of 0,00 represents the worst score in the 54-country sample. A score of 10,00 signifies the best.
2. The index is an approximation of each country's weakness relative to other countries, and the indicators allow useful comparisons between countries on each dimension of state performance.

As can be noted from Table 1, more than two-thirds of countries on the continent are fragile (with an overall score below 6,99). Senegal, Gabon, Lesotho, Burkina Gabon, Madagascar, Swaziland, Niger, Congo Republic, and Mauritania – the list is long and sobering. These countries face severe challenges with regard to the four critical government responsibilities identified earlier. Of these, 45 per cent are critical – for example, Somalia, Congo, DR, Central Africa Republic, Eritrea and Zimbabwe (overall score below 3,99). Only 12 per cent of countries in Africa perform averagely well (with a score above 7,00); for example, Seychelles, Morocco, Botswana, South Africa, and Cape Verde. Nevertheless, those countries with a higher overall score (above 7,00) are also critical, in that they perform poorly in at least one of the four core areas of government responsibility. It is interesting to note that very fragile countries are also the continent's poorest and least democratic (see also Table 2 below).

Elections: A panacea for Africa's ills?

Notwithstanding the violence and human rights abuses that often accompany the process of elections, it is in many ways remarkable that regular elections are conducted in Africa. The majority of countries have had more than two ballots, and the latest is always hailed with hyperbole as a milestone in directing that country out of the doldrums of under-development, political violence, and poverty. Tragically, for most countries and their citizens, the regular ballots have turned out to be a revolution of rising expectations, doing very little for the country's human security and development prospects. People realise that the anticipated improvements are often economically, socially and politically inflated. The promises are not as great as touted by political leaders. Indeed, when the majority of African countries with regular elections are superimposed on the latest rankings on human development (according to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) 2011 Report, the Freedom in the World 2012 Report, and the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) 2011 Report), the picture is depressing, despite significant improvements in some pockets of the continent such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone.¹¹

Table 2 Overall Human Development, Governance and Freedom Rankings in Africa, 2011 and 2012

Country	IIAG 2011		Freedom House 2012			HDI 2011
	Index	Rank	Status	PR	CL	Rank
Algeria a	55	18	Not free	6	6	96
Angola a	41	42	Not free	6	5	148
Benin ^ b	60	11	Free	2	2	167
Botswana ^	76	3	Free	3	2	118
Burkina Faso a b	55	19	Partly free	5	3	181
Burundi	45	37	Partly free	5	5	185
Cameroon a	45	38	Not free	6	6	150
Cape Verde ^ a b	79	2	Free	1	1	133
Central African Republic b	33	49	Partly free	5	5	179
Chad a b	31	52	Not free	7	6	183
Comoros ^	47	31	Partly free	3	4	163
Congo Republic a	42	40	Not free	6	5	137
Congo, DR a b	32	50	Not free	6	6	187
Cote d'Ivoire b	36	46	Not free	6	6	170
Djibouti b	49	29	Not free	6	5	165
Egypt a b	61	10	Not free	6	5	113
Equatorial Guinea	37	45	Not free	7	7	136
Eritrea	35	47	Not free	7	7	177
Ethiopia	46	34	Not free	6	6	174
Gabon b	51	27	Not free	6	5	106
Gambia a	52	24	Not free	6	5	168
Ghana ^ a	66	7	Free	1	2	135
Guinea a	38	43	Partly free	5	5	178
Guinea-Bissau a	37	44	Partly free	4	4	176
Kenya a	53	23	Partly free	4	3	143
Lesotho ^ a	63	8	Partly free	3	3	160
Liberia ^ b	45	36	Partly free	3	4	182
Libya a	50	28	Not free	3	4	64
Madagascar a b	47	33	Partly free	6	4	151
Malawi ^	57	17	Partly free	3	4	171
Mali ^ a	54	22	Free	2	2	175
Mauritania a b	47	32	Not free	6	5	159
Mauritius ^ a b	82	1	Free	1	2	77
Morocco	58	14	Partly free	5	4	130
Mozambique	55	21	Partly free	4	3	184
Namibia ^	70	6	Free	2	2	120
Niger ^ b	44	39	Partly free	3	4	186
Nigeria b	41	41	Partly free	4	4	156
Rwanda b	52	25	Not free	6	5	166
Sao Tome Principe ^ b	58	12	Free	2	2	144
Senegal ^ a	57	15	Partly free	3	3	155
Seychelles ^ a b	73	4	Partly free	3	3	52
Sierra Leone ^ a	48	30	Partly free	3	3	180
Somalia	8	53	Not free	7	7	n/a
Somaliland	n/a	n/a	Partly free	4	5	n/a

South Africa ^ b	71	5	Free	2	2	123
South Sudan b	n/a	n/a	Not free	6	5	n/a
Sudan	33	48	Not free	7	7	169
Swaziland	51	26	Not free	7	5	140
Tanzania ^	58	13	Partly free	3	3	152
Togo a	46	35	Partly free	5	4	162
Tunisia ^ b	62	9	Partly free	3	4	94
Uganda b	55	20	Partly free	5	4	161
Western Sahara	n/a	n/a	Not free	7	7	n/a
Zambia ^ b	57	16	Partly free	3	4	164
Zimbabwe a b	31	52	Not free	6	6	173

Source: Adapted from 2011 Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Summary, p.9; Freedom in the World 2012, pp.14–18; UNDP HDR 2011, pp.126–129.

Key:

^ indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

a indicates 2012 elections.

b indicates 2011 elections.

PR indicates political rights.

CL indicates civil liberties.

For PR and CL 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.

IIAG Rank the Mo Ibrahim index of African governance is out of 54 countries.

HDI Rank the human development index is out of 187 countries.

National elections and open political competition in many countries generate violence, especially whenever presidential elections (and also parliamentary and/or local elections) are held. Examples include pre-election and post-election-related violence in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Senegal, Congo DR, Malawi, Madagascar, Nigeria and Sudan. Part of the reason is that elections in Africa have particularly high stakes, since the ethnic group from which the president originates generally tends to be more favoured and prosperous, while other groups and regions are neglected. As in the case of South Africa, local elections define access to power and resources such as government tenders, dubbed 'the gravy train'. Thus those without power are eager to obtain it, and those who have it are keen to retain it. Significantly, this tendency brews many forms of election-related violence, which hinders democratisation.¹² Often, conflict occurs because elections become a 'zero-sum' game, particularly if conducted within the 'first-past-the-post (FPTP)' electoral system, which tends to disregard popular vote. In effect, discontent about the fairness of the electoral process and the legitimacy of its outcomes often draws large numbers of people to

protest on the streets. The state security agencies, such as those in Zimbabwe, Congo DR, Ivory Coast and Kenya, have responded with heavy-handed and brutally enforced government prohibitions, often resulting in the loss of life and displacement of many civilians.

Furthermore, social and political cleavages in Africa are complicated by the continent's economic situation. Poverty is rampant, unemployment is high, and economic inequality is significant and tends to correspond to ethnic fractionalisation, leading to widespread competition for limited jobs and resources. This motivates grievances and belligerent behaviour in those that are marginalised. Although a large majority of the population experience economic deprivation, there are significant cleavages according to ethnic and political party positioning. Some groups and regions are generally wealthier than others, for example: Nkandla village (KwaZulu-Natal) and Sehlale and Mankgaile villages (Limpopo) in South Africa, Mashonaland and Matabeleland in Zimbabwe, Northern and Southern Uganda; North and South Nigeria, Kikuyu and the Lua in Kenya, and previously North and South Sudan. Such local inequalities contribute to unending intergroup resentment and rivalry which can be exploited by political leaders and criminal gangs to incite turmoil to satisfy selfish egos. Furthermore, large numbers of uneducated, unemployed and disenfranchised youths are very vulnerable for recruitment into ethnic militias and criminal syndicates.

While it is true that electoral democracy does have the capacity to facilitate the resolution of political and socio-economic problems, the frequency of elections should not be regarded as the only measure of democracy, because regular elections can be held even if there is not democracy.

The extent to which institutions, actors and relationships are (both vertically and horizontally) created and transformed from violent to non-violent culture is the key determinant of whether or not democracy will endure to leverage peace and development. There is abounding evidence that not all elections have led to peace and development. In some cases, elections have been a liability and have either ushered in authoritarian leaders or perpetuated their stay in power: for example, in Senegal, Zimbabwe, Congo DR, Gabon and Kenya. The democratic dividend and prospects for peace and development in these countries continue to elude millions and subject many to protracted socio-economic deprivation and authoritarian governance.¹⁵ Thus, in this respect, democratisation is reduced to electoral democracy skewed on 'fallacy of electoralism' and ignores the political reality of non-electoral dimensions of community demands. The emerging realisation is that rebuilding fragile societies is not simply a process of conducting elections. It calls for more integrated approaches that will place emphasis not only on electoral political recovery but also on non-electoral political dimensions such as the transformation of infrastructure for peace (I4P) and actors within those structures to promote healing and reconciliation of groups affected by protracted social violence.

Conclusion

The majority of countries on the continent are vacillating between democratic and authoritarian governance systems in a milieu of poverty and protracted social conflict. Given the complexity related to democratic transition and peace-building, it is essential to appreciate that transitions can be tough, protracted, and inconclusive such as in Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Congo DR and South Sudan. It is impossible to pin down the failures of Africa to a particular cause. The lesson is that we cannot assume that the advance to democracy will be effortless, given the cleavages and disparities that exist in Africa. Democratisation and its consolidation are an integrated process and therefore necessitate an integrated approach that will not only focus on the electoral democracy dimension but also on non-electoral elements. As we laud the regular conduct of elections in most of the countries in Africa, great caution should be exercised lest we fall into what Ake calls the 'democratisation of disempowerment', that is, a process whereby multi-party elections allow for

the rotation of self-interested elites of various political parties while the majority of citizens remain powerless and disconnected from the political system.¹⁴ As contended in this paper, the critical aspect of true democracy should not be about multi-party and regular elections alone, but should also address the legitimacy of ethnic demands in the political system. Many years of protracted social unrest and poor governance in the majority of African states have not only taken lives, destroyed livelihoods and broken down social, political and economic infrastructures, but also undermined the overall social capital of societies. Integrated approaches should hence address a wide range of issues: relief, rehabilitation, resettlement (land issues) and reconstruction, as well as regaining humanity and working on reconciliation. Indeed, building enduring peace, democracy and better livelihoods in Africa calls for a transformation of institutions, norms, behaviours and attitudes, based on: (i) commitment among the elites to democracy, upholding of democratic principles and behaving in accordance with democratic norms; (ii) firm-rooted belief at the public level that democracy is the best form of government; and (iii) firm commitment to democracy by non-state actors in strengthening and deepening democracy.¹⁵ These are over and above the generic minimal requirements of free and fair elections, universal suffrage, and the right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and freedom of association.¹⁶

Recommendations

Democratisation, building peace and enhancing livelihoods are complex undertakings requiring multiple processes and a broad range of actors at all social, political, and economic levels. Indeed, no single project or actor can do everything. Democratic progress in Africa will be strategic when it (i) addresses the most important issues and/or factors of political discontent; (ii) stops destructive dynamics of election-related violence; (iii) is inclusive (of winners and losers) in governance and service delivery; (iv) leverages a relatively small action to a larger effect; (v) results in positive and tangible changes in livelihoods; (vi) creates momentum for change; and (vii) is based on an explicit theory of change (a clear understanding of how change actually comes about in the area of concern).

In principle, it is therefore essential that the African Union (AU), governments and policy makers specifically tailor and target policy

interventions more effectively around the following key implications:

- Embrace effective use of dialogue, confidence-building measures (CBMs), negotiation, mediation, sanctions, early warning, preventive and field diplomacy, and application of other conflict-prevention approaches.
- Promote poverty alleviation because poorer countries tend to be fragile. The causal relationship between poverty, conflict, and state failure is undoubtedly complex, as poverty both fuels conflict and deepens as a result of conflict.
- Focus efforts of the AU, governments, regional arrangements and civil society on improving security and, in parallel and to the extent possible, on the other drivers of fragility.
- Promote greater democracy and improved human rights in fragile states. Despite the fact that democracy does not necessarily reduce conflict levels, in societies where democratic processes function reasonably well, policies to maintain and develop democratic institutions will reduce the risk of violent conflict. African leaders should take responsibility for lack of progressive stewardship, accountability and poor governance.
- Promote psychosocial healing and local reconciliation processes based on traditional structures and mechanisms to build trust and ensure legitimacy and people commitment.
- Understand that translating policy into action transcends mere articulation of policy options in a given situation. To make for effective implementation, there is need to simplify and facilitate the administrative process of determining which things need attention in a specific scenario and in what order they are to be done, that is, the *what, when, why, where*.
- Promote reconstruction and/or institutional reforms especially around human rights and rule of law; security governance; natural resource governance; women, peace and security; youth empowerment; and cross-border initiatives.
- Promote and implement mechanisms for sub-regional monitoring of member states and institutionalise procedures for peer review. While a sub-regional strategy is not a panacea, it does proffer a systematic process to complement tailor-made national efforts at overcoming the multifarious challenges besetting many African states. The ultimate test thus would lie in putting into practice the sub-regional strategy in a way that would be

flexible, case-sensitive, and reflective of the needs of each state.

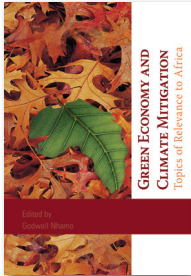
- Encourage bottom-up and collaborative ownership of initiatives by adopting a grassroots and inclusive approach; that is, engaging local stakeholders within and outside the institutions of government.

Notes and references

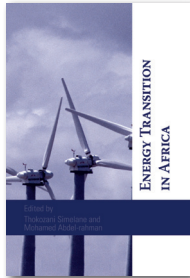
- 1 See Green, D. and Luehrmann, L., 2003. *Comparative politics of the third world: Linking concepts and cases*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.303.
- 2 See Rice, S.E. & Patrick, S., 2008. *Index of state weakness in the developing world*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, p.3.
- 3 See Arend, L., 1977. *Democracy in plural societies: A comparative exploration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p.4.
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- 12 Election-related violence denotes any random or organised act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or otherwise influence an electoral process. See Fischer, J., 2002. *Electoral conflict and violence: A strategy for study and prevention*. (IFES, White Paper). Washington, DC: International Foundation for Election Systems, p.3. Available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN019255.pdf>
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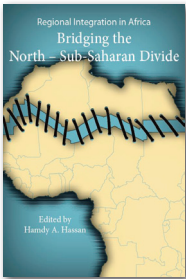
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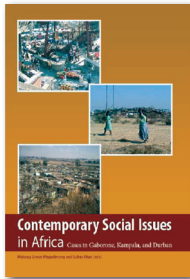
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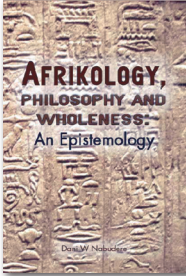
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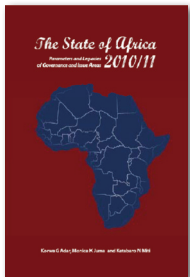
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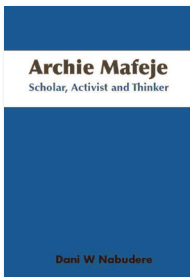
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