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EDITORIAL

Mainstream NGOs in Africa: time to rethink alliances?

With projects such as Make Poverty History and Live 8, some North-based NGOs are unwittingly advancing agendas that undermine the very people whose interests they claim to be defending, argue **Patrick Bond, Dennis Brutus, and Virginia Setshedi**

What's on offer for Africa from trendy but top-down initiatives such as Make Poverty History, Live 8, and even the Johannesburg-based Global Call to Action Against Poverty? We worry that these projects, like many NGO activities in Africa, unintentionally legitimise the institutions, processes, and personalities through which neoliberalism and imperialism do their damage. A better approach would be to endorse, strengthen, and link the myriad of Africa's bottom-up anti-racist, feminist, and ecological struggles, especially those focusing on economic justice.

After all, it should be evident to careful observers that Tony Blair and Gordon Brown are no friends of Africa. And yet, when the neoliberal New Labour government took office in 1997, the rush of British NGOs to Brown's Treasury office was akin to lemmings dancing over the ideological cliff.

Teflon man

Protected by NGO-supplied teflon, Brown repeatedly endorsed and fostered policies that destroyed millions of lives across the world. He refused to countenance the democratic reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions, whose important monetary policy committee he chairs. His choice in 2004 for managing director of the IMF was Rodrigo de Rato, the austerity-minded Spaniard whose political lineage has been described by Vicente Navarro of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health as 'ultra-right'. While a minister in José María Aznar's cabinet, De Rato supported policies designed to make religion a compulsory subject in secondary schools; compel more hours of schooling in religion than in mathematics; undo progress in the internal revenue code; and fund a foundation dedicated to the promotion of Francoism (ie, Spanish fascism).

The other finance minister with inordinate clout, South Africa's Trevor Manuel, chairs the World Bank/IMF development committee. At its last press conference, in mid-April, Manuel endorsed the new president of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz – the ruthless pro-US geopolitician who destroyed large parts of Iraq, and has been implicated in vast reconstruction corruption – as a 'wonderful individual' who is 'perfectly capable'. Capable, Manuel didn't say, of lending more than \$20 billion a year to advance the US imperial project.

NGOs should know who to make alliances with. Manuel and Brown aren't

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good material; mass social movements are. Those movements have their own analyses, campaigns, priorities, discourses, strategies, and tactics. Though it may be harder to establish a united global campaign based on their struggles, trying to impose one from the top down is counterproductive.

Imperial trade and aid

Control of Make Poverty History by Oxfam is a telling example. According to a recent critique of the organisation on the front page on the *New Statesman*, 'Is Oxfam failing Africa?' (30 May 2005), there is a revolving door between Oxfam, the Downing Street Policy Unit, Brown's office, and the World Bank.

But what has resulted from such easy access? Even setting aside Blair/Brown's financing of and participation in the looting and destruction of Iraq, British official development 'aid' included – typically – foisting the notorious Adam Smith Institute on Africa. Poor black South Africans were the victims when the UK Department for International Development (DfID) espoused funded water privatisation, which resulted in disastrous municipal pilot projects. In Dar es Salaam, the Tanzanian government had to cancel a contract with Lon-

don's Biwater in May after it had failed to meet water delivery and pricing targets that the Adam Smith Institute had helped to set out, using UK taxpayer money channeled by Brown, and DfID's Clare Short and Hilary Benn.

Yet Brown has been central to defining the parameters of Make Poverty History, and claims credit for advocating a Marshall Plan for Africa as well as promoting fair trade instead of dogmatic liberalisation. As George Monbiot explained in *The Guardian* at the end of May: 'It doesn't take a great imaginative effort to see that a double game is being played. Before the election, Blair makes one of his tear-jerking appeals for greater love, compassion, and human fellowship, and gets the anti-poverty movement off his back. After the election he discovers, to his inestimable regret, that love, compassion and human fellowship won't, after all, be possible, as a result of a ruling by the EC [against Third World industrial protection tariffs].'

The reason is that the EC's trade negotiator, the controversial and thoroughly neoliberal Peter Mandelson, is apparently undermining the British trade concessions. According to a leaked e-mail memo from his director-general in mid-May: 'Mandelson is taking up [the EC's] concerns, and will press for a revised UK line, noting that their statement is contrary to the agreed EU position.'

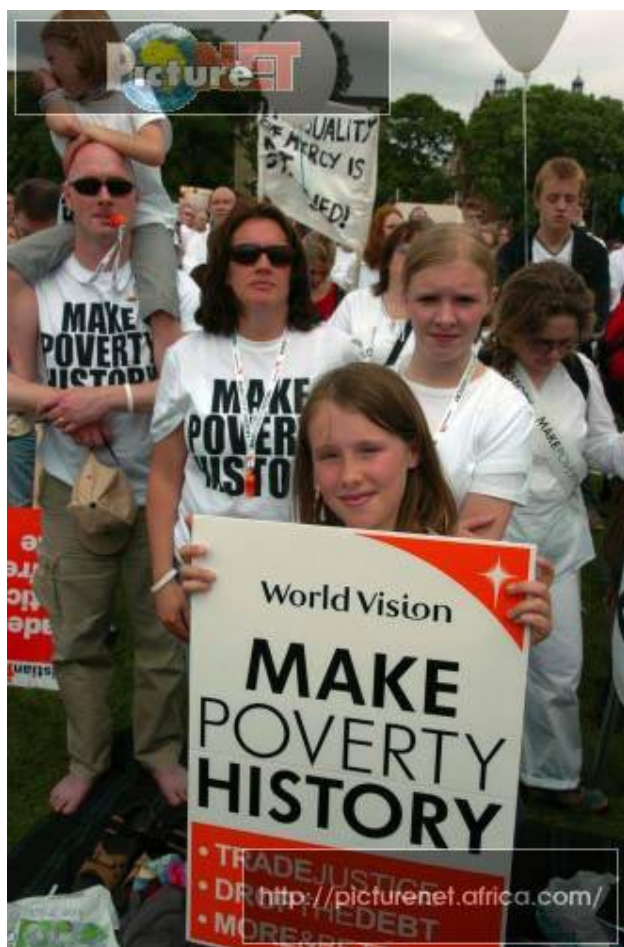
Double game

The same double game is being played with aid. Brown recently announced that Britain will pay the magic 0.7 per cent of national income by 2013, some 33 years after the date promised back in 1970. According to the *New Statesman*: 'Many in the Labour Party and in the NGO movement wonder why it has taken so long, but again, Oxfam was a signatory to an open letter congratulating the government on taking the action.' Monbiot writes: 'Again the government admitted, before the election, that its critics were right. DfID published a long mea culpa in which it promised: "We will not make our aid conditional on specific policy decisions by partner governments, or attempt to impose policy choices on them (including ... privatisation or trade liberalisation)."

'It looks great, until you read the whole document. On privatisation, DfID admits that there was "concern that in the 1980s and 1990s donors pushed for reforms, regardless of whether these were in countries' best interests". The 1980s and 1990s, eh? What about the privatisation it was demanding in 2004 and early 2005? What about its recent assault on the public services of Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, and the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh? What about the money it is still paying the Adam Smith Institute?'

The G8 debt scam

What about the alleged victory that Africa and debt campaigners won from the G8 finance ministers on 11 June? After looking at the details, the Brussels-based Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt condemned the scheme. The committee's Eric Toussaint pointed out that 165 countries deserve debt cancellation, but the finance ministers only agreed to partially cancel the debt of between 18 and 38



A Make Poverty History rally in Edinburgh, Scotland, on the eve of the G8 meeting in July ... trendy wristbands are netting some NGOs 'tens of thousands of pounds'. *Gildas Raffanel/Wostok Press*



The launch of the Make Poverty History campaign in London's Trafalgar Square ... well-meaning supporters do not fully understand the processes which these top-down initiatives are legitimising.
Bhekthemba Khumalo/PictureNET Africa

countries, depending upon how they apply neoliberal conditionality. The best case would see a \$55 billion write-down of most – not all – debt for these poorest countries. Some would, however, still be in debt to the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and private lenders.

Neoliberal policies

The true limitation of the debt relief package is shown by the fact that African debt weighs in at more than \$300 billion, and the total Third World debt that should be cancelled, according to Jubilee South, exceeds \$2 trillion. As Toussaint points out: 'The financial burden of the operation on rich countries would amount to some \$2 billion a year, compared to \$350 billion the G8 devote to farming subsidies, or \$700 billion they spend in military expenditure.'

Toussaint adds: 'The G8 decision is a continuation of the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, which involves the imposition of heavily neoliberal policies: privatisation of natural resources and strategic economic sectors to the benefit of transnational corporations; higher cost of health care and education; a rise in value added tax; free flow of capital (which results in capital flight); and lower tariff protection (which undermines SMEs who cannot compete with imported goods).' G8 conditions included in the

June 11 debt relief package include 'eliminating impediments to private investment'.

While some debt – which is not being repaid anyway – is cancelled immediately, can anyone trust Brown to deliver the future funds? Six years ago in Cologne, the G8 debt relief package was purportedly worth \$100 billion. Yet an audit found that all debt relief actually implemented between 1996 (when HIPC was launched) and 2003 amounted to just \$26,3 billion.

Why, then, do groups like Oxfam and U2 singer Bono's Washington-based NGO DATA – for 'Debt, AIDS, and Trade for Africa' – continue the charade, and why do some Africans play along?

At least some of the northern NGOs – like Jubilee USA, War on Want, the World Development Movement, and Christian Aid – have the sense to defer to progressive Third World movements for advice

ment, and Christian Aid – have the sense to defer to progressive Third World movements for advice. But this has meant little, given that, according to Stuart Hodgkinson of the British magazine *Red Pepper*: 'Oxfam's unrivalled financial resources and existing public profile make it by far the most powerful organisation in the Make Poverty History coalition. Last year, Oxfam's annual income surpassed £180 million, including £40 million from government and other public funds.'

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Opposition in Zimbabwe: parliamentary road, or mass action on the streets?

After a third rigged election, the options for democratic action in Zimbabwe have dwindled, rendering dichotomies such as 'mass action equals revolutionary democracy' and 'parliamentary procedures equals bourgeois complacency' facile.

By **David Moore**, with **Tapera Kapuya**

Both party-political and civil society opposition to ZANU-PF and its class allies appeared to be left with no options after the MDC's third election loss since its tumultuous debut in 1999. Those who believed that president Robert Mugabe would initiate a succession and step down soon after the 2008 presidential election were confounded when, at the party's post-election press conference, he announced that he would resign '[only] when I am a century old'.

There seemed to be no alternative to Mugabe's ruinous regime, and no way for the opposition to return to the strategic path that had seemed so promising in 2000. But perhaps the stark dichotomy between parliamentary and street action obscures more subtle possibilities. With almost everyone rejecting heavy foreign intervention, debates in the aftermath of the election have revolved around only two options: either to sedately take up seats in the legislature, or

taking the struggle to the streets with rather more passion.

That these are seen as the only alternatives was demonstrated at the press conference hosted by the president of the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai, immediately after the election on 31 March. He claimed that the count was fraudulent, and suggested that people should 'defend their right to vote'. Western journalists immediately assumed that he was advocating street protests. Tsvangirai might well have challenged the assumption that he had the power to 'order' his followers to rebel, as Mao Zedong was said to have done. But instead he merely said that the party structures would discuss the issue. Although sporadic street action did follow, quickly dispersing when the police arrived, activists' hopes that barricades would be erected were not realised. In fact during the whole week the most vivid extra-parliamentary action was a candlelight vigil organised by the Woman of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) on election night. Government forces demonstrated their capacity for repression by breaking it up with beatings.

By early May, advocates of the parliamentary road appeared to have won the debate. One representative of the MDC's liberal wing declared to his e-mail audience that a late April MDC meeting had 'agreed – without exception – to stand firm on our principles, and not to endorse calls for violence and extralegal activity'. This was in keeping, he wrote, with the party's steadfast 'principles of non-violent political action' maintained resolutely through five years of ZANU-PF brutality and election chicanery 'as we sought political change through the ballot and normal legal procedures'.

Repressive apparatus

But by the end of the month, Operation Murambatsvina had swung the pendulum the other way. Police rounded up 22 000 urban *siya so* ('leave it as it is'), or informal traders and residents – who make up the most of the urban population – and destroyed their homes and livelihoods. Initial resistance forced the army to back up the party-state's repressive apparatus, and the MDC had to rethink its take on opposition. ZANU-PF claimed that 'Operation Drive-out-the-rubbish' or 'Restore Order' was meant to wipe out parallel market activities. It was more likely punishment for voting MDC, a warning against mass action over extraordinary post-election price rises and food shortages, and a way of forcing people back to the rural areas.

There are a number of explanations for Operation Muram-



Zanu PF officials selling maize to Zanu-PF supporters outside an MDC rally in Chimanimani ... the manipulation of food supplies has become a major factor in Zimbabwean politics.
Nadine Hutton/PictureNET Africa



An unidentified girl sits amid the rubble of a small business centre in Chitungwiza, south of Harare ... Operation 'Restore Order' has forced opposition forces to rethink their strategies. *AP Photo*

batsvina. Some radical activists think it is meant to signal the IMF that 'order' is being imposed on the illegal market. Government statements about the abuse of the parallel market certainly reflect a crisis in state access to foreign exchange. Furthermore, big businesses with ruling party connections are closely involved in the forex market. It may also be that ZANU-PF's promise to rebuild stalls and organise marketing groups is a strategy to extend its patronage network to a previously self-organised and MDC-leaning constituency. But perhaps the main factors were ZANU-PF's lack of solutions for the economy's ailments, signs of growing impatience from the SADC, especially South Africa, and disappointment that the elections did not bring about a ZANU-PF-dominated 'government of national unity'.

By provoking a crisis, the ruling party has put itself in a position where it can now turn to a state of emergency regulations – inherited from colonial days – and beg for its regional partners' patience.

What the crisis did do, however, was put the debate over parliamentary and extra-parliamentary options back on the MDC's agenda. On 31 May, Tsvangirai stated:

'The only option available to us is to organise the people to resist, through legitimate and democratic means, the assault on their basic civil and political liberties. The people's choices require a sustained people power defence mechanism to survive the loss of incomes, a harsh winter, and the physical attacks on their families. The only way Mugabe and ZANU-PF can be stopped from going ahead with this project is through a combination of local and international pressure. The people, across the political divide, must organise

themselves against this form of tyranny and outright callousness.'

The context for Tsvangirai's statement was the plan to launch a mass stayaway on 8 and 9 June. That event, organised by a 'broad alliance' of the national constitutional assembly (led by election rejectionist and street action advocate Lovemore Madhuku), the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, and the MDC, had no impact on the state. In fact, the MDC refusal to take up parliamentary duty was probably the bigger news story. The party-state has clearly paralysed all forms of opposition. And if the kidnappings and assassinations of MDC members in Johannesburg are anything to go by, opposition politics in Zimbabwe appears fated to undergo the same distortions it did in the mid-1970s. The rise of ethnic politics, rooted in a vacuum of real strategic and ideological alternatives, is possible. In the 1970s, the consummate conspirator Mugabe emerged out of the *mélange*. Perhaps these lessons have been learned. But can this opposition mix of parliamentarians, protestors, and even putschists fashion a creative alternative?

Spectrum of choices

The lack of enthusiasm for street action is rooted in memories of bloody failure. In October 2000, soon after the June elections, food riots resulted in many deaths. In mid-2003, a 'final push' left three dead, 200 wounded, and 400 arrested. A long history of forced participation in mass rallies and 'rent-a-crowd' demonstrations, combined with the current planned poverty, render 'organised spontaneity' an uncertain option.

There would inevitably be a loss of life. Neither the parliamentary nor the 'revolutionary strategy' is risk-free. Follow one route (parliament), and millions of people face slow starvation; follow the other (revolution), and hundreds face instant death by shooting as they take to the streets to hasten transformation.

But there is in fact a spectrum of choices stretching from parliament to the streets. If there is anything to be learnt from the history of Zimbabwe's liberation war, it is that the means chosen are important. How power is pulled away from ZANU-PF's desperate grip will have substantial effects on the nature of that power itself. The idea of a dichotomy between 'mass action equals revolutionary democracy' and 'parliamentary procedures equals bourgeois complacency' is simply not useful. As in the struggle for liberation, there are 'democrats' and 'elitists' on both sides of this divide.

There is thus more at stake than the removal of Robert Mugabe and his conspicuously consuming comrades. The crisis offers the opportunity to remodel Zimbabwean politics from below. But is there any prospect of creating a democracy that is both liberal and left-leaning? There are dangers from both sides. Mugabe and his party could win the rest of this round by creating a new constitution, consolidating new forms of 'liberation capitalism', and staving off ethnic implosion. Alternatively, the opposition could win, but within this

broad coalition the wrong partners could capture the fruits of civil society's decade-and-a-half struggle. In both cases neither the thin-liberal nor thick-socialist varieties of democracy will emerge. In fact, the phenomenon of 'big men' may well rise from the ashes. To avert such prospects, we must ask whether the parliamentary road and its apparent revolutionary opposite can be reconciled. Is it possible to forge the democratic synergy that promised to create a new Zimbabwe in 1998-2000?

2½ cheers for the parliamentary path?

Much as E M Forster's *Two Cheers for Democracy* told us that liberal democracy was worth a couple of hurrahs in fascism's face, the moderate – or parliamentary – path to freedom in Zimbabwe deserves no easy sneers. 'Tolerance, good temper, and sympathy' and robust parliamentary debate are the cornerstones of both liberal democracy and the building blocks of democratic socialism. Those who cherish these institutions and the means by which they are built are far from 'parliamentary cretins'. Parliaments and the peaceful electoral procedures through which they are constituted are part of a democratising process through which power is tamed by the participation of gradually increasing numbers of social groups.

Liberal democracy is a key indicator of the willingness of politicians and people to subject themselves to the uncertainty of modernity and the other components – such as the World Bank holy trinity of rule of law, accountability, and transparency – of racially neutral liberal capitalism. They start from the assumption that the individual is important. When and if people can be convinced that their vote is indeed private, and a matter of deliberate and conscious choice, democracy has allowed criticism to unfold. Parliamentary debates and a free press are the consequences. The vote also allows individuals to register criticism and turn it into credible alternatives in the form of programmes, policies, and even ideologies.

In Zimbabwe, an opposition party tested in the furnace of ZANU-PF repression, and denied easy access to public space, still offers a place for people to register their preferences. Those who cling to that option should not be condemned as falling into a bourgeois trap. To be sure, many of them are inclined to the pure precepts of liberal-capitalist democracy. But as long as their commitments to freedom and debate remain intact, they are part of a struggle for the basic components of civil politics. Unfortunately, ZANU-PF carries none of these polite characteristics even though it may well be currying favour with international finance.

Thus, as Forster rather reluctantly remarked, in the face of authoritarianism of a fascist hue, all the liberal verities about parliamentary democracy are 'no stronger than a flower, battered beneath a military jack-boot. They want stiffening, even if the process coarsens them a little'.

The MDC had its chance to challenge ZANU-PF on its own terms. In fact, it nearly did so. In August 2004, amidst considerable internal debate, it decided to 'suspend participation' in an election that had few characteristics of the 'free and fair' process demanded by the SADC meeting in Mau-



MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai rejects the election results ...
both the MDC and civil society need a creative synthesis.
AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo

ritius that July. Although ZANU-PF had a heavy presence in Mauritius, the MDC and Zimbabwean civil society had won significant gains with neighbouring countries. However – and again after considerable debate – the party decided ('heavy-heartedly'), in late February 2005, to participate in the 31 March election. It insisted that the conditions were far from those demanded by the SADC. But an MDC alternative was needed, if for no other reason than to try and avert a ZANU-PF two-thirds majority, and thus constitutional control. But the chance to challenge the core of ZANU-PF deception was missed.

MDC strategists knew that ZANU-PF would not allow a victory. It re-entered the race for two reasons. First, within the MDC, those who would be contesting the party's safer seats had a strong voice. Second, and more broadly, there was the pressure from SADC. These countries, including South Africa, hoped that a chastened MDC and a ZANU-PF similarly tamed by a close call would hammer out a government of national unity, or at least that the ruling party itself would soon get a new and milder leader. Further pressure may well have come from the MDC's ever-present democracy-promoting advisors. This group may have reckoned that it was a good idea to foster a seasoned parliamentary opposition on the sidelines of power. In any case, London and Washington appeared to have changed their opinion of Tsvangirai – from knight in shining armour to 'buffoon'. In any case, neither 'the West' nor the ANC are keen to see a working class party in power, and the MDC is not as 'neoliberal' as its 'far-left' critics say. Furthermore, the ever vacillating ZANU-PF was signalling that it was going in the IMF's direction once again. For many parties, then, a less than victorious election for the MDC would be fine: pity about the aspirations of the people.

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Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe addresses the media after voting in the parliamentary elections in March
... no end in sight to his ruinous regime.
AP Photo/Themba Hadebe

Election results

Announced on 2 April 2005, the official results for the parliamentary election on 31 March 2005 gave ZANU-PF 78 seats, the MDC 41 (down from 57 seats in 2000 and a near miss in the March 2002 presidential contest), and one to an independent, Prof Jonathan Moyo, the former ZANU-PF information minister, deposed from ZANU-PF for 'secretly' organising Emmerson Mnangagwa's vice-presidential campaign for the December 2004 ZANU-PF congress.

It takes two thirds of a parliamentary vote to change Zimbabwe's constitution. There are 120 elected seats in parliament; the president appoints another 30 of his favourites. An officer in Zimbabwe's Central Intelligence Organisation apparently told Morgan Tsvangirai, MDC leader and former head of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, that his party had really won 94 seats. The MDC claims a minimum of 62 seats.

Overt violence was undoubtedly reduced – but far from eliminated – in the few weeks before the election. But that was engineered for the benefit of friendly observer teams from

allied states, and uninvited observers and journalists. Five years of murder, torture, rape, and subtler coercive means and intimidation had taken their toll, as had control in the rural areas and distortions by state-owned media, which dominated the press and broadcasts. Lots of positive rallies before the election did not cancel out of the rest. Those fooled – including official observers from South Africa and SADC Community – wanted to be.

A few weeks later, Mugabe announced in Indonesia that he would retire in 2008 when his presidential term ended, but imminent retirement plans are nothing new. Constitutional changes could ensure that presidential elections – now every six years – will not be necessary if Mugabe retires, guaranteeing ZANU-PF rule until the next parliamentary elections in 2010. The new constitution will abolish separate parliamentary and presidential elections, vesting more power in the prime minister. The MDC and the national constitutional assembly (NCA) are demanding a national constitutional conference.

The 'African Miracle' is no model for Africa

The politics of the *tau a tona* ('Great Lion') in Botswana have ensured elite succession with little real say by Botswana, argue **Kenneth Good** and **Ian Taylor**

Botswana has, since independence in 1966, been ruled uninterruptedly by the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). Its economic growth rate has been impressive, at the expense of diversification and persistent inequalities and weaknesses in human development. From being one of the poorest countries in the world at independence, Botswana is now classified by the World Bank as an upper middle income country, with per capita GDP of almost \$8 000 (measured according to the purchasing power parity model).

Because it has enjoyed such a high growth rate, and has ostensibly been operating as a stable liberal democracy from the outset (in contrast to most African countries before 1990), Botswana has been showered with praise, and dubbed the 'African miracle'. The bulk of the literature on Botswana is heavily imbued with celebratory assertions. Much of this is both idealistic and economic in its approach, missing much of the political dynamics of the country's pre- and post-independence experience.

Clientelist systems

But the dynamics of Botswana's celebrated democracy must be investigated if the idea that the country represents a model of presidential transitions in Africa is to be properly assessed. What makes the proposition doubtful is that Botswana's democracy is highly elitist. Power is centralised in the presidency and the country's two presidential transitions, in 1980 and 1998, took place without reference to the wishes of the people, were determined by very few, and involved successors who had no popular constituencies whatsoever.

As is well known, permanency of tenure and an absolute disinclination, by most presidents, to voluntarily hand over power – even after losing elections – has been a striking feature of politics in Africa. Widespread networks of clients receive services and resources in return for support – this is well understood and even expected in many African countries. In these clientelist systems, resources extracted via the state are deployed to maintain political support, with the effect that control of the state is equivalent to the control of resources, which in turn is crucial to remain a 'big man'. Control of the state serves the twin purposes of lubricating patronage networks and satisfying the selfish desire of elites to enrich themselves, in many cases, in a quite spectacular fashion.

This is the reason why African presidents are so reluctant

to hand over power voluntarily, and why very many African regimes end messily, sometimes in coups. In most cases the democratic option is either absent or is not respected by the loser – the stakes are simply too high. Once one loses access to state resources, the maintenance of 'big man' status – and the corresponding opportunities for enrichment – becomes virtually impossible. Politics in Africa thus tends to be a zero-sum game. At the time of writing, and nearly 15 years after the democratisation wave supposedly washed over Africa at the end of the Cold War, 39 per cent of Africa's rulers have been in power for over 10 years, while 28 per cent have been presidents for 15 years or more. A resilient 19 per cent have sat on the throne of power for 20 years or more, while three have been heads of state for longer than 30 years. Problematically, this phenomenon has survived the post-Cold War democratisation wave. Encouraging Africa's 'big men' to relinquish power is imperative – but if Botswana offers any lessons in this respect, they are rather limited ones.

Botswana is indeed exceptional, but in ways more complex than its uncritical admirers have realised. It is important that Tswana elites are historically different from most others in Africa in their direct engagement in production, and in their being individual accumulators of wealth before – as well as during – their succession to high office. Wealth and power coexist in a culturally legitimate interrelationship in Botswana. Other factors are also at work. An obvious one is that constitutional and political power is highly centralised in the executive and the person of the state president, who has, to date, also been the president of the ruling BDP.

Wealth and power coexist in a culturally legitimate interrelationship in Botswana

Additionally, the president of Botswana is not directly elected by the people, and constitutionally decides alone: he need consult no one in making a decision – not cabinet, the

vice-president, or the party caucus. Through the office of the president, he directly controls important levers of power – the military and police, the public service, the directorate on corruption and economic crime (DCEC), and information and broadcasting, encompassing the country's major daily newspaper (distributed free and nation-wide) plus Radio Botswana and Botswana Television. The president can establish a commission of inquiry into any matter, determine whether it sits in public or in private, and whether its report is made public or not. The flow of opinion is carefully controlled in this democracy. Public servants are prohibited from speaking to the press, there is no freedom of information, and no



A new government building in Gaborone ... the 'African miracle' is more complicated than its uncritical admirers have realised. *Henner Frankenfeld/PictureNET Africa*

whistle-blower laws exist for the protection of an ethically minded bureaucrat.

Authoritarian tendencies

The National Security Act symbolises the secretive and authoritarian tendencies within the state. It provides for imprisonment of up to 25 years regardless of public interest in the matter in hand; its provisions are both vague and sweeping, and encompass all matters involving the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), trade union activities and workers' wages, and the subordination of the San/Basarwa/Bushmen. Certain related powers, such as the naming and expulsion of a resident foreigner as a prohibited immigrant, devolve on the president himself, and are non-justiciable. Secrecy and non-accountability is pervasive. For instance, the government's large military expansion programme – which saw it spending more than South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s – was characterised by a failure to explain and account.

This was significant in the specific sense that military expansion in the face of no known enemy could promote regional destabilisation. But it was also significant as secrecy is a preserve of ruling elites, and stands in sharp opposition to democracy. Information helps to empower people, while secrecy weakens them. The ombudsman, Lethebe Maine, called for the enactment of a Freedom of Information Act in late 1999. Fulsome words about the ombudsman as a pillar of democracy meant very little, he said, unless the right to complain and raise issues was fully available to all sectors of the

public. Access to information is tightly controlled, because it supports stability and the status quo in 'liberal' Botswana.

Botswana's liberal democracy gives full rein to the prerogatives of ruling elites through the constitution as well as through contemporary practice within the predominant ruling party, based on the inherited political culture. The principles and dynamics here are long-standing. The accompaniment to this was (and in many respects remains) the passivity of the people. It is a highly hierarchical realm, with a huge gap between the ruling elite and the mass of the common people, with an underclass of serfs (chiefly but not exclusively San) at the bottom.

Painless transition

Independent Botswana began, much as the co-operative Protectorate had operated, through agreement among colonial and indigenous elites. It was a smooth and painless transition, which took place among a quiescent 'entirely apolitical electorate'. The experience of popular struggle, so evident within the advanced capitalism to the south, was wholly absent, and the BDP was a 'party of government' from its formation in December 1960, shortly before the pre-independence elections. The promotion of popular passivity, once attractive to colonial government for obvious reasons, became a prop for the supremacy of the elite.

The BDP's founders, Seretse Khama and Ketumile Masire, established from the start an open, multiparty system, wherein the BDP immediately predominated. This openness

entailed what a liberal politics functionally necessitated: relative freedom of speech and association. Exceptional stability was conferred on the polity, and legitimacy too on the elected ruling elite, both bolstered further soon after by a competitive economy, diamonds, and sustained growth. Sections 47 (1) and (2) of the constitution clearly indicates that sovereignty does not lie with the people. Botswana's fundamental law was 'predicated on an effective executive president', and Seretse Khama quickly initiated the strengthening of the office of the president. Great power is centralised in the presidency. Botswana's *tau a tona*, or 'Great Lion', is more like the 'Big Crocodile' of the late apartheid era than any British or Mauritian prime minister (a prime minister of the latter country recently relinquished power even before the final election results were announced).

Presidential arrogance

Commanding both the state and the predominant party, all three presidents to date have readily exercised their powers. Seretse Khama changed the constitution as early as October 1972 to accommodate the indirect election of the president. When vice-president Masire was twice rejected by his Kanye constituency, in 1969 and 1974 – defeated by former Chief Bathoen Gaseetsiwe of the BNF – president Khama first abolished the provision for the constituency election of the president (in 1972), and then introduced the requirement that a chief had to have resigned his position for a period of five years before he qualified for parliamentary election. The set of constitutional amendments introduced by president Masire in 1998 involved necessary reforms like the lowering of the voting age and creating a (more) independent electoral commission, but they also allowed for the automatic succession of the vice-president on the retirement, death, or incapacitation of the *tau a tona*.

Presidential arrogance is repeatedly displayed in the immediate re-appointment of BDP MPs and ministers rejected democratically by their constituencies. The appointment of (four) so-called specially elected members of parliament was a constitutional provision intended to help weak communities gain representation, but the provision has been blatantly used to return ruling party members to parliament against the wishes of their constituents. For example, Masire was soon re-appointed as both MP and vice-president by Seretse.

Personal decisions

In 1989, the former permanent secretary to the president, Festus Mogae, and the former commander of the army, Gen Mompoti Merafhe, were co-opted into parliament and elevated to cabinet office. When vice-president Peter Mmusi was forced to resign in 1991 after his involvement in corrupt land transactions, Masire made Mogae his deputy with no reference to the people. Festus Mogae made a number of personal, seemingly even secret, decisions, favouring the inexperienced Lieut-Gen

Ian Khama, eldest son of Seretse, as his vice-president. This expressed the presumption that he and the vice-president were above the law.

During the October 2004 elections, Mogae publicly announced three times that, if parliament rejected his re-nomination of Khama as his deputy and thus heir apparent, he would dissolve it. In other words, a president without any popular constituency would dismiss the newly elected legislature. He supposedly backed up this threat by declaring his personal assurances that Khama did not have the authoritarian intentions that even BDP members, on good evidence, suspected him of holding.

The ascendancy of nomination over election is extensive. Out of 101 nominated local government councilors, only three came from the opposition. Given that the BDP gained 52 per cent of the popular vote while the opposition accounted for 48 per cent, the nominations were described by the press as 'a monstrosity' and a 'ridiculously undemocratic ritual'.

Botswana's October 2004 national elections glaringly revealed the severe limitations in the country's elite or liberal democracy. There was the usual proliferation of 'briefcase' – essentially ballot-splitting – parties. As in previous elections, these 'parties' diverted support from the two largest and best-organised opposition groups, the BNF and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP). The ruling and dominant party was as ever the best resourced, particularly as regards corporate and other donor funding. President Festus Mogae reportedly stated at a rally in Moshupa in early October that his party had received 2 million pula in contributions so far that year.

Favoured access

The BDP also enjoyed favoured access to state resources, like the electronic media and communications. Mogae is accorded special prominence on the grounds that he is state president. Appearances by the opposition leaders on BTv, in contrast, are limited on the grounds that they are 'political' in nature. The ruling party competed in all 57 constituencies, the BCP did so only in 50, and the BNF in just 42. The enlargement of parliament from

Presidential arrogance is repeatedly displayed in the immediate re-appointment of BDP MPs and ministers rejected democratically by their constituencies

44 elected seats to 57 a few months earlier – a move made without public notification and discussion of its consequences – further strengthened the ruling party. The government steadfastly opposes all proposals for public funding for political parties, which leaves all other parties underresourced.

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has an autonomy which its predecessor did not enjoy before 1997, but which remains restricted by the power of the president to appoint the IEC's secretary, who is also its chief executive officer, and who has a mandate to override decisions. Botswana's democracy is further restricted by commonly low levels of electoral – and civil society – participation; in the 1999 elections only some 42 per cent of eligible voters went to the polls, probably due to a combination of apathy and



The president of Botswana, Festus Mogae, addresses a conference on the diamond industry ... his office directly controls all the important levers of power. AP Photo/Rajesh Nirgud

positive abstention and disillusionment about opposition weakness and division.

Against all the odds, the October vote represented a firm protest against the dominant order. The turnout of eligible voters rose to about 50 per cent, almost half of whom, 48 per cent of all voters, supported the opposition. Under the prevailing simple majority (first-past-the-post) system, however, this strong vote translated into only 13 seats in parliament – thus, 48 per cent of votes gained 23 per cent of elected seats. The BDP, which won just four per cent more of the vote than its opponents, obtained 44 seats, or 77 per cent of elected positions. Despite an electoral system that favours the already strong, a divided opposition was supported by 171 628 voters against the 192 020 who voted for the government. The BNF got 12 seats and the BCP only one, although it had increased its vote from 40 096 in 1999 to 63 911 in 2004. At 48 per cent, the opposition had won its highest vote ever, while at 52 per cent the BDP's support was at its lowest.

Military component

Three cabinet ministers lost their seats, on top of two others defeated in the BDP's earlier, and decidedly acrimonious, primary elections. But a notable addition was the increased mili-

tary component in the government, which now included three generals, a brigadier, and a captain. It was the appointment of the vice-president that holds greatest significance for the future. Constitutionally this was Mogae's second and last term in office, and under the law the vice-president inherits the presidency automatically. There is a widespread sentiment, not without foundation, that Ian Khama possesses decidedly authoritarian tendencies, values allegiance over merit, and is politically inexperienced to boot. Shortly after his initial appointment in 1998, Khama told an interviewer that his interests were in management, and politics did not concern him. On the subsequent New Year's Eve, he used the police backed by the paramilitary to stop the service of alcohol in bars and restaurants across the country at 11pm.

Parliamentarians, even members of the ruling party, voiced opposition to these authoritarian trends. Isaac Mabiletsa, of Kgatleng East, pointed out that Khama was the first vice-president in Botswana's history to hold no ministerial post, and that he failed to engage in parliamentary discussions. He also quoted Olifant Mfa who said, as an assistant minister, that he was not sure what would happen to his democratic rights to free speech after Mogae's departure. Party members seem to be increasingly uneasy about Ian Khama's ambitions and the prospect of yet another undemocratic transition. Some prominent party officials now openly call for the president of the BDP to be directly elected.

Poor model

On the evidence, Botswana is a poor model for African presidential transitions. As the vice-president under Masire, and head of the ministry of finance and development planning, Mogae declared in December 1997 that it was time to stop blaming colonialism when it was the policies of the new leaders that were responsible for Africa's current predicaments. The following June, soon after becoming president, he said, in Burkina Faso, that autocrats who oppress their own people should be barred from high office in the organisations of African unity. It was Mogae too who pushed for the establishment of the DCEC (which has its investigatory strengths, but whose prosecuting powers are in the hands of the president), saying that corruption was a serious problem requiring serious solutions.

Mogae as president, in immediate tandem with Khama, seems a less rational, principled, and perspicacious person. The president and his deputy are essentially managers, not politicians – one a financial bureaucrat, and the other a soldier. They believe, to a varying extent, in control and loyalty rather than performance, discussion, and principle. The temperament and actions of Khama in particular are autocratic and prone to order-giving rather than debate and argument, the stuff of democracy. He recently chose to ignore a strong recommendation by a government task force that the country's second university should be sited in Selebi-Phikwe, and instead ordered it to be located in the smaller town of Serowe. Many see this decision as a portent of things to come: favouritism and the overruling

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From health crisis to security threat: HIV/AIDS and peace in Africa

A concerted effort is necessary to move beyond ignorance to policy interventions that will successfully tackle the challenges presented by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, writes **Angela Ndinga Muvumba**

In the last two decades, HIV/AIDS has become much more than a medical crisis: it is now considered a contributing factor to poverty, a potential source of political instability, and a security threat to several African states. The UN High-Level Panel report of December 2004 identified HIV/AIDS as a major security threat. In South Africa, where more than 5 million people have HIV, the implications for national and human security deserve both serious consideration and concerted action.

Two battle fronts

In all nation-states, the military plays a crucial role in defending a state's territorial integrity. Beyond its borders, a country's military also provides peacekeeping in conflict areas, and humanitarian assistance in times of natural and human disasters. Senior officers within militaries are also central to political life, and their technical skills and knowledge contribute to the national economy. Yet the armed forces are particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV is the most insidious cause of illness and death.

The ranks of military forces, and, to some extent, other uniformed services, are made up of a population most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS: young men and women in their early twenties and thirties. Soldiers are generally faced with complicated sexual choices. But at the frontlines of conflicts, decisions relating to sex are particularly complex and profound. The risk factors for unsafe sex proliferate. These include foreign deployment, which implies long separations from regular sexual partners, and a lack of access to condoms. As peacekeepers, troops interact with host populations, refugees, and internally displaced com-

munities that are dependent on them for food and security. At the same time, soldiers serving in peace operations have extra money that can be easily used to acquire the services of sex workers. Finally, because soldiers tend to engage in increased use of alcohol and substance abuse during deployment, their ability to practice safer sex is compromised.

A report published by Healthlink Worldwide in 2002 noted that levels of HIV infection are often higher in the armed forces than in the general population. The same report states that in the late 1990s, 40–60 per cent of Angolan soldiers and 50 per cent of Zimbabwe's military were estimated to be HIV-positive. Furthermore, STD rates are usually higher among military units in the field, indicating that troops deployed as peacekeepers have higher rates of HIV.

The cumulative effect of HIV/AIDS can threaten the ability of military forces to ensure peace and stability. AIDS contributes to underperformance

The armed forces are particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV is the most insidious cause of illness and death

and low morale. HIV-related illnesses and high death rates can lead to a depletion of skills in all ranks, undermining institutional capacity. Undiagnosed and untreated HIV can lead to the disease being spread further, within the armed forces themselves and among civilian populations at home and abroad. This then becomes a severe human resources challenge within the armed forces. High HIV infection rates will also affect combat readiness, and ultimately impact on deployment pat-

terns. Indeed, as the International Crisis Group emphasised in a 2001 report, the perception that a country's armed forces are heavily affected by HIV/AIDS could lead to increased external threats from other countries which may see a weakened military as an opportunity.

Peacekeeping operations

Another implication of AIDS for South Africa's military – especially if the pandemic is not adequately managed – is that the country's armed forces may not be able to adequately participate in peacekeeping operations in Africa and beyond. Such operations are vital to peace and security. Eight of the UN's 17 current peacekeeping operations are in Africa, and 48 864 of the 60 731 UN peacekeepers deployed around the world in August 2004 were stationed in Africa. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has already served in operations in Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda. It has also engaged in humanitarian interventions in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Angola, and is currently a component of the AU's protective force in Darfur, Sudan. As a regional power, South Africa is critical to the success of the AU's intention to establish an African standby force, consisting of a peace brigade in each African subregion, by 2010. The fact is that HIV/AIDS make it harder for South Africa to sustain a leadership role in peace operations on the continent.

The toll of AIDS

Just as HIV/AIDS threatens traditional security, it also has broad implications for the safety of people from other threats. Human security, in this sense, refers to stability and security for individuals rather than nation-states. The concept underscores the importance



A Congolese woman watches a joint UN and Congolese army patrol on its way to disarm exiled Hutu militiamen ... HIV/AIDS can undermine the ability of armed forces to ensure peace and stability. *AP Photo/Riccardo Gangale*

the poorest countries in the world are in Africa, and 47 per cent of its people live on less than one dollar a day.

In South Africa, HIV/AIDS could undermine efforts to reverse the structural inequalities of apartheid, and reduce economic growth and productivity. By the year 2014, South Africa's projected per capita income growth could decline by 2–3 per cent. HIV infections have been projected to peak at 23 per cent for skilled and 13 per cent for highly skilled workers this year. By 2015, South Africa's skilled workforce could be 85 per cent smaller, and its highly skilled force 18 percent smaller.

Painful breakdown

The impacts of AIDS are felt by the more than 11 million children younger than 15 who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. Women, who are particularly vulnerable to HIV, have largely met the cost of educating, feeding, and clothing these children. About 76 per cent of the world's HIV-positive women are in Africa. The disease has led to a drawn-out and painful breakdown of Africa's traditional social safety net: the extended family. Many of Africa's AIDS orphans – whose numbers could rise to 20 million by 2011 – are living on the streets of Africa's urban ghettos, where they are likely to turn to prostitution and crime in order to survive. In politically unstable environments, orphans are prime recruitment material for militias and insurgent non-state actors. If not addressed, these consequences are likely to become a vicious circle, leading to the further spread of hiv/aids, exacerbating poverty and income inequality, feeding Africa's increasingly complex violent conflicts, producing more randomness – as well as organised – crime and violence, and filling tomorrow's prisons with today's orphans.

A broader context

HIV/AIDS initiatives have increasingly involved strong leadership and support by African communities. One example is Botswana's recent commitment to provide antiretroviral drugs to its

of protecting political, social, and economic rights, and is a reference point for reducing the negative impacts of poverty and underdevelopment. In this context, HIV/AIDS reduces economic productivity, and exacerbates poverty. It renders the challenges of ensuring that people have access to health care and education, are able to build sustainable livelihoods, and live free from threats to their safety even more daunting.

Human security crisis

Nearly 20 million Africans have died as a result of HIV/AIDS in the past 20 years,

and the disease is now the leading killer in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the 25,4 million people living with HIV at the end of 2004, 64 per cent were in sub-Saharan Africa. The high levels of prevalence translate into a human security crisis at the individual, communal, and societal levels. It has been estimated that, due to HIV/AIDS, Africa will lose 20 per cent of its productivity by 2010. The Commission on Macroeconomics and Health has calculated that the AIDS-related deaths of about 2,2 million Africans in 1999 corresponded to a 35 per cent reduction in the continent's GDP. The implications are enormous, given that 15 of

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Postponing peace in northern Uganda

The involvement of the International Criminal Court in the conflict between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army marginalises local processes and may be misdirected, suggest **Dani W Nabudere** and **James Latigo Ojera**

Despite numerous attempts to resolve it, by both military means and dialogue, the conflict in northern Uganda has now lasted for 19 years. The long duration of the conflict has generated secondary factors, which have tended to blur the primary causes of the original conflict. Yet these causes are still important and will have to be addressed if the conflict is to be resolved. But dealing with primary causes requires long-term strategies and total engagement by all the actors and the international community.

The short-term factors that have exacerbated the conflict include exclusionary policies and discrimination and the mismanagement of economic rents, combined with poor governance, corruption, and widespread poverty. All of this has created inequalities that have triggered resentment, and polarised society.

Power and greed

The conflict, which began in the Luweero Triangle in 1981, was originally inspired by the ethnic orientation of Uganda's politics since independence. It was primarily a competition based on power and greed for scarce resources, expressing cleavages within existing social, political, economic and cultural structures. This was exacerbated by the weakness of the state, which, unable to accommodate conflict, fuelled the onset of armed rebellion.

In the last quarter of 2004, there were signs that the government and the rebels of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) were prepared to accept a cease-fire as a step towards a negotiated settlement. There appeared to be light at the end of the tunnel despite the characteristic stop-start nature of negotiations. So despair was even deeper when that effort failed. After 19

years of conflict, many people wanted peace at almost any price. Communities sought an end to the atrocities committed against them. And yet, what emerged seemed to be a continuation of persecution and passive victimisation.

Sporadic ceasefires

The recent sporadic ceasefires between government and the LRA represented a historic moment. The dialogue between the government and LRA leaders meant that the people of northern Uganda spent one of the most peaceful Christmas seasons in recent memory. But before Easter the temporary peace was shattered with the resumption of violence and abductions. Despite their efforts, it is apparent that neither the Uganda Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) nor the LRA can win this war by military means.

A key factor became apparent during this period. The different mechanisms of justice and reconciliation involved in attempts at conflict resolution have often worked at cross-purposes. There has been no real collaboration, and

The different mechanisms of justice and reconciliation involved in attempts at conflict resolution have often worked at cross-purposes

certainly no meeting of minds between actors such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) – which recently entered the picture – the Amnesty Commission, traditional and religious leaders, and the local legal apparatus.

Although justice demands that the perpetrators of crimes against humanity be held accountable for their actions, the intervention of the ICC has

raised a series of questions. Elders and religious leaders of the Acholi community, including Rwot Acana and LCV Gulu, have visited the ICC prosecutor-general in the Netherlands to convey their doubts about the implications of prosecutions for the peace process. But their initiative divided the leaders of the Acholi community. Some have voiced support for the ICC intervention while others have questioned its usefulness. The government has played a double game on the issue.

Many questions arise. Why has it taken this long for the international community to become interested in prosecuting LRA leader Joseph Kony and his followers? Is the international global justice system concerned with the violation of the laws of war or is it concerned with the protection of human rights? The conflict in northern Uganda was viewed as an isolated pocket of instability, which did not threaten the capital. Yet abominable crimes were nevertheless being committed. Was the inaction solely due to there being no international legal mechanisms to deal with such crimes?

Child soldiers

Why, as recently as January 2004, did the UN Security Council avoid discussing allegations that Uganda had used child soldiers, focusing instead on regimes that are not allied to the west? Is the ICC acting politically and not legally in its decision to intervene? Some suggest that the ICC, despite the resources poured into it, has yet to justify its existence. Are its officials thus not under pressure to 'deliver justice' in northern Uganda, and in the process are they not perhaps inclined to disregard the warnings by civil society and the Acholi community leaders about the consequences of their intervention?

In fact it may be an illusion on the



A woman pleads with policemen and soldiers to stop firing at people protesting in Lira, northern Uganda, against a massacre by the Lords Resistance Army ... reconciliation, not retribution, may be the key to settling the conflict. AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo

part of western jurists to believe that prosecuting war criminals can solve the problems underlying armed rebellion in small rural communities. For this reason, many of the people of Acholi – who have borne the brunt of the war – insist that there is a need for reconciliation, not retribution. Putting Kony in jail or executing him will not resolve the political problems of governance in Uganda, they say.

Traditional justice

From this perspective, it is important that the victims of the war be allowed to define justice themselves. Acholi traditional justice is based on the acknowledgement of guilt, compensation, and reconciliation. When the Acholi leaders visited the ICC, they expressed concern that the timing of the investigations could discourage the rebels from talking peace and therefore jeopardise the ceasefire discussions. But, perhaps surprisingly, these suggestions elicited a counter-reaction from other Acholi leaders – especially from the Pader and Kitgum districts – who argued that the attempt to halt the ICC process was an

act of sympathy to the LRA, and effectively supported its atrocious activities.

Reservations have also been expressed by Justice Onega of the Ugandan Amnesty Commission, who has argued that ICC intervention would make the commission's work extremely difficult. Religious and traditional leaders in Acholi, and civil society organisations, have asked the ICC to put the prosecution on hold while efforts to end the war continue. They argue that intervention may in fact aggravate the human suffering. These fears appeared to be confirmed by attacks on the civilian population at Abia and Barlonyo, and, in March 2005, in Minakulu and Kitgum, where more people were mutilated.

The Abia and Barlonyo incidents came immediately after the ICC and president Yoweri Museveni had agreed to go ahead to investigate the LRA. These were immediately identified as incidents of interest to the ICC. But why is the ICC not interested in the attacks on the IDP camp at Paboo? This was one of the biggest incidents: 6 000 huts were set ablaze, scores of people died, and many more were arrested. The

difference is that the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) was implicated. Those who exposed it were threatened with deportation. Is this incident not of interest to the ICC? And how will the court ensure the safety of the witnesses? They can easily be intimidated, and some of them might even be killed or forced to flee.

Disarmament and demobilisation will be a considerable post-conflict problem. While it is being dealt with, the security of many potential witnesses is likely to be compromised. That is one reason why many people in Acholi wish to pursue reconciliation rather than retribution. It is also an option that resonated with their time-tested traditional and cultural practices.

Ritual cleansing

The Acholi people have a well-developed system of conflict management and resolution known as *mato oput*. In this process, the community at large accepts responsibility for what has hap-

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Owning our elections

Africans are making great strides in building electoral institutions that serve the interests of democracy, Brigalia Bam, chairperson of South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission, tells **Garth le Pere**

Educated in South Africa and abroad in teaching, social work, communications, and management, **Dr Brigalia Bam** has led an active public life. Her first formal job was as a teacher, and she has held a variety of posts throughout the world.

Among others, she has served as Africa regional secretary and co-ordinator of the Women Workers' Programme for the International Food and Allied Workers' Association; national executive secretary of the World-Affiliated YWCA of South Africa; and executive programme secretary for the Women's Department of the World Council of Churches.

At the time of her appointment as a commissioner in 1997, Dr Bam was general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. She serves on several public bodies, including the South African Human Rights Commission, where she is vice-chairperson. She is also founder and president of the Women's Development Foundation. She has extensive experience in lecturing and radio and television broadcasting, and has published widely.

What exactly is the role and function of the IEC?

The majority of our people do not know much about the IEC, and what we do when the elections are over. The major function and role of the IEC is to promote and safeguard democracy, and we do that by focusing on the management of elections. In South Africa, all elections – national, provincial and municipal – are managed by a central body, which is not the practice in other African countries. South Africa adopted this approach because we have a particular kind of history, and are trying to change the structures and laws related to the way in which communities and citizens

lived in the past. The most important feature of elections is the preparation aspect, and therefore, in order for us to run credible elections, we work continuously between elections to prepare ourselves for that very important event.

What are some of the challenges faced by the IEC in exercising its mandate?

The greatest challenge in running elections is the registration of voters, because one has to have an idea of how many people in a nation are eligible to vote. Importantly, we also have to mobilise citizens, and get them interested in the process. Hence the registration process becomes a very important function. This raises a very important question: how to get people to value the vote?

What is the relationship between our vote and the freedom that we fought for? One of the most important things with the registration of voters is that you must have a bar-coded identity document. At the moment, identity documents have proven to be the most difficult document to access, partly because of the centralised systems and the requirements that have been put in place. In our population register, many people of my generation were not registered at birth. As a result, we have struggled to reconcile our voters' roll with the population register, and to accommodate those that have problems in receiving ID documents.

We also need to make sure that South Africans who turn 18 are not only able to get their identity documents but are also registered on the voters' roll. In our case, this has not been easy. It's not like developed countries where every birth is registered and they have technology to ensure that once you reach 18, your name automatically goes on to the voters' roll. In such cases, you don't have to vote, but you have a choice, and if you choose to vote you can easily do so,

because your name is already on the voters' roll.

Generally, the infrastructure in our country is not that good, especially in the rural areas. We had boundaries and municipalities with borders that were created during the apartheid era. For example, Kokstad used to be part of the Eastern Cape, but now forms part of KwaZulu Natal. This causes a problem, because you get voters who live in the old town of Kokstad and the surrounding villages who now belong to another province. It has been confusing, especially when it comes to our voting stations. So, on an ongoing basis, we have been involved in delimitation processes, which is why South Africa has a separate demarcation board. We had to redraw the boundaries, and this process has taken longer than most people expected.

Despite these challenges, we have successfully created a very good relationship with our political parties. On a monthly basis, we meet political parties to inform them of the amendments made in parliament. It is also our responsibility to inform parties of the difficulties we meet in the field, in order to avoid conflict and tensions during elections. We also have to make sure that we train staff. In South Africa we are professionalising the running of elections and thus train presiding officers, who work on a voluntary basis. We also train mediators and observers.

The tendency has always been that trusted observers must always come from overseas. What we have done is to strengthen our local professionals as observers, and to ensure that they are at the same level of competency as their international counterparts. Importantly, we have to make sure that municipal electoral officers, who have contracts with us, know what is going on in their municipalities all the time, especially with regards to boundaries and registration. They also need this



Dr Brigalia Bam with president Thabo Mbeki at the South African election results centre in Pretoria. AP Photo/Obed Zilwa

information for pensions and disability grants.

What have been some of the successes in entrenching democracy in South Africa?

One of the advantages we have is our constitution, which has been the guiding light. The second most important thing that happened in our country was the creation of a truly independent electoral commission, which has made it possible for us to realise that we are responsible in this country for running credible elections. Assuming this kind of responsibility made a difference to the way in which we operate, because we realised that we owe it to the people of South Africa and to the post-apartheid goodwill of South Africans.

The system that CODESA thought about so carefully – proportional representation (PR) – has put all of us at an advantage. It ensures that every small political party can participate in governing the country, and this has been a fundamental building block of our democracy. It has prevented domination by the majority, which could be

a major cause of conflict in a young democracy. Our PR system also provides for party funding and participation of women, both of which are crucial to maintaining the momentum of our young democracy.

The people of South Africa have been yearning for freedom and dignity. As a result, most South Africans have wanted to vote and experience what the rest of the world has been experiencing, especially the freedom to choose our leaders. The response from South Africa to our calls for them to exercise this freedom has been overwhelming in comparison with many other countries. When we created our first voters' roll, we broke the record and registered more than 10 million people in two days. This was not a miracle, but reflected a commitment by South Africans to exercise their democratic right.

Our successes have been partly due to the technology that we have in place for verifying results and counting votes. In this regard, we have one of the best systems in the world. As a matter of fact, our country has one of

the biggest and most technologically advanced results centres. Due to this technology you can get the records of more than 19 000 voting stations in less than three days on any computer and internet. Because of our transparency, we have less rejection of results by political parties. Most importantly, our success has also been due to the support we have received from our people, especially the volunteers and all the government institutions.

We also have 'flashpoints' to deal with. We have teams that work in areas that are likely to experience conflict and we work with trained mediators who are deployed in the 'flashpoints' long before the elections. These measures have played a major role in decreasing the level of violence, especially in KwaZulu Natal, where faction fighting almost derailed the elections in 1994.

As far as electoral systems are concerned, how does South Africa fare internationally?

South Africa fares relatively well, given that we have successfully hosted elections in the most difficult and testing times in our young democratic transition. As part of our comparative studies, we sent some of our colleagues to England to monitor their elections and electoral systems. We were interested in a comparative study with a developed nation that has been conducting elections for a longer period of time. The report from this visit demonstrated to us that our electoral structures and systems are almost on par with the developed nations. Nevertheless, there are a number of areas that still need work and improvement.

Our biggest challenge at the moment is infrastructure, especially in the rural areas where voters have difficulties reaching their voting stations. In developed nations most voters, even those considered to be in rural constituencies, still have access to voting stations. Some countries use the postal system for voting; in our case we cannot use the postal system because our infrastructure is not comprehensive. Postal services in the informal settlements and rural areas are inadequate for this purpose, partly because they are not reliable.



Voters queue for South Africa's third inclusive elections ... the IEC has contributed to the credibility of South Africa's democratic institutions. *Naashon Zalk/PictureNETAfrica*

The other challenge we face is the problem of registration. Over the years most developed nations have refined their registration systems and some have been automated. In our case, voters have to go through time-consuming processes of finding the closest Home Affairs office to get an identity document. Poverty inhibits most people. These areas reflect our past and the underdevelopment of certain parts of the country.

What would you rank as some of the electoral successes in Africa?

The continent has made significant progress in the past decade in institutionalising democracy and holding successful elections, particularly with the remarkable performance in the SADC subregion, and in countries like Ghana in the past year. Moreover, in the past decade it would seem that the majority of the countries on the continent have accepted the fact that they have to run credible elections and respect the rule of law. Those who have tried to resist it, such as Togo, have experienced the

wrath of continental institutions, which have been critical of unconstitutional changes of government. Generally, multiparty systems have also been embraced on the continent despite the weaknesses. Consequently, the era of one-party systems has virtually disappeared and a new epoch of multiparty systems has emerged.

The participation and level of interest in elections has also drastically improved. I was monitoring elections in Ethiopia for the first time this year and even though the voters were unhappy and felt that the ruling party was going to win, the turnout was still impressive. The level of political intolerance has also decreased drastically and very few conflicts have arisen out of rejection of election results. However, the levels of cooperation between civil society and government still need to be improved. Cooperation between government and civil society can provide a platform for engagement on a number of issues, especially with regards to improving our electoral systems.

What is the nature of your involvement

and assistance with elections in Africa?

We prefer to use words such as technical assistance and partnership to avoid the perception of South Africa being a big brother who interferes in the internal affairs of independent nations. We worked closely with Namibia and assisted them in running a results centre. In the case of Malawi, we sent a team of technicians to assist in setting up the systems and assessing which technology would best suit their needs. We also worked closely with Lesotho on their IT systems for registration as well as improving their results centre.

The Rwandan Electoral Commission also visited South Africa to study our systems. When I later went to Rwanda as an election observer, I was impressed by the improvements they had effected based on our system. At the moment, we are working closely with the Democratic Republic of Congo's Electoral Commission and we have signed a memorandum of understanding on staff training, logistics, voting, result verification, voter education and mediation.

How important are elections in the agenda of the AU and NEPAD?

In the last two years the AU has adopted very important resolutions related to the management of elections, norms and standards. Two years ago, we organised a conference in South Africa co-sponsored by the AU to discuss matters relating to elections. At this meeting, we agreed on a set of recommendations on the standards and norms that should be observed by all electoral bodies on the continent. Most importantly, the African Peer Review Mechanism could also be an important tool in assessing governance progress after elections.

The AU has also strongly recommended that electoral bodies be independent in order to exercise their mandate without the interference of governments. Additionally, the AU also needs to strengthen its observer mission and broaden its mandate to include African professionals to assist in managing elections.

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The WTO's 'July Package' – a development perspective

Faizel Ismail applies Amartya Sen's four types of unfreedoms in evaluating the 'July Package' – the set of decisions dealing with the multilateral trading system taken by the WTO's general council in July this year

The development dimension was officially introduced into multinational trade negotiations during the Doha Round of trade talks, which began in January 2002 following agreement at the fifth WTO ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar, in December 2001. With the sixth ministerial meeting of the WTO looming, it is useful to revisit the issues. An appropriate basis for doing so is Amartya Sen's seminal work *Development as Freedom* (1999, Oxford University Press). Development, in Sen's view, is the process of expanding human freedoms. For Sen, human freedom is both the pre-eminent objective of development and the means of achieving development. Development, he argues, is the process of removing unfreedoms.

Four types of unfreedom

Four types of unfreedom are relevant to the multilateral trading system. The first is the deprivation that results when people are denied the opportunities to engage with markets. The second, Sen argues, is deprivation of basic capabilities. In his view, it is this, not low incomes, that constitutes poverty.

The third is the absence of social justice as a basis and objective for public policy. Sen argues that the market mechanism cannot function effectively in the absence of trust, and that trust is most effectively generated where policy has an ethical basis. Policy-makers can reconcile selfish individualism with social justice through public debate.

Fourth, Sen argues strongly for political liberties and basic civil rights. He repudiates the claim that rapid economic development is more effectively achieved where opportunities to participate in crucial public policy decisions are restricted. He views the expansion

of democracy as an essential component of development.

There are four relevant elements of the development dimension of the multilateral trading system: fair trade, capacity-building, balanced rules, and good governance. First, fair global trade would allow developing countries exporting their products to developed country markets and thus create opportunities for them to advance their development. Second, allowing developing countries – especially the poorest and most marginalised – to develop their comparative advantage would enhance the human, institutional, productive, and export capabilities needed if they are to compete in the international trading system.

Third, to meet Sen's criteria for justice, rules would need to ensure a fair compromise between the costs and the benefits of new agreements, balance the values and interests of developed and developing countries, and allow appropriate flexibility for developing countries to implement development policies. Finally, building a transparent and inclusive system of decision-making

Developing countries have succeeded in negotiating a framework agreement on both agricultural and non-agricultural market access (NAMA)

ing in the WTO will facilitate decisions that are both democratic and consistent with the previous three dimensions of development.

Importantly, the development dimension of multilateral trade is not meant to be for the exclusive benefit of developing countries. Developed countries also have good reasons to improve the multilateral trading system. It could

restrain inefficient protectionism in their domestic economies, minimise costly trade wars, and increase global growth. Addressing the development dimension of the multilateral trading system will also contribute to its stability and legitimacy, which is in the interests of developed countries. In the WTO, growth and development are shared systemic objectives, recognised in the Doha Declaration's call for the system to play 'its full part in promoting recovery, growth and development'.

Unbalanced welfare gains

Given the shared systemic goals between developed and developing countries – in building a strengthened rules-based trading system – it has been said that the WTO should be regarded as a 'global public good'. However, it can be argued that the WTO is a global public good in form only. It lacks the substance as a result of the unbalanced welfare gains from trade. Addressing the four elements of the development dimension will contribute to ensuring that the WTO gains legitimacy as a global public good.

The July Package – agreed at the meeting in that month of the WTO's general council – will now be evaluated on the basis of the four elements described above.

Developing countries have succeeded in negotiating a framework agreement on both agricultural and non-agricultural market access (NAMA). This is consistent with the Doha mandate, and does not impose an agreement prejudicial to the interests of developing countries. But the July agriculture text is far from perfect. It is vague in many respects, postpones key decisions, and raises the level of generality to avert an impasse. Nevertheless it provides hope that the Doha mandate can still be implemented, and



An anti-WTO demonstration in South Korea ... the active participation of civil society is crucial to efforts to improve the multilateral trading system. *AP Photo/Lee Jin-man*

so fulfil its promise of fair trade and development in agriculture.

In addition, developing countries ensured that the principle of proportionality was applied to their commitments, in line with the principle of special and differential treatment (S&D). The text had a number of provisions that go beyond traditional S&D provisions. The market access section agreed to allow developing country members the right to designate a number of 'special products' based on food security, livelihood security, and rural development needs. In applying these criteria, the levels of development of these countries and their vulnerability will be taken into account.

Simultaneous objectives

Similarly, in the NAMA negotiations, debate on the substance of the 'framework' has been postponed. Liberalisation in NAMA will need to accomplish two simultaneous objectives. First it will need to address the issues of tariff peaks, tariff escalation, and the remaining high tariffs that prevent developing country exports into developed country markets. Second, it will need to ensure sufficient flexibility to accommodate the

diverse levels of development among developing countries.

The Doha Declaration confirmed that 'technical co-operation and capacity building are core elements of the development dimension of the multilateral trading system', and recognised that 'financially sustainable technical assistance and capacity building programmes have important roles to play'. The July Text, while recognising these efforts, also calls for 'developing countries and in particular least developed countries to be provided with enhanced trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) and capacity-building to increase their effective participation in the negotiations, facilitate their implementation of WTO rules, and enable them to adjust and diversify their economies'.

In addition, the section on 'other development issues' commits the WTO to ensuring that 'special attention (is) given to the specific trade and development-related needs and concerns of developing countries, including capacity constraints'. The July Text clearly accepts the need to address the implementation and supply-side needs of developing countries, beyond the WTO's traditional role of building

capacity to improve their negotiating skills.

The WTO made an important advance when it recognised the relationship between the trade and development components of cotton subsidies, which had undermined West African producers. The WTO has recognised that it has a role in building institutional, productive, and export capabilities. In addition, the WTO has recognised that it should share some responsibility for these development impacts of trade, and that it needs to play a role in building coherence between the WTO and the various multilateral and bilateral agencies.

Preference erosion

Preference erosion is a complex challenge for a number of developing countries. In addition, many of these countries – including the 'new entrants' – also face the larger challenge of addressing their institutional, productive, and export capacity constraints. These countries may need assistance – perhaps in the form of funding from the Bretton Woods institutions – in managing their adjustment and diversification strategies. It goes without saying that such funding should not immerse these countries in unsustainable debt. It may be necessary to find additional finance to fund these strategies.

In implementing these strategies, the WTO must adhere to the concept of coherence in multilateral decision-making. WTO decisions need to be co-ordinated with the Bretton Woods Institutions, and vice versa. This requires the WTO to establish formal relationships with institutions that have expertise in building supply-side capabilities. An appropriate mechanism, within the WTO, to advance these new approaches needs to be developed. A recent proposal by some WTO members (the Africa Group) and academic observers to create a 'monitoring mechanism' to evaluate the capacity constraints of developing countries and with the mandate to recommend either more coherent multi-agency strategies or temporary flexibility in terms of WTO rules and obligations, or both, needs to be seriously considered.

The Doha mandate accounted for criticism from developing countries

that many of the rules inherited from the Uruguay Round – such as those on intellectual property, investment, and anti-dumping – were imbalanced, and needed to be reviewed. Thus, the Doha mandate stated that ‘that negotiations on all outstanding implementation issues shall be an integral part of the work programme’.

In addition, the concerns of developing countries about the effectiveness of provisions for S&D were to be addressed by reviewing the provisions ‘with a view to strengthening them and making them more precise, effective and operational’. Whilst some progress has been made on S&D, negotiations on implementation issues have been held hostage by the debate on the extension of geographical indications (GIs), and have yet to begin in earnest.

In the agriculture framework negotiations, developing countries in the G20 ensured that the disciplines on domestic support and export competition took into account the principle of proportionality as well as the levels of development and vulnerability of developing countries.

Domestic support

On domestic support, it was agreed that ‘developing countries that allocate almost all de minimis support for subsistence and resource-poor farmers will be exempt’. On export competition, it was agreed that export subsidies for developing countries could be maintained for a longer period – to be negotiated – and that ‘special consideration’ would be given to state trading enterprises in developing countries that maintained ‘domestic price stability and food security’.

The NAMA framework proposal recognised that reducing tariff barriers alone will not provide genuine market access for developing countries. Non-tariff barriers such as anti-dumping rules, technical barriers to trade, and import licensing in developed countries pose significant obstacles to developing country exports. Thus WTO members will need to ensure that the NAMA negotiations produce more balanced rules to support market access, and do not unfairly impede exports

from developing countries.

The details of the trade facilitation agreement are an effort to build more balanced rules in the WTO. They state: ‘The extent and timing of entering into commitments shall be related to the implementation capacities of developing and least developed countries.’ This draws an explicit link between the implementation commitments of developing countries and their capacity.

Global governance

Only by participating actively in the negotiations can developing countries articulate their interests, and negotiate fair and sustainable compromises. For this to happen, the WTO has to function in accordance with the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, both in negotiations and implementation of rules. Only if these principles are honoured will WTO decisions be legitimate and accepted by all members.

In agriculture, a lack of transparency regarding the implementation obligations of developed countries led to the frequent circumvention of Uruguay Round commitments and obligations.

Only by participating actively in the negotiations can developing countries articulate their interests, and negotiate fair and sustainable compromises

While, in both the agriculture negotiations and NAMA, developing countries displayed unprecedented negotiating skills as well as solidarity, and succeeded in obtaining better agreements, it was widely felt that the negotiating process was not adequately transparent, and needed to be improved. The most intense part of the agriculture negotiations was conducted in a small group of five countries. Although Brazil and India represented the G20, the detail and complexity of the negotiations and the differences in interest among the members of the G-20 required greater transparency and inclusiveness. However, other major groups such as the Africa Group, the ACP, the LDCs, and the G10 were largely sidelined. The debate on how to improve the deci-

sion-making process in the WTO will hopefully be given some renewed impetus by its new head, Pascal Lamy, who has referred to the decision-making structure as ‘medieval’ because of his frustrations with the breakdown of the Cancun negotiations.

The July general council decision represents progress for all members of the WTO. By saving the WTO from another collapse, and ensuring it is still on track – albeit much delayed – towards achieving the objectives of the Doha Round, members have made a significant contribution to entrenching the development dimensions of the system.

The July decision of the WTO extended the Doha Round to the sixth ministerial meeting in December 2005. While Lamy has expressed the view that the Doha agenda could be concluded by then, WTO members still need to develop a work programme to advance the Doha development dimension. This will have to include the deadlines for modalities in agriculture and NAMA. In addition, a new work programme needs to be developed to ensure that some other issues that were not part of the July Package – rules, environment and intellectual property negotiations – also gain momentum.

Developing countries will also need to maintain impetus, and strengthen their delicately knit alliances. The success of the G20 in the agriculture negotiations should be built on by strengthening its alliance with the CAIRNS group and the G33 and G90 groups of countries, thus creating greater and more equal bargaining power between developed and developing countries. Vigorous debate within each of these groups should balance the interest developing countries have in a more open trading system (including trade between themselves) and the need for greater flexibility for less developed members. The active participation of civil society groups, including the private sector, in developed and developing countries will be crucial to ensure that those seeking a fairer, more balanced and strengthened multilateral trading system prevail over protectionist lobbies. ■

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Understanding conflict in the Great Lakes region

Welile Nhlapo unpacks the complex web of forces and factors complicating the peace process in the Great Lakes region

An important point of departure is the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in November 2004, and organised by the UN and AU. This conference was intended to provide a platform for the major players in the region to discuss the issues and formulate a common understanding of the challenges to unlocking the current conflict. The conference also had to look into the links between conflicts in the region as well as developing solutions peculiar to Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda.

Furthermore, the conference was confronted with the broader issue of redefining the Great Lakes region. There was agreement about a number of countries, namely, Uganda, Tanzania, Angola, Sudan, Zambia, the Central African Republic and Congo Brazzaville. This was informed by the fact that several countries have been involved in the Great Lakes, primarily because they are neighbours to the three main countries and because they have been directly or indirectly affected by the conflict in the Congo.

Eastern Congo

There was general consensus among the regional players that, in order to solve the problem in the Great Lakes, the situation in the eastern Congo had to be addressed. The eastern Congo has attracted a large number of people because of its geographic position in relation to Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. These three countries have also been affected by the activities of Mobutuists who came together in the eastern Congo to destabilise the region. Problems were exacerbated by the Rwandan genocide (1994) and the mass movement of refugees, including perpetrators of the genocide, into eastern Congo.

The problems in the eastern Congo are peculiar for two main reasons:

firstly, the eastern Congo has not been integrated into the broader administrative structures of the greater Congo; and secondly, there is a multiplicity of armed formations that have taken advantage of the lack of government to secure mineral resources which can be exchanged for arms. Because of these dynamics, there has been an influx of small arms and easy access to bases for armed groups fighting governments in the region.

The forces responsible for the Rwandan genocide are still in the DRC, and this has been the major source of tension between Rwanda and Burundi. In addition, armed elements from Burundi, such as Agathon Rwasas Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL), which has relocated to eastern Congo after being pushed out of Bujumbura rurale and, which has the support of the FDLR/Interahamwe and the Mai Mai, are using the Kibera and Rikoko forest as a launching pad for attacks on Burundi. The Mai Mai is an organisation with a great dislike for Tutsis and thus is ready to support any organisation they perceive to be against Tutsi domination. Gatumba (a refugee camp, where civilians were killed by the FNL in August 2004) is only one case where these negative forces acted together to wreak havoc on a massive scale.

The forces responsible for the Rwandan genocide are still in the DRC, and this has been the major source of tension between Rwanda and Burundi

To address the crisis in Rwanda and Burundi, a solution must be found for the ongoing instability and lack of government control in the eastern DRC. But if the crisis in the eastern Congo is resolved, Burundi will have to absorb

a population influx (by rebels) from the Congo, especially in the north-west parts of the country. For this reason it is important that the peace process in the Congo should go hand in hand with the peace process in Burundi. In the long term, a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Congo will also have a direct impact on the problems in Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan. At the moment there is a clear link between the elements fighting in Uganda – and operating from Sudan – with groups in the DRC. This largely explains why Uganda has taken an active role in incursions and occupation of certain territories of the DRC, especially Bunia.

Unpacking progress

The conflict in Burundi has a number of elements. Currently, the major problems confronting Burundi is the nature of its political class. It is weak, inexperienced and inclined to form political groupings for the wrong reasons. Political parties have by and large become the only means of economic survival, partly because the government is the only guarantor of secure employment. While some parties have been formed for financial benefit, other parties that were formed after 1994 were established simply to deny the Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi (FRODEBU) a basis for ruling the country after it had won the 1993 elections and the coup that followed. The Convention of Government, a deal signed by government and political parties to resolve the 1994 crisis, saw the mushrooming of Hutu political parties to provide a counterweight and ensure that FRODEBU could not exercise power. These parties and the ones that followed were formed for the wrong reasons and some of the conflicts among them reflect this.



The president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, left, and his DRC counterpart, Joseph Kabila, sign the Dar es Salaam declaration of 2004 ... ethnic cleavages and unequal power relations continue to bedevil the peace process. AP Photo/Khalfan Said

for minority Tutsi parties. Moreover, the shift disregards the law that had been enacted to ensure that political parties are not exclusive in ethnic composition. In a nutshell, the minority Tutsi parties have been trying to secure parliamentary seats through the peace process.

The national defence force

Burundi has been going through a process to transform the army into a truly united National Defence Force, reflecting the country's ethnic diversity, and acting as a symbol of unity rather than factionalism. The DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration) process is moving, but at a snails pace, with a list of problems especially regarding ethnic balance. Initially, there was an understanding that the demography of the country should inform the composition of the armed forces. However, this would have meant that Hutus would dominate.

In Arusha the parties agreed to a loose formula of 50:50 in the ethnic composition of the national army. However, it was very clear from the onset that managing this composition would be a challenge. The first cracks emerged with the large-scale recruitment of Hutus into the army. Tutsi politicians argued that the new recruits will have to make up the 50 per cent allotted to the Hutu. However, given past Tutsi domination of the army, the 50:50 arrangement is problematic as it maintains the status quo and does not address the ethnic imbalances of the past.

The integration of former rebels has been marred by two key issues; firstly, the age of soldiers and secondly, the levels of education. Most of the soldiers from the armed groups are very young (including children who are now being demobilised and reintegrated into society), and therefore cannot reach the age benchmark that has been set at 40 and above for positions of colonel in the army. Therefore, the politics of exclusion continues. Age and qualifications are being used to marginalise former rebels in this most important instrument of power. At the top level there has been some progress. The Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff have been appointed in accordance with the Arusha Accord. Despite this, the eth-

At present, Burundi is on a knife edge. The time period (36 months) for implementation of the Arusha Accord has passed, and a major part of the transition programme has not been implemented. It has been slow largely because of the political class mentioned earlier. The majority of parties, especially smaller parties, have been reluctant to go ahead with the elections because they might lose the benefits of being part of transitional government. Most of the smaller parties suspect they might not survive the elections, hence the fear of elections. Therefore any confusion that accompanies the delay of elections is to the benefit of the potential losers. Thus, when the transition was extended, nobody raised concerns.

Arusha Accord

Some of the issues that have caused deadlock in the transition period can be traced back to the beginning of the Arusha Accord. When the Arusha Accord was signed in 2000, the Tutsi parties (the so-called Group of 10) signed with reservation and stated that there were issues that should be addressed in the transition process. Key questions were the nature of the power-sharing, which at the moment is at the centre of the delay, and the attempts to change the interim constitution... The smaller Tutsi parties argue that apart from the guarantees given in the Arusha power-sharing agreement, the national assembly

would have to be ethnically sensitive in order to avoid the situation that erupted in the first democratic transition in 1993—leading to a coup and the assassination of the democratically elected president. The power-sharing agreement stipulates that the National Assembly will be constituted on a basis of 33.5 per cent Tutsi:60 per cent Hutu to guarantee the rights of the minority, and to have a sufficient number to block legislation which might discriminate against them. On this basis, the Pretoria negotiations agreed to a 40 per cent:60 per cent arrangement.

However, once the armed groups—especially the Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie—Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD)—entered politics and attracted a number of Tutsi into their ranks, the six Tutsi parties started raising concerns about the 40 per cent Tutsi stake. Generally, the fears stemmed from the assumption that the larger Hutu parties would field Tutsi candidates, thus excluding minority Tutsi parties from participation in parliament on the basis that a chunk of the 40 per cent seats would be occupied by Tutsi in collaboration with bigger Hutu political parties.

Consequently, the Tutsi minority parties suggested that the 40 per cent should be divided among the smaller Tutsi parties to guarantee their participation in the future parliament. This was a shift from what was an ethnic balancing act to a political guarantee

nic composition of the army remains a major source of tension because both ethnic groups understand that control of the army is critical to governing the country. There has never been a police force but as they try to establish one, the same principles of power-sharing and ethnic composition and the challenges faced in other spheres will apply.

Moreover, there is also a move to marginalise Tutsis from the South because for a long period of time the south has dominated the politics and economy of Burundi. This tension has always existed but has become more pronounced and may in future undermine the power-sharing agreement at all levels of government, especially in the army and the police force.

The UN has been deployed to replace the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) that operated for a year and paved the way for the UN mission. Initially, the UN was reluctant to deploy peacekeeping forces because the conditions for deployment such as cessation of hostilities had not been met and conflict continued in other parts of the country. After the successful work that was done by the AU, with limited resources, the UN was satisfied with progress and issued a mandate for the deployment of a larger UN force. The UN deployed five battalions from Nepal, Kenya, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and a company from Mozambique. The UN mission is an integrated mission that takes into account all the needs and challenges in Burundi and, as such, also includes all UN agencies, military observers and human rights experts.

South Africa's role

South Africa became involved in Burundi as early as 1994 when it joined the OAU and was subsequently elected vice-president of the Central Organ, with a major role in conflict resolution. One of the key issues at that point was Burundi. Outside the OAU structures, South Africa had also established links with Burundi civil society groups through the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). This initiative was later extended to military groups and political parties in an attempt to draw on lessons from South Africa's experi-

ence. This involvement makes South Africa a key mediator in Burundi.

In 1996, President Julius Nyerere was appointed by the OAU as the official facilitator of the Burundi peace process. He formally requested South Africa to appoint a special envoy as a contact between South Africa and the Arusha peace process. I was then South African ambassador in Ethiopia and was appointed in 1996 as the special envoy to Burundi. South Africa continued in this role until the death of Nyerere in 1999, when South Africa was officially asked to take over the mediation.

President Mandela led the process that culminated in the 2000 Arusha Accord. Deputy president Jacob Zuma, president Paul Kagame and president Yoweri Museveni got directly involved at the signing of the Arusha Accord when a number of problems emerged and some parties were threatening to walk out of the process. The summit later agreed to engage armed groups outside the Arusha process, and once again Mandela was requested to lead the process. Mandela then asked Zuma to take over negotiations on his behalf.

The biggest challenge for South Africa came in 2001 when the decision was taken to establish the transitional government of Burundi (TGoB). It became clear that some of the Hutu and Tutsi leaders in exile would not be able to

At the core of the continuing crisis in the region lies the issue of exclusion

return to Burundi as part of the TGoB for security reasons. It was evident that they did not trust the security forces – which was the reason they had left the country initially. Even though they had agreed on the formation of a VIP protection unit, they could not agree on its composition. When the TGoB was established, it became quite clear that someone would have to step forward and provide a solution to the deadlock that had emerged around the protection unit.

The UN could not provide VIP protection units because it is outside their mandate to deploy forces to protect individuals. At the time South Africa, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria were work-

ing together on the possibility of deploying a force under the UN banner. In the absence of a UN mandate, South Africa took up the challenge, and deployed special protection forces. This formed the basis for the deployments that followed after the VIP protection units. In essence, the TGoB came into being and has survived so far mainly because of the first deployment of the protection forces. The protection unit has been the driving force in securing the continued negotiations and implementation of the Arusha process.

Past injustices

At the core of the continuing crisis in the region lies the issue of exclusion. The challenge has always been how to address past injustices and historical imbalances. To a large extent the major areas of contention have been addressed in the negotiation process and agreed upon. However, difficulties have risen around extremist Tutsi elements that are opposed to change. The Hutus have also not reached consensus in assuring the minority of a safe future. There are still talks about revenge for events that took place in the past. In the absence of consensus, and a clear programme of reconciliation, some of these problems will not be overcome.

The issue of peace has been broadly dealt with, especially issues like security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration. However, there is no clear reconciliation programme to deal with ethnic cleavages and power relations. It is therefore very important for the parties to agree on a common vision for the future, and to define and unpack the programme for reconciliation. However, given the lack of an efficient judicial system, and a lack of consensus at the political level, any attempt at establishing a functional Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be met with resistance. ■

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Carbon trade – the double-edged sword of the Kyoto Protocol

The Clean Development Mechanism contains significant loopholes that benefit corporations from the North, argues **Richard Worthington**

The generic term 'carbon trade' covers a wide spectrum of activities, ranging from modest transactions within countries, where absolute caps on greenhouse gas emissions have been translated into caps for economic sectors and individual plants, to the massive 'package deal' initiatives between institutions such as the World Bank (through their Prototype Carbon Fund – PCF) and the governments of developing countries. Carbon trading has been incorporated into the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the inclusion of three flexible mechanisms, but there are also initiatives that seek to operate outside of this multilateral agreement, generally to its detriment.

Clean Development Mechanism

In line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities established in Rio in 1992, the Kyoto Protocol stipulates emissions reductions only for the most industrialised countries – listed in Annex 1 of the Convention – during its first commitment period (2008–2012). The first two mechanisms (Emissions Trading and Joint Implementation) apply only to activities between Annex 1 countries. This article will assess the third mechanism, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which provides for trade in 'carbon' between Annex 1 and developing countries, which do not have emissions caps. There is no space here to discuss the perversities of current emissions allocation systems within industrialised countries, where corporations are freely granted 'rights' to pollute, and are allowed to sell these to other companies should the original recipient not need the allocations.

The twin objectives of the CDM are to support sustainable development

in the South while assisting northern countries to comply with their caps. It is important to note that Kyoto puts in place a legally binding international system, with monitoring to ensure that countries fulfil their commitments. Politically, it has prioritised climate change on the international agenda. It has also stimulated national policies and measures that require accounting of greenhouse gas emissions, and has promoted energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.

However, there are significant weaknesses in the 1997 Kyoto agreement, as well as loopholes in the rules covering the CDM. First, Annex 1 countries have only committed themselves to a 5.2 per cent overall reduction, measured against the benchmark year of 1990. Even this agreement assumed a 7 per cent reduction by the USA and a limited (8 per cent) increase for Australia. Both these countries have since reneged on the agreement, thus reducing the overall cap. Kyoto is merely an initial step towards climatic stabilisation. It requires that reductions be progressively stepped up over succeeding

All of this is another example of power being transferred to corporations in the name of 'market forces', where the task of driving change is left to vested interest groups that profit handsomely under current practices

five-year cycles. Negotiations concerning the second period are due to start this year.

Second, trading is allowed to enable northern countries to meet up to half their commitments. This was a result of a compromise over the meaning of the

term 'supplementary action', negotiated four years after Kyoto. Kyoto emphasises the need for the transfer of new and additional resources from North to South, especially ecologically sound technologies. The result was the establishment of a Special Climate Change Fund in 2001, capitalised by £420 million pledged by developed countries. But the fact that there have been no additional pledges since then makes it increasingly clear that carbon trade is now seen as the main vehicle both for mobilising finance and introducing more advanced technology in developing countries.

Vested interest groups

This is not only a failure to honour the spirit of the 1997 negotiations, when the compromise – to include trading – was sweetened with talk of 'other pathways' for technology transfer, but also an abdication of responsibility by governments. The understanding that there would be direct funding for adaptation activities has been watered down, and the Adaptation Fund is now reliant on a levy on the CDM. All of this is another example of power being transferred to corporations in the name of 'market forces', where the task of driving change is left to vested interest groups that profit handsomely under current practices. Thus provisions for trading, particularly through the CDM, undermine the efficacy of the Kyoto as a global response to climate change.

Nevertheless, most developing countries have embraced the prospect of foreign direct investment offered by the CDM. This is particularly the case with rapidly industrialising countries such as South Africa, with its high emissions profile and thus considerable scope for reductions. Earning CDM finance for a project requires that



Steam and smoke rise from cooling towers in Moscow ... there are significant weaknesses in the Kyoto protocol, as well as loopholes in its regulations. *AP Photo/Ivan Sekretarev*

Certified Emissions Reduction units (CERs) – the ‘credits’ that can be sold – are certified by the international executive board through one of its operational entities, essentially the auditors of CERs. These must be satisfied that the CDM component is additional to what would have ordinarily happened – that is, that the reductions would not have taken place without the revenue generated through the CERs.

Carbon brokers

Strict additionality tests for CDM projects should serve to exclude projects that do not involve substantial improvements in technology or practices (eg energy efficiency) in developing countries. This will also put upward pressure on the price of credits, and thus the overall potential revenue for developing countries. However, many countries and carbon brokers (including the World Bank’s PCF) are more interested in the quantity of credits than the quality of projects. This is of course consistent with the current low price of credits being traded.

Chemical process projects provide an example of the dilemma. Nitrous oxide is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, and is therefore incinerated at most facilities. Where this doesn’t happen – at a certain South Korean plant, for instance – many millions of credits might be generated by changing this practice and incinerating current emissions. But this would undermine the global market.

Developing country governments show no sign of interest in collective action to increase the price of carbon. The concept of a sellers’ cartel has attracted little interest. Instead, these governments are competing to sell their ‘low-hanging fruit’ – in other words, generating CERs by taking up cheap and easy emissions reduction opportunities. There is thus little prospect of the CDM supporting a significant increase in renewable energy use, or even energy efficiency, under current market conditions. The price of carbon would need to be many times its current value to make a substantial contribution to sustainable energy. However, agreements regarding the second Kyoto

commitment period could change this dramatically.

It is up to individual countries to determine whether a proposed project will contribute to sustainable development, through a designated national authority to approve CDM projects. International competition for shares of the CDM market will not encourage a rigorous national process. This raises the possibility that negative environmental and social impacts at the local level may be justified or ignored in the name of reducing atmospheric (global) impacts, to which a monetary value has been attached, particularly where there are no standards or effective enforcement regarding local impacts.

Landfill project

If CDM is to benefit local communities in addition to the project developers, it is crucial that strict criteria are applied to national approval, taking account of the full range of impacts as well as the distribution of benefits. An example of the

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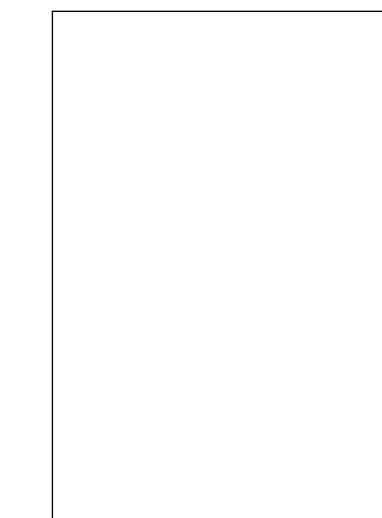
The *leitmotif* of Pax Pretoriana

Chris Landsberg's timely book meticulously unpacks democratic South Africa's foreign policy of 'quiet diplomacy', writes **Garth le Pere**

Reviewing a book written by an author whom one considers a friend and colleague will always be a challenge. Fortunately, Landsberg has made the task easy, since this book – based on his doctoral dissertation at Oxford University – is a timely and important one. It carefully and meticulously documents the role that international actors have played in what he calls South Africa's triple transition, namely '... a political transition from apartheid to democracy; an economic transition from a closed, white-dominated economy, to a gradually globalising, more open economy which increasingly strove for black participation; and a military transition from resistance ... and armed struggle, to democratic peace under majority rule'. The foreign interventions that helped to propel South Africa's transition under these three rubrics thus inform the title of the book.

Competitive diplomacy

The first part of the book chronicles how a divided world devised appropriate strategies for dealing with successive recalcitrant apartheid regimes. The Commonwealth, for example, was a forum where a great deal of 'competitive diplomacy' took place and highlighted the tensions between Britain's gradualism on the one hand, and a much more aggressive posture demanded by Africa, Asia and Canada on the other. The issue of sanctions and their application was particularly divisive, and it was only through the tremendous combustion of pressure from below that the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986, over-riding a presidential veto. The pressure for reform was significantly augmented by the ANC's diplomatic offensive-in-exile such that western governments – notwithstanding their initial aversion to it – came to accept that a negotiated settlement in South Africa was not possible



*Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation:
International Politics and South Africa's
Transition*
By Christopher Landsberg
Jacana Media, 2004

without the engagement and participation of the ANC and other liberation movements.

The end of the Cold War provided a more salutary and co-operative environment among international actors in resolving African conflicts. Great power agreements, for example, made possible Namibian independence and Angolan peace. The loss of the Soviet Union as patron moved the ANC closer to the western orbit, which demanded a reassessment of the efficacy of armed struggle. Importantly, the ANC fashioned its constitutional guidelines of 1988 and the Harare declaration of 1989 as templates for negotiating principles. This coincided with a period where the South African government under F W de Klerk was experiencing increasing pressure from the US, the UN, and the Commonwealth to embark on an irreversible path of democratisation and reform in return for incremental lifting

of sanctions. De Klerk made the rounds of western capitals where he experienced the '... depth of unfavourable international perceptions about South Africa'. His Damascene experience was complete when, in February 1990, he lifted the ban on political movements such as the ANC and PAC, and set the stage for the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela.

Landsberg then examines the transition period in great detail, and the extent to which international players had a hand in ensuring that the main protagonists stayed the course towards the final inauguration of democracy. Again, as with normalising the political environment for the transition, 'diplomatic intercession' in its various guises was equally important in cajoling, persuading, and nudging the sides towards agreement in the face of what at times seemed like insurmountable odds, especially since political violence and threats of destabilising the negotiating process loomed so large. With extensive international support for the initiative, a referendum in March 1992 established that the white community was, for the most part, behind the reform process, and this put De Klerk in an unassailable position to negotiate the end of white rule in South Africa.

International observers

The trials and anguish that accompanied the transitional negotiations – the CODESA process – were made palatable by the strong representation, presence, and encouragement of international observers and monitors which included the UN, the OAU, the Commonwealth, the US, and the EU. In the author's words: 'In seeking to make an impression on international audiences, the ANC and South African government negotiators resolutely pursued the establishment of the transitional executive council (TEC).'

This broadly satisfied international players of the irreversibility of the process, and signalled the death knell of sanctions. It also created an environment for a new kind of international relations for the once pariah state, replete with bountiful promises of aid for reconstruction and development and advice on constitutional engineering. International players were also key to ensuring that potential spoilers were not in a position to unsettle South Africa's democratic passage and it was through such interventions that the participation of Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the Inkatha Freedom Party was secured in the April 1994 elections.

Post-apartheid diplomacy

The book then delves into how this international interface and foreign involvement, which had so profoundly shaped the contours of South Africa's transition, came to influence the conduct of its post-apartheid diplomacy. The author suggests that the 'quiet diplomacy' that characterised the international approach and informed its temperament in fostering change in South Africa has been internalised as the leitmotif of a Pax Pretoriana. The

domestic politics of reconciliation and the role that diplomacy played as the art of the possible in its negotiated settlement resonated with the foreign policy impulses of both the Mandela and Mbeki governments, albeit with different emphasis and in varied guises. In the post-1994 era, South Africa therefore '... pursued a diplomacy that was activist in nature, economically conservative, and politically both pragmatic and principled'.

Whether as elements of an ethical foreign policy under Mandela, or a central pillar of the African Renaissance under Mbeki, human rights, peace, democracy, and stability are all species of the same genus. Diplomatic tools have been crafted to advance these values in bringing peace to the Great Lakes, dealing with African autocrats, calling for nuclear disarmament, and advancing the cause of Africa or the global South. Mbeki especially has honed these diplomatic tools in areas as diverse as shaping a new economic blueprint for Africa (NEPAD), developing a more responsive continental architecture, and extracting pledges from the G-8 on behalf of developing countries for improved aid, market access, and debt relief. This diplomatic

activism comes up, of course, against severe domestic challenges regarding poverty, economic growth and development. But, ultimately, strengthening the collective capacity of developing countries is viewed as an inherent public good from which South Africa also stands to gain, especially if it promotes the goals of development, peace and security.

Two concerns

Finally, there are two concerns. First, transitions are profound international events, as this book demonstrates. It could have benefited from a closer engagement with the theoretical literature on democratic transitions, foreign policy, and international relations. The interlinkages between their systemic dimensions and the interests that underpin these areas provide fertile ground for creative theorising. Second, the book also bears the hallmarks of sloppy copy-editing, with several errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling evident throughout the text. Despite this, it is ultimately a very satisfying work. ■

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Mainstream NGOs in Africa – continued from page 3

Make Poverty History, Live 8, and Global Call to Action Against Poverty are all promoting white wristbands as symbols from which yet more funding can be extracted. Hodgkinson quotes campaigning staff who have remained with Make Poverty History simply because, 'although we hate the message and the corporate branding, some NGOs are making tens of thousands of pounds through the wristbands'.

Concludes filmmaker John Pilger, who was once very close to Oxfam: 'Many NGOs have embraced a version of corporatism and a closeness to the British government whose neoliberal trade policies remain a source of much of the world's poverty.'

NGOs in the service of imperialism?

Africa has seen many such 'co-opted NGOs' (also termed CONGOS). Possibly

the toughest evaluation of this phenomenon was offered by James Petras and Henry Veltmayer, both academics with extensive experience of social movements. Their 2001 article 'NGOs in the service of imperialism' is still the seminal critique of those who '... confer with top business and financial directors and make policy decisions that affect – in the great majority of cases, adversely – millions of people, especially the poor, women, and informal sector workers. NGO leaders are a new class not based on property ownership or government resources, but derived from imperial funding and their own capacity to control significant popular groups.'

Petras and Veltmayer argue: 'NGOs have become the latest vehicle for upward mobility for the ambitious educated classes. Academics, journalists, and professionals have abandoned their earlier interests in poorly rewarded

leftist movements for lucrative careers in managing NGOs. They bring with them their organisational and rhetorical skills and a certain populist language. These structures have displaced and destroyed the organised leftist movements, and co-opted their intellectual strategists and organisational leaders.'

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There are indeed NGOs, not only in Washington and London but also in South Africa and across Africa, which, as Petras and Veltmayer allege, 'deflect popular discontent away from the powerful institutions towards local micro projects, apolitical "grass-roots" self-exploitation, and "popular education" that avoids class analysis of imperialism and capitalism. On the one hand they criticise dictatorships and human rights violations, but on the other they com-

pete with radical socio-political movements in an attempt to channel popular movements into collaborative relations with dominant neoliberal elites.'

At some point, this general problem will have to be more explicitly confronted. At the Africa Social Forum's Lusaka meeting in December 2004, the Social Movements Indaba coalition from South Africa (which includes anti-privatisation, anti-debt, landless, and environmental activists) expressed its resentment as follows: 'The under-representation of social movements in relation to NGOs is reflected in the political content of the forum. It manifests in the persistence of the notion

that the Africa Social Forum is nothing other than a space, in contrast to the perspective that it should have a programme to advance our struggle against neoliberalism.'

Perhaps once the dust has settled on the wretched deals done by the G8, to the applause of CONGOs, the latest version of the Africa charity fad will be buried. Then the more durable opponents of oppression will again be in the front lines and on the front pages, whether through specific campaigns against state and corporate malfeasance, other forms of progressive mobilisation and democratic advocacy, or the construction of national social

forums. If NEPAD – termed 'philosophically spot-on' by the Bush state department in 2003 – is to be countered by a bottom-up alliance of African social and labour movements, then some of the mainstream NGOs will have to move out of the way. ■

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Opposition in Zimbabwe – continued from page 7

Even after re-entering the election, street action – despite the prospects of a strong state response – was never far from the MDC's and civil society activists' minds.

The MDC, after some prevarication, decided to contest electoral irregularities in court. Although the courts are stacked against its cause, the MDC's choice was to 'defend the right to vote' (with more than 30 legal challenges), and to rejoin the campaign for a popular constitution. Some of the party's left wing believed though that this implied the eclipse of socio-economic issues by 'rights talk'.

National day of action

Then Operation Murambatsvina hit the streets. Even though ZANU-PF had captured parliament, claiming fair and square all the way, and the MDC had apparently acquiesced out of procedural politeness, the Zimbabwean governing class struck out as if it were besieged. It was the opposition's response to this barbarism that set the stage for the dialectic between parliamentarianism and street action.

WOZA called for a National Day of Action for 18 June, two days before World Refugee Day. International Socialist Organisation leader and one-time MDC MP Munyaradzi Gwisai – convinced that the township cleansing would give the IMF the green light to re-enter Zimbabwe – encouraged

workers' solidarity and innovative action by the Zimbabwe Social Forum. The exiled former secretary-general of the National Students Union, Tinashe Chimedza, perhaps underestimating the extent to which the resistance to 'restore order' was also support for the MDC, wrote:

'This is the time to strike back, [to] re-forge progressive alliances broader than the NCA, ZCTU, and MDC alliance. There is need to forge alliances with the "small" community organisations, the residents' associations, the informal traders' groupings, and others that have been considered peripheral to this struggle.'

Soon after, the Broad Alliance announced the 8-9 June stayaway. What is at stake in all of this is the rearticulation of first- and second-order 'rights'. These have been joined and separated many times since demands for change emerged in response to the devastation of structural adjustment in the 1990s. These issues dovetailed with ZANU-PF's ossification, internal contradictions, and *gukurabundi* ('spring storms that clean off the chaff', referring to ZANU-PF's 1980s mini-genocide in Matabeleland). ZANU-PF's latest response to this double challenge has simply multiplied the antagonisms in Zimbabwe's body politic.

Its alliance with the war veterans, perversion of the land issue, and immersion in the political economy of war by involvement in the DRC's tur-

moil-ridden transition out of Mobutuism have placed it on the harsh terrain of primitive accumulation as never before. Its inability to move out of the tensions of 'tribe' as the succession issue raised its head has brought the 'social' and the 'political' to the fore in an unprecedented fashion – and all this in the world's most quickly declining economy.

Support base

If the MDC leaves the extra-parliamentary movement to its own devices, it will lose the opportunity to take the always fraught relationship between parliamentarians – already partially embedded in the state – and 'popular (as opposed to bourgeois) civil society' to a plane where ZANU-PF, with its state-seeking 'liberation discourse', cannot compete.

It will also lose the chance to rebuild its support base, which needs renewal after ZANU-PF repression has all but killed it. Civil society, starved and beaten, needs the MDC and its shaky access to formal political institutions too. General strikes for the oppositional coalition have proven unsustainable. What is needed is a creative synthesis with parliamentary forms of action.

Zimbabwe's left politics and ideology attempt to span a wide gap between 'agrarian patriotism' and 'critical cosmopolitanism'. Within the opposition there is also a divide between the

'new middle classes' who have gone far down the road of resistance, and the subalterns forced into unemployment. The latter have now also been forced out of the informal sector into deep urban or rural *lumpen* status.

A new synthesis of parliamentary and street opposition could take Zimbabwe to a phase of 'democratic transi-

tion' never reached by its neighbours to the north and south. Those who offer international solidarity to progressive forces in Zimbabwe can only hope for this to occur. Given the inability of Zimbabwe's southern neighbour to spread its purportedly unique combination of socio-economic and civil justice, such supporters can also contribute to the

forms of assistance offered by proponents of 'global civil society'. ■

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The 'African Miracle' – continued from page 11

of law, professionalism, and procedure in the service of personal agendas. Ian Khama had earlier announced that he expected his younger brother, Tshekedi, to inherit his parliamentary seat in Serowe North West. Even the bdp secretariat expressed objection to such an abrogation of democratic procedures.

Disarray

The preference accorded Khama is to someone who has no ministerial job, and whose education credentials are seemingly a secret. Furthermore, he has made no secret of his intense dislike of the compromises of politics and of his contempt for politicians. Indeed, he has previously attacked members of his own party as 'unprincipled, intolerant, selfish vultures, and monkeys'. This is the person who is about to take over the 'African miracle'.

All of this has been facilitated in Botswana by the fact that civil society has been poorly developed and disorganised, and the democratic impulse relatively weak, due to the undiversified nature of the resource-dependent economy. The predominance of the BDP was unchallengeable until the early 1990s, but disarray in the ruling party has subsequently escalated con-

siderably. The popular vote in the 1994 and especially in the 2004 elections suggest that, with the spread of education and urbanisation – if not yet the strengthening of civil society – people might at last be 'waking up'.

The long-term voting trend, despite low turnout levels, is against the BDP. The independent media are active and more critical, and if the BNF and BCP can achieve an alliance, the dominance of the BDP's 'Great Lion' might be terminated. Principles and ideas play no role in the intense factionalism in the BDP, and Mogae and Khama, now the top factionalists, show no hint of restraint or conciliation. Near the end of his State of the Nation address in November 2004, Mogae described automatic succession as constituting 'the smooth transfer of executive authority', as being 'now entrenched', and as 'a hallmark of our democratic stability'.

Popular organisation

Reports emanating in 2005 from both Khama and his loyalists indicate opposition to the continued existence of the BDP parliamentary backbenchers' committee: the party must speak with one voice, and opposing factions must be further suppressed, they believe. Mogae

and Khama display little capacity for political innovation either. No new political formula, equivalent to the growth economy and development state of the 1970s and 1980s, can be expected from this duo. But popular organisation is vital for dissatisfaction to become protest, and then to be actualised. Change has to become a definable and realisable option by and for the people. Extensive constitutional and electoral reform focused on an elected and accountable presidency – requiring 50 per cent or more of the popular vote – is no small prerequisite. Botswana does not yet serve as a model for democracy. The real miracle is still to come. ■

This article is an edited version of a paper entitled 'Presidential succession: no model for Africa' which Prof Kenneth Good was to present at a public seminar at the University of Botswana on 23 February 2005, and which led to him being declared a prohibited immigrant by presidential decree on 18 February. Good, who lectured in political science at the University of Botswana, was deported from Botswana after a court judgment in May 2005 upheld the decree. Dr Ian Taylor, who also taught at the University of Botswana, is now at the School of International Relations at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

Postponing peace in northern Uganda – continued from page 15

pened, before taking the conflicting parties through a process of ritual cleansing and the 'bending of the spears'. This process would inevitably include both the LRA and the UPDF, for the resolution requires the involvement of the actual combatants in the conflict.

If, on the other hand, the ICC wants to prosecute only the LRA commanders

– when most human rights organisations have demanded that both sides be investigated – it will indicate the one-sidedness of international 'justice'. Allegations of atrocities committed by both parties have been reported by, among others, Human Rights Watch. The ICC's silence about investigating actions of the UPDF is disturbing. It

creates the impression that a political agenda is more important than even-handedness.

There are actors in this conflict who have contributed to the atrocities by supplying equipment, or who have exploited it for access to natural resources. A comparable case is the looting of minerals, timber and other

natural resources in the DRC, which has encouraged the commission of war crimes. In Uganda, the participants in such activities are not necessarily combatants in the UPDF or LRA, but other actors on either side who had an interest in perpetuating the conflict.

How does the ICC propose to deal

with these accomplices, especially those outside Uganda? The ICC should be urged to deal with these 'invisible hands' rather than simply focusing on the top echelons of the LRA or the UPDF. Justice requires that the ICC cast its net wide enough to also catch these accomplices. ■

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From health crisis to security threat – continued from page 13

armed forces. It will provide anti-AIDS drugs at three sites, targeting 5 000 soldiers and their families. Another promising initiative is the HIV/AIDS treatment programme initiated within the Health Services branch of the SANDF. One component of the programme – Project Phidisa – provided AIDS medication at two South African army sites last year, and will eventually help to build knowledge about the effectiveness of antiretroviral treatment in the armed forces.

But, given the overall implications of HIV/AIDS, is enough being done? The answer is often no. African governments and their people cannot rely on ad hoc policies to mitigate the long-term security implications of HIV/AIDS. Programmes such as those mentioned above could become even more effective if funding was guaranteed for long periods, allowing for comprehensive planning and implementation. Broad support for building capacity and strengthening health care infrastructure within the armed forces could also be mobilised. Networks of collaboration would also help to guarantee co-ordinated strategies that deliver prevention, treatment and care, and life skills education to the armed forces and their families. Ultimately, strong links between governments, civil society, and communities within countries and across borders will be vital to delivering long-term strategies for the HIV/

AIDS and security dilemma.

The recently launched UN report entitled *aids in Africa: Three Scenarios to 2025* describes three possible outcomes based on different types of global and African responses to HIV/AIDS. The most promising scenario, 'Times for transition', offers a positive vision: dramatic pro-poor changes take place in global trade rules, broad partnerships are built between civil society and governments, and a focus on human security is at the heart of HIV/AIDS interventions. Cumulatively, predictable and sustainable resources fuel action that leads to the scaled-up delivery of AIDS drugs, and long-term capacity building is achieved in the health and social sectors. In this scenario, the number of Africans living with HIV and AIDS will be halved and antiretroviral therapy will be available to 70 per cent of people living with HIV.

In a future where the pandemic has been tackled meaningfully, policy prescriptions would be translated into concerted and co-ordinated action. There are important lessons for South Africa in particular, and Africa in general, in addressing the impacts of HIV/AIDS on national and human security. Attitudes towards HIV/AIDS in Africa have to evolve from pessimism and exaggeration to understanding and compassion. The silence and stigma around AIDS inhibits our response by promoting ignorance about the disease and its consequences

for states, societies and individuals, and feeds apocalyptic fears about social anarchy resulting from a modern plague on the 'dark continent'. As a result, well-considered and researched interventions become difficult to imagine and implement. For example, interventions that deliver treatment and care to soldiers could be matched by humanitarian efforts in conflict zones. After all, rebels and refugees need condoms too.

Last year, South Africa celebrated 10 years of democracy. The celebrations were particularly significant for the rest of the continent: South Africa has emerged as the greatest source of direct investment in the rest of Africa, and has played a key role in the establishment of the AU and NEPAD. This economic and political giant is now set to vie for a seat on a reformed UN Security Council. All of these positive developments have raised the stakes. South Africa's capacity to leverage its influence and resources abroad will depend, to a large extent, on its response to HIV/AIDS at home. Will it rise to the occasion and fearlessly deliver a comprehensive, sequenced response that bolsters national and human security in an age of AIDS? The answer must be yes. ■

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Carbon trade – continued from page 25

complexity is a landfill project where methane will be collected (rather than simply vented – as a greenhouse gas, methane is about 23 times as potent as carbon dioxide) and used for electricity generation, thus displacing coal-fired

generation emissions and extending the operational life of the landfill. But a local community which had expected the landfill to be closed – because its toxic fumes are (allegedly) damaging health and childhood development – do not feel that revenue for the landfill

operator and cheap carbon credits for atmosphere polluters in the North justify prolonging their misery.

The inclusion of 'sinks' projects is perhaps the most contentious element of the CDM. There is still a high degree of scientific uncertainty in cal-

culating the amount of carbon that is sequestered through such activities; the definition of forestry includes single species plantations that have detrimental impacts on ecosystems; and the time-span of projects is three to 10 times shorter than the length of time that 'offset' greenhouse gas emissions will remain in the atmosphere. It also encourages a land use, with accompanying water use (which is greatest for fast-growing trees that sequester carbon rapidly), which often conflicts with local needs. Moreover, projects include a contractual obligation to maintain the carbon 'sink' that effectively passes control of vast tracts of land to the northern buyer of the credits.

Perverse impact

Another perverse impact of the CDM is that some developing countries are more reluctant to introduce measures that directly mitigate climate change while delivering local benefits, such as mandatory energy efficiency standards for low-cost housing or preferential finance for solar water heating, for fear that potential CDM projects would then fail the additionality test. This is really a matter of perception since the executive board, which will hear appeals against operational entity decisions, has repeatedly noted that mitigation measures introduced since 2000 may not be used to disqualify projects.

Even though the Kyoto carbon trading provisions are flawed, it is the schemes for carbon trade not bound by the rules of the multilateral system that pose the greatest threat. Parties to the protocol should renounce alternative trading schemes proposed by rogue nations such as the US, or opportunistic brokers such as the World Bank's PCF and independent speculators. There are certainly alternatives to carbon trade, including a proposal for an international emissions-based currency, that offer more equitable ways to allow markets a role in reducing emissions. However, non-Kyoto compliant trading would reduce the already meagre gains of the protocol.

If carbon trade is to contribute to rather than compromise efforts to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, more rigorous additionality criteria are needed. If it is to benefit developing as well as industrialised countries, co-operative measures are needed to drive up the price of carbon, bringing it closer to the costs of emissions reductions in the Annex 1 countries. If it is to benefit local communities as well as polluting industries, national project approval should require inherent and guaranteed social and environmental benefits. ■

Richard Worthington is the co-ordinator of the South African Climate Action Network (SACAN). The views expressed in this article are his own.

Interview – continued from page 18

How are women faring as managers and participants in elections in Africa?

In South Africa, women have dominated in our registration process. This is something of an exception rather than a norm on the continent. Most countries in Africa have embraced the quota system and as a result government structures have become gender sensitive. For example, the Rwandan government has reached the 50 percent quota and women are part of the decision-making bodies. On the continent, there are a number of women presiding officers and professionals managing elections. However, the political parties are still male dominated and need to be transformed urgently.

What should the role of the international community be in improving the electoral climate in Africa?

I have been trying to facilitate a meeting through the UN Development Programme with the donor countries to co-ordinate our efforts in funding, supporting and managing Africa's observer missions.

Donors need to channel funds towards sustaining the electoral process rather than focusing on the event. They should also consider empowering nationals to observe elections so that there can be some sense of ownership in Africa's elections. ■

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