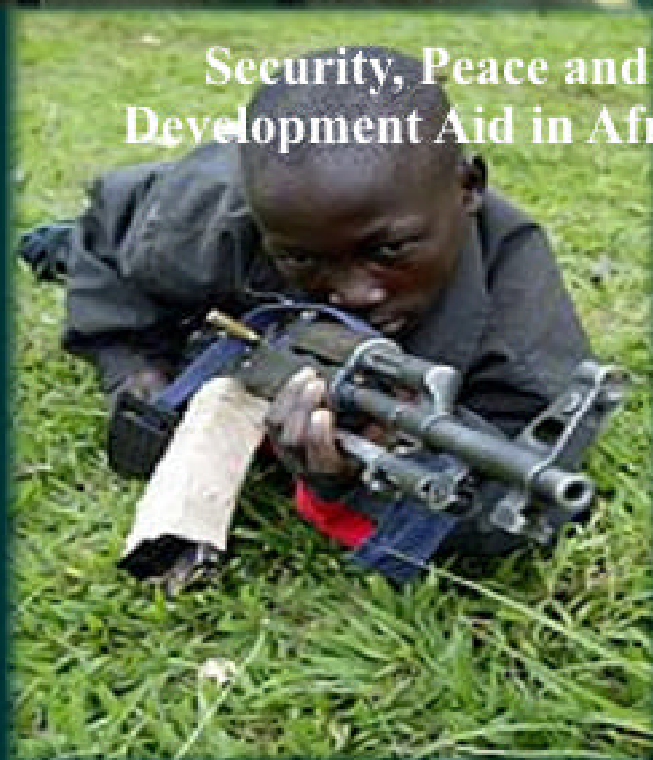




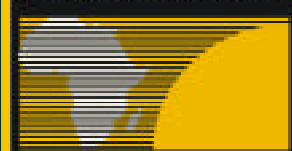
REALITY CHECK

ON DEVELOPMENT AID

Security, Peace and
Development Aid in Africa



AFRODAD



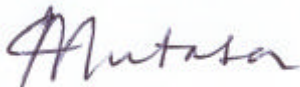
African Forum and Network
on Debt and Development

PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this volume of the 2005-2006 Reality Check on Security, Peace and Development Aid in Africa under the auspices of the Reality of Aid Africa Edition by AFRODAD.

As rightly put in this publication, the unspoken part of the conflict and security dimensions of Africa's development discourse is the role of the neoliberal ideology and outsiders, especially creditor institutions and governments. It is true that conflict in Africa, like elsewhere, is inevitable but ironically it is also a fact that it is not unmanageable if certain sectors of the global village cease to continue to thrive on its existence. Aid to Africa appears to have contributed immensely to assuring the security agenda of the mighty within the global geopolitics. Its spillovers have by and large gone to the matters of economic growth and poverty reduction in recipient countries. Tied aid has, rather than induce good governance, fueled intra-state tensions as recipient governments found themselves neither able to fulfill their electoral developmental pledges to their citizens nor deliver on basic socio-economic needs. Coupled to this are the continuing seeds of ethnicity sown and nurtured by years of colonial rule and dehumanization of the African people. The fact that most donors insist on the triad of neoliberalism-privatization, liberalization and deregulation means that aid recipient countries become more accountable to them than their local populace that continues to languish in poverty and economic quagmire.

Following the debates on good governance and the need for better and more effective aid that have been deliberated within the auspices of the 2005 G8 meeting in Gleneagles', it seems proper that in restructuring the aid architecture, the whole monitoring and evaluation of aid at country, regional and international level need therefore to be done in a multi-stakeholder consultative set-up. The involvement of civil society organizations, parliamentarians and community-based organizations must be able to address the shortcomings of aid, more so the security and peace questions. The world requires an aid architecture that is inclusive, participatory, accountable and transparent. A people and rights based approach will make the difference and a better world for all.



Charles Mutasa
Executive Director

Acknowledgements

AFRODAD would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank Prof. Edward Oyugi for the hard work in putting together this Reality Check. This work was made possible by the initial contributions of the following authors whose chapters for the Reality of Aid, Africa Edition 2005/6 were summarised to come up with this Reality Check: Dr. Martin Rupiya, Dr. Yakubu Zakaria, Mr. Lee Habasonda, Dr. Godfrey Chikowore as well as Mr. Ayo Aderinwale. We also thank Moreblessings Chidaushe our Lobby and Advocacy Programme Officer for providing invaluable comments, and coordinating and ensuring the smooth flow of both the Reality of Aid and Reality Check publications. Vitalice Meja, Lobby and Advocacy Director and Charles Mutasa, Executive Director contributed comments that were invaluable in ensuring a worthy final product. AFRODAD remains indebted to NORAD for providing financial support to enable the African Reality of Aid Network members to attend the Reality of Aid IAC meeting in Paris (June 2005). DIAKONIA, KEPA and PWRDN's continued to support for the Reality of Aid project in Africa remains greatly appreciated.

Table of Contents

Introductory overview	6
Harmonization: Imposed Coherence on Aid, Debt, Trade, Security and Good Governance	8
Inter-state Conflicts: Weak links in the strategic networks of liberal governance	10
Intra-state Conflicts: A Function of Deficient Democratic sovereignty	13
Youth, Conflict and Development: An instrument, a victim or a potential source of Peace	16
Conflict resolution in Africa: The Ups and Downs of an intractable challenge.	18
What Should or Ought to be done	21
Conclusion:	22

Abbreviations

ACRI -	African Crisis Response Initiative
AFRODAD -	African forum and Network in Debt and Development
AU -	African Union
AU-PSC -	African Union Peace and Security Commission
CAF -	Conflict Analysis Framework
CDF -	Comprehensive Development Framework
DFID	Department of International Development
ECOMOG -	Economic Commission of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS -	Economic Commission of West African States
EPAs -	Economic Partnership Agreements
EU -	European Commission
G8 -	Group of 7 richest countries plus Russia
GDP -	Gross Domestic Product
GWOT -	Global War on Terror
HDI -	Human Development Index
IGAD -	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF -	International Monetary Fund
LICUS -	Low Income Countries under Stress
ONUSAL -	United Operations in El Salvador
PSC -	Peace and Security Commission
RUF -	Revolutionary United Front
SADC -	Southern African Development Cooperation
SADCAF	
UNTAG -	United Nations Transition Assistance Group
UPC -	
US -	United States
USAID -	United States of America International Development

Introductory overview

Conflict is a human phenomenon. It is a condition that, in nearly equal measure, both afflicts and provokes positive transformation of every society in varying degrees of severity just as it assumes many forms. Organizing and managing human society in whatever formations, under whatever circumstances and for whatever reasons involves, more often than not, one form of conflict or another; particularly if in doing so some sections of a given society come out as net losers or beneficiaries of the entailed imbalance. Human society, therefore, has to contend with a wide variety of conflicts whenever the balance of social forces and corresponding power relations within a given social formation is not harmoniously synchronized with and able to address the existential needs of the various sections of the society in question.

Conflicts, in their wide variety of manifestations, should be seen as arising from and being caused by opposing interests where one party interferes violently or otherwise with another if they try to pursue incompatible interests or strive to achieve incompatible goals outside the democratic workings within the historical limits of a given social formation. This happens in cases where a sustainable consensus that inevitably draws upon the common understanding and, for that matter, connects with and brings on board the specific interests of the parties concerned, is not sought. Conflicts, by any name and in any society, therefore, are always complex, dynamic and multidimensional in nature and are usually caused by instances of crass inequality, particular forms of exclusion, sub-national subjugation or social marginalisation, hegemonic control of common destiny and resistance to the entailed systemic designs leading to economic disadvantage. The diverging and irreconcilable interests and motivations of those involved in a conflict situation can fuel and maintain it hence the recurrence of many forms of conflict across the world in general and Africa in particular.

There are different types of conflicts including armed , inter-state and intra-state , inter-personal and even intra-personal types. The possible combination of conflictual interests is thus hugely multiplied if some or many of them come together to characterize one particular conflict situation as they always do. Intra-state conflicts, either alone or in combination with other types of conflict, are the most dominant in Africa and have been experienced, in varying degrees, in countries such as Angola, Somalia, Algeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic and Senegal amongst others. Such conflicts have been caused by a wide variety of factors, ranging from instances of inequality, ethnic exclusion, greed and unfair desire to control access to valuable resources like diamonds (Sierra Leone) and oil (Angola) away from the imperatives of equity, subsidiarity and fairness.

There are as many direct as there are indirect impacts of conflict on individual members of the affected societies, families, communities, national economies and development in general. Direct impacts include loss of life, physical disability, displacement, separation of families, destruction of social capital, reduced life expectancy, high unemployment food insecurity, hunger, disease, capital flight, decreased capacity of states to collect revenue, child soldiers, violation of basic rights, loss of human dignity and livelihood. All these were witnessed in varying degrees of intensity in the Great Lakes region, Somalia, Liberia, Uganda, Ivory Coast (where conflict has disrupted production of cocoa, the mainstay of the economy) and others.

Conflict and insecurity, though a driving force of historical development, have another side to their overall effects on development. By displacing human resource away from productive engagement and directing social energies towards destructive avenues, it undermines the social basis and economic framework for dignified livelihood.

It is not only the social infrastructure that suffers in the wake of a conflict situation; but also the physical and economic infrastructures (roads, schools, clinics) are destabilized. Those who are forced to flee their countries leave behind a vacuum of labor force, causing the national economy to be depressed and unresponsive to social development needs of the rest of the population. It is estimated that both intra- and interstate conflicts in the Great Lakes region has led to progressively declining per capita GDP levels in almost all countries involved. In this particular respect Burundi registered a decline in GDP of nearly 20% (from US\$ 140 to 100 US\$; Rwanda from US\$ 230 to 220; Uganda from US\$ 310 to 280; Zimbabwe from US\$ 620 to 480 whereas Chad registered a decline from US\$ 300 down to 270 over a period of three years (1998-2001).

As indicated in the table below, most of the countries affected by conflict like Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and others tend to rank low on the Human Development Index.

Human Development Index ranking

HDI rank	Country	Life exp at birth yrs 2002	Adult literacy rate (15 yrs & above) 2002	Gross enrol. Pri., Sec & tertiary sch. 2002	GDP per capita 2002	Pop below \$1/day 1990-2001
	Medium	Human	Development	(Non-	Conflict	Countries)
64	Mauritius	71.9	84.3	69	10,810	-
109	Equ. Guinea	49.1	84.2	58	30,130	-
120	Egypt	68.6	56.6	76	3,810	3.1
128	Botswana	41.4	78.9	70	8,170	23.5
131	Ghana	57.8	73.8	46	2,130	44.8
137	Swaziland	35.7	80.9	61	4,550	-
	Low	Human	Development	(conflict/	Conflict	countries
143	Togo	49.9	59.6	67	1,480	-
144	Congo	48.3	82.8	48	980	-
146	Uganda	45.7	68.9	71	1,390	-
147	Zimbabwe	33.9	90.0	58	2,400	36.0
151	Nigeria	51.6	66.8	45	860	70.2
156	Eritrea	52.7	56.7	33	890	-
159	Rwanda	38.9	69.2	53	1,270	35.7
160	Guinea	48.9	41.0	29	2,100	-
163	Cote d'Ivoire	41.2	49.7	42	1,520	15.5
166	Angola	40.1	42.0	30	2,130	-
168	DRC	41.4	62.7	27	650	-
170	Ethiopia	45.5	41.5	34	780	26.3
171	Mozambique	38.5	46.5	41	1,050	37.9
173	Burundi	40.8	50.4	33	630	58.4
177	Sierra Leone	34.3	36.0	45	520	57.0

Source: UNDP Human Development report 2004

Harmonization: Imposed Coherence on Aid, Debt, Trade, Security and Good Governance

For more than a quarter of a century the ideological seeds of harmonization and coherence have, with the stealth of an impending tragedy, been bursting their pods and insinuating their malign influence into the hegemonic wirings of aid, debt, development assistance, trade and security of the global political economy.

As developing countries continue to drown in donor bureaucracy, confusion still continues to stalk the necessary distinction that needs to be made between the quest for harmonization of procedures and the tendentious standardization of donor policies. Whichever side of the coin faces up, the dice seems to have been cast in favor of a mono-centric rather than a multi-centric logic of partnership spiced with a heavy and potent dose of unilateralism. And the victims of this democratically unsustainable situation are the poor in the marginalized economies of the South. Behind the myth of harmonization lies a historical record demonstrating that the economic demands of the big powers lead to a curious definition of security, democracy, freedom, aid, partnership, terrorism and development. When it comes to talking about freedom, it is freedom to trade, invest and intervene in a unilaterally defined context and the freedom to define every other thing for everybody up to, and including, the meaning of democracy. All this is informed by a foreign policy that has rarely, if ever, concerned itself with promoting democracy. If anything, it is a foreign policy that has been historically assigned the difficult task of providing a relatively stable climate for Western economic expansion and investment in a world of stark inequalities. This explains, only in part, why the treasurer of Standard Oil of New Jersey, way back in 1946 had the following to say about the mission of the American enterprise:

" The American enterprise is confronted with this choice: it may strike out and save its position all over the world, or sit by and witness its own funeral We must set the pace and assume the responsibility of the majority stakeholder in this corporation known as the world.. This is a permanent obligation... Our foreign policy will be more concerned with the safety and stability of our foreign investments than ever before. "

The Monterrey consensus, having been heavily influenced by a dynamic interface between the Washington and Post-Washington Consensuses, provides the strategic framework within which the powerful nations of the North and their metropolitan interests articulate the general relativity theory of the coordination and management of development in dependent economies of the South. It advocates for harmonization of and coherence between all the key aspects of development, particularly from the point of view of the already mentioned areas of strategic interest within the context of the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). Ready to accommodate the new strategic priorities occasioned by the Global War on Terror (GWOT) the Monterrey Consensus brought into a coherent and unmistakable focus the emerging imperative of securitisation of aid as a means of instrumentalising the security concerns of the Global North into the purview or, better expressed, conspectus of a broader and more comprehensive strategic pre-eminence.

Driven by a Cartesian anxiety and equally inspired by a sense of post-modern self-referentiality to open up national and regional policy spaces for the realization of a raft of vaguely, though tendentiously, defined global interests, the GWOT remains firmly and stubbornly etched against a baroque political architecture of a world grotesquely resembling a hypothetical shelter under the American military umbrella that is inherently allergic to, and violently opposed to, beneficiaries of a promiscuous character. In this context security has become much more than a military concept.

It has taken on a strategic character that flies in the face of real concern with the factors that sustain it, leave alone those that preclude its materialization, and the political motivation of its process drivers. It has become a significant part of a dynamic actuarial calculus designed to indemnify and shelter metropolitan interests away from the pressing need for a genuine understanding of the historical makeup of national and international problems of insecurity and against any painful awareness of the damages that the metropolitan commercial interest do to the African economies.

There is no doubt that the big powers have always used foreign aid strategically. The Marshall Plan, the first major U.S foreign aid program was largely motivated by concerns over national security and the determination to preemptively put paid to Soviet expansion in Europe. In the recent past Kenya, Zaire, Ethiopia and Egypt have been among the largest recipients of American aid. The assistance has been used to promote a regional security agenda with a middle-Eastern focus. Against this background GWOT has affected US development assistance in many significant ways. Some of the effects have involved drastic shifts in allocation between and within countries and sectors. But most importantly it has diverted aid away from the poorest countries and, thereby, compromised donor commitment to poverty reduction. In recognizing the significant effect that GWOT is already exerting on the evolving pattern of U.S foreign assistance, it is necessary to identify some GWOT-related potential, if not actual, determinants of aid allocation. These include:

- Countries with a significant and restive Moslem population (Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia etc.),
- Countries that are foreign terrorist targets (Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt etc.)
- Countries that are either part of or subscribe to the security agenda and strategic pre-eminence of the Coalition of the Willing (Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt etc.) and particularly those that have been chosen for sheltering under the American strategic umbrella, not because of proven good governance credentials but because they seem like the most ferocious dogs in the ken.

Inter-state Conflicts: Weak links in the strategic networks of liberal governance

Africa has been a disgusting scene of increasing and recurring inter-state conflicts. The causes of such conflicts vary from irredentist claims (Ethiopia vs Eritrea), frayed territorial integrity, regime change of failing states by cross-border/multilateral and bilateral antagonisms and commercial interests - among others - to politically intransigent cross-border refugees, (the Great Lakes region). The revolutionary operations that saw the installation of the post-Mobutu government in the Congo, though accomplished with what appeared to be an act of neighborly solidarity, was later on to reveal a weird mix of multiple and contradictory interests (passing for military aid) directly compounded by the regional spread of and configuration around the conflict in question. (See, Mwesiga Baregu). The true character of the conflict manifested itself in the ensuing process of conflict resolution when the main provocateurs in the conflict emerged with demands implicating a complex mixture of self-interests and, therefore, unfavorable conditions for conflict resolution.

Conflicts in the Great Lakes region can be traced back to the period when Imperial Belgium governed Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi as a single colonial entity; then known as Le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi with a single military: Force Publique. Colonial machinations combined with ethnic and sub-ethnic differences arising from colonially inspired cross-ethnic-border migration and settlements and vaguely defined citizenship status conspired to provide the seeds of mistrust and eventual conflicts. Post-colonial manipulation of the above sources of inter-ethnic mistrust as a manifestation of democratic incompetence of the respective post-colonial regimes provided the impetus for breakout of conflicts engulfing the entire region.

The rebranding of the conflict area as the Great Lakes region prompts us to read strategic contradictions in the humanitarian interventions that followed, bringing on board conflicting yet mutually reinforcing commercial interests of big Western powers and their local sidekicks. Even as the plurilateral efforts at containing the conflict were being made by regional entities and allied process drivers like SADCAF, behind-the-scenes unilateralism by the US, France, Great Britain and other powerful nations obtruded with such schemes as the American Crisis Response Initiative and French Operation Turquoise; converting the conflict from high to low intensity fratricide. With such a curious combination of selfish imperial and sub-imperial/commercial interests and designs no lasting solution could be found to restore peace in the region. In this particular case the exploitation of the rich mineral resources in Zaire and the control of their markets produced commercial incentives that relegated the plurilateral drive for a comprehensive peace in the region to backburner priority. This, to a large extent, explains the recidivous character of the conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

Poverty entrenching trade, unsustainable Debt, and, conflict-promoting aid will continue to expose Africa to mounting socio-economic tensions that will, in turn, subject African economies to continued internal conflicts and, therefore, external intervention. Homegrown solutions like the historic Abuja Treaty of 1991 with a distinct conflict-prevention and peace-resolution agenda built into the charter, if pursued with sovereign determination would begin to make a significant difference. But not when their strategic integrity is undermined and diluted by other conflict-prone interventions that rely on neo-liberal mechanisms for tying African political-economic dispensations to the lurching engines of Western capitalism.

It is also important that the existing conflict-preventive and resolution mechanisms be activated at all levels up to the African Union level. But most importantly, the grudging, though steady, return of regionalistic thinking among the ruling elite in the Eastern Africa region is undoubtedly one very important trend in contemporary international relations in this particular part of the world. On a worldwide level it rides on the wave often and increasingly being referred to as the new regionalism. This wave is mainly, characterized by an ever-increasing geographic scope, demographic diversity, historical fluidity and a wide variety of process drivers and actors in the regionalization project.

Everyone who has studied the relationship between poverty and conflicts will recognize that conditional aid weakens the capacity of recipient countries/societies to exercise their sovereignty in dealing with possible causes of conflicts. In this particular regard, many Western governments have contributed to the increase of the poor world's misery by tying aid disbursements to the privatization of essential public services.

In the area of services, aid helps in 'supporting the establishment of a domestic pro-competitive regulatory framework. necessary to undertake and benefit from liberalization of services'. On investment it helps promote 'open and non-discriminatory rules for investors' and 'very much on the overall investment climate'.

As another example, the British Department for International Development (DFID) funded the Adam Smith Institute to design the water privatisation programme for Dar es Salaam, a contract won by the British firm Biwater. In May 2005, the Tanzanian government deported three Biwater executives for mismanagement, highlighting the inappropriate way that aid influenced Dar es Salaam's water privatisation. According to the Financial Times:

A contract dispute between a British water company and the Tanzanian government has dramatically illustrated the dilemmas of international aid-giving in developing countries... Experts from multilateral agencies are understood to have taken the view that the UK-German-Tanzanian joint venture performed poorly and that the Tanzanian government had abided by its agreement... The dispute highlights politically charged issues surrounding foreign private-sector involvement in public utilities - particularly water - in developing countries... The overall \$164m project for Dar es Salaam, 87 per cent financed by the World Bank, African Development Bank and European Investment Bank, is for upgrading services in an area of three million people where only about one in five households is connected to mains water... But it resulted in what many complained was worse rather than better water supply.

Intra-state Conflicts: A Function of Deficient Democratic sovereignty

Intra-state conflicts have been the bane of Africa's economic history. Although the underlying causes of these conflicts vary from one country to the other, and over time, they could generally be traced to issues of governance, tensions arising from resource misdistribution, faith-based tensions, sub-national (ethnic) disputes and poverty. The political exploitation of such conflict-prone conditions has driven many African states to the brink of anarchy and internecine wars. Conflicts experienced in Somalia, Uganda, the Sudan, Ivory Coast and the Horn of Africa have one or a combination of these factors in play. In nearly all of the above cases conflicts have affected the respective society in ways that have led to loss of state control over parts of their territories or their populations.

In the majority of cases intra-state conflicts have been over-determined to the extent that a curious permutation of the above cited factors are found to be responsible for different types of conflicts in which both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are at play. Whereas inter-clan rivalries combining with undemocratic management of attendant conflicts led to the failure and eventual collapse of the state and now a never-ending civil insecurity in Somalia, in Ivory Coast a prolonged incubation of inter-ethnic bitterness arising from a strong feeling of exclusion and economic marginalisation - real or imaginary - (on the part of the pre-dominantly Muslim North) by the Southern-based government has sustained the conflict beyond the expectations of many observers. In Kenya, the ethnic clashes that saw the country witness serious tensions among the various communities living in the Rift Valley province was the product of a complex combination of self-preservation tactics of the Moi Government. All this happened in the face of mounting opposition by the political class from outsider ethnic groups and untenable land policies that had predisposed the land tenure system into a conflict waiting to erupt with bottled-up violence. Interventions by faith-based organizations and other civil society organizations helped restore a modicum of peace that remains threatened by the unresolved land question.

As a response to the on-going and recurring conflicts in different regions of Africa a wide variety of actors have come into the scene to try different methods of dealing with the conflicts. At a generic level the AU, for instance, has come up with new norms and values that are intended to enhance its capacity for effective intervention. The most outstanding efforts at peace making have been through diplomatically supported multilateral interventions undertaken by sub-regional organizations such as ECOMOG (in Ivory Coast), IGAD (in the Horn of Africa, Somalia and Sudan).

The so-called Low Income countries under Stress (LICUS) initiative by the World Bank, using a new Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) as an instrument of conflict-sensitive programming, has come in handy as a means of locking in the Bank's and IMF's systematic conflict risk assessment into their program design and implementation. What this means, among other intentions, is that the Bank's program design and surveillance could and, in fact, must henceforth incorporate an evaluation of the risks when discussing and deciding on the necessary trade-offs between policy choices. This has ended up undermining the integrity and consistency of the Bank's mandate and jurisdictional claims that explicitly prohibit any activity of a political nature. In fact, the additional jurisdiction of assessing the risk of conflict has meant that the Bank and the Fund are increasingly prone to making judgments with compromising bearing on the balance of political forces.

Getting the Bank's analysis right is one thing. The implications of the strategic framework within which such an analysis can claim an appropriate use value are another. Given the fact that the state sector, alongside open circuits of public interest institutions operating above a network of deceptively concealed power conduits, is at the center of security and also given the increasing influence of non-state actors (as ordained by the neo-liberal push for deepening privatization and marketisation of social and political life), the corresponding hollowing and enfeebling of states in the Third World turns out to be a means by which the metropolitan interests are keenly learning how to govern the borderlands by projecting authority through non-state actors and non-territorial networks of international aid system.

Most of the so-called collapsing or collapsed states that constitute the object and strategic focus of the LICUS initiative happen to be those states that have been, for different reasons, heavy beneficiaries of exclusive support from the metropolitan strategic intervention (Egypt, Israel, Congo, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Soviet Union, Iraq and others). In the majority of cases it is the same aid that, by exacerbating social and political inequalities, turned the recipient political economies into breeding grounds for internally confined or externally directed conflicts: they pitted rural populations against their urban counterparts (Ivory Coast and Kenya), ethnic group against another (Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda), high potential regions against low potential ones (Kenya and Uganda), women folk against their male counterparts, youth against the older generation (Kenya, Nigeria, Ivory Coast), and expansionist military escapades born of sub-hegemonial designs. These, however, are in no way peculiar to Africa and its so-called fragile states.

Youth, Conflict and Development: an instrument, a victim or a potential source of Peace

Youth is a category of society that is located somewhere besides, in front and rarely at the center of the trajectory of a given social formation. Either it is being deswamped out of the malign influence of Muslim fundamentalism in Kenya or it is being instrumentalised as a potent force in Museveni's National Resistance war against Milton Obote's UPC government in Uganda and in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and others.

The first victims of many different forms of social decay in a given society are the marginal sections of the same. Either they are women, children, the poor or the demographic minorities. When in normal political contests the legitimate actors reach out for extra-democratic instruments in the way of protests, violent confrontations, banditry or reprisals it is invariably the youth that are pushed forward to the frontline. When conflicts ravage national economies the first victims of unemployment are the youth.

Youth are usually the weak link in the long chain of social stress in any given society. In Kenya the incapacity of the political class to create a veritable institutional framework for doing policy/issue-oriented political business, leaving the youth sector in a given society in limbo and without a firm political handle on the body politics, combined with other factors like rampant unemployment, drug abuse, slum life and ethnic chauvinism to produce the Mungiki phenomenon . When conflicts in society - whether latent or active - disrupt normal and peaceful life the youth are either instrumentalised as fodder for prosecuting the entailed conflict or for ameliorating the deleterious effects of the same; such that when USAID targets the Kenyan Muslim/pastoralist youth by seeking to dry up the existential swamp around them it is because of the potential threat it adumbrates and not because of a holistic interest in the well-being of the Kenyan society.

Politically bankrupt leaders have used Mungiki and similar youth movements to do their political biddings. Owing to their high degree of impressionability, the youth can be indoctrinated to pursue a sectarian agenda that can easily become the seedbed of future conflicts in the host society. It is, therefore, incumbent upon agents of stable social transformation and posterity to see to it that appropriate strategic investment is put into efforts to protect the youth from the psychological fallout from conflicts and direct their energies into society-enriching activities.

In many wars in Africa, the youth, i.e., young children - both boys and girls - are usually targeted for special atrocities. In Sierra Leone the civil war between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and government forces, rebels targeted women and children as a tactical option. Schools were destroyed, leading to a drastic decline in school enrollment in the war-prone parts of the continent. What normally follows is rampant crime either in the African cities into which the youth are forced to move when life in the rural areas become unbearable and also in rural areas when migration to cities loses its appeal on account of not promising to bring livelihood advantages.

Efforts aimed at addressing some of the problems of youth in conflict situations are yet to produce tangible results. In the Niger Delta of Nigeria multinational oil companies have come up with an intervention strategy that not only exacerbates the already bad situation but also makes a mockery of the will to deal with the attendant problems. For instance, in a bid to curb widespread violence among the restive youths and warlords in the Niger Delta, oil companies have resorted to the strategy of "sit-home allowances". This is gradually turning into a hydra headed monster or a Jekyll and Hyde that is undermining the potential employability of the youth in question.

The youth now constitutes conflict frontlines that many ordinary conflicts in society use as an avenue for expression. Inter-ethnic hostilities now have ready agents in the armed, destabilized youth. Political competition/rivalry can now find expression in youth fights.

Conflict resolution in Africa: The Ups and Downs of an intractable challenge.

The post-cold war international dispensation had an immediate impact on Africa. The impact was dicey. Whereas, on the one hand, it promised to free Africa from the treacherous vice akin to the Procrustean bed of East-West conflict, on the other hand it imposed a unipolar diktat on the way it was supposed to run its own affairs. To start with, the United Nations began to attract increasing attention as a possible vehicle for multilateral security. The need for this new role was felt more readily in the field of conflict resolution and in the mobilization of resources that would be required to safeguard and guarantee peace. Countries directly affected then were: Namibia, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Somalia and others. Expectedly, the concept of international peace-keeping gradually expanded into a wider concern with peace making, peace building and peace-enforcement concerns. Though the Namibian operation - the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) - still retained the resilient features and ingredients of the traditional tenets of peace-keeping, it also gained in strategic clarity as time passed by, particularly as the United Operations in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and United Nations operations in Central America took place.

Having lost its strategic importance to the international community, Africa has been a theatre of all manner of tendentious external interventions up to and including in the area of conflict resolution. In the majority of cases conflicts on the continent have largely been ignored and the conflicting parties left on their own. It is only when such conflicts become or threaten to become humanitarian catastrophes and difficult to ignore have certain actors in the international community intervened. This means that international responses to conflict-produced crises and emergencies have, to a large extent, been motivated by strategic rather than basic humanitarian needs or considerations - with Africa benefiting much less than it would have otherwise deserved.

With most conflict situations in Africa tending to be stubbornly recidivous, conflict resolution and management mechanisms and the attendant capacity to sustain peace remain acutely challenged. This has meant that efforts aimed at negotiating peace deals within the continent continue to meet with little success, with some conflicts proving resistant to conflict resolution efforts made so far. The challenge can be put down to the weakness of the regional and sub-regional blocks such as SADC, IGAD, and ECOWAS that are usually under-resourced, making it difficult for them to deal effectively with the conflict situations around them. Whereas the Abuja, the Lusaka and the Lome Agreements chalked a modicum of success in providing settlements for the multiple conflicts in Liberia, Congo and Sierra Leone respectively, the accompanying incidents of squandered resources and undelivered services in the severely weakened states remained unaddressed; providing renewed opportunities for the ramification and continuation of the same conflicts. Short of a comprehensive conflict resolution on the basis of which the principal phases of the entailed process is expected to embrace: the preparatory phase - characterized by compelling belligerents to reach a ceasefire; the second phase of disarmament, demobilization and supervised elections and the long-term phase of post-conflict reconstruction and development, little has been achieved in the way of sustaining peace on a long-term basis.

At the continental level, conflict resolution efforts have been channeled through the AU's Peace and Security Commission (PSC) and a host of sub-regional entities such as: ECOWAS, IGAD (the Naivasha Accord) and SADC. Though the latter was basically formed to promote economic cooperation among the member states, its mandate has since been widened to include engagement in conflict resolution/management in the southern Africa sub-region.

Through the deployment of peace missions and sub-regional Standing Forces they have been used, with varying degrees of success, to restore peace in Somalia, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Darfur and Liberia. Resource constraints have, however, militated against the possibility of these conflict management agencies going the whole hog of the three complementary phases of a comprehensive conflict resolution and development up to and including rehabilitation and resettlement. The tendentious support that most of the agencies attract from the powerful nations of the North, either under the auspices of the United Nations or other regional or Multinational agencies has, in many cases, ended up compromising the capacity for conflict-resolving actors. Regional and sub-regional hegemonic designs, like in the case of Ethiopia in the Somali conflict, Uganda in the Rwanda conflict and Kenya in the Sudan conflict, have also undermined the efficacy of these peace agents; particularly when the sub-regional hegemonic interest combine/coincide with power balancing games of the big international players like the US, United Kingdom, Germany and others to complicate the peace agenda of the intervening agencies.

The UN Panel of Experts Mechanism operating in Africa, particularly at the height of both external and internal response to conflicts, violence and wars in the continent, has the potential of contributing to effective strategies of dealing with conflicts in this part of the world. Its impact on conflict resolution, particularly in the post-conflict reconstruction phase has been remarkable. Its extraordinary value as a conflict-reducing facility was incontrovertibly demonstrated in the civil war in Angola and Congo, when the exploitation of natural resources (e.g. diamonds, like in the case of Angola) in the war-torn nations fuel and sustain conflicts. Its researched information-driven intervention agenda has had an outstanding impact particularly in its early-warning capacity.

What Should or Ought to be done

Although various efforts are being made in the area of conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution, a lot more needs to be done if Africa is to rid itself of the conflicts that retard its development. Some of the measures that need to be taken include:

1. Strengthening regional and sub-regional organizations, particularly their peace-enhancing mandate. This should include AU-PSC structures and their sub-regional ramifications
2. Releasing the UN system, particularly its peacekeeping functions, from the clutches of the big power influence.
3. Adoption of and synchronization of the One Tier Brigade idea with African Standby Force.
4. Formalizing the role of the Permanent Panel of Experts and sharpening its expertise in the generation of early and credible information on conflicts.
5. Instituting of genuine efforts by the international community to help Africa reduce poverty through beneficial trade relations and debt cancellation.
6. Sustained investment in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the antagonized sections of society.
7. Early identification of potential spoilers on the basis of their motivations, strength and goals in order to avoid having war-torn societies relapsing back into conditions of instability.
8. Promoting of democratic norms as a basis for governance at national levels and the level of international relations.
9. Strengthening of the democratic principles on which the UN was founded and affording its various agencies the multilateral capacity needed global democracy
10. Unbundling of the curious and tendentious dynamics of Coherence/Harmonization agenda away from the hegemonic interests of the powerful nations or block of nations in the world.
11. Decreasing but critical reliance on conflict analyses that are generated by hegemonic interests of powerful interests in the world.
12. Post-conflict institutional re-configurations need to feed on the democratic potentials of all the actors; because it is in this exercise that costly signals of the parties' commitment and buy-into a permanent settlement can either be ignored at the detriment of the peace accord or harnessed for sustainable peace.
13. Resist the weakening of the regional blocks along with their peace-building potentials by multilateral as well as plurilateral partnership arrangements and models that undermine the historical necessity and strategic integrity of the entailed regionalistic tendencies. In mind are such partnerships like the e EPAS which seeks to re-configure regional entities in Africa on the basis of the strategic machinations of the EU.

Conclusion:

The fundamental issues raised in this paper highlight the fact that most questions about security, conflict and aid urgently await coherent answers, and that humanitarian crises that result thereof cannot be done away with until the African governments together with the international community formulate more systematic, holistic and preventive mechanisms devoid of self interests and personal agendas. It can be said that what is needed for sub-Saharan Africa at the end of the day is keeping conflicts at bay and inviting peace to be a natural ingredient of social life that promotes diversity and tolerance. Any development aid that is not sensitive to these is likely to end up broadening the frontiers of conflict than promote security and peace.



African Forum and Network on Debt and Development

31 Atkinson Drive, Hillside,

PO Box CY1517, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

Telephone 263 4 778531, 778536 Telefax 263 4 747878

E-Mail afrodad@afrodadco.zw

Website: www.afrodad.org