



Drums of Change

A quarterly newsletter of the Peace and Development Platform

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Acronyms

- AU** – African Union
- CSO** – Civil Society Organisation
- ICC** – International Criminal Court
- PSC** – Peace and Security Council
- ECOSOCC** – Economic, Social and Cultural Council
- EU** – European Union
- UNAMID** – United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur
- UNMEE** – United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
- AMISOM** – African Union Mission in Somalia
- IDPs** – Internally Displaced Persons
- PAD** – Peace and Development Platform
- SADC** – Southern African Development Community

Investing in Agriculture



Countries in Africa face many challenges as they try to raise economies, deal with increasingly integrated world markets, and meet the Millennium Development Goals, especially those focused on hunger and poverty. This situation is exacerbated by the declining external assistance due to the global economic crisis, and many competing demands on resources. Development assistance for agriculture in the developing world has declined over the last two decades, leaving many poor countries more vulnerable to hunger and poverty especially in sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture has been plagued by low productivity and under-investment, which makes it difficult for Africans to feed themselves and earn an income from farming. The spike in food prices in 2008 jeopardized even more people in poor countries as the price of imported foods such as rice, wheat, and maize peaked. This resulted in a negative economic impact on families, who often spend at least half of their income on food.

In the long term food security and economic growth will depend on investing in agriculture which is essential for growth, poverty reduction and food security, especially for the poorer countries on the continent. However, additional funds for agriculture and rural development should be accompanied by measures to enhance the performance of agricultural projects and programmes and the absorptive capacity of the sector. Donor coordination has to be stepped up and public expenditure processes have to be reformed to respond to demand and promote private sector activity.

Investing in agriculture will help Africa's poorest people earn their way out of poverty. This is especially true in sub-Saharan Africa, where agriculture is the backbone of most economies and

employs nearly two-thirds of the population. In addition to fuelling economic growth, investment in agriculture will also enable Africa's poorest countries to better feed their people and weather shocks caused by changing global food prices.

In the long-term, food security and economic growth will require investing in agriculture. With stronger infrastructure, improved technology and training, farmers could benefit from increased crop yields and stronger connections to domestic, regional, and international markets. Tools such as fertilizer and seeds are also urgently needed to help communities deal with the immediate impacts of the food crisis.

In most African countries, accelerated agricultural growth can play a decisive role in generating economic growth, employment and trade as well as in poverty and hunger reduction, because in most African countries, agriculture is a major productive sector and

because most of the poor and hungry live in rural areas where they depend on agricultural activities for their livelihoods. This is why it is highly important that agricultural growth be at the centre of any development strategy.

Enhanced resource mobilization for agriculture and rural development is an essential ingredient of a poverty reduction strategy, but investment in agriculture alone is not sufficient for achieving the poverty and hunger reduction rates the region needs. This mobilization must be undertaken in an environment of supporting access to assets by the poor, improving human capital, and investing in health, education and social services.

With increases in population, Africa's traditional cultivation and resource utilization methods have become unsustainable and soils in African countries have become weathered by high rainfalls and temperatures. They are becoming poorer in nutrients, farmlands suffer soil erosion and rangelands are degraded. This

has caused countries that were formerly self-sufficient and exporters of food to become net importers of food.

Governments can introduce measures for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness to make societies more resilient to shocks. This may include adjusting agricultural production systems, putting food and non-food based safety nets in place, ensuring that adequate credit is available to finance recovery, and decentralizing decision making for disaster risk management.

Despite their seriousness, the problems facing agriculture in Africa are not insurmountable. The problems can be overcome if political will can be found and if resource mobilization for the sector is improved. With the theme of the 13th AU Summit being "Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security," signs are that the importance of agriculture in the region is being increasingly recognised.

THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

AU Peer Review Attacks Development Model

The African Peer Review Mechanism (MARP)* Forum warns, in its self-evaluation report, published in February, that Mozambique's development model is creating a wide moat, separating rich and poor, which can generate serious conflicts.

The consumer society is creating serious frustrations in the group that is excluded, which could lead to social convulsions in the medium term. The population is already taking justice into its own hands because it no longer trusts state institutions. This is a very strong statement from a very establishment body. The MARP Forum is a joint government-civil society body of 58 people, including three governors, the governor of the Bank of Mozambique, representatives of eight parliamentary commissions, civil society, the private sector, and members of the Agenda 2025 commission. The Forum president is Lourenço do Rosario, rector of Universidade Politécnica.



The principle beneficiaries of growth have been a tiny group and 'the most credible indicators show an increase in absolute terms in the number of people below the minimum subsistence line', thus rejecting

government and donor claims of dramatic reductions in poverty. The Forum calls for the creation of a development bank. Additionally, recognising that Mozambique has electricity from the Cabora Bassa dam,

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Editorial

By Clever Chikwanda

The June/July AU Heads of State Summit in Libya comes at a time when, again, the continent finds itself wallowing in the quagmire inflicted by the global economic recession. Arguably, it is Africa that pays the heaviest price, through decreased donor aid, escalation of food prices, job losses, hunger, poverty, further increase in the gap between the rich and the poor – a fertile recipe for more conflicts. The theme of the summit therefore seems to be well thought out, provided the aspect of food security will be addressed. The continent awaits the innovativeness of the Heads of State to craft objective resolutions and proactive policies that mitigate the effects cited above and that are also responsive to the real needs of the populace on the continent.

This summit needs to recommend practical and sustainable solutions to conflicts that continue to affect the continent, if our dreams to advance and catch up with the rest of the world are to ever become a reality. Of much disturbance is the surge in fighting in Somalia and the DRC, the issue of child soldiers in Chad and the seemingly endless conflict in the Niger Delta between the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and the Nigerian Government. Of equal concern is Niger's President, Mamadou Tandja's planned referendum allowing him to seek a third term in office, contrary to the ruling by that country's constitutional court. Indeed this is a typical setback for the democratic gains Africa had made.

Moreover, China's entrance into and its purported endeavour to end the conflict in Sudan is another development which is sure to spur lots of debate. Again, the issue of fresh elections in Mauritania and Madagascar should be dealt with conclusively by this summit.

On the other hand, the continent celebrates Africa Day during this period. As Africans, we should seize this moment and take time to reflect on who we are as a people. This is the moment when we need to pull together as a united force for Africa's economic emancipation. For those, particularly in South Africa, this period vividly reminds them of the infamous xenophobic attacks of last year. To this, Africa should stand up and say, "Never again shall we allow this to happen on this, our land, both during our life time and in the future."

The summit takes place against a background of the recently held general elections in South Africa and Malawi. The South African poll received a "seal of approval" by the majority of observer teams deployed there. The same however cannot entirely be said of those in Malawi. While the Zimbabwean delegation in the SADC Parliamentary Forum described it as a "hallmark of all plebiscites in Africa", John Kufuor, the Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group stated that "the overwhelming impact of the exploitation of the incumbency advantage, especially the unashamed bias of the state TV and radio which created a markedly unlevel playing field. ..." This is a wakeup call to all electoral stakeholders, especially in the face of the very same discrepancies that were identified during Malawi's 2004 elections.

It is also taking place against the backdrop of Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity between the MDC and ZANU [PF], which has survived the first few months. Already, however, the opposition accuses the former ruling party of lacking commitment to the success of this arrangement, citing its failure to solve contentious issues such as: the unilateral appointment of the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the Attorney General;

the continuous inclusion of the bloated youth militias and other ghost workers on the government payroll; the long overdue legislative reforms which seek to address issues relating to the Electoral Act; proper freedom of assembly and association; and constitutional reform. It also points to the deliberate delay in convening the National Security Council. The political violence and continued farm invasions by alleged ZANU [PF] supporters and the failure by the service chiefs to recognise the legitimacy of the Executive Prime Minister are other burning issues. This has compelled the MDC to launch an appeal to SADC to convene an extra ordinary summit which would address these and other issues as the sine qua non for any envisaged free and fair elections in the country.

The intervention in Uganda by Kitgum Mediation Initiative is another success story. Peace-builders, the world over, now overwhelmingly agree on the efficacy of marrying modern and traditional methods of conflict transformation. This has been eloquently demonstrated by this peace initiative.

The Gomoza experience highlighted in this issue is another eloquent demonstration of how peace-builders can endeavour to successfully build peace within their communities. For a long time, Zimbabweans have been brutalized and forced to accept living in an atmosphere of extreme fear while perpetrators of violence walked scot free, thanks to the excesses of patronage politics. The intervention by Grace to Heal came at a time when the level of polarization was way beyond any level of imagination. As the Peace and Development Platform, it is our hope that this work should be emulated by all peace-builders both within and without our network. Thank you.

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it calls for electricity prices to be reduced for the production sector. Because of the bias to the social sector, only 3.5% of the state budget is allocated to agriculture and rural development. This should be increased to the 10%, as recommended by various African Union Heads of State Summits and NEPAD.

'Mozambique's present development model, based on free individual initiative and the principles of economic liberalism', is seen as creating unemployment and leaving many families without enough to survive, especially in urban areas. This is polarising society, and creating 'serious risks' of conflict. In a survey, half of respondents say unemployment is the most serious threat to peace, stability and security. The report repeatedly uses the word 'fosso', meaning a constructed moat or ditch, to describe the widening gap between rich and poor. The report also warns 'corruption is growing because of impunity.' *MARP is the Mecanismo African de Revisão de Pares, the African Union/NePAD Peer Review Mechanism, under which a team of eminent persons

evaluates the performance of member states on a range of issues.

On Madagascar

The African Union suspended Madagascar as a member, the strongest condemnation yet by the international community after opposition leader Andry Rajoelina took power with the support of the army. The AU decision echoed criticism by SADC, the European Union and United States. Weeks of political unrest in Madagascar have killed at least 135 people, devastated the economy and worried foreign investors.

On Guinea Bissau

The chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping strongly condemned the assassination of the President of Guinea Bissau, João Bernardo Vieira hours after that of his army chief of staff, General Batista Tagme Na Wai and called on political leaders in the country to rally behind the legitimate authorities. Meanwhile, the Economic Community of West

African States announced that it would send a ministerial delegation to Bissau to 'engage all stakeholders in an effort to restore confidence among the political actors, civil society and security services and return the country to constitutional normalcy'.

On the indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir

The Peace and Security Council of the AU condemned the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and recommended that the chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, send a delegation to the UN Security Council with the aim of stopping the indictment.

On the Upcoming AU Summit

Libya is holding the AU Heads of State Summit which was supposed to be held in Madagascar in July. The theme of the Summit is "Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security".



MALAWI



Food Security Situation in Malawi

By Jacinta Chisi

Nutritional problems continue to affect large proportions of the population in Malawi and contribute significantly to infant and child mortality.

The rate of food security has been improved since President Dr Bingu Wa Muntharika came into power in 2004. He introduced subsidy programmes where farmers, especially the poor, are accessing fertilizer at reasonable prices. In Malawi, we have NGOs that promote irrigation farming schemes which enhance the harvesting of variety of food. Since 2004, Malawi is food secure.

Malawi is one of the countries greatly affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The impact of

this disease on agriculture is often difficult to distinguish from factors such as drought, war/civil strife and other shocks and crises. Furthermore, the effects of the epidemic on agriculture tend to be subtle and largely invisible, while parameters of impact are highly complex and often hard to quantify. Moreover, what we know about the impact of HIV/AIDS on rural households has been based on studies from very small areas, often single villages.

HIV/AIDS induced structural changes with relevance to agricultural production that need to be monitored include:

Alteration in typologies of farm households (young adult widow headed households, orphans headed households and household without young adults). Rural capital

accumulation and saving mechanism, labour out-migration has traditionally served as mechanism for rural capital accumulation and savings through remittances.

In brief HIV/AIDS constitutes more than a threat to households' food security in Malawi. It can create livelihood crises among rural households. For this reason, there is a need to go beyond agro-vulnerability mapping so as to enable policy makers to measure broader based vulnerability.

Despite the current food security, there are some parts of Malawi that are experiencing food insecurity due to floods and dry spells, just to mention a few districts in Balaka, Salima, Kalonga, Nkhotakota and part of Nsanje.



Gomoza: A small miracle

By Dumisani Ngwenya, Grace to Heal

While the use of violence as a political and campaign tool has become entrenched in the Zimbabwean social psyche, its after-effects on communal relations are often ignored or overlooked. However the damage done by such violence, especially where it pits the community against itself should never be underestimated. Neighbours, long time friends, relatives and even family members no longer speak to each other, let alone participate in family and community activities.

A community that has recently experienced this is Gomoza in Lupane District in the Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe. On 20 June 2008, ZANU [PF] supporters went on a rampage, beating up MDC supporters in preparation for a rally that was to be held the following day on the 21st. In fact a "base" was established just outside the primary school in a dilapidated building from where attackers were sent out to targeted individuals. People were visited at their homesteads and beaten up. In a bizarre incident, one of the leaders sent people to beat up his sister, the child of his father and mother, simply because she belonged to the opposition. This man is now ostracised from his family as the family members refused to go to him or assist, when he lost a child. He in turn is unable to attend family funerals. It really is a crying shame when relationships are sacrificed at the altar of political expedience. In the heat of the frenzy, people never think about the consequences of their actions until it is too late, then they become outcasts in the communities and live miserable lives.

The MDC supporters decided enough was enough. On the day of the rally, they ambushed ZANU [PF] supporters coming from the rally by the bridge. It was then very dark and people were beaten up indiscriminately and dogs set upon them. School children and the elderly were also on the receiving end of the revenge attack. After that they went to the "base" and destroyed cooking utensils.

ZANU [PF] then sent its youths to all known MDC supporters' homes and forcibly took plates and pots to replace the ones destroyed at the base. Several MDC youths were arrested yet no ZANU [PF] supporter was arrested. One of the MDC top officials had to flee his home and live in the bush for a while for fear for his life. Traditional leaders were also harassed and the headman was made to jog from his homestead to the "base" which is quite far from his home.

Despite the violence eventually dying down, it left a much polarised community. People no longer trusted each other. At gatherings, people sat according to their affiliations. One could only drink beer with people from one's party because they were afraid they might be poisoned. The polarisation even crept into the church as well. This community was on such a knife edge that it was no longer possible for community meetings and development programmes to continue. The simple procedure of convening the community became impossible as attendance now depended on who called the meeting. Neither the councillor nor the headman could call a meeting and get the whole community to attend. People would come or stay away depending on whether the person who called the meeting was perceived to be for or against them.

The unforeseen consequence of this whole incident was that the violence spilled into South Africa where the children of the victims were reported to have assaulted the children of the ZANU [PF] supporters. It was also feared that when these children came home, violence might flare up and it would affect ZANU [PF] more. One young man is said to have written to his mother, a councillor and at the forefront of the violence, to stop forthwith as his life was now in danger.

The intervention

When we heard about the violence, one of our staff members visited the area and met the wounded from both parties, as the violence



"Farmers from poor and rich countries alike want to get more funds for agriculture, saying the sector has been neglected since the economic crisis broke out... Billions of dollars were poured out to prop up ailing banks, while funds are drying up to help the world's almost 1 billion hungry, advocates for the poor say."

AJAY VASHEE



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was dying down. In early October we went back into the community to help with a Conflict Resolution workshop attended by church, traditional and political leaders from the two parties. There were thirty five people in all.

Since then we have been working in the community, visiting individual leaders, i.e. church, political and traditional, trying to understand their perspectives on the violence and its impact on their community. Follow up meetings for the traditional leaders and the politicians were held separately in an effort to empower the traditional leaders who have been overpowered and used to further the interests of one political party. The traditional leaders pointed out that their people wanted the political leaders, as the instigators of the violence, to apologise publicly to the people.

After further work, particularly with the local politicians, it was eventually agreed that Grace to Heal facilitates a church service that could be used as a platform to express the public apology and to seek forgiveness and try working towards reconciliation.

Working with churches in Lupane Centre

4 December 2008 was set as the day for the service. On this day, pastors from Bulawayo, and Tsholotsho, the headman from the neighbouring area, and a colleague from Harare made the trip to Gomoza. The meeting was well attended with 500-600 villagers

present including a significant number of young people.

After words encouraging the community to get back to how they were before the violence, party representatives for both sides stood up and offered apologies on behalf of their parties. (These parties were represented at local and district levels). The highlight of the day was the frank and sincere admission by the vice chairman of ZANU [PF] that they indeed were the originators of the senseless violence.

“The greatest trait needed by any people involved in social transformation is ‘a sense of the possible’”

Camilo Cavour

Unfortunately there are still two or so high ranking officials who remain unrepentant and unable to offer an apology. These however have become isolated and with little if any support from their party members. They are no longer respected within the community.

The service was the beginning of the communal healing; more work awaits us this year as we visit individual victims to offer psycho-social support. The issue of restitution has been brought up by several people at several

meetings. Working through this issue will pose a challenge as both sides lost property, including precious jewellery and party regalia. The question would be who will compensate who for what? Should both sides call it “square?” If they do, what about the individuals who are now struggling to cook because of the loss incurred? When does compensation stop? What happens to those who had limbs broken and maybe incurred huge medical costs?

It is clear though that some sort of communal consensus satisfactory to all affected must be found before people can continue with the journey towards reconciliation and forgiveness.

We believe that the deconstruction of a culture of violence and constructing one of peaceful and nonviolent conflict resolution is a long term objective that goes beyond a generation. So while we may celebrate the miracle in Gomoza we are under no illusion whatsoever about the work that still remains to help create a nonviolent community. We believe however that this goal is attainable in every society.

The senselessness of the Gomoza violence is clearly illustrated by the ironic fact that this place is one of the three places in which ZANU [PF] won the local council elections. Why they decided to use violence for the presidential rerun remains a mystery even to some of those more level-headed within the party. One thing for sure is that just about the whole community has passed a vote of no confidence, in not just the councillor, but the party as a whole.

“We thank you for intervening in this conflict and for bringing us together so that we can resolve our conflict. I for one was at loss as to how to bring the whole community together to deal with this”

JOSEPH MOYO, ZANU [PF] VICE CHAIRMAN.

TOGETHER

together

in unity

hand in hand

hearts held safely

in comfort's gentle embrace

in this moment...we become one

undivided...unconquered

God WILL bless Africa

and we shall overcome

together



UGANDA



Local Mediation Initiative making a breakthrough in Kitgum, Uganda

By Jackson Omona, National Peace-building Coordinator

Pajong and Pubec clans had a wrangle over a land boundary in the early 1990s which led to the arrest and detention of Obonyo Alfred of Pajong, who later died of pneumonia on 29 August 1992, after being subjected to harsh conditions in the police cells. This marked the beginning of a rift between the two clans who had lived in harmony in the same village for many years.

The conflict was exacerbated by the massacre of 56 civilians by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on 24 July 2002, which is alleged to have been triggered by Otim, a member of Pubec clan who escaped from the LRA captivity with a gun. It also led to the massive displacement of the community from the whole of Mucwini Sub County into the IDP camp.

In December 2007, I talked to several elders of Pubec and Pajong and later undertook an analysis of the conflict to identify the parties and the power relationships, the context, the root causes as well as the gaps in the previous attempts to resolve the conflict. It was clear that the conflict was very complex. I recommended to the district authorities to constitute a mediation team that was impartial. A ten man team was appointed, led by the Retired Bishop of Kitgum Macleod Baker Ochola II and started work in March 2008.

As the IDPs were resettling their former villages, Pubec clan remained in the IDP camp. However the mediation team has made a breakthrough in resolving the conflict. As a social responsibility, Pubec clan has agreed to pay reparation for the late Obonyo of Pajong clan to be followed by a traditional reconciliation ceremony - mato oput. It was also agreed that protecting the 56 civilians

from the LRA attack was an obligation of the government of Uganda and therefore Pubec clan would not take responsibility for that. The two clans agreed to hold a reconciliation ceremony after completing payment of the reparation in February 2009. Owing to this intervention, the two clans are now able to interact at social functions such as funerals, traditional marriages and at markets.

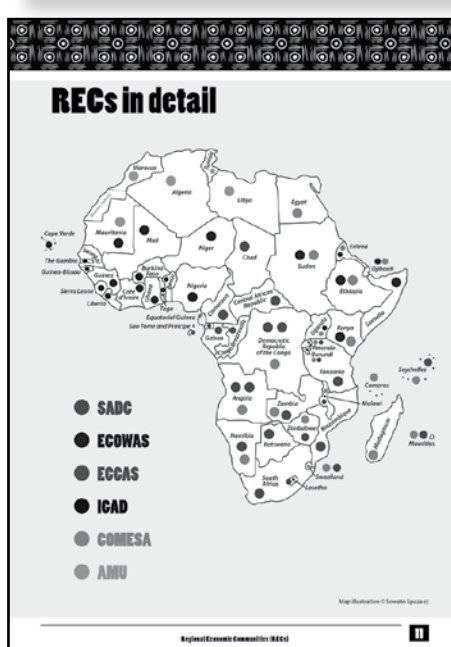
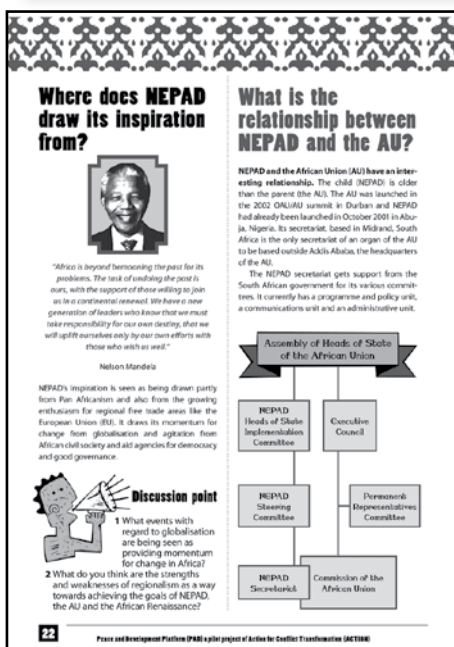
World Vision Uganda played an important role in facilitating the mediation process through the Kitgum Peace-building Project. The long mediation process came after several unsuccessful attempts by cultural leaders and other civil society organisation to seek a settlement. It has also helped to build local community capacity to resolve conflicts. This achievement is attributed to the fact that the mediation team remained impartial and focused on the cause.

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