



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 Africa Development Community

Overview of the peace and security situation on the continent in 2008 and update of the current situation

INTRODUCTION

As has been in previous years, 2008 was marked by contradicting processes of state consolidation and state erosion. There were successful democratic processes in Benin, Zambia, Botswana, and in Ghana early in 2009. However, there were crises in countries such as Chad, Guinea, the Central African Republic, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The importance of Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development was heightened in the resumption of conflict (eastern DRC) and its perpetuation (Somalia) and Darfur. Moreover, the risk of creating sustainable pockets of war economies that will undo any regional peacemaking attempt was strengthened. Principally, violent conflicts in Africa seem to move from open, full wars to diffuse, low-scale but destructive conflicts with a strong potential of regionalisation.

In 2008, regional developments varied in terms of governance, state stability, economic performance and poverty reduction. The sustained interest of emerging powers – China, India, Brazil, Turkey, Gulf countries – in Africa constitutes a factor with a potential of either anchoring Africa in the global market or accentuating its economic marginalization.

By and large, the electoral violence experienced in some countries over the past year has generated the concern of the emergence of deviant democratic experiments, particularly in Kenya and Zimbabwe.

NORTH AFRICA

North African states were widely consolidated and gearing towards a phase of sustained



economic growth due to increased commodity demands. However, there were still faced with human security challenges, such as: a constant insecurity in the region due to various reported bomb explosions, suicide attacks and hostage-taking that terrorised the citizens of most of the countries of the region and damaged the tourist industry; popular uprisings in much of the region in protest at high food prices; issues of human rights and governance; and, finally, the stalemate in the protracted conflict on Western Sahara.

Algeria has borne the brunt of this insecurity, particularly in 2008. Most of these terrorist activities, especially in Algeria, have allegedly been attributed to Al-Qaeda.

The issue of Sudan remains an important one for the region as reported fighting between rebel groups and government escalates ahead of an expected decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on whether to issue an arrest warrant against Sudan's President, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, on charges on orchestrating war crimes in Darfur. International experts argue that the Darfur conflict has killed 200 000 and driven more than 2, 5-million from their homes. Khartoum puts the death count at 10 000.

THE HORN OF AFRICA

In 2008, the Horn of Africa witnessed: an escalation in violence against civilians, displacing large numbers of south/central Somalis; the dual problem of attempting to enforce peace agreements and fighting insurgencies; additional territorial disputes that could derail any form of previously achieved stability, as seen in Abyei, the border skirmishes between Djibouti and Eritrea, Somaliland and Puntland; and the challenges with the withdrawal (UNMEE) or deployment (UNAMID and AMISOM) of peacekeeping missions.

The region continues to see the interplay of the nationally driven interests of neighbouring countries through the waging of proxy wars and in the name of the global war on terror. The interdependence of each country's security in the region is as much a reality now as ever, with the constant possibility of interstate and civil wars reigniting.

Somali lawmakers who met in Djibouti due to insecurities back at home have elected Islamist leader Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as Somalia's president, leaving him in charge of a fragile peace process aimed at ending 18 years of civil conflict. Sheikh Sharif will face the daunting task of taming the Shebab, a hard-line offshoot of the ICU, which rejects the peace process and controls several key towns.

The U.N. refugee agency reported of signs that Somalis displaced by fighting in Mogadishu were beginning to return to their devastated neighbourhoods for the first time in two years. However, it warned that the situation in the capital remained very volatile.

WEST AFRICA

West African Developments in 2008 continued to illustrate the difficulties faced by countries attempting the transition from civil conflict to democratic peace. These were further complicated by stresses emanating from the global economy, as the wild fluctuation of oil and food prices revealed West Africa's exposure to a dependence on petroleum exports and food imports.

In Mauritania, the elected government was received with great fanfare, only to be toppled by a military coup.

Cote D'Ivoire elections were postponed as expected.

In Guinea as predicted in many circles the military assumed power following the death of President Conte.

Elsewhere, too, the hopes of building on a democratic consolidation were mitigated by the imperatives of retaining power (e.g. Senegal). One positive event in West Africa was the peaceful electoral process in Ghana.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Events in Central Africa were driven largely by the continuing crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Attempts to secure agreement on the disarmament of irregular and renegade forces failed, and the fighting in the Kivus has been severe enough to generate speculation that a more generalised regional war could be in the offing.

A joint military action between Congo and Rwandan troops led to the arrest of Laurent Nkunda who is the leader of rebel group, Tutsi National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP). Last year, Nkunda led his group in an offensive in Congo's North Kivu province which displaced more than a quarter of a million civilians.

The leader of Rwandan Hutu FDLR rebels, Ignace Murwanashyaka had recently predicted that intense fighting would erupt within days in eastern Congo amid an expected assault by government forces on rebel positions.

Chadian government had a torrid 2008, as rebel forces fought their way into the capital N'Djamena. Chad continues to face an influx of refugees from the Central African Republic, fearing attacks from armed groups and fighting between Government forces and rebels, the United Nations refugee agency reported.

In Cameroon, Democratic processes were hindered by the adoption of a third term for President Biya. Cameroon's high food prices led to violent street riots, which were, to some extent, instrumentalised for political reason.

EAST AFRICA

Kenya contested elections, which experienced post electoral conflicts that killed many, and displaced several, resulted in a power sharing agreement between the disputing parties.

In Uganda, Joseph Kony's L.R.A. failed the

peace process- Joint Operation against Kony in 2009. Again, all indications are that president Museveni will run for elections in 2011.

Tanzanian President Kikwete managed to make the most of his tenure as chairperson of the African Union to impress diplomatically. In 2009, his attention will be more on domestic politics.

In Rwanda the ruling party won an overwhelming victory in the legislative elections in 2008, and President Kagame seems virtually assured of securing re-election in the presidential contest of 2010.

Whilst in Burundi the integration of Palipehutu-FNL in the peace process remained problematic. However, the year ended positively with the release of over 80 due to their affiliation with Palipehutu and the decision by Palipehutu to remove Hutu from its name could hasten the transformation of the rebel movement to a political party and enhance attempts for a comprehensive peace deal.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

2008 has been an eventful year in this region. Parliamentary and presidential elections were held in Zimbabwe, Angola and Swaziland, though not all enjoyed the same amount of public attention. Key in the region was the recalling of South Africa's Thabo Mbeki in September 2008.

The Zimbabwean humanitarian situation worsens with the country's economy continuing its descent to all time lows. This continues to dog the region as political leaders failed to finalise the power sharing agreement brokered by South Africa's former President Thabo Mbeki.

2009 has seen ushered new hope for Zimbabwe, as the opposition, MDC, announced that it would join the unity government, to be led by Robert Mugabe as President, and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangarai becoming the Prime Minister.

What needs to be done:

- ✿ Prevent conflict
- ✿ Manage conflict
- ✿ Prevent a return to conflict
- ✿ Set the basis for sustainable peace

Originally written by Mr. Kenneth Mpyisi



Editorial

By Clever Chikwanda

This issue of the newsletter is unique owing to an array of continental human security developments in recent months, coupled with a plethora of issues that emerged out of this year's African Union Heads of State Summit, held in Ethiopia. Furthermore, civil society from across the African continent gathered here to deliberate on a number of issues that concern their communities. A generous coverage of these and others was therefore deemed to be necessary.

Eastern DRC rebel leader and purportedly Tutsi ethnic group's defender, Laurent Nkunda was recently arrested in Rwanda. Arguably, this paints a gloomy picture as to what peace and security trajectory the DRC and whole Great Lakes Region will take. One school of thought submits that his arrest marks the beginning of the end of this violent conflict, while the other argues that this only adds more fuel to the already fierce fighting since the arrest does not at all attempt to address the root causes of this conflict. This is also corroborated by the fact that the United Nations envoy, Olusegun Obasanjo's mediation efforts have not even been concluded. Another scenario which continues to arouse public debate is the possible indictment of Sudan's sitting President, Omar Hassan Al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court, juxtaposed against the yet to be concluded, Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The recent adoption of the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe, leading to the formation of the Inclusive Government whose "ancestry" is traceable to Kenya, is another unprecedented and regrettable dispensation in African politics. With fifteen African countries holding Presidential elections in 2009, what history should teach stakeholders in these countries is that there is virtually nothing to

emulate from this arrangement, which by far rewards and legitimizes the loser while robbing the winner and the entire electorate, at the same time bastardizing the whole noble process of holding periodic elections.

Muammar Gaddafi's take over as the African Union Chair is one other development which received tremendous ambivalence from various quarters, especially on what to expect from his "administration." One dimension contends that this will help expedite the realization of the United States of Africa as he has been the chief proponent of this continental arrangement. However, evidence is awash that the African Union Heads of State are presently more divided than ever on this highly contested debate. On one hand, those in Southern Africa argue [and not without basis] that this needs to be a gradual process. The regional Economic Communities need to be adequately integrated first since they have always been perceived to be building blocks whose successful harmonization would lead to the attainment of the United States of Africa. Again, the issue of sovereignty has never been objectively debated and concluded while equally important is the feasibility of the whole project as well as what set of values, democratic principles and governance arrangements would govern the continent. The African Heads of State and Government are singing from completely different hymn books on this matter.

In sharp contrast to the above, the Northerners, chiefly Senegal and Libya itself have already concluded that, come rain or thunder, the African Union Government will come into being in 2010. The recent statement by the AU chair himself that it is democracy that has greatly contributed to Africa's demise, if read

in this context could greatly help to lay bare the glaring direction that Africa is taking. One can be forgiven to conclude that all the gains that have been made and the ground that has so far been covered with regards to democratization of the African Continent are likely to be reversed. To further support this school of thought what would one make of the fact that Gaddafi's generation-long government does not uphold the principles of democratic governance and human rights enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well its array of impressive declarations including the AU Protocol on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

Elsewhere on this issue, civil society from all walks of life on the continent have strongly argued that there is a near zero consultation by policy makers on this issue. All these are critical matters which pose a threat to human security on this continent and need to be seriously perceived as a wake up call for civil society and all stakeholders.

Other pending issues range from the conclusion of transformation of the Pan African Parliament into a fully fledged organ of the African Union, with oversight powers as well as the integration of NEPAD into the African Union Structures. The Social Policy Framework for Africa, though ridden by, and awash with countless inadequacies, needs to be fine tuned and adopted, ratified, domesticated and fully implemented by member states if the whole issue of human security in Africa is to holistically be addressed.

Readers are reminded to give us feedback so we can better the next issue of the newsletter. Please send in your articles for inclusion in the next publication. May Peace prevail on the continent in 2009. Enjoy your reading.

Civil society organisations' communique at the fourth citizens' continental conference on the 12th african union heads of state summit

PAD attended the 4th Citizens' Continental Conference organized by the Centre for Citizens Participation in the African Union, a gathering of civil society organizations from across the continent, shortly before the African Union Summit. Below is the Communiqué of the recent meeting held in Addis Ababa on the 16 to 17 January 2009.



Participants at the 4th Citizens' Continental Conference in Addis Ababa, January 2009

There are three ways of dealing with difference: domination, compromise, and integration. By domination only one side gets what it wants; by compromise neither side gets what it wants; by integration we find a way by which both sides may get what they wish.

MARY PARKER FOLLETT



Preamble

We, the undersigned CSOs, membership associations, trade unions and NGOs working in all the regions within Africa, met for two days to consider the issues facing our leaders in the upcoming 12th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government. This upcoming Summit takes place within global financial crisis, fuel price fluctuations, food and ecological crises that threaten to undermine the economic growth and development progress we have seen in Africa over the last few years. For millions of people in Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe among others, these crises are compounded by the persistence of human rights violations, conflicts and governance failure. As such, two Member States – Mauritania and the Republic of Guinea – are suspended as a result of *coup d'etats* that violate the principles on which the Union has been founded. The unfortunate post election crises in Kenya and Zimbabwe, contrasted with the successful electoral processes of Angola and Ghana, cast a shadow on the delicate African democracy and our need as citizens to strengthen the latter. More globally, we met against the backdrop of the Gaza Crisis. Within this context, we offer these specific recommendations for consideration by the Heads of State and Government at the 12th Ordinary Session of the A.U. Summit in the following three areas, namely, Peace and Security – Eastern DRC, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Darfur – the Social Policy Framework and Union Government.

On the situation of Peace and Security

Concerned that conflicts continue to ravage selected countries on the continent, while peace and security have not yet been realized in areas with prolonged conflicts like Somalia, Darfur, the Eastern DRC among others;

Recognising the challenges faced both by international and national organisations attempting to realise peaceful resolutions of these conflicts and hence initiate the peace-building process;

Cognizant of the causes of conflicts in Africa, essentially Africa being the richest continent in terms of natural resource endowment and yet its inhabitants are impoverished and repeatedly denied their rights;

Acknowledging that empowering CSOs in individual countries can eventually, contribute to the attainment of peace and security in Africa;

Aware of CSOs, given a common forum and grounds to operate, and recognising the positive role that the ECOSOCC can have as an advisory body to the AU;

Recommend that

1. The AU helps Member States develop and strengthen their capabilities on implementing the preventive component of the Responsibility to Protect;
2. Member States actively engage diverse CSOs and institutions of higher learning in their countries on endeavours to generate possible solutions for the achievement of peace, security and human rights in Africa;
3. The AU actively monitors the implementation of agreements and protocols that have been signed by Heads of State and Government on human, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the African population;
4. The AU and its Member States provide an enabling environment for Civil Society to freely associate and participate in governance processes aimed at bringing about peace and security, particularly in elections and resource management;
5. The AU assists Member States to develop institutions and structures to strengthen the understanding of the Responsibility to Protect, act on their commitment and support the principle at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly debate.



On Eastern DRC

Concerned of the resumption of violent conflict and war in Eastern DRC, the rising number of civilians fleeing the country, the sexual violence against women, and recruitment of children as soldiers and the foreseeable collapse of government structures in the country;

Noting the discourse and efforts being undertaken by regional, continental and international organisations;

Recognising the complexity of the situation on the ground, given the attempts that have been set forward but failed to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and the apparent split within the Conseil National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP);

Cognizant of the need to deal with the situation at hand by engaging the local and neighbouring parties involved in the conflict;

Recommend that the AU

1. Vigorously condemns the grave violations of human rights abuses committed by the armed parties involved in the conflict and demands Congolese authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that victims of those crimes have access to proper justice and reparation;
2. Demands that perpetrators of the grave crimes be brought to justice and prosecuted, and to that effect encourages the work of the International Criminal Court;
3. Condemns every external support (regional, sub-regional and multi-national corporations) to CNDP troops and calls on the latter to strictly implement the ceasefire agreement and fully engage in the political peace process;
4. Supports the Congolese Civil Society action and demands Congolese authorities and CNDP leaders to ensure the safety of human rights defenders;
5. Condemns the illegal exploitation of natural resources by all parties to the conflict and enforces measures including those set forward by groups of experts in the United Nations on the issue;
6. Monitors governments so they can regulate the responsibilities of trans-national corporations with regards to the local populations inhabiting the areas of intervention;
7. Advocates for increased logistical and financial support to MONUC in Eastern DRC;
8. Publicly calls on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations to ensure free access for humanitarian aid.



On the situation in Somalia

Concerned with the worsening security situation due to the recommencement of armed conflict and the fragility of the transitional government;

Hopeful of the role and efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Somalia;

Commending the effort of the United Nations political office for Somalia in supporting and facilitating the implementation of the Djibouti Peace Agreement between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) and in this regard appealing to the militant ARS to embrace dialogue;

Recommend that AU

1. Applauds the role of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and sacrifices made by the Ugandan, Burundian and Ethiopian troops in Somalia;
2. Strengthen AMISOM by contributing more troops and availing financial and logistical support to ensure that it accomplishes its mandate;
3. Urgently engages the United Nations Security Council to own up to the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security globally and to deploy a strong UN peacekeeping force in Somalia;
4. Appeals to the Somali leadership to embrace the spirit of compromise and dialogue to peacefully resolve their differences and display wisdom in the election of new leadership in an all-inclusive process dialogue and act in the interest of the Somali society which has suffered for too long;
5. Condemns all forms of armed violence and take protective measures to ensure civilian safety, and address the humanitarian crisis and form a commission of enquiry to investigate and document war crimes in Somalia;
6. Joins hands with IGAD Member States in drawing up and enforcing targeted sanctions on spoilers of the peace processes and the violators of the UN arms embargo in Somalia;
7. Condemns acts of piracy off the Somali Coast and supports efforts to resolve the root causes of the Somali piracy menace – the lack of a functional central government in Somalia.



On Zimbabwe

Deeply concerned about the needless deaths arising from cholera due to failing public service delivery arising from the unresolved political crisis that is causing instability in the region;

Concerned about the escalating politically motivated and organised violence, including the abductions of Civil Society and political activists;

Alarmed about the selective or non-existent response of officials to the violence and impunity of those who are perpetrating it;

Taking note that the AU has continued to ignore the principle of non-indifference and continued to apply the principle of non-interference;

Deeply disturbed that despite 5.1 million Zimbabweans requiring humanitarian assistance, the government continues to frustrate the efforts of NGOs to work freely in areas of need;

Recommend that the AU

1. Formally recognises that the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) mediation is challenged and has not achieved the desired results and that the resolution of the Zimbabwean Crisis should be done under the direct authority of the AU;
2. Decisively deals with the Zimbabwean government's failure to respect African institutions, their decisions, and pushes for a resolution calling for an end to the current political impasse, which has led to further deterioration of the humanitarian situation;
3. Demands the Zimbabwean authorities ensure uninterrupted and unconditional humanitarian assistance to reach the citizens of the country;
4. Condemns the on-going violence, torture and abductions taking place in Zimbabwe, and calls for the immediate release of Jestina Mukoko and other activists;
5. Intervenes and protects the people of Zimbabwe from all forms of politically motivated violence and makes the realisation of all human rights for all Zimbabweans a reality.



*"It is a strange desire to seek power and lose liberty,
or to seek power over others and lose power over a man's self."*



On Darfur

Concerned about the failure to monitor any improvements on the security situation since the last Summit and the documented 300,000 new population displacements that have occurred within the past year;

Noting the continued non-cooperation of the government of Sudan with regional and international organisations that have tried to bring about peaceful resolution to the situation in Darfur;

Conscious of the sufferings of humanitarian aid workers, human rights activists and Darfurians as a whole;

Aware of the threats set forth by the Government of Sudan on the International Community operating in the country upon the issuance of an arrest warrant for President Omar al Bashir;

Recalling that African countries have the largest number of ratifications to the Rome Statute and must therefore lead in the fight against impunity;

Cautioning the AU not to allow political negotiations to take precedence over issues of human rights;

Recommend that the AU

1. Commits an increased number of peacekeeping forces in Darfur and work with the Government of Sudan to ensure that UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is strengthened as a matter of urgency;
2. Urge all parties to immediately cease hostilities, respect international humanitarian law, and ensure humanitarian agencies to safely access the four million people in need;
3. Does not lend its support to the inappropriate use of Article 16 of the ICC Treaty that would set a bad precedence in Africa and around the world;
4. Immediately signs the cooperation agreement with the ICC to fulfil the outstanding arrest warrants for those implicated in war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide;
5. Gives due attention to the Chad-Sudan conflict and emphasises the need for both governments to forge lasting solutions by complying with recent agreements aimed at improving their relations.



On the Social Policy Framework for Africa

Recognising and commending the African Heads of State and Government for having undertaken bold and impressive commitments to advance social development in Africa by developing the Africa Social Policy Framework;

Noting that the past five years have witnessed noticeable improvements in all sectors of social development and social policy;

Concerned that the adoption of the framework occurs in a background of a Triple 'F' crises of a financial crisis that threatens global recession, fuel price fluctuations, and food emergency in the continent;

Recommend that

1. Heads of State and Government in Africa recognise the central place of social development within economic development;
2. Social protection responses be implemented in the context of the labour market, standards, and collective labour relations, social security and human rights;
3. Due emphasis in the Social Policy Framework document be given to the informal sector, women engaged in small-scale trade and migrant workers;
4. African governments adopt an economic paradigm that links social development to macroeconomic policy;
5. African governments prioritise government expenditure to ensure efficient resource use;
6. African governments take responsibility to close the gap between civil society, trade unions and governments to create a united face in claiming international obligations to addressing social development;
7. African governments address conflicts and inequality, which continue to lock out poor and vulnerable populations from the gains of economic growth and development;
8. The AU be at the forefront of strengthening links with other regional blocs, donors and multilateral organisations to mitigate the impact of the current global food and financial crises, and fuel price fluctuations in Africa.



On the Union Government

We are concerned with the limited progress in the establishment of the proposed Union Government and noting in particular the failure to adequately involve the African people in the process;

We welcome the long awaited move to enable the Pan-African Parliament to exercise full legislative powers and have its members elected by Universal Suffrage;

We recommend that

1. The AU Member States popularise the idea of the creation of the Union Government, its challenges and opportunities within African countries and get CSO involvement in the process;
2. State parties engage CSOs to address the question of Member State sovereignty vis à vis the integration process in the continent;
3. Any decision taken at the Summit on the Union Government be fully discussed in each AU Member State;

Signed by the undersigned, 45 national, regional, continental, and international organisations, coalitions and networks from Africa:

THE FIRST 2009 AFRICAN UNION HEADS OF STATE SUMMIT IN ADDIS ABABA – ETHIOPIA

PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

The Assembly welcomed the progress achieved in the process of national reconciliation in The Comoros and encouraged the Comorian parties to continue to work together to consolidate these gains.

It welcomed the progress made in the political process in Somalia particularly the signing of the Djibouti Agreement and the Agreement on the Modalities for the Cessation of Armed Confrontation, the decision to establish an inclusive and expanded Parliament and a Unity Government and the election of a new President for Somalia.

The Assembly noted Ethiopia's completion of the withdrawal of its forces from Somalia in line with the Djibouti Agreement. It paid tribute to AMISOM 's Troop Contributing Countries i.e. Burundi and Uganda, for their commitment to the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia.

AMISOM

The Assembly reiterated its concern at the continued impasse in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the persisting tension at the Djibouti-Eritrean border and the relations between the two countries.

It welcomed the efforts invested towards successful outcome of the process of implementing the agreements concluded between the Government of Burundi and PALIPEHUTU/FNL and the peace process in the East of the DRC.

It expressed concern at the deteriorating security situation in Darfur and called upon all the parties to exercise restraint. It also

expressed serious concern at the current tension in the relations between Sudan and Chad and appealed to both countries to work towards consolidation of the gains made.

On the Central African Republic, the Assembly welcomed the holding and the outcomes of the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPA) in the country. It encouraged the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to expeditiously set fresh dates for the election. It welcomed the decision of the Chairperson of the Commission to dispatch a multi-disciplinary team of experts to assess the post-conflict reconstruction needs of Liberia and Sierra Leone and make recommendations on how the AU and its member States could best support the countries.

Zimbabwe

The Assembly welcomed the timelines agreed for the formation of an inclusive Government, e.g. the adoption of amendment 19 on 5 February 2009, and the swearing in of the Prime Minister and his two deputies by 11 February 2009 and that of the Ministers and their deputies by 13 February 2009. It called upon AU Member States and partners to lend their full support to the implementation of the GPA. The Assembly further called for the immediate lifting of the sanctions on Zimbabwe to ease its economic and humanitarian catastrophe.

Resurgence of Coups d'état

The Assembly expressed deep concern over the resurgence of the scourge of coups d'état in Africa and called on Member States to react firmly and unequivocally to put an end to this. It strongly condemned those that occurred in Mauritania in August 2008, the Republic of Guinea in December, as well as the attempted one in the Republic of Guinea Bissau in August. It supported the decisions taken by the Peace and Security Council on the immediate return to constitutional order, and requested the Commission to see to the strict implementation thereof.

Application by the ICC

Regarding the decision on the application by the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor for the indictment of the President Sudan, the Assembly expressed its deep concern at the indictment. It endorsed the Communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to defer the process initiated by the ICC. It also condemned the gross violations of human rights in Darfur, and urged that the perpetrators be apprehended and brought to justice.

From AU Commission to AU Authority

African leaders agreed to transform the AU Commission into the AU Authority as a step toward forming a continent-wide government.

The Commission's chair, Mr. Jean Ping indicated that this authority would have a broader mandate and bigger capacities than the existing

commission, in line with the move towards the said ultimate goal.

The idea of creating a future Union Government for Africa, which is believed, would boost Africa's international standing, and give stronger bargaining power at international forums has been discussed for several years among the region's leaders with Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi as its chief proponent.

Since 2007, the South African government has embarked on an intensive countrywide campaign to gather the views of its citizens on the envisioned African Union Authority. The representatives all showed support for the position, which was eventually adopted, namely that of a gradual process of integration, strengthening of multilateral institutions as well as the strengthening and integration of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). South Africa falls under the 14 member SADC REC

Timelines and the method for Africa's integration are to be set out according to the Accra Declaration, adopted at the conclusion of the three-day summit. These entails strengthening AU organs, including the AU Commission and expediting the integration of RECs, then ultimately create the Union Government.

Guinea

Guinea's political elite was rendered powerless by an army whose leaders owe their survival to a political system built upon confusion and fear. Though many political actors had long hoped for a coup to end Lansana Conté's regime and the political impasse it generated, it is highly unlikely that the military junta which recently seized power will relinquish control and lead Guinea into a stable democracy.

While the latest coup is a logical outcome of the socio-political situation of recent years, there have been tensions for some time between an old military guard, which wanted to remain faithful to Conté, and a younger generation of officers who have been seeking a platform from which to assert their authority. But at the same time the coup and the absence of any substantial resistance to it highlights the complexity of Guinea's political landscape. Since its independence, Guinea has seemed trapped in political ambivalence, in which

hopes are repeatedly raised then dashed. In all three major historical landmarks of the last 60 years – Ahmed Sékou Touré's "1958 No" to French rule and his ensuing term in office; the failed democratic transition in the 1990s which followed the 1984 coup in which Lansana Conté came to power; and the January 2007 popular revolt initiated by the trade unions – the incompetence of the political class, including the opposition, has made the army a destabilizing factor.

In 2007, what began as a protest for better working and living conditions turned into a call for political reforms in Guinea which reflected the popular rejection of a regime that had failed dismally to improve these conditions. When the unions and political leaders reached a deal to end the crisis, one of the major concerns of Guineans was whether in this volatile environment, the authorities would lead the country into better governance. After more than a year, there is consensus that the process has collapsed and that there are many challenges to establishing a democratic political process. When President Conté died, the question was whether his death, combined with the changing context brought about by social forces since January 2007, would break the political impasse without generating violence. But hardly had news of his death broken when the army again took control with a fallacious promise of a new transition.

Each time there is a glimpse of hope, Guinea's political elite is outclassed by forces over which it has little or no control. A review of the three major historic periods in Guinea's political trajectory helps to make sense of the current political crisis. Sekou Touré's historic decision to reject the integration of his country into metropolitan France was saluted across the continent and paved the way for independence in 1958. With his anti-imperialist stand and pan-Africanist vision, Guinea presented an image of radical experimentation in social and political development, and throughout his rule Guinea occupied a special position among African states.

He promised prosperity and dignity to Guineans. But a combination of external and internal factors compromised his leadership and forced him to resort to violence to survive. Internally, his regime was characterized by

extreme repression, motivated by fear of assassination plots. Externally, it was isolated from the West and relied heavily on Soviet aid for development projects but this was never sufficient to ensure that the basic needs of Guineans were met. His political legacy is now a matter of controversy.

His death in 1984 opened a new chapter, marking the first attempt at transforming the political system from autocratic rule to a pluralistic democratic system. At first, the bloodless military coup that brought Lansana Conté to power initiated an era of limited political restoration. Political prisoners were released and about 200,000 Guineans returned from forced exile, followed by some initiatives aimed at liberalizing the political and economic environment and improving relations with the West.

This illusion did not last long. Within a few months, Lansana Conté reverted to authoritarian rule. His troops arrested and executed potential political rivals accused of plotting a coup. The victims included Conté's close ally and then prime minister, Colonel Diarra Traoré. The next attempt at political reform came with the 1990s wave of democratisation across Africa. When pressure from the street became unbearable, Conté introduced a quasi-democratic multiparty system – more to lure development partners than to respond to his people's demand for accountability and improvement of socio-economic conditions.

Despite complaints by the opposition over the credibility of the electoral processes, Lansana Conté stood for the 1993 presidential elections and, was controversially declared the winner. He appointed Sidyia Touré, a technocrat, as his prime minister to purportedly liberalize the economy, reduce corruption and alleviate poverty. But he frustrated the prime minister's efforts and his re-election in 1998 and this was interpreted as the consolidation of his dictatorship.

He dismissed Sidyia Touré and entrusted most key government positions to members of his ethnic group. With the 2001 amendment of the constitution that removed term and age

limits for presidential candidates, it became clear that there was little hope of an end to Conté's regime. Many opponents, including Alfa Condé, leader of the main opposition party, were repeatedly detained without trial. In 2003, Conté won another election, boycotted by the overwhelming majority of voters, this time around with 95.6 percent of the votes. The popular riots of January 2007 marked the third decisive moment in Guinea's political trajectory. The appointment of Lansana Kouyaté, former executive director of the Economic Community of West African States and former under-secretary general of the United Nations, raised hopes for political stability. But it did not in any shape or form guarantee the end of Conté's system.

Kouyaté was quite capable of leading Guinea into a new socio-political era. But the country lacked the ingredients for political transitions in Africa. While the union leaders who took the initiative in demanding change succeeded in negotiating the terms of the transition, they failed to assess carefully enough the difficulty of implementing the agreement in a hostile political environment. Also, political parties failed to seize the opportunity to consolidate the concessions obtained by the unions by insisting on legal and constitutional changes to reinforce reform. Prime Minister Kouyaté was unable to act without the authority of presidential decrees. Twenty-four years after the coup that brought him to power, Guinea's political elite has again pledged allegiance to a military junta that promises a return to constitutional rule in 2010. There is some evidence for cautious optimism that the anti-corruption stance of the new junta may bear fruit. But the new military authorities are progressively consolidating their control, inspired by the recent coup in Mauritania and confident that the African Union and the international community will not go beyond the rhetoric of condemnation.

Fear has once again been deployed as a tool to induce a government to surrender, while citizens hoping to see some improvements to their living conditions will have to wait. The question is whether this will take another two decades

of military rule or whether there is hope for democratic reform. In Guinea, as elsewhere in Africa, military coups hardly serve the interests of a coherent democratic political order.

Central African Republic: A complex armed conflict

The Central African Republic has never known stability since its independence in 1960. It has experienced the greatest number of regime changes [six] that have been marked by persistent violence, not only in the country itself, but also in the region. This has exacerbated the instability the country's domestic civil crisis, with the perpetuation of human rights violations, and international crimes.

As is typical of crises in Africa, the struggle to win, exercise and keep power is the cause of atrocities perpetrated on the population of the CAR, leading to state collapse.

There has been an endless struggle for power, and force has been the instrument that legitimizes power in the country. The uninterrupted spate of rebellions ended in 2003 with the take-over by the President Francois Bozize, a former chief of staff of ousted President Ange-Felix Patasse. However, Bozize's coming to power in no way ended the political crisis, since 2005 his regime had been burdened by the increase of rebel groups with interests, such as the formation of the United Alliance of Democratic Forces, an alliance of military forces which have in common only their unappeased grievances and fierce opposition to the regime in power.

Economic factors also play a role in the conflict in the CAR. The origin of which lie in the entrenched poverty, which succeeding governments and the international community have failed to address conclusively over time. The country's economic situation is so bad and the state of authority is so undermined that its territory has become a battlefield where the forces of violence commit all sorts of atrocities on the civilian population with impunity.



"I dream of an Africa which is at peace with itself.."

NELSON MANDELA



The Kibera Youth Programme for Peace and Development (KYPPEDE)



Kibera Youth Programme for Peace and Development (KYPPEDE) is a local inter-religious network of youth organizations based in Kibera slums in Nairobi. The organization was founded in 2000 when Kibera was characterized by ethnic and religious violence. Over the years KYPPEDE has initiated numerous activities that led to enhancing many peace building structures in Kibera. Among the structures are Kibera Inter-religious Forum for Peace, Kibera Youth Development Programme and Youth Network for Peace, among many others. Kibera is the largest, most populous and the most condensed slum in East and Central Africa, with a population of about 1.2 million.

Our Ultimate objective is to inculcate a culture of peaceful coexistence among the ethnically and religiously diverse community.

Activities

- ✳ Capacity building in Peacebuilding and conflict transformation (trainings, workshops and seminars)
- ✳ Advocacy and lobbying (Organizing, Campaigns, rallies, outreach through I.E.A materials and organizing major sporting activities)
- ✳ Research and documentation (periodically through our semi annual newsletter).
- ✳ We reach the entire Kibera community, Nairobi and Kenya in general through the above stated means as well as through networking with other partners e.g. Kenya Action Network on small arms
- ✳ Our work is quite relevant and effective. This can be judged from the successes and positive impact felt in all aspects of our work from peace building, community policing, to small arms control, among others.
- ✳ We need to learn new approaches especially from other African countries with similar contexts.
- ✳ PAD can link us up with other countries where we can learn and borrow a lot from one another.

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.

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 THE SECOND SERIES: 4 Regional Economic Communities (RECs), 5 Good Governance and Democracy, and 6 The Path to Sustainable Peace
 These are also available in Portuguese and French.



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