

PEACE, CONFLICT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE
EXPERIENCE IN UGANDA

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Peace, Conflict and Sustainable Development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the relationship between peace, conflict and development, taking Uganda's experience as a point of reference. The paper focuses on Uganda's progress under globalisation since Rio in the context of the conference theme; globalisation, governance and sustainable development. It has three parts. Part One is an overview of the socio-economic conditions in Uganda in relation to the challenges of globalisation, governance and development. Part Two discusses the problems of conflict in Uganda and how they relate to globalisation, governance and development and examines the prospects for peace building. Part Three is a way forward for a strategic framework.

2.0 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN UGANDA

2.1 Linking Peace, Governance and Development and the global trend

The African continent is characterised by extreme poverty and poor economic performance (Mbaku, John M: 2000). Many African countries cannot meet the basic needs of its people without injection of foreign aid, which constitutes about 55% of the Government of Uganda expenditure. The Africa region suffers from the scars of the slave trade, colonialism, the cold war, and continues to be wounded by conflicts arising from inter and intra state ethnic conflicts and now over Africa's natural resources (UN Secretary General: 2000).

The most salient feature of these conflicts is underdevelopment, a factor that continues to fuel conflict. Conflicts, high debt levels, political opportunism, (Mbaku, John M: 2000) a global economy and international financial systems that are discriminative of the Africans are some of the factors contributing to the high levels of poverty. Africa has 33 of the 48 poorest countries in the world and it is also the only region according to Kofi Anan "where conflicts are not decreasing,

social integration and cohesion remain elusive for the people of the continent. (Yusuf Bangura: 1994)

Uganda optimises the plight of many African countries and occupies one of the bottom positions of the poorest countries. It is perennially in conflict within and outside its borders and at the centre of this crisis is the problem of governance that remains unresolved. This problem has had very serious repercussions in the development field as bad governance creates a 'social environment detrimental to development.' (NFSD: 2001). Without democratic governance, peace and sustainable development will remain elusive.

Problems of governance manifest differently but in the African context, the structural and institutional weaknesses stand out the most. There are no viable institutions in the governance and development process and this prompts one to pause the question whether the state in Africa, is possessed with the capacity to generate development and good governance? This is indeed a very complex question, which has provoked debate among African scholars. It is for instance, argued that;

'...majority of polities in the continent are still characterised by antiquated, anachronistic and non-viable governance structures, many of which were inherited from the colonialists. These structures were not designed to enhance the ability of Africans to govern themselves and generate the wealth to meet the needs, nor were they expected to advance peaceful co-existence of groups.' (Mbaku: Ibid 2000, p.4)

All governments in Uganda, past and present have failed to create the environment in which various groups can effectively participate in the governance process and it is around these groups that conflicts usually emerge.

In the Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peace making and Peace keeping, the UN Secretary General identifies economic despair, social injustice and political oppression as the main causes of conflict. (UN Secretary General: 1992) Other factors include, "inequality, economic decline, state collapse and "history". (UK Cabinet Sub Committee: 2001) In all these factors

governance through democratic means stands out as one of the main issues in the debate about sustainable development. That is why the Rio Declaration addresses poverty, environmental equality and governance as fundamental issues of concern, the issue being democracy, which is inseparable from development.

There is however one school, which does not subscribe to democracy as an essential prerequisite for sustainable development, a school apparently supported by the World Bank. In an interview with the Courier Magazine in 1991, the WB Vice President Jay Cox, when asked whether he found any link between democracy and development, said: “No, I absolutely don’t believe that, I think there is no historical link whatsoever.” (Jjuuko, F.W. 1995 at p, 35) The World Bank favours that school of thought because it is only under repressive governments that WB/IMF economic recovery programs can be implemented. (The Economist: 13 May 200)

Larry Siroway and Alex Inkele, (1990) point out that democracy, undermines economic development and therefore, weak and poor countries cannot generate and sustain growth. Democracy without economic development is unsustainable. Economic growth requires discipline and efficiency in the implementation of economic programs, democracy therefore, is problematic, makes the state inefficient because, in the third world countries;

“...forging consensus by force becomes critical if these nations are successfully to undertake mobilisation for rapid national development. Democratic regimes due to their respect for human rights inflame social division and erode the capacity of government to act quickly and effectively.”(p.129)

This is the very model that applied immediately after independence in many African countries and it is the very model that the current leadership in Uganda is trying to pursue. For instance, President Museveni has often been at loggerheads with Parliament for delaying the implementation of his programs. Even during the parliamentary elections, he urged the population to vote for candidates who would support his manifesto and programs. He has also often attacked

the judiciary for being ignorant and an obstacle to government programs. This model has hampered economic growth in African countries and cannot succeed in Africa, where it is now clear that repression often degenerates into armed conflict.

The Rio Declaration came at a time when there was a sigh of relief at the end of the cold war. The "pursuit of lasting peace and an end to conflict" and sustainable development became "a global imperative." To this end, the Declaration focuses on issues that impact on sustainable development and peace. As noted by the UN Secretary General, (Ibid) demand for social justice is a factor featuring in many conflicts in Africa. The Rio Agenda therefore calls on states to address "the fundamental concerns of poverty, environmental equality and governance". Governments therefore must adopt policies that address poverty and generate political reforms.

2.2 RIO AGENDA AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION

The Rio Declaration faced the challenges of globalisation that were emerging at the time. Globalisation is hailed as an irreversible force that has helped in dismantling authoritarian regimes, facilitated and increased co-operation. It is also known to be increasing nationalist sentiments, undermining the cohesion of states and challenging social peace by provoking discrimination and exclusion in communities.(UN Secretary general Report: Ibid.) The impact of globalisation is well illustrated in the Asia Times:

"As a dominant force in the last decade of the 20th century, globalisation is shaping a new era of interaction.... But it is also fragmenting production processes, labour markets, political entities and societies."

So while globalisation may be "positive, innovative, dynamic, it however has "negative and marginalising aspects," and does not have a "human face."

Scott Marshal in "Imperialist Globalisation," shows how globalisation is constantly draining away resources from the poor to the rich regions of the world with 82% of world resources

concentrated in a fifth of the world population. The level of inequalities between the poor and the rich has escalated from 3:1 in 1820 to 72:1 in 1992. A CNN report shows globalisation as increasing inequalities and marginalisation and this does not serve the interest of peace.

2.3 POST RIO POLICIES IN UGANDA

2.3.1 THE ECONOMIC REFORMS

As noted above, Uganda is among the poorest countries in Africa, and has experienced misrule for many years. The economic decline resulting from the misrule prompted Uganda and many other countries to pursue economic policies and reforms designed by the WB/IMF, the forces behind globalisation.

The WB/IMF programs were started in Uganda in 1981, after government agreed to institute economic reforms and the return of Asian properties expropriated in 1972 by Idi Amin's military regime. A billion dollars was sunk in the economy, between 1981-1984, which generated growth rate of 2.6%. The impact of SAPs during this time cannot easily be gauged because the country experienced civil war that affected every sector of the economy (Marios Owona, 1996). The present government adopted the WB/IMF Economic Recovery Programs towards the end of 1987.

The adoption of these policies has given rise to intense debates about their impact. The donor community represented mainly by the WB/IMF and the government of Uganda praise the economic performance of Uganda, which is being marketed as a success story. It is not clear what growth rates Uganda has registered under the ERP as there are conflicting statistical figures given. According to Mbaku (ibid;) Uganda managed a growth rate of 3.3% and Mabirizi gives a higher figure of between 6-8% in his assessment of economic performance, saying Uganda has been the most consistent performer:

“Uganda's record, the impact of the economic reforms since 1992 is clear; fiscal policy has been disciplined, IMF targets have consistently been met and the effect on performance indicators, has been positive.”

There may be growth at the macro level but there are sceptics who view ERPs as having virtually no trickle down effect. First of all, there are suspicions that the WB manipulates statistics. This manipulative behaviour was exposed in the UN Report of the Independent Expert on the effects of SAPs (1999).

Therefore one can never be sure about the claims of government about its economic success as they rely on WB statistics. It is for instance claimed that poverty in Uganda has fallen from 56% in 1992 to 35% in 2000, which contrasts a lot with an outcry of poverty among people.

In a commentary on ERPs published in an independent daily,(Guweddeko in The Monitor, September 5, 2001) the author expresses more pessimism than the economists at the WB and Government of Uganda would like to hear. To him the economic situation has been getting worse in the last 10–15 years. He claims that:

"Over the years, NRM has committed very many policies, programs and projects to ending poverty. If only half of them delivered, some beggars in this country would be millionaires....Towards the end of 1987, NRM launched the ERPs. By 1992, it was evident this program which included structural adjustment was responsible for a new wave of poverty. The program for alleviation of Poverty and Social Cost of Adjustment (PAPSCA) followed by a multiplicity of policies and programs all targeting poverty, have since been launched. It is important to stress that there are two kinds of poor people in Uganda. There are those who are poor because they have never been rich, and those who are poor because of the policies of the NRM, starting with the economic reform programs and other ill-conceived policies. Corruption and endless wars are part and parcel of poverty born under the NRM....."

The claim by Guweddeko seem credible following a study on State and Dynamics of Social Policy Practice and Research in Uganda (Manyire and Asiingwiire: 1996) The fallacies of the claims made by Mbazira, the WB or G.O.U were laid bare. First of all is the sad finding that ERPs have vested every sector of economic activity including social services delivery into the domain of

market forces yet, market forces are well known for being ineffective in the redistribution of resources.

The study compares Uganda's social policy performance under structural adjustment and the period before the military Junta in 1971. It shows that social policy in the first decade of Uganda's independence was 'characterised by marked improvement for the various sectors and this was because of 'well formulated and implemented policies in all major social fields of health, income maintenance, housing and education.' P15. However, these gains were wiped out by the governance problems which engulfed the country due to 'a non pragmatic approach towards addressing socio-economic issues' and owing to 'the subsequent macro-economic policies funded by the market model embraced by the regimes of the 1980s and 1990s.' The study then concludes:

"....The world economic order of the 1990s has culminated into exacerbating disparities in social development rather than bridging them. Despite Uganda's highest registered levels of economic growth (13th. On the list of countries with the highest growing economies) faces severe social problems and considered 4th poorest country in the world. The recent economic policies clearly reflect a failure to result into opportunities for the vulnerable groups to improve their conditions of living..... Without human development as emphasised by social policy, economic growth cannot easily begin, and even be sustained as emphasised by economic policies.. The lack of an integrated view of social and economic development makes development unsustainable over the long-term, by not placing the capacity of human beings at the centre of social, scientific and economic change..."p22

This view is shared among many critics even within the UN. In fact there is a global view that the WB/IMF sponsored ERPs are having a negative impact. The I.L.O in 1989 for example, expressed doubt about the economic policies of the WB/IMF arguing that they cannot generate equity and employment. (Kwanika PanFord : 994) WB officials also admit the limits of their policies, as Jay Cox had to confess that, " the donors (had) done a disservice to Africa and many African governments (had) participated blindly."(Mlambo, A.S: 1995)

Mlambo also shows how adjusting countries are facing “reduced relative incomes, increased poverty, deteriorating social conditions, reduced growth potential...” (p.81) These countries have become worse off than before the adoption of these policies. Mlambo therefore sees the agenda behind SAPs as not about sustainable development but merely “reinforcing neo-colonialism” and dependence embodied in an ideology supportive of the free market dogma. ((P77-78))

SAPs are also perceived to be contributing to instability of governments. Whether elected or not they become nervous about the possible reactions of the affected. (Mlambo et al). The case of Zimbabwe illustrates this assertion, where ERPs provided the spark for the political instability raging in this country. A journalist who was a victim of the ZANU PF government in Zimbabwe explains the impact of SAPs and globalisation on the stability of many governments and the possibility of conflicts. This is what he said:

“Zimbabwe shows that an African country can work...Its roads, cities and parks were well kept. Trains ran on time. Nearly every child went to school. Hospitals were adequate. People had enough to eat. There wasn’t a great variety of goods on offer, but the basic stuff was there. I liked it so much that I left my good job....to stay as a freelance journalist...But the ground was shifting. Because of structural adjustment, tuna and disposable diapers appeared on the shelves-but the poor were saddled with new school and hospital fees. By 1997, UNICEF and Oxfam were recording rising child and mother mortality rates. Poverty rates spiraled from 40% to 79%.....Slowly but steadily the ruling party’s popularity eroded. As parliamentary elections approached...President Robert Mugabe’s government was desperate. Human rights monitors reported tens of thousands of cases of beatings, arson, rape, kidnapping and destruction of property...”(Newsweek, March 5, 2001)

The unrest generated from the WB/IMF sponsored programs manifests differently. In some cases the reactions are spontaneous and violent over for instances, food price increases, while in other situations, tensions build up gradually. In Uganda for instance, the issues relating to social welfare were sharply brought out during the presidential elections and later presented in Besigye's Reform Agenda, in which fair and just distribution of wealth and the provision of basic social and economic security, are issues of concern.

2.3.2 THE POLITICAL AND LEGAL REFORMS

The coming to power of a new government in 1986 also brought about a series of reforms in the governance process. These reforms culminated into the promulgation of a new constitution in 1995, conceptualised around two tenets: limited government and respect for human rights. Chapter IV of the constitution provides for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and guarantees in Article 39 the right to a clean and healthy environment. The new reforms also introduced institutional framework to promote accountability and transparency.

However, the Constitution has provisions that contradict each other. Article 269 of the constitution entrenches the so-called no party systems, thereby allowing a de facto one party state yet, it is clear now that the movement system of government is like a political party. There are even voices within the movement agitating for multi-party system and the transformation of the movement into a political party. Article 269 has generated a lot of heated debate and is therefore an aspect that is building up tension in the country.

The efficacy of the 1995 constitution is already cast in a cloud of uncertainty, unfolding slowly but steadily leading to a potentially explosive armed rebellion. This is reflecting on the defects in the constitution itself and the behaviour of the leadership that seems to be drifting away from the rule of law. These defects pertain to the problem of absence of independence for these institutions. The contemptuous attitude towards the constitution and constitutional rule was depicted in the last presidential election. In one of his campaign trails in Kasese district during the presidential elections, Yoweri Museveni, the president of Uganda is quoted to have uttered the following statements:

“I am not ready to hand over power to people or groups of people who have no ability to run a nation... Why should I sentence Ugandan to suicide by handing over power to people we fought and defeated? It’s dangerous despite the fact the constitution allows them to run against me.... At times the constitution may not be the best tool to direct us politically for it allows wrong and doubtful people to contest

for power". (the East African, February 12, 2001 and Human Rights Watch March 2001)

Elections play a significant role in resolving political conflicts. They allow democratic and peaceful transfer of power and to check the erratic behaviours of political leaders. However, elections are always used to entrench a political faction in power. They are never free and fair although sanctioned by the election observer groups, and the judicial institutions which are simply too timid to challenge the powers that be. It is not possible for an economy to flourish where it is 'the might of the sword' rather than free and fair elections that decide who shall rule.(NFSD:Ibid, p,2)

Besigye one of the presidential candidates and a former ally of Museveni, challenged the validity of the presidential election in the supreme court. The petition was based on what was suspected to be state inspired violence, involving the army (especially the presidential protection unit) massive rigging and illegal activities of the Electoral Commission.

While the court agreed with the petitioner about the existence of massive rigging, violence and other illegal activities committed by the Electoral Commission and by agents of the respondent, three of the five judges found no reason to nullify the results. Although the fraud, illegalities and violence were in contravention of the constitution, meant to guarantee free and fair elections, the Supreme Court majority judges looked the other way in sanctioning what was clearly an illegality. Since then tension has been building up between Museveni and Colonel Besigye culminating prompting the latter to issue a warning about the possibility for resisting power 'built on an undemocratic foundation.'

2.3.3 PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Uganda is one of those countries that has put in place legal and policy framework for promoting environmental protection. The policy framework seeks to integrate “environmental concerns in the socio-economic development planning of the country...” It acknowledges the linkage between development and the environment as fundamental in attaining sustainable development. (Forward to the NEMA Policy for Uganda 1994). The policy framework also recognises the integrative environmental management as the most viable approach for “achieving the overall policy goal of sustainable socio-economic development which maintains and enhances environmental quality and resource productivity to meet the needs of present and future generation.” (Executive Summary) In fulfilment of the objectives under the National Environmental Management policy, Article 39 of the constitution of Uganda provides for the right to a healthy and clean environment. The National Environmental Management Statute was also enacted, establishing the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) as well as providing for a broad range of issues pertaining to the functions of NEMA and measures for environmental protection. On the face of it therefore, Uganda has moved a greater distance in the policy and legislative framework for environmental protection. The issue however, is whether these policy and legal claims are well integrated in Uganda’s investment policy.

Government is backtracking on its own claims and there is no political will to support the implementation of the policies, perhaps to appease, protect or attract investments. An illustration of this backtracking behaviour is represented in two controversial projects that have drawn very strong protests from people.

There are advanced plans to build a dam at the Bujagali Falls on River Nile. Government has gone a long distance to support AES Power Supply Company against concerns of environmental protection; claiming that the building of the dam is vital for the development of

Uganda. What is sad about this project is government's willingness at the instance of a private company to compensate AES for any short fall in power generation caused by water fluctuations. Parliament at one point passed a resolution ordering government not to proceed with signing an agreement with AES but was ignored and the construction of the dam has been endorsed.

While only 3% of the population consumes hydro power, it has become evident that the recently commissioned Kiira Dam just 3 km from Bujagali has led to the hiking of power rates by 100%, pushing consumption of power further beyond what is affordable by majority of the people. This dam was constructed without EIA, and within a distance of less than 5 kilometres, 3 hydro power stations will stand close to each other if the World Bank goes ahead to fund the Bujagali project at a cost of about \$500m. Therefore, the fact that it is only 3% of the population in Uganda consuming hydro electricity has raised the question whether it is power, which is the problem in the development process.

The second controversial project with serious environmental consequences is the expansion of the sugarcane acreage of a multinational Sugar Company. It is a controversy that has pitted Government of Uganda and the multinational against parliament and the community, in an eco-war. The company had been granted a lease of 49 years to harness wood fuel from the Butamira forest reserve covering 1,257 hectares and planted by the people of the Kingdom of Busoga in the 1930s to control soil erosion. When the lease granted to the sugar company expired in 1998, it was fraudulently extended to allow the company to plant sugarcane. By the time parliament intervened and cancelled the extension, the sugar company had cleared 900 ha and planted them with sugarcane. After the cancellation, people replanted the 900 ha with two million trees.

While people are protesting and parliament has cancelled the extension, the president has ordered government to ensure that the sugar company has its way. He is quoted by the government owned (New Vision paper. Set 12, 2001) to have "...directed the Prime Minister...in June this

year (2001) to oversee the compensation of the permit holders....and to degazette the reserve and hand over to Kakira.” The two eco-conflicts are merely a tip of the iceberg in the politics of environmental protection.

The environmental crisis in Uganda is illustrated in an article the Monitor (August 23, 2001). The paper laments that: *“in Uganda, consensus over environmental issues is as fragile as the environment itself. Many harbour the notion that we can develop now and take care of the environment at a later date.”* The article puts Uganda among the *‘ten worst eco-offenders and ‘.... ranks third on the ESI scoreboard despite the strong environmental legislation and institutional landscape National Environmental Management, Forest department, Uganda Wild Life Authority and other sectoral departments.’*

An analysis of the reforms in governance, the economy and the environment management in Uganda raises some issues to ponder about. The constitutional reforms that had been instituted, though they look positive, have been characterised by non-compliance with the rules established, often reflected in the absence of accountability and transparency in government machinery. That is why Uganda occupies the 3rd bottom position in the corruption rating by Transparency International and 3rd on the ESI scoreboard. The economic policies though are said to be generating economic growth, are also pushing Uganda more and more into the debt trap with its debt standing in the region of \$3 billion.

When extreme poverty, autocracy, ‘political opportunism’ and absence for respect of the rule of law add up, they produce tension in the population and the governance process. This is the trend in Uganda as an article in the Sunday Monitor News paper, (September9 2001) observed:

“... today, Museveni’s popularity is perhaps the lowest since 1986. Increasingly, his power base has shifted from the people to the Army and now, to a small cabal of loyalists and sycophants in the army and public service many of them based on family ties”.

Museveni has been in power for 15 years a period rather too long and the fraudulent elections that put him in his fourth term of office have climaxed his rule, now riddled with serious conflict and rebellion. The Sunday Monitor again:

“Having been in power for the last 15 years and with 5 more to go, many Ugandans tired of the dictatorial approaches of Museveni and disillusioned by elections that are always manipulated – might be forgiven for opting for violence to over throw the government”.

The current political atmosphere bears a lot in similarities with what happened in 1981 following the 1980 fraudulent elections. The electoral fraud triggered off the 5-year guerrilla war executed by the present rulers in Uganda. Similarly, the “massively rigged March 2001 presidential elections, Museveni has been catapulted into Obote’s seat ruling over a population that largely views him as a cheat”.

Poor governance and the structural adjustment policies often trigger off conflicts, which otherwise are dormant. According to the government owned Sunday Vision newspaper, (Ibid) there is reported recruitment of rebels in a number areas of Uganda and Kasese district is one of them where sections of the population are disgruntled over a long standing feud for the establishment of the Rwenzururu Kingdom. There are many other dormant conflicts situations which are likely to flare-up should another war erupt.

There is the problem of the remnants of Idi Amin's followers based in the Sudan West Nile Bank Front that may in fact be hibernating, and a serious flare up of conflict in one part of the country will wake them up. Added to this melee is the Lord Resistance armed rebellion in the Northern Sub region, the Allied Democratic Front rebels in the Rwenzori Mountains and the long standing conflict among the pastoralist communities in the north east of Uganda linking up with Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia. At the regional level, Uganda is embroiled in a regional military conflict that has pitted it with almost all its neighbouring countries. Therefore, a rebellion that

seriously threatens Museveni's power will certainly play into the hands of those with old wounds and the conflict entrepreneurs. Such a war might leave the Great Lakes in shambles because it is not only likely to draw in neighbouring countries, its intensity may end up into a DRC scenario with very serious and unprecedented repercussions.

3.0 THE PROBLEMS OF CONFLICT IN UGANDA

The conflict situation in Uganda is interwoven with the conflict system in the Greater Horn of Africa, a geographical classification that includes the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. A number of the very poorest countries in Africa; Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda are in this region. Several of the characteristics and causal factors in this conflict system cut across all these countries and include the following:

- The problem of political structures and character of the state;
- Ethnicity and historical claims to autonomy and ethnicity;
- The problem of the international economic system

3.1 THE STRUCTURES AND THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE

A question has been posed as to whether the African state is capable of providing an enabling environment for good governance and sustainable development. It is argued by Mbaku that the African states were not created to generate development or to solve conflicts among different groups. The colonial powers deliberately created the environment for conflict through their methods of divide and rule, and the regional imbalances that exacerbate the fragile polity constructed on forcible co-existence of different groups. Secondly, the state in Africa was created for exploitation of the continent's natural resources by the developed economies, creating dependence that required

direct colonial rule or some other mechanism of control. Debt became the easier way of holding sway over these countries. That is why it has virtually become impossible for Africa to disengage itself from this bondage. Hence the calls for re-conceptualising the concept of the state in Africa.(Archie Mafeje: 1999, Kifle Wodajo: 1999 and Yusuf Bangura: Ibid)

3.1 ETHNICITY, INTERNAL BORDERS AND CLAIMS TO AUTONOMY

The introduction of internal political and administrative borders along ethnic lines created 'tribally oriented local government system.' While the post independence governments in Uganda made attempts at 'nation building' by abolishing kingdoms in 1966, social integration failed as government continued with the divide and rule tactics, or simply due to failures to address developmental issues that usually feature as ethnic sentiments or regionalism. (Ocaya: 2000) This factor is interlocked with historical claims for autonomy, and in Uganda, the “Buganda question” and the Rwenzururu movement, is constantly featuring in political debates and armed rebellion as historical claims. It is these factors that have helped swell the ranks of the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) with many of the recruits in the organisation coming from Kasese district.

The Allied Democratic Front (ADF), fighting in the west of the country and the Lord Resistance Army of Joseph Kony in northern Uganda are off springs of the fragile political and economic environment in Uganda brought about by Museveni's attempt to entrench his power, and involvement of Uganda in the wars in Rwanda, DRC and Sudan. This fragile situation has been exploited by Sudan and DRC to sustain a bloody war and it will continue to provide ammunition for more conflicts.

Conflict in Northern Uganda is not only due to internal causes, it is also linked to the problem of ethnicity and Arab racism in the Sudan and the problem of internal borders that reduced grazing land for the pastoralist communities in the north east of the country. There was loss of

territory by the pastoralist communities through gazetting of land for forestry, game parks and conservation in an attempt by the colonial administration and post independence, to force the pastoral communities to abandon their dependence on cattle for a sedentary pattern of life. This sparked off a conflict situation that remains a nightmare and has remained elusive to resolve. The issue in the Karamoja conflict is about the rights of pastoral communities to land and water to guarantee their right of access to food and life.

3.2 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICTS

Conflicts usually result into massive violations of human rights and in the case of war in Gulu, Kitgum, Karamoja , Kasese and Bundibugyo districts, the violations are mainly perpetrated by the rebels and the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF). (See Amnesty International Reports of 1998 and 99 and the Uganda Human Rights Commission Reports of 1997 and 98)

The conflict in the northeastern Uganda has been raging on since the time when the British established colonial rule in this region. While they used force to get Karamoja region under their control, ivory traders were using violence to rustle cattle from these communities to exchange for ivory. As the community got alienated by the British and subsequent governments, this created an anti government culture, to which the state responded by neglecting the region. The communities in this region essentially live in conditions of a natural economy. The hostile eco system makes the region unsuitable for sedentary farming. It is therefore, one of the least developed areas in Uganda with barely any schools, roads or adequate health services. It is an area, which is prone to drought and famine and poverty prevalence is much higher.

In Gulu and Kitgum districts armed conflict has been going on for the last 15 years as a carry over of the NRM/A guerrilla war started in 1981. Since the overthrow of the UPC Obote II government and the Tito Okello military junta, the war in the Luwero Triangle simply shifted to the

north. This region has suffered a lot in terms of massive deaths, displacement of the population estimated to be around 500,000 forced to live in camps. IDPs have been a characteristic of all these conflicts with a large population in the districts of Bundinbugyo in the west and Katakwi in the northeast also forced to leave in camps. These camps are congested, without sufficient social infrastructure to cater for the IDPs. The Northern Uganda Reconstruction (NURP II) District Profile Study, points out that the war has caused the collapse of the social infrastructure. 'Schools, roads, health centres are in a sorry state. The war has also greatly shattered the social and cultural arrangements that existed before, and have generally retarded economic development.' (p12). The report shows further how this war has completely changed the way of life, and has "created a negative attitude to development in the minds of many people." (p.85) Keith Muhakanizi, an economist in government of Uganda admits that the 'trend in the northern region where two thirds of the population cannot meet their basic consumption needs is unfortunate.' He attributes it to the insurgency in parts of the region and the aftermath of rebel activity in other parts, which 'continue to have a very negative impact on people's livelihood strategies.' (The Monitor, September 12, 2001)

4.0 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: WHICH WAY?

The definition of sustainable development in the Rio Declaration is eco-based. Preserving ecological balance for the benefits of the living and the unborn is absolutely essential. However, it is equally important to understand the elements that should constitute an ecological balance. The social side of development is an important component of sustainability. Therefore, I consider the definition of sustainable development by Serageldin to me more encompassing. He says:

"A proposal has to be economically... and ecologically sustainable... However, equally important is the social side, and here we mean equity, social mobility, social cohesion, participation, empowerment, cultural identity and institutional development... It is to my mind, an essential part of the definition of sustainability, because let

me remind you the neglect of that side leads to institutions that are incapable of responding to the needs of society. We see the consequences of that in tragedies from Somalia to Rwanda and from Liberia to Bosnia." (Serageldin, 1995, p.4)

The authoritarian models of development emphasises economic growth, which is indeed critical, but acknowledged not to be sufficient in the eradication of poverty. (Muhakanizi: Ibid; and NFSD, 2001) Such growth without social policy is hollow. Social policy 'constitutes one of the pillars of economic development and growth strategy' and ideally, should reinforce each other. Policies to propel economic growth must therefore have a well-defined social policy component that 'places particular emphasis on meeting basic human needs.' Manyire and Asingwire (Ibid at p.21)

It is also argued contrary to the authoritarian models of development that good governance is a key factor in development economics. Governance must be human centred (Asian Times: July 13, 1999) and where this is lacking, the governance process simply "...generates a social environment detrimental to development. In such cases external aid whatever the amounts or intention has little effect." (NFSD:Ibid , p.2)

Unfortunately, the forces of globalisation are not interested in supporting meaningful social policy programs, are only pursuing development strategies ill suited to the needs and capacity of poor countries. The ERPs are not meant to help countries become "economically viable and independent." The IMF, which any way is not a 'development institution' (Camdessus, Micheal: 1998) 'is only interested in ensuring the continued existence of a specific type of international economic order based on the free operation of the global capitalist system....'(Mlambo: Ibid; p, 81)

Two issues of strategic importance arise from the above discussion. First is the question of social policy and its integration in the economic and governance process, it must be addressed and given more meaning. The second issue relates to the institutional framework that has to support 'social climate in which the door to full personal development is open to every one--regardless of

gender, race, social cultural background or other differences.’ This climate should be the basis for sustainable development.

4.1 RE-CONCEPTUALISING THE STATE, PEACE BUILDING AND THE VALUE SYSTEM

Many African states are disorganised and are in a state of collapse. Their legitimacy is also under challenge to be able to harness the benefits of globalisation. As observed in the UN Report on Globalisation, it requires states that are sufficiently cohesive and organised to meet these challenges. One of the most dangerous trends in Africa is the prospect of state collapse that hinders the ability of the continent to face the challenges of globalisation more effectively. State collapse is characterised by the following tendencies: (UK Cabinet Sub Committee: *ibid*)

- Predatory governments operating through coercion, corruption and personality politics to secure political power and control of resources.
- State inability to provide basic services or security to its people.
- Questionable legitimacy.
- Collapse of infrastructure.

These characteristics constitute what is dubbed “shell states” and they contribute to the conditions for sustaining conflict. These characteristics are well represented in the Uganda situation.

Re-conceptualising the state in Africa, therefore, is an important question for strategic thinking, when reviewing the balance sheet since Rio. While I agree with those who call for re-conceptualising the state, there is the issue of what this actually entails. Radical views are calling for the redrawing of borders in the hope of creating new and viable states. The option for redrawing borders is outlawed and politically unviable at least in the foreseeable future. Secondly it is a very complex option that may either lead to serious conflict or protracted negotiations that may only

aggravate the problem. However, the problem of boundaries is key in the debate about the capacity of the state and its future and is pertinent that the issue of boundaries should be discussed. What are then the other options available?

It is of strategic importance therefore, to begin thinking about new constitutional orders that grant more autonomy for diverse groups. The structural, institutional and legal framework must be innovative, reflecting each cultural group's positive traditions. This may involve granting more autonomy, which takes different forms and these may include federal arrangements or creation of confederations etc. Perhaps, this may be a better option for creating new forms of state entities that sufficiently represent diversity. This then raises the question of value systems to support these new structural, institutional and legal imperatives. It is my view that we examine indigenous knowledge, methods and forms of governance as a basis for the new concept of the state that will have the capacity to govern, generate development and guarantee peace and security of the community.

The Manila Declaration of the International Conference on Conflict Resolution, Peace Building, Sustainable Development and Indigenous People gives insights on many of the issues being argued. The preamble to the Declaration identifies denial of the right to self-determination as one of the root causes of conflicts. Article 2.2 therefore calls upon states and the international community,

“to recognise and respect the various forms of self-determination which would include ... autonomy, secession or federation, recognition of indigenous socio-political and juridical system, etc. as viable solution for pluri-cultural and pluri-ethnic societies”.

The preamble, also makes reference to the concept of justice, recognising its universal character, but rejecting the premise and processes by which it is achieved . This process is based on values that are "culturally defined", that underpin the way justice is understood and realised. The Declaration stresses the fact that the universalisation of western culture and its influence in

understanding the world around us has forced us “...to turn away from our own institutions” and to “operate within those western legal paradigms.”

The role of indigenous systems is emphasised in the Declaration, which recommends the creation of “new systems and institutions of peace making that are sourced in indigenous values...” The Declaration implores the need to recognise the respect and nurturing of indigenous knowledge, which should be blended with “appropriate modern knowledge in bio-diversity conservation, health promotion, agriculture, and cultural development”.

4.2 PEACE BUILDING

The Manila Conference recognised the need for each country, to:

“weave together the threads of equality, justices, participatory democracy and recognition and respect for the rights of all peoples and culture; peace building implies establishing intercultural and other relationships which facilitate peaceful co-existence within a framework of plurality and mutual respect”.

Article 4.3 calls on states, international organisations and donor community to support the further development of indigenous peoples systems, method and practices on peace building and conflict resolution. Peace building mechanisms based on indigenous knowledge is of significance in developing, strengthening and formalising Track II Diplomacy, which is increasingly winning recognition, as peace making and building is moving away from a state centred activity to an embracing process involving civil society. Non-state actors have an important role in promoting peace and security. (Sagaren Naidoo: 2000)

4.2.1 THE EXPERIENCE IN UGANDA

Already in the conflict zones of Gulu, Kitgum, Kotido and Moroto districts, are exploring the indigenous approach to conflict resolution and justice. They are using people to people

initiatives to resolve the on going conflicts In Gulu district. They are activities being initiated by a cross section of the church, groups and individuals in and outside Uganda around what is popularly known as KACOKE MADIT (KM) to negotiate peace between government and the Lord Resistance Army. In 1998 for instance the second KM was held attracting 300 delegates from across Acholi community, NGOs, non-Ugandan individuals and representatives of governments and INGOs. This conference drew up 11 resolutions.

Similarly the communities in the north east of Uganda are also engaged in a people to people initiative to reduce the incidence of cattle rustling that is so rampant in this region. NGOs are involved in the process to encourage dialogue and of them is the Kotido Peace Initiative.

Conclusion

The experience in Uganda shows that sustainable development is not about economic growth only, it is about human centred development, embracing equity, social justice and an institutional framework for realising these standards. In many countries, realisation of economic, social and cultural rights, the very foundation of equity and justice is still unfulfilled. The fulfilment must be holistic not peace meal, like adopting UPE as Uganda has done, without taking measures in other areas that guarantee individuals and the community the right to freedom from want. The right to freedom from want constitutes real peace as opposed to armed peace.

The failure for countries to realise economic, social and cultural rights is attributable to many factors, but for the poor and weak countries like Uganda, poverty, absence of democracy are a hindrance. The forces of globalisation have also not permitted the growth of democratic governance and economy. Much as globalisation has positive attributes, it is well-organised countries in all respects that harness them. Instead the poor and weak are increasingly getting marginalized under a heavy debt burden, making it practically impossible for these countries govern themselves

democratically and peacefully. This has contributed to states being unviable particularly those in Sub Sahara Africa, which nonetheless, were not intended for development but to exploit African natural resources and labour for the benefit of the North. This imposes on us a challenge to rethink about restructuring the nature and character of the state in the strategy for governance and development.

Greater autonomy for the different and diverse communities has become an imperative as a basis for new state entities, as the basis for new ways in governance and generation of development, and taking care of the environment not merely for consumption but for peaceful co-existence. This entails exploring values systems that should not only be based on the universal concepts of human rights, but on indigenous systems. Therefore a role for indigenous knowledge, methods and practices in governance, development, peace and conflict resolution, and environmental conservation must be recognised

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