

DEVELOPMENTAL PEACEKEEPING

What are the advantages for Africa?

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“Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict.”

Dorothy Thompson

Introduction

This paper seeks to address and explain the failures of current peacekeeping interventions to resolve resource-based conflicts on the African Continent. It will argue that the main drivers for conflict in Africa are resource-based. Whether it is a struggle to control, to access or directly exploit scarce resources, Africa’s conflicts are inherently economic by nature. If this holds true then current military focused approaches ignore the developmental and economic nature of not only the source of conflict, but also its resolution.

This failure is clearly illustrated by the long time delays between peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction interventions. These delays are characteristic of all missions currently being conducted on the African Continent. This is in part due to the symptomatic short-term “military” solutions, which forms the core of current peace-missions as opposed to a developmental economic approach. As a result, current peacekeeping interventions lack focus and capacity to accelerate sustainable peace, through economic,

industrial and social growth.

In response to these challenges this paper proposes the creation of an African Action Plan for Developmental Peacekeeping and Reconstruction, which is rooted in the concepts of developmental peacekeeping and human security. This paper will illustrate how developmental peacekeeping, as a post-conflict reconstruction mechanism, can serve as a catalyst for achieving the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development’s (NEPAD) primary objectives of:

- Poverty eradication;
- Placing African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development;
- Halting the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhancing its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and
- Accelerating the empowerment of women

The challenge of ensuring sustainable human security

To understand the challenges facing current peace-missions and the rationale for adopting a developmental peacekeeping approach, it is necessary to unpack the nature and causes of

conflict in Africa and to see how current peacekeeping approaches are geared to meet these challenges.

The causes of conflict in Africa

General Amadou Toumani Toure remarked that: "Conflicts arise from human relations in two principal ways: first, individuals or groups of individuals have different values, needs and interests; and, second, most resources are not available in unlimited quantities and so access to them must be controlled and fought for. These two factors intrinsically cause conflicts."¹

Through the years a wide range of causes of conflict in Africa has been identified, these include:

- Unequal access to and control of resources;
- State collapse or failure due to poor governance and a lack of the rule of law;
- Social and regional inequalities;
- Ethnicity;
- Food insecurity;
- Economic decline and shock which leads to unfulfilled expectations;
- Absence of an independent, well-informed civil society sector; and
- Misplaced humanitarian assistance.

When one analyses these causes of conflict on the African Continent, it becomes apparent that they all relate in some way either directly or indirectly to the ability to attract, absorb and utilise resources equitably and transparently. The ability to attract, absorb and utilise resources is fundamentally an economic as well as a political imperative. This position is supported by Dzelilovic when he states that the failure to understand how economic and political factors are linked have important implications for policies aimed at resolving conflict and assisting post-war rehabilitation.²

The nature of conflict in Africa

For decades the African continent has been ravaged by wars characterised by the proliferation of small arms, forcible recruitment of children, sexual violence, killing and maiming of civilians, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Economic wars are a predominant instigator and sustainers of conflict in Africa. The failure of African states to provide human security through formal mechanisms of economic exchange has given rise to the increased informalisation of economies and the development of parallel extra-legal activities that try to obtain control of resources within a fragmented environment.

Amid shrinking resources and a collapsing formal economy, ethnicity networks provide limited access to resources (through excluding other members of the society), thereby creating polarisation. In turn, these informal networks undermine the ability of the state to protect the interest of all its citizens. As a result, an alternative set of economic and social relations develop which make use of violence and perdition as a means of survival and legitimacy. This alternative economy is defined as a war economy.

At the heart of a war economy is the practice of asset transfer based on the expulsion of populations, killing and large-scale human rights violations as means of accumulating resources. In addition, prolonged conflicts in Africa destroy the productive human capacity and infrastructure necessary for development. In turn, this disrupts production that weakens social, economic and administrative structures. Ultimately, this results in the collapse of the state and the economy.

This economic and political collapse results in African societies emerging from conflicts that are characterised by:

- Polarised economic and social relations;
- Decimated social cohesion;
- Lack of human security;
- Isolation from the outside world and markets;
- Lack of basic functioning institutions;
- Poverty;
- Social decay;
- Political instability; and
- Destroyed infrastructure (transport, communication and basic social services)

These characteristics reduce the ability of post-conflict societies to enhance their capacity to normalise economic relations and structures as reflected in the primary objectives of NEPAD. These normalised economic rela-

tions and structures constitute the basis for dismantling war economies and predatory practices. In spite of their importance in normalising post-conflict economies these important factors have been functionally ignored by current peacekeeping practices as will be illustrated in the next section.

Overview of peacekeeping approaches

The United Nations (UN) currently constitutes the dominant hegemony with regard to peacekeeping operations. In spite of its dominance, the UN has come under both internal and external criticism for its apparent failures in the area of peacekeeping. The Brahimi Report is a review of the UN peacekeeping performance. In this report, failed peacekeeping efforts of the UN are ascribed to a lack of a “sound peace building” or “post-conflict reconstruction” strategy.

An analysis of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) documentation found that the primary focus of traditional peacekeeping methods remains within the traditional understanding of security, which gives preference to the security of the state. This approach illustrates a failure to understand the full extent of human security, resource-based conflicts and war economies. It appears that the UN approach, in essence, ignores the need for a speedy economic recovery, which is crucial for removing the threat of renewed conflict or the escalation of an existing one.

The current UN approach entails merely disarming combatants and does not address the dismantling of war economies and effectively re-integrating ex-combatants into society, which is at the root of the problem. The approach pays lip service to gender equality by not taking cognisance of the specific needs of women ex-combatants or the violation of the rights of women by peacekeepers. In fact, despite the fact that the UN passed a resolution calling for greater participation of women in all aspects of the peace processes, this is often ignored.³ The delay between the start of peacekeeping operations and the start of peace-building and socio-economic development interventions reduces the ability to

absorb combatants into the formal economy and to dismantle the war economy.

The time delay exponentially increases the risk of unmet expectations, as post-conflict economies are unable to address and remedy the fundamental developmental causes of resource-based conflicts. Ultimately, this results in an inability to break down conflict systems.

The inability to breakdown conflict systems results in increased instability in other areas or regions. Moreover, the mechanisms of the war economy become reactivated.

Problem Statement

Based on the above-mentioned analysis, the following problem statement has been formulated:

Current peacekeeping interventions are unable to resolve resource-based conflicts or conflicts that are being sustained by war economies.

The main causes of conflict in Africa are resource-based. Whether it is a struggle to control, access or to exploit scarce resources, it is inherently economic and political in nature. Therefore, a purely military approach ignores the developmental and economic nature of peace building and the contemporary definition of human security.

Current peacekeeping approaches are characterised by long time lapses before developmental and peace-building interventions can be implemented in war torn zones. This leads to inadequate capacity to dismantle war economies, the inability to both absorb ex-combatants and to destroy conflict systems.

Lacking focus to accelerate economic, industrial and social growth through post-conflict reconstruction inhibits a post-conflict society from being absorbed into the global economy. In turn, the inability to be integrated into the global economy sets the war economy into motion resulting in the reactivation of the conflict system.

In response to the above-mentioned problem statement, developmental peacekeeping has

been formulated as an African alternative to current peacekeeping interventions.

Defining Developmental Peacekeeping

Developmental peacekeeping is fundamentally rooted in the holistic understanding of human security in all its dimensions. These dimensions include the establishment of conditions that enable people and communities to live free and secure lives, through the protection of fundamental human rights and meeting of basic needs—health, education and a clean and healthy environment free from poverty and exploitation

In keeping with this holistic understanding of human security, developmental peacekeeping is defined as a post-conflict reconstruction intervention which aims to achieve sustainable levels of human security through a combination of interventions aimed at accelerating capacity building and socio-economic development which will result in the dismantling of war economies and conflict systems and replacing them with globally competitive peace economies.

Developmental Peacekeeping has two features, which distinguish it from current approaches to peacekeeping. The first is the focus on human security. Traditional definitions focus on the application of security and military apparatus in ensuring the security of the state, as apposed to the security of individuals and communities. In essence this system is applied to interstate conflicts as opposed to intrastate conflicts.

This is illustrated by current United Nations (UN) definitions, which tend to reflect the traditional understanding of security. The preoccupation with the security of the state is clearly illustrated by the UN definitions of both peacekeeping and peace enforcing as defined by the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

In this regard peacekeeping (under Chapter VI of the UN Charter) is defined by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as:

The use of military forces to monitor

agreements between two, or more, warring political entities. The presence of UN forces has to be consented to; UN forces are to be strictly impartial; and they may not use force except in self-defence and as a last resort.

The definition of peace enforcement (under Chapter VII of the UN Charter) is essentially the same as that of peacekeeping with the exception that the principles of consent, neutrality and the non-use of force are suspended.

Clearly the definitions are not in keeping with the concept of human security outlined in the UN Commission Report on Human Security, published in 2003. These concepts need to be reformulated and doctrines for peacekeeping and peace enforcement changed in line with the broader concept of human security which recognises the security of people as well as that of states.⁴

The second distinguishing feature of developmental peacekeeping is that it does not distinguish between peacekeeping and peace building on a process level. Peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and peace building are collapsed into one process. On an operational level this is its greatest distinguishing characteristic. In essence this means that post-conflict reconstruction interventions operate in synergy with peacekeeping and peace-enforcement. On a practical level this would mean that post-conflict reconstruction practitioners and resources are deployed alongside peacekeepers irrespective of the existence of cease-fire agreements.

The Developmental Peacekeeping Process

Developmental Peacekeeping does not distinguish between peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and peace building as separate phases or elements in a linear process. Developmental Peacekeeping actually rolls all of these into one process. Peace building, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, unlike current approaches, start simultaneously at the onset of a peace mission.

This would require that peacekeepers enter the operational area (irrespective of the existence of a ceasefire) with the mission objective

of creating an enabling environment for post-conflict reconstruction teams which are deployed simultaneously with them. In other words, African Peacekeeper contingencies of the future should no longer solely consist of military personnel but should include multi-disciplinary teams of development economists, civil engineers, public and development managers and policy developers which are deployed at the onset of an operation.

These post-conflict reconstruction teams should conduct detailed socio-economic assessments of the target country. The aim of these assessments would be to develop an integrated post-conflict reconstruction action plan for the beneficiary country. The integrated development plan will focus on identifying opportunities and resource requirements for economic development. Critical to the success of this plan is the identification of mechanisms to dismantle war economies and the creation of mechanisms to ensure the optimal utilisation of economic resources for the benefit of all. Central to this process is the identification of mega infrastructure projects that would enhance the economic development process.

These mega infrastructure projects should form the core of an extended public works programme, which in turn would lay the foundation for sustained service delivery. Sustained service delivery is a critical mechanism in dismantling war economies and ensuring human security. These extended public works programmes in turn should place a heavy emphasis on labour-based methodologies and technologies. The use of labour-based technologies would enhance the absorption of ex-combatants and affected communities.

The implementation of such an integrated extended public works programme would create a massive impetus for the skilling and reintegration of ex-combatants into society. Through the accelerated training of ex-combatants and affected communities the power relationships between these parties would be altered and the need for violence as a survival mechanism negated.

The logic of this approach is underlined by the current situation in Burundi where demo-

bilised combatants are restricted to demobilisation centers without any effort being made to equip them or the communities to which they are returning with functional economic skills. Some of these ex-combatants have been restricted to demobilisation centres for up to eight months. This situation greatly enhances the potential for conflict as pressure on limited resources will be increased and as ex-combatants and internally displaced people place more demands on the system.

By starting “peace-building” only after a cease-fire agreement has been signed, more pressure is placed on the economy and this exponentially increases the potential for conflict. By rolling the “peace building” and “peacekeeping” components into one, as proposed in terms of developmental peacekeeping, mechanisms are created to reduce the volatility, which characterises the early stages of a peace-mission whilst speeding up the post-conflict reconstruction process and capacity.

The Advantages of Developmental Peacekeeping Mechanisms for the African Union and NEPAD

The advantages of Developmental Peacekeeping primarily focus on the realisation of the African Union and NEPAD’s priorities. Firstly, it creates a platform from which to establish the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring the creation of peace and security. Because of its focus on the causes of conflict as opposed to the symptoms, it provides a sustainable solution to peace and security on the continent. The utilisation of post-conflict reconstruction resources towards achieving sustainable political and economic development will advance democracy and the regional integration and cooperation, through the dismantling of exploitative war economies.

The primary focus on accelerated capacity building and training, as part of macro infrastructure development will create the required capacity to ensure sustainable socio-economic and political development. Secondly, developmental peacekeeping creates a platform for policy reforms and increased investment

through the dismantling of war economies. This is primarily achieved through the development of an integrated development plan or framework for post-conflict reconstruction and development. Not only does it drive the dismantling of war economies, it also facilitates the optimal use of resources by focusing reconstruction efforts on optimal internal value addition as apposed to value extraction by external role players. In essence it facilitates the development of strong local economies on the African continent. The focus on creating an enabling environment through the creation of labour-based infrastructure development will enable African economies to cluster their activities, thus ensuring the retention of and addition of value to their products.

The clustering of post-conflict economies will also allow for the diversification of production with the intention to export, which in turn will ensure sustainable socio-economic development. The creation of such clustered markets will accelerate intra-African trade, thus mitigating the exploitative nature of the war economy. The focus on the equitable redistribution of resources in post-conflict societies will ensure stability and confidence, which is fundamental for achieving sustainable economic growth both locally and within the global economy.

The strong focus on service delivery issues and socio-economic imperatives such as skills development, job creation and food security at the early stages of a developmental peacekeeping intervention serves as a strong driver for effective and efficient utilisation of human resources and capacity building.

Accelerated capacity building for governance and service delivery in turn is a critical mechanism in establishing and securing peaceful political transitions. By linking capacity building to service delivery and the infrastructure needs of a clustered economy, the acceleration of functional skills development is achieved.

Conclusion

Developmental peacekeeping although still in its infancy, provides the African continent

and its institutions such as the African Union and NEPAD, with a mechanism to address the fundamental causes of conflict, through the dismantling of war economies and the creation of sustainable equitable economic growth and accelerated skills development. It provides a mechanism that mitigates the failures of current peacekeeping interventions to resolve resource-based conflicts, by focusing on the developmental and economic nature of not only the source of conflict, but also its resolution.

It provides a mechanism to reduce the delays between the start of peacekeeping missions and the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction or peace-building activities, by rolling these processes into one. Through the effective integration of these processes it creates the capacity to accelerate the creation of sustainable peace, through economic, industrial and social growth.

What developmental peacekeeping requires is the collective wisdom of all the members of the African Union to expand and develop the concept to a level where it can be institutionalised within the African Union. This would require the formulation of a developmental peacekeeping doctrine, which would guide the retraining of our armies towards contributing to the reconstruction of the African continent. It will also require a redirection of our research and development resources towards enhancing our capacity to deliver developmental peacekeeping technologies to meet the service delivery and post-conflict reconstruction needs of war-ravaged communities.

As Africans we need to create political, socio-economic and military mechanisms that would accelerate the dismantling of war economies. This needs to be done in a uniform manner under the leadership of the African Union in conjunction with civil society. This is the only effective way to break the cycle of violence on our continent. Anything else is a compromise.

Finally, we need to institutionalise and resource developmental peacekeeping as a guiding principle within a broad African Action Plan for Developmental Peacekeeping and Reconstruction that can be implemented

by the African Union. Then we, as Africans, will truly be able to achieve our shared goal to end wars on our Continent and to ensure the positive and equitable application of our indigenous resources, towards ensuring sustainable human security on the African Continent.

Notes

1. A Adedeji (ed), 1999: *Comprehending and mastering African Conflicts: The Search for Sustainable Peace and Good Governance*, Zed Books.
2. United Nations, 2000: Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multi-dimensional Peace Operations. Lessons Learned Unit, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, New York.
3. UN Resolution 1325, 2000.
4. UN Commission on Human Security, 2003: *Human Security Now*.