Preventing Conflicts or Preventing Relapse:
Understanding the entry-point of emerging peacebuilding actors

Author: Charles Nyuykonge

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3rd Floor Robert Sobukwe Building
263 Nana Sita Street
Pretoria South Africa

PO Box 14349
The Tramshed,
0126
Pretoria South Africa

+27123376082
+27862129442
info@igd.org.za
www.igd.org.za

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About the author

Charles Nyuykonge is a Senior Researcher at The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). Prior to joining ACCORD, Nyuykonge worked as a Human Rights Observer for the African Union Mission in Mali. Nyuykonge has also been a lecturer of human rights, international relations and political studies at the universities of the Witwatersrand and Zululand (South Africa). He has also served as a Senior Consultant for the African Union Peace and Security Programme at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa where he conducted independent research on peace and security challenges confronting the African continent and employed lessons learnt from previous conflict resolution attempts to craft indigenous strategies of resolving conflicts; these continue to inform the African Union's perspective on conflict resolution today. Nyuykonge's research interests are Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention; and he has published on African approaches to managing conflicts as well as interrogating the efficacy of traditional approaches to peacebuilding or the role of peacekeeping in conflict management.

■ LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

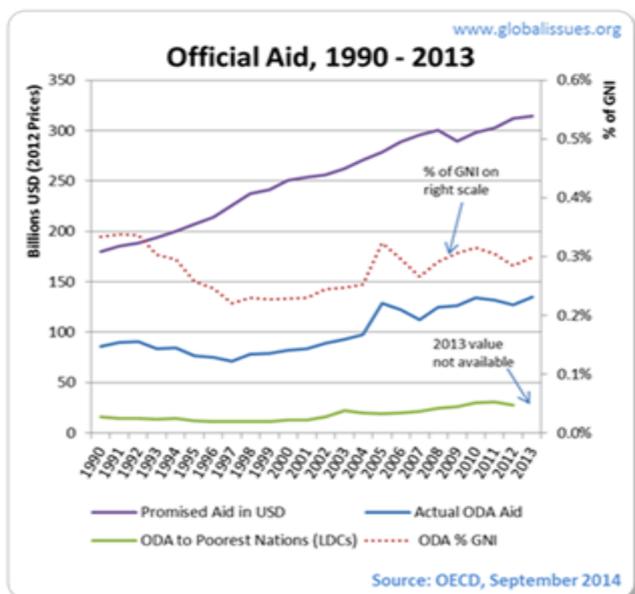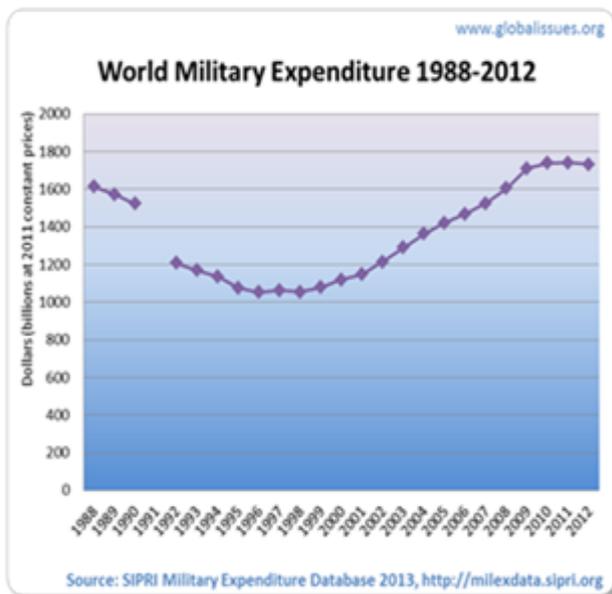|	
ACIRC	African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises
AfDB	African Development Bank
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
ASI	African Solidarity Initiative
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CAR	Central African Republic
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
F2F	Fragile to Fragile
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
G20	Group of Twenty
G7	Group of Seven
HIV/ AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa
IBSA Fund	IBSA Facility for the Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger
IDPS	International Dialogue on Peacebuiling and Statebuilding
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M23	March 23 Movement
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission of the United Nations
PCRD	post-conflict reconstruction and development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USD	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organisation

Introduction

Following reports from the World Health Organisation (WHO) which approximate the number of humans killed in violent conflict to 700,000 per annum, and a further hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes and exposed to degradable inhumane conditions from which they die, the material and human cost of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction or relapse prevention are alarmingly and disproportionately higher than conflict prevention.[1] Put simply, conflicts strain and reverse economic growth at an average of 2.2% per annum and the cost of reconstruction is estimated to be between US $4 and $54 billion[2] which is dwarfed by an estimated $1204 billion per annum for worldwide military spending.[3]

Against this background, it seems conflict prevention couched in the form of preventive diplomacy is figuratively different from preventing relapse. The former though emphasizes the need for sustained dialogue and investment in institutional strengthening, job creation and provision of social amenities which deters participation in criminal activity, rebellions and war. It is a framework primarily applicable to states whose governments are experiencing domestic challenges impairing their ability meet these most basic citizenry needs. Like in Political Science theory, prevention in this sense is synonymous to state-building which is a phrase used in state theory to describes the construction of a functioning state.[4]

By contrast, prevention in the sense of conflict relapse relates to post-conflict institution and infrastructural reconfiguration erstwhile called post-conflict reconstruction. The salience of this distinction seems to be the entry point of some actors in the peacebuilding corridor. It cannot therefore be discarded that this is the dividing line between some emerging actors of peacebuilding and the traditional actors. The former thrive on the pledge that prevention is better than the unavoidable cost of war and that, preventing post-conflict relapse which has become common place in peace circles is a model needing review.

This conceptual distinction could not have been captured any better than in the images below which point to similar trends between the rise of military expenditure and the rise of promised aid, but a stark disproportionality on how much of such aid eventually gets to the nations most in need. This means that, the demand for military action is proportionately similar to the cost of rebuilding. And it can thus be inferred that the lesser the usage of military action, the lesser the cost of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Additionally, the figure on the right also depicts the disproportionality between what is needed for peacebuilding (Promised Aid in USD) and what needy or recipient states (Actual ODA Aid) get. This perhaps points to the fact that while military spending is rising *as depicted in the image on the left above*, and pledges for post-conflict reconstruction are rising *as depicted in the image on the left (Promised Aid in USD)*, actual investments in such reconstruction is less than 50% of the pledges, and because such aid only cools-off tension, it incubates relapse. Thus showing a direct problem with conventional peacebuilding funding models from which some new actors such as perhaps the African Union making inroads through diverse preventive diplomacy initiatives.

In spite of the disproportionality in growth between military spending and development aid, it should nonetheless be asserted that, catalytic funding such as what the PBC provides, goes a long way to stop the bleeding of conflict wounds as it offers emergency care kits (in form of food, healthcare and portable water) which usher-in hope for some of the despondent. In some cases, it stimulates economic growth and accelerates reconciliation and national unity which are key ingredients for state-building.

To mitigate the most dreaded effects of relapse, states in recovery have in certain fora such as the g7+ and the International Dialogue on Peacebuiling and Statebuilding (IDPS) voluntarily congregated to work together; share experiences; and, support and learn from one another in what is known as fragile to fragile (F2F), while also advocating for reforms of the international conflict management organs of the United Nations such as, the peacebuilding Commission; and the World Bank and IMF aid policies. This advocacy includes but is not limited to reminding leading states and institutions on the need to meet their publicly pronounced commitments to fragile and states in recovery. F2F is a generic term relating to information-sharing and learning from each other's experience to hedge the risks of relapse. F2F is derived from the South-South Cooperation which is already a catch phrase for some new actors in Peacebuilding. The g7+ member states are enhancing F2F cooperation, namely with regards to public finance management, natural resource management, and peace and reconciliation.[5]

Similarly, the IDPS shares a collective vision to "end and prevent conflicts and to contribute to the development of capable and accountable states that respond to the expectation and needs of their population, in particular the needs of vulnerable and excluded groups, women, youth and children.[6]

Other new actors include multilateral arrangements such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) which work together towards strengthening peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) on the African continent. Through the IBSA Facility for the Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger (IBSA Fund), contributing states including South Africa are already tweaking the international peacebuilding landscape through involvement in projects which have huge impacts. For instance, the IBSA Fund in less than ten years of operation (2006-2015) has financed projects in African countries such as Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Burundi, and Sierra Leone.[7] Other non-African beneficiaries include Haiti, Palestine and Cambodia.[8] Some IBSA Fund projects worth mentioning include the Burundi government's capacity project to combat HIV/ AIDS (2008 to 2012).[9]

The project "built and equipped a centre for HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment [that] will enable around 39,000 consultations per year for various health-care services, including for HIV and AIDS care, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, prenatal care and family planning."[10] The impact of such a project to peacebuilding as a prevention framework cannot be overemphasised. In the same breath, "in Cape Verde, a public health center was reformed and modernized in 2008, and in Guinea Bissau, an agricultural project [was rolled-out in 2007; expanded and operationalized by 2011]"[11]. That these projects are envisaged at a time when neither Burundi or Guinea Bissau are threatened by conflict suggests that, IBSA's interventions are more on state building and consolidation of government efforts to meet citizens' needs and prevent conflict.

Last but not the least, the African Union together with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have put enormous efforts in the conflict prevention through facilitation of dialogues, negotiations and preventive diplomacy or peaceful resolution of disputes generally.[12] With the exceptions of Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Mali and Somalia which experienced conflicts, the Comoros, Madagascar and Libya even before conflict broke-out are testament to pro-active preventive Diplomacy of the African Union. And if in the case of Libya today, a civil war reneges, or full blown civil war was averted in Madagascar, the African Union cannot be denied some credit for insisting on political settlements rather than coercive military action which precedes post-conflict reconstruction and the setting up of expensive mechanisms to prevent relapse. Not only does this project the African Union as a proactive conflict management interlocutor, but also speaks to the continental agencies preference for conflict prevention which as an entry point to peacebuilding is opposed to preventing the inaction from which conflict and relapse prevention ensue.

Through a review of what emerging peacebuilding actors are contributing to the peacebuilding discourse, this brief provides guidance on better understanding the contributions of the African Union, South Africa and other African States. It focuses on entry points of opportunities for these states to contribute to the international peacebuilding architecture in general and Africa's peacebuilding needs in particular. And it concludes with how peacebuilding actors should approach peacebuilding challenges ensuing from the transforming international and intercontinental peacebuilding challenges.

While seeking to understand the role and contribution of new actors to peacebuilding, this paper posits that, the perpetuation of post-conflict challenges and the apparent inability of the United Nations (UN) or the PBC to, singlehandedly compound them, has created a caveat for new actors to inject new approaches to meeting the needs of fragile and recovering states. That these new actors have gained an interest-in, and are investing in peacebuilding activities across the globe begs for an understanding of what distinguishes them from the PBC particularly in a year when it is anyone's guess what the Advisory Group on the review of the Peacebuilding Architecture will put forward as recommendations to the General Assembly.[13]

Conflict Prevention and Relapse Prevention as entry points for new actors

Whereas in certain cases, it is difficult to state whether an actor such as the African Union, South Africa and other African states are totally inclined towards conflict prevention or relapse prevention, a point to make from the onset is that, often times, Conflict Prevention and Relapse Prevention have in Peacebuilding corridors been used interchangeably. And as such where there is a need to support states, the focus of these actors seizes to be less on the semantics as to whether their involvement is preventive action or relapse prevention. Often, the focus is on supporting projects with the most impact of sustaining peace.

In certain cases as with the African Union or IBSA previously mentioned, support is directed both for statebuilding and peacebuilding. For instance, the African Union PCRD framework is couched to "improve timeliness, effectiveness and coordination of activities in post conflict countries and to lay the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace, in line with Africa's vision ..."[14] The emphasis on *coordination of activities in post-conflict* suggests that like traditional actors, the AU strives to prevent relapse *particularly* because of the intractable conflicts that perpetuate in the continent. However, in reading further, the PCRD sets itself *not just* to "a) consolidate peace and prevent relapse of violence [but also helps to] b) … address the root causes of conflict [and to] c) encourage and fast-track planning and implementation of reconstruction activities [while] d) [enhancing] complementarities and coordination between and among diverse actors engaged in PCRD processes."[15]

The emphasis of redressing root causes is one which if inferred within the context of William Zartman's *Ripe Moment* for intervention will suggest an intervention at a time when the escalation of hostilities can either be averted or prevented. However, the broadness of the AU's PCRD framework seems intended to acknowledge the necessity to prevent conflicts while also preventing relapse by supporting the "… gains made, thanks to the collective determination and efforts of Africa, with the support of its partners."[16] In consonance with the PCRD policy, at its 19th Ordinary Session of the policy organs of the AU, the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) was launched as an AU-led process for mobilizing support from within the continent for countries emerging from conflict.[17] The ASI has gained currency on the continent with Sibry Tapsoba, Head of the Fragile States

Department at the African Development Bank (AfDB) revealing that countries including Algeria, South Africa, Nigeria and The Gambia have already agreed, in principle, to contribute to the ASI's budget.[18] Being a framework designed to support states in recovery, it is safe to assume that the PCRD is modelled around the UN PBC that supports states in recovery with the view of preventing relapse while other AU organs such as the Peace and Security Department's broad, "… support to the efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts; [and foster the] promotion of programmes for the structural prevention of conflicts …"[19]

Reading into South Africa's involvement through IBSA, and the African Union's determination to support efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts through the promotion of programmes for the structural prevention of conflicts, it seems that emerging actors are more inclined to conflict prevention.

This notwithstanding, out of need, and perhaps against the understanding that, while preventing the emergence of new conflict, old ones must be resolved, and fragile states must be supported until they attain resilience, there is a growing ambivalence and understandable confusion as to why conflict prevention and relapse prevention is often mistakenly seen as the same.

Last but not the least, it must be clarified that, conflict prevention in its classical sense is intended to stop armed conflicts before they break-out. According to Muggah and White, "Conflict prevention is a broader concept referring to the monitoring, containment, and reduction of risk factors that shape war onset, intensification, and spread [of war]."[20] Muggah and White while also not distinguishing the two concepts clearly, opine that Relapse Prevention was "conceived in the latter half of the 20th century, [because of the] sizeable array of international or interstate wars."[21] In peacebuilding circles, the fault line is the growth in early warning and capacities to foresee and avert conflict break-outs. This seems to be an area where new actors are investing under the banner of building strong partnerships such as by South Africa in the BRICS and IBSA, or the ASI which threads on a vision of Africa helping Africa. Just how are they doing so is the bone of contention which the next section addresses.

South Africa and Peacebuilding

There is no gainsaying that since the demise of apartheid, South Africa has made considerable efforts in integrating and advancing itself as a global player and promoter of African concerns.[22] This is manifest in its multilateral engagements in IBSA, BRICS, the G20, and previous memberships in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as non-permanent member and member of the United Nations Peacebuilding Council. These have positioned South Africa centrally as a pacesetter in the African Peace and Security Agenda; and as a result, South Africa is one of the leading architects of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and has very recently played a leading role in the creation of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) which has been prepared to intervene in emergency threats to peace and security. ACIRC is intended to serve as an ad hoc measure to bridge the gap before the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF). Through these engagements, Kok contemplates that South Africa is enhancing its African agenda in terms of fostering South-South Cooperation which is a key pillar of its foreign policy.[23] This point was further emphasized by President Jacob Zuma of South Africa at his state of the nation address before parliament in which he reiterated that "Africa is at the centre of South Africa's foreign policy."[24]

In the same breath, South Africa has played a key role as an enabler and confidence builder in the support of Africa's peacebuilding needs through its pledge of over US$1 million to support CAR's recovery efforts; and also contributed to AU Peace support operations in Burundi.[25] Complimentary to this, South Africa was a contributor to the special United Nations Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) which provided the Congolese national army (FARDC) with enough firepower to defeat the M23 rebellion operating in the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Similar activity was conducted in Cote d'Ivoire following the contested 2011 elections.
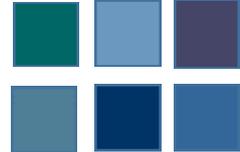
Although criticized in some circles as domineering and hegemonic, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) has defended its interventions as interventions which ensue from states' requests, and which have not nullified the clarion continental call for South Africa to:

- o   Use its capable military might to support Peace Support Operations.[26]
- o   Support more ASI and PCRD initiatives in a multilateral platform which is in sync with the AU and RECs positions[27]
- o   Continue to carry out capacity building, implementation support, economic development and information sharing programmes which can strengthen African states' recovery from crisis[28]
- o   Take a leading role on civil society engagement and the Livingstone Formula which states that "Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) may provide technical support to the AU by undertaking early warning reporting, and situation analysis, which feeds information into the decision making processes of the PSC."[29]

That these engagements make no distinction as to whether South Africa is participating in conflict prevention or relapse prevention as conceptualized above, speaks more clearly to how the continent is grappling with where its own emphasis should be. But as an actor in other multilateral agencies such as BRICS, and IBSA, South Africa has been seen playing more of an active preventive diplomacy and state building while also supporting Africa's economic and development initiatives such as The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Founded in 2001, the NEPAD framework was an African Union (AU) initiative anchored in the AU Constitutive Act and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and profiled by African states counting on themselves in order to achieve the AU's vision without *exclusively* relying on foreign aid; and secondly, giving special focus on regional integration. In May, 2014, under South Africa's Chair, the 7th Annual Africa Investor CEO Infrastructure Investment Summit was convened in Abuja, Nigeria as an important reflection in the enhancement of Africa's infrastructural development.[30] It is important to note that, although playing a leading role, the strategic partnerships that South Africa established with Nigeria, Algeria and other states constitute Africa's burgeoning contribution to its own peacebuilding.[31] President Jacob Zuma asserted in the Summit that, the diaspora has a role to play in the economic development of the continent as enumerated in the AU Constitutive Act.[32] It is through this realisation that South Africa implemented the African diaspora roadmap which culminated in the convening of the first ever Global African Diaspora Summit in May 2012 to sensitise African stakeholders to foster good relations with their citizens abroad as a means of encouraging the latter to invest in the continent.[33] Following from this, South Africa's role as an emerging peacebuilding actor cannot be discountenanced just because of the enormous pressure and expectation from a continent bedeviled by an avalanche of crises.

The African Union and Peacebuilding

Following from the above demonstration that the African Union (AU) in its broad objective is structured and inclined to prevent conflict rather than prevent relapse, the AU has not invested much in terms of the broader or traditional conceptualization of peacebuilding which seeks to restitute constitutional order through elections, enforcement of human rights, facilitation of the DDR/SSR, restoration of the rule of law, and support for reconciliation and national unity.

By contrast, the AU in recent years, together with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have begun a bottom-up peacebuilding process which according to Okeke starts with the "militarization and securitization of peace rather than undertaking peacebuilding [based on] democracy and good governance [as] underpinned in its own Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance."[34]

To this end, the African Union has undertaken to fund such operations mainly through two grand initiatives – The Peace Fund and the African Solidarity Initiative. The Peace Fund is a derivative of Article 21 of the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council. The Peace Fund was created to provide "financial resources for peace support missions and other operational activities related to peace and security."[35] The Protocol requires the Fund to be made up of financial appropriations from the regular AU budget; voluntary contributions from Member States, international partners and other sources such as the private sector, civil society and individuals; as well as through fund-raising activities. The Peace Fund is operational and receives funds for all Peace and Security Department activities including but not limited to preventive diplomacy initiatives, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Considering the shortfalls between what is pledged to states in crisis and what is received, and bearing in mind the UN and other traditional peacebuilding actors' inability to meet the amplifying global peacebuilding needs, the Peace Fund is already playing a significant role in Africa. In the last decade, the AU has deployed over 100,000 uniformed and civilian peace keepers and peace builders to different theatres of operations.[36] Between 2013 and 2015, the AU managed three peace operations with support from the peace fund or member states who generously accepted to cater for some of their uniformed personnel in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Somalia. African States contributed about 50,000 troops and some hundreds of civilian personnel with an estimated budget of one billion per annum.[37] That some of these uniformed and civilian (wo)men are still in Mali, CAR and Somalia even after the cessation of hostilities is testament to the a growing trend of the AU and African states to take ownership of shaping African peace processes.

Another AU initiative being used to pilot international peacebuilding is the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) which was launched as an AU-led process for mobilizing support from within the continent for countries emerging from conflict, in line with the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) adopted in 2006. – The ASI unlike several similar post-conflict initiatives is tasked to "mobilize in-kind, capacity building, as well as financial contributions, to support post-conflict reconstruction activities and efforts in the African countries concerned."[38] The AU's recognition that capacity building is a human capital which is often negligible in peacebuilding circles is undoubtedly an innovation worth mention. Botswana's Finance Minister Kenneth Matambo, focusing on non-financial matters asserts that the ASI could "make a major contribution to capacity-building among the target post-conflict populations, as well as facilitating experience-sharing across all areas of development."[39] Given that the ASI vision is in direct symphony with the AfDB's Fragile States Facility earlier mentioned, he adds that, "It is important to ensure effective coordination between the AfDB's activities"[40] as a means of ensuring coherence whose dividend is lasting peace.

Based therefore on the above, it can be safely concluded that the African Union uses the peace fund to drive its preventive diplomacy and the ASI to foster post-conflict reconstruction with the latter being homegrown contribution and the former accepting some external contribution.
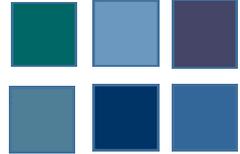
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Having argued that the dichotomy between conflict prevention and prevention of relapse seems to be the moot point of where emerging actors should intervene, the issues and trends above demonstrate a greater leaning by emerging actors to lean towards conflict prevention while paying keen attention on relapse prevention where traditional peacebuilding actors are experiencing challenges relating to resource mobilization and how to coherently coordinate the limited or available resources to prevent the cyclical nature of conflicts in post-conflict states.

Africa and the international peacebuilding fraternity at large face numerous constraints and need to take expeditious coordinated action in the pursuit of the *2020 Silencing the Guns* agenda of the African Union. For this reason, greater attention should be given to resolving intractable conflicts while improving the local infrastructure of fragile states to hedge the risks of succumbing to conflicts. To this end, there is need for the African Union and its multiple peace enforcement partners to engage in a massive drive towards investing in the manufacturing and processing industries that would add value to Africa's raw materials; reduce unemployment and dissuade youth from being lured into rebellions. To achieve this, capacity skills development and productivity enhancement support programmes need to be collaboratively put in place with the African Union (AU) championing the drive to encourage member states to streamline these needs in their domestic policy development frameworks as a means of boosting Africans' income purchasing power, increase national domestic revenue and by extension reduce the AU's dependence on external funding thanks to states timeously meeting their contributions to the AU operational budget.

The challenges faced by countries which have experienced relapse must be critically researched- with the view of teasing out lessons about causes of relapse. These include lack of ownership in the externally funded peacebuilding programmes; overlapping support of certain issues at the expense of others; misalignment of priorities between states, the people and international agency; failed peace agreements, and fears of domination by certain parties who feel their security might be compromised by further concessions. These challenges have to be reviewed alongside Africa's potential to meet its import needs from its own sources and the elimination of existing barriers at a continental level which could greatly enhance intra-African cohesion.

To the date, most African states have been able to benefit from the benevolence of South Africa, or other African States through the African Union resource mobilization funds such as the Peace Fund and the ASI. While some states are still spectators in the theatre of peacebuilding, they need to be proactive in response to multilateral peace and security challenges as a means of minimizing the negative impacts of conflict on the African region.

Despite these diversifications and shortcomings, the 2015 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture provided an opportunity to reflect on why the PBC continues to focus on preventing relapse and not consider rigorous partnerships with other UN agencies and multilateral actors such as the g7+, IDPS, IBSA, BRICS, the AU and key stakeholders such as Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt and South Africa to prevent the resumption of hostility through proactive investments in education, catalytic funding to boost statebuilding and foster negotiations which can reverse the cycle and inclination of resolving differences through the gun—a plague that has bedeviled Africa.

Fragile states, particularly those in Africa need to learn from the experiences of states like South Africa, Nigeria and Angola that emerged out of decades of civil war and have put in place strong institutional mechanisms which tend to lend themselves and support other states in need. Africa's growth in the last decade has been averaged 5 per cent a year or more, and this has largely been driven by domestic demand, foreign investment, strong commodity prices and improved economic governance. The ultimate measure of progress, however, is the wellbeing of people – and so the international (traditional and emerging) actors need to foster a peacebuilding agenda that is people centered.

End Notes

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[11] Stuenkel, O. Op Cit.

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[13] On 15 December 2014, at the request of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed Anis Bajwa (Pakistan), Saraswathi Menon (India), Funmi Olonisakin (Nigeria), Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah (Mauritania), Charles Petrie (France), Gert Rosenthal (Guatemala) and Edith Grace Ssempala (Uganda) as members of an advisory group on the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

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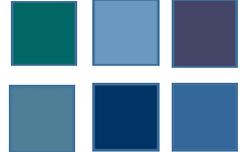
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