



# Drums of Change

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM



Elections 2010

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## Overview of the peace and security situation on the continent

### Introduction

The recurring issue that we see in almost every news publication has to do with food insecurity in Africa. Last year and into the new year, Africa has seen fresh conflicts, droughts, floods, erratic rainfall patterns, and the general degradation of natural resources (land and water in particular). All these have led to a myriad of problems affecting agricultural production. Conflicts and civil wars affect the security and stability of populations, and lead to an adverse effect on production. Slash and burn cultivation, over grazing, deforestation, and excessive cultivation expose land to soil erosion, reduced fertility, and/or sterility. Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Uganda and Zimbabwe are just a few of the countries that are facing serious food shortages due to very different circumstances. Humanitarian assistance is being requested by the UN, the AU, IFRC and some governments are asking for help because they cannot handle the crisis on their own. Africa needs to find effective responses to this problem in order to secure a future for upcoming generations.

### HORN OF AFRICA

Ethiopia and Eritrea have had no incentive to resolve the frozen border conflict. Indeed, both regimes have used it as an excuse to enhance their domestic power at the expense of democracy and economic growth, thus reducing the attractiveness to them of diplomatic compromise. They



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## Editorial

By Rindai Chekerwa

The long awaited edition of the newsletter is finally here! We are glad to be back in communication with the VCT members, and to be able to bring this very important newsletter to you.

A lot has happened since the last issue of *Drums of Change* and it is impossible to capture absolutely everything in this one edition. We will, however, highlight the main events such as the AU Summit and all other events around it at the beginning of the year. We have replicated some of the resolutions that were reached by the AU including the recommendations from the CSO and Gender pre-summit sessions.

One of our members was in Sudan earlier this year and has written a very informative piece on the preparations for the elections to be held in April this year. His report outlines a brief account of a conflict management intervention carried out by a member of the ACTION Steering Committee through the Electoral Assistance Division of UNMIS and with the Political Parties Affairs Council (PPAC) in relation to the multi-party elections planned for April in Sudan. The intervention sought to maintain a focus on the relational aspects of the electoral context while also providing practical ways in which the electoral stakeholders could mitigate against the potential for violence and maximize the opportunities for deepening the democratic aspects of the peace building process.

Also in this issue, we take a look at the proposal that was put forward by President Wade of Senegal to “repatriate” Haitians to Africa after the devastating earthquake that hit the island country early this year. Our Sierra Leonean counterparts gave us a short history lesson on what happened in their own country when slaves were “repatriated” to Africa after so many years abroad. Additional information and more contributions on this topic are welcome, especially along the lines of what the implications of such a project would be on peace and security in Africa.

The overview of peace and security in Africa may not be as detailed as usual. Our writers tried to include everything that has happened in the last six months into the overview, and we know how hard that can be. Again, we urge VCT members in particular to share stories from their countries with us. We want to read stories of peace and development success or even stories of why peace and development are not flourishing in your countries. We want to hear from you, and we anticipate more contributions here on out.

Readers are reminded to give us feedback so that we can better the next issue of *Drums of Change*. Please send your articles for inclusion in the next publication.

With this, I give you the first publication of *Drums of Change* for the year 2010. Enjoy your reading.

### ◀ ctd from p1

support the other’s domestic rebels, and each is convinced that the fall of the other’s regime is imminent and the only real solution to the border dispute. At the same time, the key international actors have allowed this situation to remain frozen. Furthermore, this bilateral dispute also has significant regional implications. During the Ethiopia-Eritrea War, Somalia became a proxy battlefield, with both Eritrea and Ethiopia supporting different armed groups. This has significantly increased the incidence and severity of fighting in Somalia. Since the end of the war, Eritrea has periodically provided assistance to anti-Ethiopian-government groups in Somalia and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia to put pressure on Ethiopia to stop blocking implementation of the Boundary Commission ruling. Ethiopia has countered by aiding its allies in Somalia.

At the same time, Djibouti is suffering from a shortage of water that is threatening the already low livelihood of the people of Djibouti. Disappointing rains have killed livestock, leading to many pastoral families pulling their children out of school, selling remaining livestock and moving to cities where they can work for food and money.

### SOUTHERN AFRICA

Despite President Zuma’s efforts and his report to the media, the highlight in southern African issues is probably the deadlock of talks in Zimbabwe. ZANU PF’s politburo resolved that it would not make any concessions until the sanctions targeted at members of Mugabe’s regime are lifted. At the same time, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network has warned that calls for fresh elections in the country are premature in the absence of an overhaul of the discredited voter’s roll and a review of electoral, security, and media laws. The organization, which is the largest independent elections monitoring body in Zimbabwe, believes that major reforms are need before free and fair elections are achievable in the country.

In the meantime, Madagascar’s Andry Rajoelina and about a hundred of his supporters are facing travel bans and economic sanctions after failing to deliver on agreements made to restore constitutional order a year into the coup. The island country was suspended from the AU and SADC. The stiffer political and economic sanctions that have been slapped on her have forced thousands out of work and right into poverty.





While all this is happening in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, Mozambique is still recovering from the devastating floods that rocked her in early March. About 130 000 people had to be evacuated from the flood prone areas. Thankfully, there were minimal deaths since the beginning of the season. And to top it all off, the discussion around homosexual rights is still going on in countries such as Malawi, Uganda and Zimbabwe where it is still uncertain whether homosexuality will ever be legal.

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### **WEST AFRICA**

In 2009 and thus far into 2010, the West African region of the continent has experienced instability with a recurring threat to its peace and security. Some of the countries within this region have had quite a long history of conflict mainly caused by a lack of democratic electoral processes; power hungry ‘heads of state’ that have used tyrant-like tactics to govern their respective states; and civil unrest influenced by factors such as ethnicity, other social and economic factors that hinder on the developmental process.

However it should also be acknowledged that institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have played a vital role in trying to consolidate these countries economically. Also recently the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FOA) has taken an initiative to help an estimated 5000 West African farmers with a 2.4 million dollars boost to grow and sell certified produce globally. This initiative attempts to help slightly balance the poverty ratio, since poverty and inadequate natural resources are some of the influential factors in ongoing internal conflicts in the African continent.

On the other hand Nigeria has been making continuous headlines with protests spiraling out of control and ending in violent police retaliation. Civil unrest in Nigeria is mainly attributed to the growing call for President Yar’Adua’s removal from the presidential seat with many citing his incapacity to govern.

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### **EAST AFRICA**

This region of the African continent has mainly been characterized by coup attempts either to overthrow current or former governments. Essentially many of these East African countries have been occupied by rebel militia opposing their respective head’s of state, consequently

leading to violent clashes between loyalist state troops and armed rebels. Although no single factor may be used to define the causes of the conflicts there are commonalities, however relative, that appear generic in most part of this region. Two main influential factors appear redundant, these are rebellion against illiberal and corrupt governments and ethno-political or identity conflict.

Tracking back to previous years in Rwanda, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict that sparked world wide attention and late intervention resulted in genocide of remarkable proportions. In more recent years, to be exact 2007-2008, ethnic and geographic violence erupted in Kenya due to the diversity of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) coalition which at the time had recently acquired power. However, acknowledgment needs to be granted to the Khartoum government in Sudan for extending a ‘white flag’ to their two main opposition rebel forces in the form of a peace agreement. Although the Justice and Equality Movement accepted the offer, the Sudan Liberation Movement declined the offer perceiving the proposed peace agreement as a political maneuver in light of the upcoming April 2010 elections. On the Ugandan front, U.S legislatures and other humanitarian agencies (primarily the UN) have recently conveyed their support of a military cohesive campaign to neutralize Lord’s Resistance Army rebels as a way of realizing peace and stability in Uganda.

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### **NORTH AFRICA**

The terror threat that frightened North African leaders from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger into meeting to discuss action in Algeria was the most recent in al-Qaeda attempts to scare the world. An al-Qaeda offshoot in North Africa, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Aqim), along with other criminal groups, has exploited the vast spaces of the Sahara and Sahel to hide from authorities after launching attacks or kidnapping foreigners. There have also been growing links between terror and criminal groups in the region that has seen a rise in weapons and drug smuggling. The first and crucial action will be to put in place effective and multifaceted border cooperation between the countries.

The upcoming elections in Sudan are proving to be rather difficult. Already, they have been condemned as “Hitler elections” by the EU monitoring team the government has threatened to expel foreign observers which begs the question of what they want to do without the observers in the country.



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### **CENTRAL AFRICA**

Essentially the central African region is no stranger to conflict and instability; similarly to the eastern and western regions a definitive macro analysis would not do justice by simply generalizing the reason behind the historical and ongoing conflicts occupying the region. However if such an assumption was to be made (general analysis) about the



*"True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence."*

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



reasons behind the conflict, the following themes would arise: ethnic rivalry; oppressive governments; cross border relations; mismanagement of mineral resources, amongst others.

A recent study by the United Nations has found an intrinsic link between exploitation of mineral resources and illegal weapons trade. The study shows that illegal weapons trade has long fueled conflicts in central Africa, although this may not be the reason behind the conflicts it has however surfaced as a catalyst behind the ongoing wars. UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro recently

stated (March 2010) that organized crime and illegal weapons trade have been used to support rebel militia in this region. Despite governmental attempts at disarmament and re-establishing peaceful reconciliation in their respective countries, the relative ease of acquiring these weapons through cross-border interaction is impeding on the peace process. Migiro says that despite the Economic Community of Central African States' efforts to eradicate illegal arms trade, more commitment is needed from the nations that supply these weapons. Migiro also proposed that the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament Affairs will help draft the sub-region's first legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, ammunition, explosives and equipment supporting their manufacturer.

*Compiled by Thabiso Sekhobo and Rindai Chekerwa*

## **Communique on CSO Consultation on the Year of Peace and Security in Africa**

The CSO Consultation for the Year of Peace and Security in Africa was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2010 to consider peace and security issues to be discussed by the heads of State and Government in the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary African Union Summit. Their recommendations at the end of the meeting included the following:

### **Unconstitutional change of Governments**

1. We call for urgent adoption, operationalization and popularization of the Ezulwini Framework.
2. We also urge the AU to put in place effective censure and sanction processes for those who fail to comply.
3. We urge the AU to suspend Niger until it restores constitutional order.

### **Elections in Africa**

4. We call upon the AU to observe all the electoral processes in 2010, to ensure full compliance with all AU standards on elections.
5. We call upon the AU and member states that are due to hold elections in 2010 to put in place early warning and effective response mechanisms and broader conflict prevention methods.

### **The Principle of the Responsibility to Protect**

1. **Urge** AU Member States to prioritize efforts to prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity by taking timely and appropriate action in specific situations where these crimes and violations are imminent.
2. **Urge** AU Member States to strengthen their collaboration with the UN and regional bodies in the provision of assistance required for states to fulfil their responsibility to protect.

### **Transitional justice**

1. Call upon the AU to adopt a policy on transitional justice mechanisms in Member States emerging from

conflict based on international human rights standards and norms.

2. Call upon the AU to follow up and monitor the implementation of negotiated settlements and transitional justice measures adopted by Member States.
3. Call on AU Member States emerging from conflict to include victim and survivor voices in the adoption of transitional justice mechanisms.

### **Operational environment for CSOs**

5. Urge AU Member States to abide by the spirit of the AU Charter on Popular Participation and ensure that an optimal regulatory and operational environment for civil society exists, *including the specific plight of human rights defenders in Africa.*
6. Urge the AU and Member States to guarantee the right to information and freedom of the media as guaranteed by the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant legal instruments.

### **The CSOs in attendance were:**

- \* Action Aid, Africa Peace Forum, African Child Policy Forum, Amnesty International, Arab
- \* Coalition, Centre for Citizens' Participation in the African Union, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Darfur Consortium,
- \* Fahamu/AU Monitor, FIDH, GF2D/WILDAF, Institute for Democracy and Governance, Institute for Security Studies, International Coalition for Responsibility to Protect, NADRE Ethiopia, Open
- \* Society Initiative East Africa, Open University of Tanzania, Pan African Lawyers Union, Southern
- \* Africa Litigation Centre, Speak Africa, Trust Africa, WANEP, West African Civil Society Forum,
- \* Western Africa Bar Association, World Vision Ethiopia.



## Pre-Summit on Gender

Focus on using ICT for gender equality and women empowerment and building peace and security capacity

The Third AU Pre-Summit on Gender ran from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2010 at the AU headquarters in Ethiopia. It focused on two main issues: Using ICT for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) which was in line with this year's Assembly Summit theme; and Peace and security particularly building participants' capacity on UNSC resolution 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889.

- ✳ Resolution 1325 was the first ever to specifically address the impact of war on women, and women's contributions to conflict resolutions and sustainable peace;
- ✳ Resolution 1820 confronts sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations;

- ✳ Resolution 1888 mandates peacekeeping missions to protect women and girls from sexual violence in armed conflicts; and
- ✳ Resolution 1889 urges renewed measures to improve women's participation in peace processes such as rebuilding war torn societies.

Their work will be aimed at assessing the implementation of the status of resolution 1325; identifying time-bound goals/targets and measuring the accountability mechanisms which are currently lacking in 1325; and most importantly holding UN states accountable to take practical steps to implement 1325.

## Assembly of the AU 14th Ordinary Session

The Assembly of the African Union Heads of State and Government at their 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session from 31<sup>st</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, discussed, debated the following issues and adopted decisions on each of them:

- ✳ The International criminal court
- ✳ Abuse of principle of universal jurisdiction
- ✳ Terrorist attacks against the Togolese national football team
- ✳ African common position on the review of implementation of Beijing+15
- ✳ Fund for African Women
- ✳ African Common position at the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change
- ✳ Response to the global financial crisis
- ✳ Reform of the UNSC
- ✳ Annexes to the statutes of the African Investment Bank

**On the situation of peace and security in Africa,** the Summit expressed satisfaction with the efforts by the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), with support from the international community, for the effective establishment of the continental Peace and Security Architecture, as well as for the prevention and resolution of conflict and the consolidation of peace.

**With regard to unconstitutional changes of government, and strengthening the capacity of the African Union to manage such situations,** the Assembly reiterated the African Union's total rejection of unconstitutional changes of Government, and its determination to put a definitive end to this scourge, which undermines the progress achieved in the ongoing democratization processes in the continent and constitutes a threat to peace and security in Africa. The Assembly decided that, in case of unconstitutional changes of government, in addition to the suspension of the country concerned, the following measures shall apply: non-participation of the perpetrators of the unconstitutional change in the elections held to restore constitutional order; implementation of sanctions against any Member State that is proven to have



instigated or supported an unconstitutional change in another State; and implementation by the Assembly of other sanctions including punitive economic sanctions. It further decided that, Member States should, upon the occurrence of an unconstitutional change of Government, refrain from granting any accreditation to the *de facto* authorities in non-African international bodies, including the United Nations and its General Assembly, thus strengthening the automatic suspension measure taken by the AU against the countries in which unconstitutional changes of Government have taken place. The Assembly strongly underscored the importance of signing and ratification by Member States which have not already done so, of the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance as well as on good neighborliness and non-subversion.

**For the Hissène Habré case:** the Assembly appealed to all Member States to contribute to the budget of the trial and extend the necessary support to the Government of Senegal in the execution of the African Union (AU) mandate to prosecute and try Hissène Habré;

On the **Year of Peace and Security in Africa**, the Assembly stressed that the Year of Peace and Security will be an opportunity for African people and leaders, as well as



*"It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. but there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power."*

ALAN COHEN



African institutions, in partnership with the international community, to review current efforts towards peace on the continent, with a view to strengthening them and, where appropriate, launching new initiatives, in particular by:

- \* giving added momentum to peace and security efforts on the continent;
- \* giving greater visibility to ongoing and past efforts by the African Union on the ground;
- \* speeding up the implementation of commitments made by Member States to various AU instruments relating to peace and security;
- \* making synergy between official efforts to promote peace and security with those being undertaken on the ground by grassroots communities; and
- \* mobilizing resources to support peace and security efforts on the Continent.

**Regarding the establishment of the Fund for African Women**, the Assembly decided to launch the Fund for African Women in accordance with Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.143 (VIII) adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2007.

**On the date and venue of the fifteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union**, the Assembly accepted the dates proposed by the Republic of Uganda and the Commission for the holding of the Summit meetings in Kampala as follows:

- \* 19 to 20 July 2010: 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives' Committee;
- \* 22 to 23 July 2010: 17<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council;
- \* 25 to 27 July 2010: 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

Concerning **the election of the members of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union**, the Assembly appointed the following five (5) Members of the Peace and Security Council for a three-year term as of 1 April 2010:

NAME	REGION
Equatorial Guinea	Central Region
Kenya	Eastern Region
Libya	Northern Region
Zimbabwe	Southern Region
Nigeria	Western Region

It also appointed the following ten (10) Members of the Peace and Security Council for a two-year term as of 1 April 2010:

NAME	REGION
Burundi	Central Region
Chad	Central Region

Djibouti	Eastern Region
Rwanda	Eastern Region
Mauritania	Northern Region
Namibia	Southern Region
South Africa	Southern Region
Benin	Western Region
Cote d'Ivoire	Western Region
Mali	Western Region

**Regarding the report of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee on NEPAD**, the Assembly approved the adoption of a new strategic approach focusing on partnership dialogue on Africa's development policy issues and called for the institutionalization of Africa's engagement within the G20, and the effecting of the desired paradigm shift from management of poverty in the Continent to economic transformation for Africa to emerge as a new growth pole to address existing imbalances and play a significant role in the integrated world economy.

**On the integration of the NEPAD into the structures and processes of the African Union including the establishment of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA)**, the Assembly approved the following:

- \* Facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the continental and regional priority programmes and projects;
- \* Mobilize resources and partners in support of the implementation of Africa's priority programmes and projects;
- \* Conduct and coordinate research and knowledge management;

**On the African Union budget for the 2010 financial year**, the Assembly approved the Budget of the African Union for the Year 2010 amounting to US\$250,453,697. They requested the Commission to implement the decision to increase Member States' contribution towards the peace fund from 6% to 12% over a period of 3 years starting from 2011. They also decided to allocate US\$3,020,854 to NEPAD as initial budget for its integration into African Union structures and processes pending the approval of its structure by the Policy Organs as well as the continued harmonization of its programs with those of AUC to avoid duplication and ensure coherence.

**On Zimbabwe**, the Assembly recalled its Decision 252 adopted in Sirte, Libya, in July 2009 on the immediate lifting of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. In this regard, the Assembly invited all the Member States of the AU and the international community to give priority to the immediate and permanent lifting of the international sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe.



# Sudan Election Preparations

The forthcoming election in Sudan is an essential element of the CPA and an important benchmark in the peace building process in Sudan. However it also heightens existing tensions between contesting parties and exposes some of the ongoing and unresolved issues that are brought into sharper focus by the contestation for political power. The increases in levels of tension, and the potential for conflicting issues to trigger violence, are a cause for particular concern in the context of a fragile peace agreement.

The formation of political parties, and the accompanying space for dialogue and discussion that an election creates, also provide opportunities for deepening democracy, developing peaceful forms of public expression on issues of concern and areas of difference, and for building relationships that can endure beyond the period of political campaigning and the contestation of the ballot. An election also provides the opportunity to build ownership around issues of common concern such as peace and security and to draw the focus of parties and their supporters to common long-term needs that go beyond the contestation of power.

Following a series of consultations with UNMIS stakeholders as well as external partner organizations the consultants to UNMIS tabled a draft concept for a Confidence Building exercise. The series of discussions with the PPAC that ensued eventually refined to a sharply focused one-day event aimed at high level political party representatives, entitled "Building Confidence in Peaceful Elections". As the pilot initiative in a long-term strategy the Confidence Building workshop aimed to strengthen the relationship between the political parties and the PPAC, to provide a space for dialogue, learning and skills transfer, and to establish a clear way forward for all stakeholders.

A series of discussions took place at which draft documents were tabled, discussion ensued and then



amendments were made to reflect the collective views of the stakeholders. This consultation process strengthened the final product, assisted in ensuring full ownership and buy-in from the stakeholders and also contributed considerably to the relationship building that was so critical to the successful outcome of the event itself. The initial hesitancy that characterized the first meetings thawed considerably over time, and a strong set of relationships were established by the time the event itself took place.

The workshop that was eventually agreed was an attempt to contribute directly to creating an electoral climate that is conducive to free and fair elections. In addition it aimed to assist in defining a vibrant leading role for the PPAC during the election that would lay the foundation for their longer-term role in institutionalizing democracy.

An innovative attempt to include humor through the involvement of a Sudanese dramatist and comedian provided another useful way of reducing tensions while still driving home some critical messages around the election. The comedic component of the workshop, that included a satire on democracy, appeared to be well received. It assisted in defusing initial

tensions and breaking the ice at the start and in creating a space within the workshop that reminded participants of their common humanity and the shared stake they had in an election that contributed to strengthening democracy and did not become destructive.

In addition to the important space for dialogue between political party representatives that the workshop provided, it also created a useful platform for officials from the key stakeholders to communicate directly to political parties on the eve of the campaigning period. These official communications were an important mix of democratic messages that focused on the importance of dialogue and open discussion, the need for tolerance and a shared commitment against violence and a call for political parties to use the election to focus on deepening the democratic culture that was being built in Sudan.

This event was an important step in a process that demonstrated the potential of parties to work together beyond their differences. It also clearly brought out the need for extensive contact and relationship building between party representatives. This relationship building aspect alone will make a big difference in laying the foundation for non-violent dispute resolution processes in the longer term. However a single day is unlikely to have enough of an impact to overcome the deep and emotional differences that will inevitably arise as the elections draws closer, and the stakes become higher. Follow-up that communicates clearly to the delegates at the workshop how the event is being taken forward is essential. The need for subsequent events that build on what took place, and make the links explicitly to the spirit and concrete recommendations that began to emerge are going to be essential if UNMIS and the PAC get the maximum value from the hard work and effort that went into this particular workshop.

*"No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent..."*

LANGSTON HUGHES

# The impact of repatriated slaves on land issues

Following the proposal by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal to “repatriate” Haitians to Africa, there was some discussion and argument in many parts of Africa on the implications of such a project on indigenous Africans. We decided to ask one of our own members to write about the experience of his country with regards to the ‘repatriation’ to his country hundreds of years ago. This is his offering to the great debate:



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*PAD is always looking for people to support their work. If you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and would like to make a donation to PAD please contact us.*

## Acronyms

<b>AU</b>	–	African Union
<b>CSO</b>	–	Civil Society Organisation
<b>UNMIS</b>	–	United Nations Mission in Sudan
<b>PPAC</b>	–	Political Parties Affairs Council
<b>CPA</b>	–	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>GEWE</b>	–	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
<b>UN</b>	–	United Nations
<b>EU</b>	–	European Union

## The Settlers and Land

When the settlers arrived in Sierra Leone for the first time on the recommendation of botanist Henry Smithsman, they negotiated a treaty with a native king called King Tom for a piece of land 20 square miles in return for 59 pounds worth of goods. A senior king, King Niambana repudiated the earlier treaty between King Tom and the settlers, and urged them to sign a new treaty with him for 85 pounds worth of goods. From the outset, the treaty was construed differently by the two parties that signed it. For the settlers, it meant a freehold title to the land i.e. complete purchase of the piece of land for with a consideration of 85 pounds worth of goods has been forfeited to the indigenous authorities; for the indigenes it meant lease of land, for in Sierra Leone, land was not to be sold to strangers. Today, the misconception in that early treaty is responsible for the type of land tenure system operating in Sierra Leone.

## Problems faced by Settlers

Before repatriation to Sierra Leone, each of the three groups of settlers was promised a piece of land upon which to settle and farm. This promise turned out to be disappointing and frustrating. The Black Poor arrived during heavy rains and could therefore not put up permanent shelters. The tents that were erected got washed off by the rains.

Furthermore, the land allocated to them was grossly inadequate and barren. Within two months of their arrival, the settlers began to starve thereby forcing them to exchange their belongings with the nearby indigenous communities for food. Just few more months after their arrival, the settlers began to abandon the settlement to pick up shelter in nearby communities. The final blow to the settlement came with the rivalry between France and Britain. A French Naval Ship mistakenly bombed a local king’s settlement, and in retaliation, the king (King Jimmy) set the whole settlement on fire. This brought a complete end to what was the first settlement.

One can safely say that Land matters easily lead to conflict. This will be compounded by the fact that land is a major cause of conflict in Africa today. If the AU follows through with President Wade’s proposal and “repatriates” Haitians to Africa, it will be a major challenge for African Governments given that presently there is massive environmental degradation leading to climate change. Where will the Haitians be given land that will adequately meet their needs? How will the locals react to foreigners being given land when they themselves are impoverished and do not have access to land? Wade’s Senegal, which made the offer has mostly savanna land, is barely able to support all of her inhabitants. These are issues to be carefully assessed so that in as much as Africa may want to be of help, it must be in the interest of indigenous Africans and not generate conflict.

*By Umar Paran Tarawally and Paul L. Koroma  
Partner in Conflict Transformation (PICOT)  
Bo- Sierra Leone*

## Contacts

### Action Support Centre (ASC)

Peace and Development Platform (PAD)

### Telephone

+27 11 339 6332/62561

### Fax

+27 11 339 6352

### Physical

28 Melle Street,  
North City; Mezzanine Floor,  
Braamfontein  
Johannesburg, 2001

### Postal

Postnetsuite #204  
PO Box 2226, Johannesburg,  
2001, South Africa

### E-mail

enquiries@actionsupport.co.za

### Website

www.actionsupportcentre.co.za

## Editorial Team

Sandisiwe Qweni  
Thabiso Sekhobo  
Rindai Chekerwa

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