Democracy and Development in Africa
Démocratie et Développement en Afrique

Foreword.................................................. i

Introduction.......................................... iii
Le coût de la résolution des conflits
éloigne l’Afrique des OMD/
The Cost of Resolving Conflicts
takes Africa away from the MDGs

Presentation:

Western Democracy: Is it Applicable in Africa?
Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle...................... 2

Contributions:

Democracy and Its Practice: A General Theory of Democratic Relativity
Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle...................... 16

Africa’s missing billions
International arms flows and the cost of conflict
OXFAM................................................. 26

Upholding Human Rights as the Most Cost Effective Option in Averting Violent Conflicts in Africa
Patrice E. Vahard ......................... 52
A grant from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the project is gratefully acknowledged.

Nous remercions le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD) de son soutien financier pour la réalisation de ce projet.
Foreword

The quest for development in Africa has preoccupied politicians and economists alike. Africa is one of the richest continents in terms of natural resources, yet its citizens remain the poorest on earth. There are many potential explanations to this irony, and one of these is the poor governance environment in many parts of the continent.

As Africa struggles to alleviate poverty, bring about rapid socio-economic development and integrate into the global economy, the debate over good governance has become topical, thanks to the proven impact of the latter on the attainment of the aforementioned objectives. Within this context, the issue of democracy has taken centre stage.

Democracy derives from the Greek words *demos* and *kratos* meaning rule of the people. As a form of government, it is generally defined as power of the people, by the people and for the people. By implication, the government must belong to the people and not imposed from outside; the citizens, not outsiders, must set the rules; and it should be a means of helping the people achieve their aspirations. Based on the foregoing, therefore, the cultural aspect is extremely important in any democracy. People must be free to devise their own styles of government as a means to achieving their set objectives. These will undoubtedly vary significantly from one place to the other, in view of difference is culture. Hence, the failure of Western-style liberal democracy in some parts of the world can be blamed largely on the failure on the part of the West to adequately gauge the impact of cultural differences.

In Africa, much progress has been made in the democratization process. This is evidenced by the growing number of multi-party elections, greater influence of civil society in government policy, and the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in January 2007.

Good governance, guided by strong democratic institutions, has a direct link to peace and stability. In Africa, many conflict situations are direct consequences of poor governance environments. In addition to this, the entrenchment of corruption in some quarters has had significant effects on the cost of doing business which consequently impacts on competitiveness and level of investment inflows. Addressing this problem is therefore likely to improve the business environment, attract investments and impact positively on economies.

In recognition of the aforementioned, concerted effort is being made at continental level to improve the democratic space and governance climate. Great importance is attached to NEPAD’s African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). To date, 29 AU Member States have acceded to the APRM, 7 have completed their reviews and several are at various stages of undertaking their assessments. On the issue of addressing the problem of corruption, more than 15 countries have ratified the AU Convention against Corruption whereas more than 40 have ratified the UN Convention on Anti-Corruption. Other legal instruments such as the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance will go a long way in further entrenching the principles of democracy and good governance in Africa.
Africa must do more to embrace the principles of democracy. This will mean not only ratifying conventions, but also ensuring that they are applied to the letter and strong institutions developed to uphold the principles of democracy. Failure to do the latter could result in a reversal of significant gains made in democratic processes.

The continent must also do more to ensure that the masses have a say in the way in which their resources are managed. Hence, prudent economic governance and the equitable distribution of resources are vital to guarantee balanced development and stability.

By upholding the principles of democracy and good governance, Africa would be laying the foundation for peace, progress and prosperity. This way, the abundant resources we have can benefit the masses who deserve much better.

Dr. Maxwell M. Mkwezalamba
Commissioner for Economic Affairs
Introduction

Le coût de la résolution des conflits éloigne l’Afrique des OMD

Depuis le début des années 90, le monde est caractérisé par la domination de l’économie de marché, symbolisée par le phénomène de la mondialisation. Au plan politique, cette mutation s’est manifestée, entre autres, par l’effondrement du bloc de l’Est, la chute du mur de Berlin, le discours de la Baule de F. Mitterand invitant l’Afrique, tout entière, à adopter les vertus de la démocratie grecque. Dans sa tentative de démocratisation, l’Afrique connaît plusieurs cas de figure. Si certain pays africains s’accommodent de cette nouvelle donne internationale, d’autres, par contre, se sont englués dans divers maux : crises politiques graves, alternances démocratiques douloureuses, rebellions armées, conflits intra et inter Etats, résurgence de la xénophobie, ethnocentrisme, fondamentalisme religieux, etc.

Depuis un temps, l’Afrique vit au rythme d’interminables conflits dont les tentatives de résolution sont extrêmement onéreuses. Des sommes colossales sont consacrées au règlement des conflits et aux opérations de maintien de la paix. Ces coûts extrêmement élevés conduisent, entre autres, à poser la question fondamentale suivante : et si ces ressources colossales, toutes choses étant égales par ailleurs, étaient consacrées plutôt au financement de projets de développement ? En d’autres termes, si l’Afrique ne connaissait pas de conflits et si les fonds alloués à la résolution des conflits étaient affectés aux secteurs productifs des pays africains, quelle serait la situation de l’Afrique

Introduction

The Cost of Resolving Conflicts takes Africa away from the MDGs

Since the beginning of the 90s, the world has been marked by the domination of the market economy, symbolised by the phenomenon of globalisation. At the political level, this change manifested itself, among others, by the collapse of the Eastern block, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the speech of F. Mitterand at La Baule, calling upon the whole of Africa to adopt the virtues of the Greek democracy. In its attempt at democratisation, Africa has witnessed several concrete cases. If some African countries adapted themselves to this new international factor, others, on the other hand, got engulfed in different problems: serious political crises, painful democratic alternation, armed rebellions, intra and inter-State conflicts, resurgence of xenophobia, ethnocentrism, religious fundamentalism and so on.

For some time now Africa has lived at the pace of unending conflicts, whose attempted resolution, is very expensive. Huge amounts are devoted to conflict resolution and Peacekeeping operations. These extremely high costs lead one to ask the following fundamental question: And if, all being equal elsewhere, these phenomenal amounts were devoted to the financing of development projects? In other words, if Africa did not face conflicts and if the funds allotted to conflict resolution were earmarked for the productive sectors of African countries what would be the situation of Africa
aujourd’hui ? Le continent serait-il une des économies émergentes ? Serait-il en bonne voie pour atteindre les OMD ? Autant d’interrogations qui s’offrent à l’esprit lorsque l’on tente de s’appesantir sur les nombreux coûts, de tous genres, que gênèrent les conflits en Afrique. L’énormité de ces coûts invite à un examen minutieux et sans complaisance de la problématique de l’applicabilité de la démocratie occidentale en Afrique et, partant, à une meilleure appréciation des effets des conflits sur le développement des pays africains. Les coûts des conflits peuvent être récapitulés de la façon suivante :

i) Les coûts directs (résultant directement de la violence et impliquant des dépenses directes) :
  • Les frais médicaux ;
  • Les dépenses militaires ;
  • La destruction des infrastructures ;
  • Les coûts liés à l’attention portée aux réfugiés et aux personnes déplacées.

ii) Les coûts indirects : ils sont généralement liés aux opportunités perdues. Dans ce cas, les pays connaissent :
  • Un taux élevé d’inflation ;
  • Un endettement croissant ;
  • Un recul net des investissements directs étrangers (IDE) et des investissements locaux ;
  • Un sous-emploi structurel et chronique ;
  • Une détérioration marquée des services publics.

iii) Les coûts intangibles (coûts difficiles à quantifier, mais affectant

today? Would the Continent have been one of the emerging economies? Would it have been on track to attain the MDGs? So many questions come to mind when we try to dwell on all types of cost incurred by conflicts in Africa. These very high costs call for a careful consideration, without any complacency, of the problem of the application of the Western democracy in Africa and consequently a better analysis of the impact of conflicts on the development of African countries. The costs of conflicts can be summed up in the following manner:

i) The direct costs (resulting directly from violence and involving direct expenses) :
  • Medical expenses;
  • Military expenses;
  • Destruction of infrastructures;
  • Costs related to the attention to be paid to refugees and displaced persons.

ii) The indirect costs: they are generally linked to lost opportunities. In that case the countries face:
  • High inflation rate;
  • Increasing indebtedness;
  • Decrease in Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and local investments;
  • Structural and chronic under-employment;
  • Marked deterioration of public services.

iii) The invisible costs (costs that are difficult to quantify but affect the life of the peoples and their development capacity)
la vie des populations et leur capacité de développement)

- Les coûts psychologiques tels que le traumatisme ;
- La propagation d’une culture de violence surtout chez les jeunes;
- La rupture des liens familiaux et inter-communautaires, etc..


L’étude révèle également que l’Afrique perd environ 18 milliards USD par an, du fait des guerres et des rébellions armées.

Cette étude met en lumière quelques indicateurs illustratifs des conflits et des coûts liés aux conflits en Afrique :

- 95% des armes utilisées dans les conflits viennent de l’extérieur du continent (IANSA, OXFAM, et SaferWorld (2007)) ;
- 38% des conflits dans le monde se déroulent en Afrique (Muggah R. (2007)) ;
- Psychological costs such as trauma;
- Spread of a culture of violence particularly among the youths;
- Break in family and inter-Community links, etc..

The conflicts persisting on the Continent constitute a major handicap for its growth and development. According to a study carried out in 2007 by the ’International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), OXFAM and SaferWorld, and entitled ”Africa’s Missing Billions – International Arms Flows and the Cost of Conflict”, about 300 billion US Dollars have been lost by African countries since 1990 due to armed conflicts. That amount, according to the same study, is the equivalent of international aid given by the main donors during the same period. If the 300 billion US Dollars had not been lost or wasted through armed conflicts, they could have contributed to the solution of many problems of the Continent and particularly to the promotion of sustainable development, poverty reduction and disease control.

The study also reveals that Africa loses about 18 billion US Dollars per year as a result of conflicts and armed rebellions.

The study highlights some illustrative indicators of conflicts and the costs related to conflicts in Africa:

- 95% of arms used in conflicts come from outside the Continent (IANSA, OXFAM, and SaferWorld (2007)) ;
- 38% of conflicts in the world take place in Africa (Muggah R. (2007)) ;
La moitié des conflits les plus destructeurs ont lieu en Afrique (Hiik (2006));
Comparés aux pays en paix, les pays africains où sévissent des conflits ont en moyenne :

- 50% de plus de mortalité infantile ;
- 15% de plus de personnes mal nourries ;
- une espérance de vie réduite de 5 ans ;
- 20% de plus d’adultes analphabètes ;
- 2,5 fois moins de médecins par patient,
- 12,4% moins de vivres par habitant (World Bank (2007)) ; et
- 63% moins de PIB par habitant (IMF (2007)).

Comme on le voit, les indicateurs ci-dessus confortent manifestement l’idée que les conflits sont extrêmement onéreux pour nos pays et notre continent. Ces données ajoutent au pessimisme des afropessimistes quant à la probabilité de voir un jour l’Afrique connaître des lendemains meilleurs, du fait de la persistance des conflits sur le continent. À peine un foyer de guerre est-il éteint qu’un autre se rallume, comme si tous les facteurs générateurs de conflits se donnaient rendez-vous en Afrique. Existe-t-il une thérapie efficace et durable à cette déplorable situation ?

En réalité, les solutions proposées sont nombreuses. Mais la solution qui à nos yeux semble la plus crédible et la plus facile à mettre en œuvre tient à la création de richesses et à leur répartition équitable. L’équation qui est mise en exergue ici est celle de la très forte corrélation positive et significative qui existe entre pauvreté et

- Half of the most destructive conflicts have taken place in Africa (Hiik (2006)) ;

Compared to other countries at peace, African countries, where conflicts are taking place, have, on an average:

- 50% more of infant mortality;
- 15% more malnourished people;
- Life expectancy reduced by 5 years;
- 20% more adult illiterates;
- 2.5 times less of doctors per patient,
- 12.4% less food per inhabitant (World Bank (2007)) ; and
- 63% less per capita GDP (IMF (2007)).

As can be seen, the above indicators obviously beef up the idea that conflicts are extremely costly for our countries and our Continent. These data add fuel to the pessimism of the Afro-pessimists as to Africa witnessing a better future one day because of the persistence of conflicts on the Continent. Hardly a hotbed of conflict is resolved than another one breaks out, as if all the conflict generating factors are ever-present in Africa. Is there an effective and lasting therapy for this deplorable situation?

In truth, the solutions proposed are many. But the solution, which according to us, seems the most credible and easiest to implement is the creation of wealth and its equitable distribution. The equation that is highlighted here is the very strong positive and significant correlation between poverty and conflicts. The equation that is
conflicts. En d'autres termes, et les faits de
tous les jours nous le prouvent, là où sévit
la pauvreté ou la misère, la probabilité
d'éclatement de conflits de tous genres
constitue une quasi-certitude. La pauvreté
et la misère dressent quotidiennement le lit
de la guerre. La pauvreté et la misère
appellent la guerre, et la guerre entretient la
pauvreté et la misère. Pour rompre cette
dynamique appauvrissante, voire
paupérisante, l'Afrique doit s'entourer de
tous les atouts possibles pour créer des
richesses et valoriser le potentiel
economique, tout en offrant des emplois
décents aux Africains, et notamment aux
jeunes et aux femmes. La création d'une
croissance forte pour un développement
durable et la garantie d'une répartition
équitable des fruits de cette croissance
représentent assurément la meilleure
réponse à ce cercle vicieux des conflits dans
lequel l'Afrique semble s'être enlisée
structurellement. Ne pas comprendre cette
vérité quasi universelle revient à pratiquer
la politique de l'autruche dont les
conséquences sont énormes pour les
générations présentes et futures de notre
continent.

Oui, les conflits handicapent
quotidiennement l'Afrique dans sa marche
vers le progrès, l'intégration économique et
politique. Les causes de ces conflits sont de
nature diverse et variée. La résolution de
ces conflits est extrêmement onéreuse. Et
si ces montants faramineux étaient
consacrés aux projets de développement
dans une Afrique apaisée ? Si c'est un rêve,
nous avons pour une fois le droit et même
le devoir de rêver !
“Democracy and Development in Africa”

« Démocratie et Développement en Afrique »
Western Democracy: Is it Applicable in Africa?

Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle

1.0 Introduction

Liberal democracy or Western democracy has become a religion which the West, with the Breton Woods organizations as their principal agents, is preaching to the rest of the world and Africa, in particular, as the vehicle to good governance. Like development, it is a religion in the sense that though it has consistently failed to work in Africa, unflinching faith in it continues to discourage questions about its cultural compatibility, appropriateness and affordability. For the West, there is no reason why whatever is good for “us” should not be good for “them”. This Western mentality is what Basil Davidson calls “The Church of Fifth Stage Adventism”. For Africa impoverished through four centuries of captive slavery followed by a century of colonial enslavement within the shackles and tutelage of imperialism and decades of neocolonialism, the resulting subtle mental slavery encourages dancing faithfully to whatever economic or political music is beamed from the West. This acquiescence is dangerous to Africa and should be analyzed within the context of power relations emanating from the larger religion of globalization with liberal democracy as its political subset.

This paper which draws from both recent and historical experience seeks to question the compatibility and appropriateness of liberal democracy in the African cultural environment. Specifically, it attempts to answer the following pertinent questions. Do we need a strong State without democracy or a democracy without a strong State? Is there an African voice of democracy? It also seeks to address the relationship between tribalism/ethnicity and democracy in Africa. It begins by explaining the etymology of democracy, its meaning, and its various forms. After explaining that pure democracy does not exist anywhere and that, in reality, it is a culturally compatible articulation of democracy and dictatorship that exists in all societies arguments and evidence are advanced in support of the view that liberal democracy is inappropriate to the African cultural environment and that an African voice of culturally compatible democracy exists that can be modified to suit the requirements of modern government and establish the governance conditions necessary for successful development. It is argued further that the nation and state building blocks of this African or Jaku democracy can be used to establish the United States of Africa and make Africa great as it was in ancient times.

2.0 What is democracy?

Etymologically, the word democracy comes from two Greek words: demos meaning the people and kratos meaning rule. Hence, democracy is essentially the rule of the people as a whole. While there is no problem with the etymological, pure or essential meaning of democracy, problems arise with operationalization of the rule of the people. In very small communities, the people as a whole can meet and take decisions that affect them. This is direct democracy. As societies become more
complex, it becomes difficult for the people to assemble and take decisions together concerning their common good. The process of decision making itself becomes so protracted that democracy becomes like a jelly with infinite degrees of freedom (Hobbesian state of nature). It becomes both convenient and necessary for some few selected, appointed, or elected representatives to assume the role of making binding decisions on behalf of the people. This is representative democracy. There is no one best way for selecting, appointing, or electing these representatives. It depends entirely upon the worldview of the people determined by their values, beliefs, orientations, attitudes, knowledge base, history, traditions and customs which define them and explain how they think and act. This worldview of the people is their culture.

It is within this representative context that democracy is perceived as a government of the people, by the people and for the people which according to Abraham Lincoln shall never perish from the earth. However, the people does not mean the absence of exclusion for, in both direct and representative democracy, there is some measure of exclusion by age or by registration. Babies and children are excluded and so are foreigners or non-citizens. Given the premise that the common people are in majority, the representative process is expected to reflect the rule of the common people. In practice, representative democracy does not necessarily reflect the rule of the common people. This is precisely what the elite theorists emphasize, oligarchy - the rule of the organized few.

Making decisions which are binding on the people presupposes the willingness of the people to accept those binding decisions. It is this acceptance of the binding decisions which make the people governable. Hence, democracy assumes the prior existence of governable people. In a situation of chaos such as occurred in Iraq after the removal of Saddam where people are not governable, democracy is of no use.

Binding decisions mean that the representatives have authority to tell or dictate to the people what to do and what not to do. Thus, the representatives become necessarily authoritarian. Hence, representative democracy has a necessarily authoritarian or dictatorial component without which it cannot function. However, there is some trade off. The greater this dictatorial component, the less the democratic component. Mathematically, there exists an inverse relationship between the democracy component and the dictatorship component. Pure dictatorship does not exist either, for every dictator has some council where free or democratic discussions take place. Who a democrat is and who a dictator is entirely in the eyes of the beholder. For example, to the followers of George Bush, Saddam Hussein was a dictator while to the followers of Saddam Hussein, Saddam was a democrat and George Bush is the worst dictator ever who dictates to the entire world.

Moreover, modern democracies and dictatorships have something in common. They both operate through bureaucracies which are authoritarian. Max Weber advances liberal democracy as an appropriate means for controlling the powerful bureaucracy, but
dictatorships also exercise control over the same bureaucracy. What then is the difference? It is much more a matter of style and perceived degree of control. In analyzing the relationship between liberal democracy and bureaucracy in the exercise of this control function, David Beetham and Eva Etzioni-Halevy explain in detail how bureaucracy is a liberal democratic dilemma because they consider the two to be separate. They are not! What they overlook is that authoritarianism or bureaucracy is an integral part of real (practical) democracy for, lo and behold, even the political parties of liberal democracy are bureaucracies. The private corporations are also bureaucracies. Do they have their own liberal democracies to control them? Certainly, no. They are controlled by boards of governors, a government of the selected few who dictate to the rest.

Elite theorists including, the classical elite theorists, Mosca, Pareto, Michel and modern elite theorists such as Mills, Porter, Field and Higley have drawn attention to the fact that, despite the expensive partisan political competition and claims of existence of democracy, it is the organized few that rule the majority comprising the unorganized masses. This dictatorship of the organized few is in effect a reference to the dictatorship component of democratic practice. The Marxist notion of a dominant class of capitalists and the notion of the executive of the modern State being "a committee for managing the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" also substantiate the fact that democratic practice has a dictatorship component. Thus, I advance the thesis that democratic practice is invariably a convenient product comprising some ingredients of both dictatorship and democracy. In my article Democracy and its Practice: A General Theory of Democratic Relativity (www.panafricanwisdo.com), I explained the mathematically inverse relationship between these two articulated components of real (practical) democracies. I attach it as an annexure to this paper. I proceed to explain further why democracy should be a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

3.0 A government of the People, by the People and for the People

Democracy as a government of the people implies that it must be owned by the people themselves and not imposed by outsiders. It must be a product of their ideas which reflect their culture - values, beliefs, orientations, attitudes, knowledge base, history, traditions and customs so that it authoritatively allocates their own values to them. For example, African democracy must allocate African values to Africans and not European or American values to Africans. When the people own their own democracy, they are more apt to respect it and abide by its rules. If they do not own it, they are more apt to rebel against it or reject it. The attempts by western governments to impose liberal democracy as a precondition for the grant of independence or by the Breton Woods organizations acting at the behest of the same Western governments to impose liberal democracy through structural adjustment conditionalities are therefore a contravention of this principle of democracy. Such imposition is not democracy, the rule of the people, but democrazy, demonstration of craziness. The character of such imposition is not
democratic but democrazic. It is no wonder that such imposition has not led to democracies in Africa, but democrazies as exemplified by the historical experience of Nigeria’s Biafran war, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and recently, the lamentable experience of Kenya.

*Democracy by the people* means the people and only the people must participate in it in accordance with the rules they have set and not according to rules set for them by outsiders. It implies that it is the citizens, and only the citizens, who should participate in it. Strangers and outsiders are excluded and should not interfere. The interference of the West in the democratic processes of African countries such as election monitors from outside is a very serious violation of this fundamental principle of democracy.

*Democracy for the people* means democracy is purposeful. It must be a means by which the people can realize their aspirations. It implies democracy should facilitate the attainment of the aspirations of the people including reducing transaction costs. It must help the people solve their problems. Genuine democracy must be capable of mobilizing the people and directing their talents and energies towards the realization their needs and aspirations. A predatory government that always takes from the people to provide fat salaries to politicians and officials while providing negligible services to the people or fails to mobilize the people to meet their needs and dreams contravenes this fundamental principle of democracy. The persistence of racial discrimination (detrimental to equal opportunity, equity and justice) and inequalities - coexistence of abject poverty with billionaires - in the so-called western democracies is proof that liberal democracy has failed miserably as *democracy for the people*. Go to the United States, Britain, France and you will find abject poverty in the midst of plenty despite centuries of liberal democracy, decades of space age pomposity, and inordinate pride boasting of arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. I therefore advance the thesis that *western liberal democracy is hypocritical, inadequate and inappropriate for mobilizing the people for the realization of the common good, their dreams and aspirations.*

Organizing democratic practice to fulfill the objectives of being of the people, by the people and for the people is culturally specific. Since cultural values differ it cannot be expected that African democracy should be the same as Chinese democracy, Western democracy, or Russian democracy or any other foreign democracy. What matters is cultural compatibility that recognizes and adapts to slow but sure cultural dynamics to ensure political stability. Cultural incompatibility can lead to political chaos. It is not therefore surprising that the sudden and holus bolus transplantation of liberal democracy in Africa has led to much
political chaos in the continent and has undermined the achievement of the necessary preconditions for successful development. Culture, though dynamic, changes slowly and is linked to the level of development of the productive forces or the mode of production. Thus, pre-capitalist culture and a capitalist culture should not be expected to be the same. It follows that a pre-capitalist political culture cannot be expected to be the same as the political culture of a capitalist society.

4.0 The Inappropriateness of Western Democracy in Africa

Western democracy, also called liberal democracy is appropriate for the capitalist mode of production and culture of Western society which emphasizes competition. It should not be forgotten, however, that liberal democracy did not surface in Western society until that society had become industrialized and capitalist. When western society was pre-capitalist, its culture was not capitalist and, for this reason, liberal democracy did not exist there. The pre-capitalist culture of Western society passed through several stages in response to changes in the dominant mode of production. I therefore advance the thesis that liberal democracy is only appropriate for the capitalist mode of production. Liberal democracy emphasizes individual choice leading to liberal demands. Until industrialization has taken roots with capacity and capability to meet these liberal demands liberal democracy is inappropriate. To introduce liberal democracy prematurely is to commit an economic suicide as liberal demands stretch the economy beyond its limits. Politics is about who gets what and when and economics is concerned with the production of the what. Before liberal demand for goods and services, there must be capacity and capability for liberal production of those goods and services. That is precisely why industrialization wisely preceded the bourgeois revolution that led to the development of liberal democracy in the West. The demands and requirements of the capitalist political kingdom and the precapitalist political kingdoms are just not the same. To expect the pre-capitalist culture of Africa to swallow liberal democracy without pain and at a time when industries are not even on the drawing boards is unfair, a reflection of double historical standards, and raises questions about the sincerity of those who advocate so, including their possible hidden agendas.

Some characteristics and practices of liberal democracy further confirm its inappropriateness in Africa. These derive from its partisan and competitive nature. Its partisan nature divides society along partisan lines. When this partisan nature is superimposed upon the multiethnic or multi-clan societies of Africa, the invocation of ethnic and clan symbols during the competitive campaigns to win votes sets centrifugal political forces into motion which tend to tear the very fabric of society apart rather unite it. Loyalty and commitment to the nation are sacrificed for loyalty to the party while the sovereignty of the people becomes the sovereignty of the party. I therefore advance the thesis that one of the principal hidden agendas of those who advocate liberal democracy for Africa from the West might be to keep African countries divided and weak enough to be dominated...
...the formation of political parties and the subsequent political campaigns ....divert scarce resources from development...

culturally – the same divide and rule logic of imperialism. Imperialism is like Johnny Walker, born 1820, still going strong!

Moreover, the formation of political parties and the subsequent political campaigns are not only very expensive, but also divert scarce resources from development and encourages straddling and corruption to raise funds for political competition. The expensiveness of the political campaigns of liberal democracy is substantiated by the tens of millions of dollars being spent on the processes of just selecting the nominees of Democratic and Republican parties of the United States before the November presidential elections. Is that what Africa really needs? The expensiveness of liberal democracy raises many questions about why it is recommended for impoverished Africa. The economies of African countries are known to be very weak. Is it fair to expect the weak economies of Africa to afford the expensiveness of liberal democracy? Analogously, does it make sense to expect a poor fellow to purchase an expensive Mercedes Benz car? This is my call to Africa, my native land, the land of my birth. Listen, O Africa! Liberal democracy is a luxurious and expensive political Mercedes Benz. Moreover, it is neither the only political car available nor the only real democratic car. Why buy it? If political parties in African countries find themselves not capable of raising adequate funds to finance their parties and the political campaigns, there is a great temptation to borrow from outside. Such borrowing cannot be expected to be without strings attached. When this happens, liberal democracy becomes a sell out for the resulting party government is not owned by the people, but by outsiders and a violation of a fundamental principle of democracy itself. I therefore advance the thesis that one of the principal hidden agendas of those who advocate liberal democracy for Africa might be to enable them advantageously own and control African governments from outside. This is buttressed by the fact that it is the same people who enslaved, colonized and continue to neo-colonize Africa and their agents who advocate liberal democracy for Africa. They advocated it for the Palestinians, but when Hamas won the elections, they refused to recognize it. Are they really serious about the liberal democracy they preach? Surely, liberal democracy is like its own mother, imperialism. They both have a forked tongue for they do not practice what they preach. Should Africa not be suspicious at least?

There are also cultural problems associated with liberal democracy in Africa. African culture emphasizes cooperation rather than competition for competition is regarded as an easy invitation for the devil to enter. For this reason, a competitive spirit is frowned upon right from childhood while...
cooperation and compromise are emphasized. On the contrary, Western culture emphasizes competition which it embraces as a means to efficiency. It explains why liberal democracy involves competition among political parties. Unfortunately, the expensive political campaigns are not conducive to efficiency.

According to African culture, people should not praise themselves, for it is more honourable for others to praise them. Contrary to this fundamental cultural value, the political campaign of liberal democracy both requires and encourages individuals to mount political platforms praising themselves as good people to be trusted and who deserve votes. Various scandals including the recent scandal of Governor Eliot Spitzer of New York State, confirm that the candidates are not as good as they claim and may even be hypocrites and crooks. Also, in African culture, it is a disgrace and a taboo to fail to honour your promise. In liberal democracy, more often than not promises made at the campaigns soon turn into dupes. Indeed, the successful politician of liberal democracy is the one who is able to manipulate the people with vain promises to win the most votes. Because African culture abhors vain promises, when hopes are suddenly dashed through broken promises, the resulting mistrust of politicians leads to social unrest and political turmoil. Another cultural problem is linguistic. In the indigenous political culture there were no political parties and the concept of political opposition did not exist. The only force of opposition came from the enemy from outside. There is therefore a tendency in Africa to linguistically consider the member of an opposing party as an enemy rather than a fellow citizen who happens only to have different political views. Election is therefore competition between enemies and election time is a time of war between uncompromising enemies. As African culture predicts and expects of competition, the devil of competition enters with its sharp claws turning real (practical) democracy into real (practical) democrazy. It explains why elections in Africa are characterized by much violence resulting in much loss of life.

The ballot box technology of liberal democracy complicates the problem. In such an electoral war, it is not so much who actually votes, but who controls the ballot box, stuffs it with ballot papers and announces the results. It is also not so much who is convinced about some political principles or values, but who can buy much electoral votes. All sides in the competition know the possibility of such political games. Under such conditions, it is difficult to trust the ruling government who appoints the electoral commission and is perceived as having some power over it. It is therefore not surprising that much vote rigging and vote buying characterize elections in Africa. It is also not surprising that post election accusations of vote rigging and unfairness are so common. Even if no vote rigging occurs, the suspicion persists for it is not easy and honorable to accept defeat at the hands of the enemy. Examples of this include the recent elections in Nigeria and Kenya. Certainly, this is not democracy but democrazy.

The time-mandate in liberal democracy where those elected cannot be replaced until the end of their mandate encourages the phenomenon of dictatorship of the elected few in which Prime Ministers and Presidents are virtually mandated dictators. Once the elections are over, they dictate to the people rather than listen to them as election promises are soon thrown into the garbage can. Thus, despite much
opposition from the American and British people and rest of the world, acting on a casus belli of weapons of mass destruction which both Britain and America have amassed in abundance, George W. Bush and Tony Blair declared war on Iraq with impunity. Ironically, George Bush and Tony Blair later justified their invasion of Iraq in the name of establishing democracy there. But a dictator is one who is able to carry out his intentions despite much resistance to the contrary. Thus, by such analytical criterion, George Bush and Tony Blair qualify as dictators. Some may even argue that they dictated to the entire world while Saddam Hussein only dictated to Iraqis. Despite this, both Tony Blair and George Bush claim to be champions of democracy. This confirms my thesis that liberal democracy, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. Its dictatorship component is always present and can be increased to or invoked to achieve the status of a strong state at any time. This leads to the question of whether Africa needs a strong State without democracy or a democracy without a strong State.

5.0 Does Africa need a strong State without democracy or a democracy without a strong State?

The rectangular hyperbolic relationship between democracy and dictatorship confirms that both pure democracy and pure dictatorships are impossible for the graphs do not cross the axes though asymptotic to them. Strong state is obtained by increasing the dictatorship component as desired. Desire is a product of interest. Once interest is identified and defined, the state apparatuses can be rearranged to raise or lower the dictatorship content to obtain the level of strong state required. According to the United States it has no friends, but interests. Once the interests of the United States are identified and defined, its state apparatuses respond to achieve the level of strong state required to meet the challenges and marshals the support of its allies when necessary. In the same manner, Africa must aim at having no friends and no masters or lords, but interests which it must identify and define. Additionally, African countries must be able to identify who their real allies are. Are their true allies those who give them aid with strings attached or those who give them aid without strings? Are their allies those who deny them reparations as atonement for centuries of slavery, a century of colonialism and decades of neocolonialism or are they those who are supportive of reparations which have been paid to all human societies except Africans?

An obstacle standing in the way of Africa identifying its interests is the legacy of the scramble for Africa which resulted in Africa being divided into little and weak bits. Under such conditions, it is difficult for an individual African to define its interests effectively. A city divided against itself cannot stand. It is up to the political leaders of Africa today to decide whether to continue with this particular legacy of colonialism or not. I call to Africa, my native land again! Listen, O Africa, there is wisdom in the maxim of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto it.” Imported liberal democracy, imported socialism, and imported military rule have all failed and proved incapable of providing Africa with this political kingdom – the United States of Africa. It is only a continental government of Africa that can effectively identify and define the interests of Africa effectively and mobilize the human and material resources of continent to achieve the
level of strong state required to meet Africa’s needs. Africa in bits can achieve very little. Divided African states emerging in less than a century from colonialism with weak and vulnerable economies competing with one another and weakened deeper and deeper by premature imposition of liberal democracy can only hope to be beggars with caps in hand lining up for their turn of the crumbs that fall from the masters’ tables. This is the scenario at the present. Can Africa rise above this? Yes, we can provided we unite to constitute the United States of Africa. The rudiments for constituting this United States of Africa are present in Africa’s own indigenous democracy and so are the solutions to Africa’s problems.

6.0 Is there an African voice of democracy?

Liberal democracy is not the only type of democracy available to humanity. Democracy is not alien to Africa for it is an integral part of its pervasive consensual culture and reflected very much in its mode of organization of labour, cooperative labour. Under trees, in compounds, in farms and in rooms, Africans or their selected representatives gathered to make consensually democratic decisions about their common good in both the economic and political spheres. Through this consensual decision making process, clans united to constitute villages and villages merged to form towns and cities. The same building blocks were used to constitute nations. We hear of the ancient Egyptian empire, the Ghana, Mali, and Songhay empires of the Western Sudan, the Monomapata kingdom of Zimbabwe, the Zulu empire of South Africa to mention a few. These were all products of the same consensual processes. This should not be interpreted to mean that conquests did not take place. It is to emphasize that after conquest, the processes of absorbing the conquered to expand the empire followed the consensual democratic process. It should not be forgotten that most of the ancient Greek philosophers revered today including Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Socrates, Euclid, Diodorus, Solon, Thales, Hypocrates, Archimedes, and Euripides received their schooling in Egypt where they learnt at the feet of the Egyptian masters. These masters were Africans. It is difficult to deny that these philosophers carried rudiments of democracy in Africa to Greece. The origin of democracy might therefore not be in Greece, but in Africa.

Thus, to the ancient Greeks, Egypt of the pharaohs was both the origin and fountain of wisdom amazing in mathematics and philosophy and flocked there to acquire both wisdom and knowledge that were not available in Europe. In his histories written around 450 B.C, Herodotus reminded his readers that the names of the gods of ancient Greece came to Greece from Egypt. Homer before him asked emphatically, was it not to the lands in Africa south of Egypt that that the gods of Greece flew once a year to feast with the older gods of inland Africa? If the ancient Greeks could borrow or copy the gods of Africa, what prevented them from borrowing or copying the democracy of Africa?

In my book, Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa, I explained how this consensual democracy which I called Jaku democracy worked and how the institution of Ajina (an odd number of people selected at random at any council) helped to break any consensual
...Consensual democracy – ‘Jaku Democracy’ – is the best compatible democracy for Africa...

deadlock. There are no parties in consensual democracy and representatives are selected according to their known qualities right from childhood and not by political competition. Thus, in Jaku democracy the people know those they select very well and no chance is given to hypocrites or crooks. There is no time mandate and they can be removed at any time if they do not perform. Such removal is considered a disgrace. For this reason, the representatives are kept on their toes to deliver their best. It is characterized by a balance between centralization and decentralization to prevent the abuse of power and to ensure the effective participation of citizens at all levels of the political system. Preliminary decisions taken at the top are fed down to the lower levels for their consideration and feedback before final and binding decisions are taken.

Some argue that consensual democracy is possible only in small communities. That view is far from the truth. The empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay were no small communities and the kingdoms of the Ashanti, Ga, Ovimbuda and Zulu to mention only a few were not small either. Moreover, the United Nations, a very huge and complex organization in modern times operates mainly by consensus despite the possibility of veto at its Security Council. In Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa, Chapter 5, I explained in detail how this Jaku democracy can be modified to satisfy the requirements of modern government. I argued that the Nobel prize laureate Kenneth Arrow proved mathematically that it is impossible to optimize the social welfare function under liberal democratic conditions. However, it can be optimized under consensual or Jaku democratic conditions. The superiority of Jaku democracy over liberal democracy in the African cultural environment is therefore very difficult to deny, for while liberal democracy tends to divide Africans, Jaku democracy tends to bring them together and unite them by facilitating the transfer of the ideological symbols of unity from the ethnic level to the national level through its consensual process which gives all ethnic groups equal voice.

Jaku democracy means an end to concentration of power in the hands of one person and the complete eradication of all forms of dictatorship and tyranny for the people decide by consensus. Consensual decision making encourages and empowers the free exchange of ideas leading to forward ever and backward never dynamics. Its mode of organization of labour means an end to the phenomena of unemployment and poverty so prevalent in western democracies. Because of its rejection of cultural stasis or conservatism and its strong recognition of cultural dynamics, it means continuous improvement in the organization of the consensual political system to conform to the requirements of modern government. For this reason, when Africa becomes industrialized and capitalist, a type of democracy shall emerge which may be similar, but not the same as the inadequate liberal democracy of the West, for it shall allocate African values to the Africans of those days. Jaku democracy does not mean delinking from the rest of the world. Rather, it seeks to integrate and
reorganize African political systems and unite Africans in such a manner that Africa, as a whole, can participate more effectively in the political economy of the world. It means an end to destructive competition among African states through judicious distribution of industries and productive activities to promote a strong internal trade so conducive to autocentric development.

7.0 Tribalism or Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa

The word tribe is not an African word, but a European word that was used to describe the structure of past European society especially the Goths of Germany who were also called the barbarians. Hence, there is an inextricable association between the word tribe and the word barbarian. Unfortunately, the word barbarian is used to describe savages. It was in this negative sense that imperialism described African social formations as tribes. For this reason, and because Africans are not Gothic Europeans, I do not like to use the word tribe to describe any social formation in Africa. In Africa, there were nations and sub-nations which continue to exist despite the European legacy of division of the continent into bits under colonialism. These nations and sub-nations may be referred to appropriately as ethnic groups. Ethnic tensions accompanied the processes of the European and Arab slave trade in Africans which set one African nation against another African nation for the purposes of obtaining captives. It should not be forgotten that the Atlantic slave trade in Africans was between Europeans in Africa and Europeans in Europe and the Americas. The processes of the colonial conquest and colonial logic of divide and rule had the effect of worsening these ethnic tensions. I therefore advance the thesis that **ethnic tensions in Africa are principally rooted in the legacy of slavery and colonialism and are invoked and animated by the partisan politics of liberal democracy**.

As explained above, the partisan and competitive nature of liberal democracy exacerbates these ethnic tensions and divides the people as politicians invoke ethnic symbols to win votes. The winner take all stance of liberal democracy has the tendency to alienate ethnic minorities. On the contrary, Jaku democracy overcomes ethnic tensions through its consensus building process which emphasizes cooperation rather than competition and gives all ethnic groups including minorities equal voice. While ethnicity is a problem in liberal democracies, it is not a problem at all in Jaku democracy. Historical evidence supports this view. When liberal democracy failed to work in Somalia and the modern state of Somalia collapsed, it was the consensual democracy of the clan system which rescued the various clan communities from disaster and fostered inter-clan cooperation and communication. Recently, the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has been engaged in bringing the warring ethnic factions in Kenya together using the principles of consensual democracy. Again, when liberal democracy failed and incited violent ethnic conflict in Kenya, it was consensual democracy that came to the rescue. Unfortunately, after the rescue, the leaders of Kenya are expected to operate within the same political religion – liberal democracy. Why? Because Kenyans still have faith in that religion which the West beams vehemently to the whole world. By returning to and embracing its own democracy, Africa can achieve a lot and even lead the world again.
8.0 Conclusion: What can Africa Achieve Under its Own Voice of Democracy?

Africa can practice its own Jaku democracy more effectively to solve its problems because it owns it and knows how to apply it being its own political culture. The nation-building and state-building blocks of Jaku democracy can be applied to establish the United States of Africa and to create a strong and encompassing political coalition capable of identifying, defining and realizing the interests and aspirations of the people of Africa. Africa, the slumbering giant shall awake and proudly project the African identity, respect and dignity within the world community. Africa shall become the pride of the descendants of its children who were stolen to Europe and America and shall welcome them back with open arms. The brain drain from Africa to the rest of the world shall not only come to an end, but be reversed. In this United States of Africa, there shall be no longer be citizens of Nigeria, Ghana, Somalia, Kenya, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Tanzania etc., but citizens of the United States of Africa with one destiny.

Africans shall no longer communicate with Africans via Europe and neither shall banks in Africa be the virtual extensions of banks in America and Europe for Africa shall have its own bank and is own independent common currency. The great East-West and North-South trade routes which the forces of colonialism closed shall be opened again and the internal trade of the over 800 million Africans shall be greater than those of Europe and America put together. Africa shall no longer have multiple and uncoordinated foreign policies each vetted and approved from Europe and America, but one foreign policy that speaks one potent voice. Political stability shall be ensured and coups shall cease for the large and strong federal army that can easily and swiftly crush any rebellion anywhere without assistance from outside shall dissuade such attempts. Industrialization shall open the way for value added exports that create more jobs and make unemployment a thing of the past. Unemployment is impossible in African cooperative labour. Land is available in abundance, why should Africans be unemployed? Unemployment was a deliberate creation of colonialism through the imposition of the hut tax and poll tax to obtain a reserve army of labour for the mines, the colonial administrative system, and the colonial military. Jaku democracy means genuine decolonization and an end to nominal independence in the shackles and tutelage of neocolonialism. Africa shall no longer be the exporter of primary products, but of finished products. Africa shall once again assume its role as the fountain and origin of wisdom amazing in mathematics, science, technology by establishing and expanding learning and research institutions second to none in the world.

Some may ask curiously, can the United States of Africa ever catch up in great scientific and technological feats such as putting a satellite into orbit, sending astronauts to walk on the moon and participate effectively in the international space station where astronauts float like kites in weightless space? Of course we can, but we are wiser and can do better than that so long as famine, disease and poverty abound on earth. Can Africa produce nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles to serve as deterrence to others? Of course we can and we can use such deterrence to press for the reparations long overdue to Africa from Europe, America and the Arab world, but we are wiser than that. Instead, we shall apply our superior wisdom and knowledge of the technology of desalination of
seawater to create artificial rivers and lakes from the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea to irrigate and transform the Sahara and Kalahari deserts into bread baskets for Africa in particular, and the world as a whole. Poverty and famine shall vanish away and hope for the future shall become as the bright as the sun. Africa, the dark continent of today shall become once again the brightest continent and the hope of the entire world. The souls of the ancestors of Africa including the great Pharaohs, Emperors, Kings and Queens shall rise and join us in singing “Great Africa leads the world again. O Africa, how great you are!” Certainly, liberal democracy cannot achieve this. Surely, the Jaku democracy of the United States of Africa can.
Contributions

The following section presents opinions and articles obtained from interested individuals or institutions.
Democracy and Its Practice: A General Theory of Democratic Relativity

Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle

1.0 Introduction: Defining Democracy

Democracy has been defined in various ways by different people including government of the people, by the people and for the people, government with the consent of the governed, and a form of regime that derives from popular sovereignty in which ordinary citizens are endowed with the right and ability to govern themselves. It is my contention that concepts may have real (essential), nominal and operational definitions and democracy is no exception. The real definition is concerned with the true, essential or philosophical nature of the concept. The nominal definition is concerned with what has been agreed upon by society, a particular community or by a researcher that helps to imagine and describe what the concept is. Although the nominal definition can lead to the description of the concept, it may not necessarily lead to its measurement. The operational definition specifies the indicators of the concept to enable its measurement directly or indirectly. Democracy has only one real or essential definition. Other definitions of it arise precisely because there is a difference between the real or essential meaning of democracy and the actual practice of democracy that leads to nominal and operational definitions. While the real, philosophical, ideal or essential meaning of democracy remains the same, the actual practice of democracy may be said to be in the eye of the beholder.

The essential or real meaning of democracy derives from two Greek words demos and kratos. Demos means the common people (not the aristocracy) and kratos means rule. Thus, democracy essentially means the rule of the common people (citizens). As explained above, any attempt to define it otherwise is a matter of convenience and may have its roots in the difference between what democracy essentially is and how it is practiced. Defining what constitutes the common people and what constitutes rule have both been the subject of much debate. Calling the common people simply, the people, Robert Dahl questioned how the people are designated (Dahl, 1989, p.3). For Rustow democracy has to be preceded by national feeling or a feeling of national unity for “The people cannot decide until somebody decides who are the people.” (Rustow, 1970, pp.337-367). At the time of the ancient Greeks, the common people who could take part in political decision making was defined to comprise only a subset of the people as a whole, for children, prisoners, women and slaves were excluded. For the Greeks, the exclusion of certain sections of society from the definition of the common people was reasonable and did not render democratic practice null and void. In modern democratic practice, exclusion of certain sections of society including foreigners and children still exists and considered reasonable. The problem in democratic practice is, therefore, what constitutes a reasonable exclusion. No matter how reasonable it is, however, exclusion undeniably enables one section of society (who may or may not be the majority) to dictate to those that are excluded. Democratic practice may therefore be conceived of as a mixture of some essence of democracy and some measure of
dictatorship.

Exclusion may also be subtle and there is no place on this planet where the common people (interpreted as the masses) rule. Elite theorists including, the classical elite theorists Mosca, Pareto, Michel and modern elite theorists such as Mills, Porter, Field and Higley have drawn attention to the fact that, despite partisan political competition and claims of existence of democracy, it is the organized few that rule the majority comprising the unorganized masses. This dictatorship of the organized few is in effect a reference to the dictatorship component of democratic practice. The Marxist notion of a dominant class of capitalists and the notion of the executive of the modern State being “a committee for managing the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” also substantiate the fact that democratic practice has a dictatorship component. Thus, democratic practice is invariably a convenient product comprising some ingredients of both dictatorship and the essence of democracy.

2.0 The Democratic Practice Model

Democratic practice involves a constant struggle between society and State in which society demands some level of the essence of democracy mixed with some level of dictatorship and the State provides what it considers a balanced mixture. Some level of dictatorship is always required as a control function to avoid anarchy. The relationship between the dictatorship component and the democracy component of democratic practice demanded by society is such that when one increases the other decreases - an inverse relationship. The amount of democracy content or level of democracy depends upon the amount of the dictatorship content or level of dictatorship. Denoting the level of democracy by $Y$ and the level of dictatorship by $X$, the relationship between the two may be expressed mathematically as:

$$Y = \frac{K}{X}.$$  

Thus,

$$YX = K.$$

(1)

Where $K$ is a constant.

This is the equation of a rectangular hyperbola with the level of democracy as the dependent variable and the level of dictatorship as the independent variable. For every political system, the value of the constant $K$ is different giving rise to a family of rectangular hyperbolas. We may call $K$, the democratic product constant. A sketch of the family of rectangular hyperbolas is given in figure 1 below. The rectangular hyperbolas represent paths of democratic practice demanded by society. Once the value of $K$ is calculated for any society, the path of democratic practice can be drawn. As explained below, the family of rectangular hyperbolas can help predict the impact on democratic practice both under challenging and harmonious
Any form of democratic practice is a combined product of democracy and dictatorship.

As Aristotle has warned, time and again throughout history these pure democracies had been captured by demagogues and had degenerated into dictatorial tyrannies. John Adams wrote in an 1814 letter: "Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide." This well justified fear of "the mob" led the founders to create a republic, a form of government one step removed from democracy that presumably protects the people from their own passions. The frustrations of coming to grips with the concept and reality of democracy is illustrated by Winston Churchill's 1947 remark in the House of Commons: "No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those forms that have been tried from time to time." (p.45)

Despite much rhetoric to the contrary, any form of democratic practice is a combined product of democracy and dictatorship. Stability of democratic practice therefore depends upon a balanced combination of the democracy and dictatorship components.

It is quite possible for a political regime to have a high democracy component internally, but in its relations with the outside world to have a very high dictatorship content. For example, the political regimes of the West may be said to have high democracy components internally, but in their relations with developing countries, they tend to dictate. This is because the constituents of the level of democracy and the level of dictatorship are not the same at the local and international arenas. At the international arena, the constituents that...
influence the level of dictatorship include, the degree of international regulation, the level of economic power, the level of military power, effectiveness of intelligence, degree of dependence on external resources, degree of focus on national interest, ability to exercise veto power, degree of national pride, and degree of involvement in military alliances. The constituents that influence the level of democracy include the degree of reliance on diplomacy, degree of belief in the equality of nations, degree of sensitivity to international opinion, level of tolerance of the laws of individual nations, level of tolerance of the actions of individual nations, respect for the rights of individual nations, degree of respect for international conventions, and degree of respect of the United Nations. For this reason, the value of democratic product constant, $K$, is not the same at the local and international levels. Democratic practice demanded by a particular society at the international and local levels may, therefore, be quite different.

3.0 Explanatory Power of the Model

The curves are asymptotic to the axes and convey the message that there is no perfect democracy and there is no perfect dictatorship. A study of the values of $K$ and its influence on the sketch of the family of rectangular hyperbolas shows that the higher its value, the further away a curve is from the axes. For any given value of the dictatorship content of democratic practice, the higher the value of $K$, the higher the level of democracy. $K$ is therefore a measure of how democratic practice has matured. The lower the value of $K$ the closer the curves of the rectangular hyperbolas are to the axes. It implies that the same curves that are closer to the level of dictatorship axes are also closer the level of democracy axes and sends the message that those same societies that may be quick to demand ideal democracy may be the same societies that may be quick to degenerate into chaos and requiring dictatorial control when faced with a crisis because their democratic product constant is lower. It explains the prevalence of coups in weaker economies as the economic crisis deepens. Also for any given value of $K$, the higher the level of dictatorship, the lower the level of democracy and vice versa. When $K$ remains the same, but the dictatorship and democracy contents of its democratic practice change, a society may move along a particular rectangular hyperbola. Thus, a society's movement along a rectangular hyperbola with $K$ fixed implies changes in its dictatorship and democratic constituents. It is to be noted that once $K$ is obtained from attitudinal research for any country, that country's rectangular hyperbola can be drawn. $K$ enables the democratic maturity of countries to be compared and their likely stable democratic trajectory to be predicted.

Under conditions of, prosperity, peace and harmony, a country may choose to increase its democracy content and reduce its dictatorship content. It explains why the prosperity of the West has encouraged an increase in democracy content, but it is emphasized that peace and harmony are equally important. In an emergency situation such as war, more power may be concentrated in the hands of the political executive to enable quick decisions to be made without appreciable change in the nature of the political regime. This concentration of power leads to an increase in the dictatorship component and a decrease in the democracy component while $K$ remains the same. When the challenges are overwhelming and last long enough, the dictatorship
component may so increase and the democracy component so decrease that democratic practice jumps from one value of \( K \) to another. If the value of \( K \) so changes in response to changes in the dictatorship and democracy contents, then a country’s democratic path may change from one rectangular hyperbola to the other. This change may be smooth over time or sudden. We may call this change a **regime transition** and when this regime transition changes the democracy component dramatically, a **democratic transition** may be said to have taken place. A **democratic transition** may therefore be negative or positive. The following examples illustrate these points.

After the terrorist attack on the Word Trade Center and the Pentagon, Congress placed more power in the hands of the President of the United States to enable him deal with the emergency situation and security was tightened. These measures increased the dictatorship component and reduced the democracy component, but the political regime did not change. Hence, \( K \) remained the same and democratic practice in the United States only moved downward along the same rectangular hyperbola. The experience of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union provides an illustration of a positive transition. The resulting regime in Russia made a positive transition by both dramatically increasing the democracy component and decreasing the dictatorship component. The value of \( K \) changed in such a manner that Russia is now on an entirely different rectangular hyperbola of democratic practice. However, Russia has to be carefully watched for as explained earlier, nation-states with lower levels of democratic maturity (low values of \( K \)) that are quick to raise their levels of democracy content are also likely to increase their dictatorship content rather sharply when faced with a crisis. The situation in Chechnya, if allowed to stretch the political fabric of Russia too far, can result in a transition back to the communist dictatorship of the past. Military coups are examples of negative transitions. After a military coup, dramatic changes occur in both the democracy component and the dictatorship component. The dictatorship component increases sharply, the democracy component decreases sharply and the resulting transition is negative. However, a nasty experience with military rule may actually stimulate society to demand a democratic practice in which sharp changes on the democracy and dictatorship components may lead to a positive transition to a higher level \( K \) than before the military rule. A case in point is Ghana where experience with the military rule of Jerry John Rawlings led to Ghanaian society demanding a more reliable form of democratic constitution that both increased the democracy component and decreased the dictatorship component sharply to achieve a balance at a higher level of democratic maturity.

In developing countries with acute technological scarcity and overwhelming economic challenges, it may be expected that the political systems may tend to have a high dictatorship component and a low democracy component. This tendency has been referred to variously as one party rule, personal rule, and neopatrimonial rule. While one party regimes have existed, personal rule and neopatrimonial rule may be only in the eyes of the beholder. Since the hyperbolas are asymptotic to the level of dictatorship axis, there can be no perfect dictatorship and personal rule is just impossible. Given that every dictator needs the cooperation of others and discussions take place between the dictator and his political colleagues, the
democracy content can never be zero. Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle explain neopatrimonial rule as “those hybrid political systems in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism coexist with, and suffuse, rational legal institutions.” (Bratton and Walle, 1997, p.62) These neopatrimonial systems are supposed characterize the political regimes of Africa. They explain patrimonial political systems as those in which “an individual rules by dint of personal prestige and power; ordinary folks are treated as extensions of the “big mans” household with no rights or privileges other than those bestowed by the ruler. Authority is entirely personalized, shaped by the ruler’s preferences rather than codified systems of laws.” (Bratton and Walle, 1997, p.61). They seem to forget that neopatrimonial tendencies also exist in the developed countries of the West and there is no country in the world where the political system is not a hybrid and political outcomes are not shaped by the preferences of the political executive. Party loyalty and the powers of Presidents and Prime Ministers are all reflections of neopatrimonialism. Hence, neopatrimonialism is a universal phenomenon which exists in varying degrees. It is the democracy and dictatorship contents that make the difference.

Moreover, it is not economics and technology alone that influence or shape the democracy and dictatorship contents of democratic practice. For example, the indigenous political systems of Africa, by their consensual nature, have a very high democracy content and low dictatorship content. It suggests that, with peace and harmony acting as catalysts, culture plays a significant role in determining the value of the democracy component. This role played by culture is explained in detail in Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa (Osabu-Kle, 2000).

Despite the role of culture, there is a tendency to conceive of democracy as simply a political regime in which political representatives are freely and fairly chosen through competitive elections. This fallacy of electoralism leaves much to be desired. First, a political regime comprises rules that prescribe, among other things, the qualifications for engaging in politics and how politics is to be conducted. Because the rules exclude sections of the population from competing in the political arena, in practice, the representatives are not freely chosen. Indeed, more often than not, voter registration tends to exclude. Secondly, the political arena cannot be said to be fair so long as the competitors are not endowed with equal resources. Thirdly, competitive elections are not a sufficient condition for democracy. Apart from the possibility of rigging, elections might actually lead to the dictatorship of the elected few or to the dictatorship of the majority of the population over visible minorities.

4.0 Comparison With Dahl’s Model

In Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, Robert Dahl distinguished political regimes by two axes - the degree of political competition and the degree of political participation (Dahl, 1971). The axis of political competition was graduated from monopolistic regimes in which power is concentrated in the hands of a narrow elite to pluralist regimes in which power is dispersed among groups and institutions. The axis of political participation was graduated by the proportion of the population that is entitled to participate in a more or less equal plane. The higher the proportion of the population that plays a part in decision making, the more inclusionary the regime type and the lower that
proportion, the more exclusionary the regime type. There is some similarity between Dahl’s axes and mine. His axis of degree of political competition may correspond to my axis of level of dictatorship denoted by X and his axis of political participation may correspond to my axis of level of democracy denoted by Y.

However, in Dahl’s model, there is no notion of the democratic product constant, K, or possible paths along which democratic practice may follow. His descriptive model does not explain why and how under emergency situations, political decision making power tends to be concentrated in the hands of the political executive while the political regime remains the same and change only when the challenges are overwhelming. My model explains that, for a given value of K, democratic practice demanded by society is free to move along a rectangular hyperbola so that in emergency situations a State may choose to alter its position on its path of democratic practice by increasing its dictatorship content and decreasing its democracy content. Dahl’s model does not explain why some States that have high democracy content at the local level tend to exhibit the characteristics of dictatorship in their dealings at the international arena to the extent that they even buttress regimes with high levels of dictatorship content. My model explains that the value of K is not the same at the international level for its constituents at the local and international levels are just not the same.

5.0 Determining the Point of Democratic Equilibrium

The political system of a society may move along its path of democratic practice, but at any particular period it occupies a particular point on that path. The political system as a whole may require a type of democratic practice profile specified by K, but it is the State system that, in the final analysis, permits the particular mix of democracy and dictatorship. In completely stateless societies, the dictatorship component does not exist for there is no rule, and where there is no rule, there is no democracy either for each one is for himself or herself. In such a state of anarchy or Hobbesian state of nature, both the democracy and dictatorship components are zero. In general, the democratic mix permitted by the state may be represented by

\[ Y = aX^n \]

where \( n \) is an index representing the willingness of the state system to respond to the democratic demands of society. We may call \( n \) the state sensitivity index. Since the willingness of the state may vary from one period to another and under various circumstances, the value of \( n \) may change from one period to another and under differing circumstances. When \( n \) is zero, \( Y \) equals \( a \). Hence, \( a \) represents a particular threshold of the level of democracy permitted by the State. We may call \( a \) the democratic threshold constant of the State. The value of \( a \) may vary from one State to the other. For the particular case where \( n = 1 \), \( Y = aX \) which is a straight line. The values of \( Y \) and \( X \) for the State subsystem may be obtained through an attitudinal research on the elites of the State system comprising the bureaucratic elite, the political representatives, and the leaders of political parties where such parties exist.

From equation (2), the gradient or slope of the curve, \( dY/dX \ (aX^n) \) is \( naX^{n-1} \). Hence, the larger the value of \( n \), the steeper the gradient of the curve. It implies that the larger the value of \( n \), the more sensitive a state is to democratic demands, for it permits more democracy content per unit increase in dictatorship content. The equilibrium point at any time period is determined by the
intersection of equations (1) and (2) as shown in figure 2 below.

At any particular time period, it is at this equilibrium point that any stable political system operates. The equilibrium point for external democracy may be determined in a similar fashion.

Figure 2b below is the situation when the state sensitivity index \( n \) equal zero. Under such a situation, the state provides a constant level of democracy content \( a \) no matter the demand society places on it. The state can be made sensitive again only through an overthrow of the regime and its replacement by one more responsive to the people. This is how justifiable revolution and coups occur. It is to be noted that the democracy content is not zero, but of a fixed and conservative value of \( a \). The constant \( a \) cannot be zero since, as explained above, pure dictatorship cannot exist.

6.0 Logarithmic Transformation of the Model

Equation (1) is

\[
XY = K
\]

where \( K \) is a constant, \( X \) is the dictatorship content and \( Y \) the democracy content. Taking logarithms of both sides of the equation yields,

\[
\log Y = \log X + \log K
\]

A plot of \( \log Y \) against \( \log X \) is a family of straight lines with gradient -1 and equal intercepts of \( \log K \) on both the \( \log X \) and \( \log Y \) axes. Hence, when the value of \( K \) is known, \( \log K \) can be calculated and the corresponding straight line drawn through two points, \((0, \log K)\) and \((\log K, 0)\). A sketch of these family of straight lines is shown below in figure 3.

The logarithmic transformation helps to explain democratic development which occurs when \( K \) decreases or increases. Positive democratic development occurs when \( K \) increases resulting in an upward shift and negative democratic development occurs when \( K \) decreases resulting in a downward shift. These shifts are very similar to the shift of the demand curve in economics.

Equation (2) is

\[
Y = aX^n
\]

Taking logs,

\[
\log Y = \log a + n \log X
\]
A graph of $\log Y$ against $\log X$ is a straight line of gradient $n$ and intercept $\log a$. A sketch of the resulting family of straight lines is shown in figure 4 below.

At a particular political equilibrium,

$$\log Y = -\log X + \log K = \log a + n \log X \frac{(n+1)}{\log a} \log X = \log K - \log a$$

Political equilibrium is attained when corresponding lines of figure 3 and figure 4 intersect as shown below.

Hence, at the point of political equilibrium,

$$\log X = \frac{(\log K - \log a)}{(n+1)}$$

Equation 3 enables $\log X$ and, hence, $\log Y$ for the political equilibrium points for various countries to be calculated if the corresponding $K$, $n$, and $a$ for those countries are determined through attitudinal research of their societies and their associated State systems. Thus, apart from $K$, $n$, and $a$ enabling countries to be compared on their democratic practice, they enable their relative positions on a map of democracy content versus dictatorship content to be graphically determined.

**Estimating $a$ and $n$**

By putting $n = 1$ and using the estimated values of $X$ and $Y$ from attitudinal research, $a$ can be determined. When $n = 1$, $\log Y = \log a + \log X$ giving $\log a = \log Y - \log X$. Thus, $a$ can be obtained from the estimated values of $X$ and $Y$ used to obtain $K$. To obtain the value of $n$ for any other equilibrium point on the same rectangular hyperbola, the values of $X$ and $Y$ for that particular point must be used. Substituting the values of $a$, $Y$ and $X$ in equation (3) then gives $n$ for that equilibrium point.

7.0 Conclusion

Essentially, democracy is the rule of the common people. In practice pure democracy does not exist and democratic practice is a balanced product of some level of democracy and some level of dictatorship. Society demands democratic practice in which there is an inverse relationship between the level of
democracy content and the level of dictatorship content. The dictatorship component is an indispensable control function without which democratic practice may degenerate into mobocracy. To avoid chaos and anarchy, society itself demands a reasonable mixture of some level of democracy and some level of dictatorship. The State system responds by permitting what it considers a balanced mixture compatible with the culture of society and situational variables including the level of emergency. Because culture is dynamic and situations change, both the societal demand and the response of the State are subject to change. The model discussed shows that there is always a struggle between the democratic practice demanded by society as a whole and what the State system is willing to allow. A point of political equilibrium is reached where democratic practice is in stable equilibrium. However, depending upon circumstances, the State may make some adjustments by varying the democracy and dictatorship contents along the path of a rectangular hyperbola determined by the democratic product constant $K$. The State does that by varying $a$, the democratic threshold of the State, and $n$, its sensitivity to democratic demands. When societal challenges are overwhelming, a positive or negative transition may occur in which $K$ moves smoothly or jumps from one value to another while $a$ and $n$ remain constant or change to accommodate a new equilibrium point. Thus, society determines the value of $K$ (societal property) while $a$ and $n$ are determined by the State system (State properties). Societies may be compared on their $K$ values and State subsystems may compared on their $a$ and $n$ values.

While not denying class or group struggles within society itself, the model conveys the idea of a constant struggle between society and State which sometimes results in crises leading to democratic transitions from one value of $K$ to another. However, a high level of $K$ does not necessarily mean a high level of democracy content. Depending upon the nature of the State system, it is quite possible for a political system with a high value of $K$ to have less democracy content than a political system with a lower value of $K$. For this reason, democratic practice may be said to be in the eye of the beholder.

**References**


Briefing Paper

Africa’s missing billions
International arms flows and the cost of conflict

Summary

For the first time, IANSA, Oxfam, and Safeworld have estimated the economic cost of armed conflict to Africa’s development. Around $300bn since 1990 has been lost by Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda.

This sum is equivalent to international aid from major donors in the same period. If this money was not lost due to armed conflict, it could solve the problems of HIV and AIDS in Africa, or it could address Africa’s needs in education, clean water and sanitation, and prevent tuberculosis and malaria.

Our research estimates that Africa loses around $18bn per year due to wars, civil wars, and insurgencies. On average, armed conflict shrinks an African nation’s economy by 15 per cent, and this is probably a conservative estimate. The real costs of armed violence to Africans could be much, much higher.

The costs are incurred in a huge variety of ways. There are the obvious direct costs of armed violence – medical costs, military expenditure, the destruction of infrastructure, and the care for displaced people – which divert money from more productive uses. The indirect costs from lost opportunities are even higher. Economic activity falters or grinds to a halt. Income from valuable natural resources ends up lining individual pockets rather than benefitting the country. The country suffers from inflation, debt, and reduced investment, while people suffer from unemployment, lack of public services, and trauma. More people, especially women and children, die from the fall-out of conflict than die in conflict itself.

The research carried out for this report has estimated that the cost of armed conflict to Africa’s development has been a shocking $284bn since 1990. Although high, this is almost certainly an underestimate. For a start, this calculation only covers the cost of armed conflict, not armed crime. Further, our calculation only covers periods of actual combat but some costs of war, such as increased military spending and a struggling economy, continue long after the fighting has stopped. Neighbouring countries also suffer economically, due to reduced trade, political insecurity, or an influx of refugees.

---

1 This text is adapted by the publisher from Africa’s Missing Billions by Debbie Hillier. Oxfam GB Publishing Oct 2007 with the permission of Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2JY UK. www.oxfam.org.uk Oxfam GB does not necessarily endorse any text or activities that accompany the materials, nor has it approved the adapted text.
The evidence also suggests that at least 95 per cent of Africa’s most commonly used conflict weapons come from outside the continent. The most common weapon is the Kalashnikov assault rifle, the most well-known type being the AK-47, almost none of which are made in Africa.

A steady supply of ammunition is required to keep arms deadly, but little military ammunition is manufactured in Africa. Although it is impossible to demonstrate precisely, our research suggests that the vast majority of ammunition has to be imported from outside Africa.

If armed violence is this costly and most of the weapons come from outside Africa, then Africa desperately needs to stop the flow of arms to those who abuse human rights and ignore the rules of war. As well as looking at the demand for weapons, strong initiatives must be taken to restrict supply. Many African nations, recognising the threat to their development from irresponsible arms transfers, have already made significant efforts towards arms control.

However, many African governments feel let down by the international community. They know that the arms trade is globalised, and that national or regional regulations, although absolutely vital, are not enough.

Africa, as elsewhere, needs new international standards on arms transfers – a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Such a treaty would not prevent the responsible transfer of weapons for defence, policing, peacekeeping, and other legitimate purposes, but it must prohibit arms transfers if they are likely to be used to:

- Commit serious violations of international humanitarian law;
- Commit serious violations of international human rights law;
- Undermine sustainable development.

Although the causes of armed violence are many and highly complex, and require a variety of actions to be taken, we believe that an ATT based on these principles would be one important tool in reducing armed violence in Africa.

At the moment, there are international negotiations working towards such a treaty. So far, African support for an ATT has been crucial to its success. Negotiations in the United Nations are reaching a critical stage. It is vital for governments, in Africa and around the world, to support these negotiations and demand a strong result.

There is an urgent need to reduce the international supply of arms and ammunition to Africa. Otherwise the cost to African development – measured not just in dollars wasted but in lives shattered and opportunities squandered – will remain immense.

1.0 Introduction

This report moves beyond what is already clear: that armed violence is one of the greatest threats to development in Africa. It investigates the high costs of armed violence to Africa, looks at where the weapons come from which feed this violence, and then highlights one important area where progress is urgently required at both African and international
levels. This report will not attempt to address the complex causes of armed violence, but instead will focus on the arms that fuel, prolong and intensify this violence.

This report will focus primarily on Africa’s armed conflicts – partly for methodological reasons, and partly because their impact on people and economies is most severe. But this should not imply that armed violence is caused only by armed conflicts.

Africa’s experience of armed violence comes from both armed conflict and armed crime (with increasingly blurred distinctions between the two), sustained and made more lethal by the supply of arms and ammunition.

Globally, an estimated 1,000 people die every day due directly to the use of small arms. But this figure captures only a fraction of the human impact. For conflicts, the greater part of the human cost results not from deaths and injuries due to combat but indirectly from the loss of health and livelihoods caused by the disruption of economy and society. Across nine African conflicts, indirect deaths were 14 times greater than deaths occurring in combat.

Even though the number of armed conflicts is falling, there is no room for complacency. Thirty-eight per cent of the world’s armed conflicts are being fought in Africa, and in 2006, almost half of all high-intensity conflicts were in Africa.

Thirty-eight per cent of the world’s armed conflicts are being fought in Africa, and in 2006, almost half of all high-intensity conflicts were in Africa.

These conflicts prevent development. Paul Collier, Professor of Economics at Oxford University, defines conflict as one of four ‘traps’ that keep the world’s poorest countries poor and confine the world’s ‘bottom billion’ people to a life of poverty in stagnant or shrinking economies. Africa is further from attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) than any other region and armed conflict is one important factor in this. Compared to peaceful countries, African countries in conflict have, on average:

- 50 per cent more infant deaths;
- 15 per cent more undernourished people;
- Life expectancy reduced by five years;
- 20 per cent more adult illiteracy;
- 2.5 times fewer doctors per patient, and
- 12.4 per cent less food per person.

The value of the Human Development Index (HDI) drops, pushing the average conflict country from medium to low development, and GDP per capita is reduced by $1120 (63 per cent).
course, costs are not borne equally across the population, and inequalities often rise as many conflicts are fought along regional, social, religious, or ethnic lines.

In non-conflict situations, Africa is also disproportionately affected by violence from firearms. It has 14 per cent of the world’s population but 20 per cent of the world’s firearm homicides, second only to Latin America.\textsuperscript{17} This is perhaps not surprising, as the guns made available through armed conflict are one factor dictating levels of armed crime.\textsuperscript{18}

Data on armed crime in Africa are in short supply, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it is rising in a number of countries. According to law enforcement officials, armed robbery increased sharply in Ghana from 1999 to 2001 (latest figures),\textsuperscript{19} in Kaduna, northern Nigeria, firearms homicide increased by over 130 per cent in 1999–2000\textsuperscript{20} and there has been a rise in gangster violence, including a proliferation of armed ‘cults’ in institutions of higher learning.\textsuperscript{21} In northern Kenya, livestock rustling, banditry, and insecurity involving pastoralists have become widespread and increasingly severe, with women and children constituting around a quarter each of all deaths.\textsuperscript{22}

What is crucial here is that this is armed violence. Just as the continuing supply of arms and ammunition sustains and increases the lethality of conflicts, so arms increase the deadliness and widen the impact of societal violence, domestic violence, and crime. For example, in Nigeria, researchers have linked the increase of crime in Lagos, with the increase in availability of firearms\textsuperscript{23}. In a survey of over 200 people, the infiltration of arms was given as a major cause of armed insecurity in northern Kenya\textsuperscript{24}. In a well-armed community, fist-fights become fire-fights, leading to an ‘arms race’ in which young men feel the need to be armed.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Africa has 14 per cent of the world’s population but 20 per cent of the world’s firearm homicides...}

As the Kenyan Foreign Minister said, ‘Conflict is part of the history of mankind. My part of the region is no exception to this historical fact. There are enough reasons to cause conflict like religious, ethnic and clan difference. Poor people tend to have even more causes for conflict. But when guns get into the calculus then it becomes a recipe for disaster.’\textsuperscript{26}

Reducing levels of armed violence requires many actions to be taken by African governments and by the international community, in diverse areas such as conflict prevention, governance, and disarmament. Oxfam, Saferworld, and IANSA members are working in many of these areas. We acknowledge and recognise the multi-faceted nature of the issue and that the root causes of armed conflict in Africa – such as poverty, poor governance, and inequality – must be addressed. Indeed, these factors can lead to a high demand for arms and there is a need for more work to address this.

However, this particular report does not aim to be comprehensive in its search for solutions. It has been written to support discussions on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) currently under consideration in the United Nations. The research for this paper confirms what we intuitively know, that the vast majority of weapons used in Africa are not made in Africa. So as one...
key part of the solution, we must look at arms flows into Africa.

2.0 Counting the cost of armed conflict

In new research for this report, we have estimated the economic cost of armed conflicts to Africa’s development. Because of methodological challenges and weaknesses in the data, the results are approximate but they will, for the first time, provide a figure to help show the scale of the threat facing development in Africa.

Our estimation

There is no standardised methodology to calculate the cost of conflict. We have used a method similar to that used by Stewart and Fitzgerald, in their influential War and Underdevelopment, where they used the fall in gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of costs in 14 conflicts. GDP shows the combined value of all goods and services produced in one year, and will be seriously affected by armed conflict in a variety of ways; Section 3 explains how this happens. This method (see below and further in the Appendix) is robust enough to provide an order of magnitude result.

Using the definitions from the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, Conflict Barometer, we looked at 23 African countries that experienced armed conflict or severe violent crisis, between 1990 and 2005. This included all African conflicts in this period, apart from Somalia for which there are no data. We calculated what the GDP of each of these countries would have been had there been no conflict, by applying the average economic growth rate of countries at a similar economic level to that of the country in conflict. The growth foregone is revealed by finding the difference between each country’s actual GDP and this projected GDP. Figure 1 demonstrates the result for Burundi.

Figure 1: Cumulative GDP loss for Burundi

This method will underestimate the true figure because it does not include:

- International costs: humanitarian aid, peacekeeping etc;
- The economic impact on neighbouring peaceful countries;
- The lingering economic impact once the conflict has been officially resolved – our estimation only covers the war years.

Further information on neighbouring countries and long-term impacts are included in Section 3. Just to reiterate, we have only estimated the costs of armed conflict, not economic losses due to crime or societal violence.

We have deliberately taken this conservative approach to ensure that the calculation does not exaggerate the cost of armed conflict to Africa’s development. It is therefore particularly shocking that the cost estimated for those 23 countries is $284bn (in constant year 2000 $) from 1990 to 2005, representing an average annual loss of 15 per cent of GDP. This amounts to an average of $18bn per year lost by Africa due to armed conflict. These figures are of course approximate. What is most telling, is that they are likely to underestimate the true cost.
This is a massive waste of resources – roughly equivalent to total international aid to Africa from major donors during the same period. It is also roughly equivalent to the additional funds estimated to be necessary to address the problems of HIV and AIDS in Africa, or to address Africa’s needs in education, clean water and sanitation, and help prevent the spread of TB and malaria.

The average annual loss of 15 per cent of GDP represents an enormous economic burden – this is one and a half times average African spending on health and education combined.

The table below gives some of the results per country as an illustration. Unsurprisingly, we find that in general, countries with bigger economies produce the biggest dollar losses, and long-lasting and widespread conflicts produce the biggest loss as a percentage of GDP. So although the dollar loss in Eritrea, for example, seems tiny in comparison with DRC, the loss is still 11 per cent of GDP, representing an enormous economic burden. Again, it must be underlined that GDP data from conflict countries are not always reliable. The figures below should be regarded as estimates rather than precise calculations.

### Other calculations of the cost of Africa’s conflicts

There are very few data with which to compare these figures.

- A review of 14 studies using different methodologies found widely differing estimates, with an average cost of 17.6 per cent of GDP per annum.
- Paul Collier and others used regression analysis to estimate that the average civil war reduces GDP by around 2.2 per cent per annum.
- Stewart and Fitzgerald studied nine African conflicts from 1970 to 1995; the average loss was 10.5 per cent per annum. This was expected to be an under-estimate due to lack of data for four countries.

For the damage caused by Uganda’s activities in the north eastern part of the DRC, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Uganda should pay reparations. The ICJ agreed that the DRC’s estimate of the bill – $6bn–$10bn – was appropriate; $6bn represents an annual loss of 21 per cent of GDP. Our calculations are similar: around $18bn reduction in GDP, representing 29 per

---

Table 1: Selected country results for the cost of conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Conflict years</th>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Projected growth</th>
<th>Actual growth</th>
<th>Loss as % of GDP</th>
<th>GDP loss ($bn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1993–2005</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1990–2001</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>1996–2005</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>1998–2000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>-3.8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Congo</td>
<td>1997–99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1990-96</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average of annual growth during war years.
**Average of annual loss as percentage of predicted GDP.
cent of GDP. Our higher values are due to the longer time frame (11 rather than five years) and the fact that our calculation would also capture the broader impact of the war beyond that associated with the Ugandan presence.

More than $20bn per year?

Our estimate of the cost of armed conflict to Africa is around $18bn per year. We have not attempted to calculate the cost of armed crime and other violence, despite its importance. To date, no studies have quantified the cost of societal violence and crime in Africa.

Further data on armed crime and the effects of armed violence in Africa will be published in 2007 and 2008. In particular, the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have developed guidelines for estimating the economic costs of injuries due to interpersonal and self-directed violence, and studies are currently ongoing in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya. In Brazil and Colombia, similar studies estimated the total costs of gun violence at 0.5 per cent and one per cent of GDP respectively.

When the African reports are available, it may be possible to calculate the cost to Africa’s development of armed violence outside of conflict. It may be possible to answer the question: does armed violence cost Africa more than $20bn per year in lost development?

3.0 Breaking down the costs of armed violence

To the national economy

The economic costs of armed violence represent resources lost to society that could have been invested in projects that benefit the economy and population.

- Direct costs: arise directly from violence and involve actual expenditure;
- Indirect costs: represent lost resources and opportunities;
- Intangible costs: do not have a price tag but fundamentally affect people’s lives and their capacity for development.

The table below presents the broad categories of costs.

**Table 2: Key costs to the national economy in the context of armed crime/societal violence and conflict**

These are all real costs to each country involved but not all will be noted as a drop in GDP, because GDP captures the market value of all goods and services produced, whether these increase wellbeing in the country or not. GDP will be reduced by most of the indirect costs; but most of the direct costs represent ‘unproductive expenditure’ i.e. extra expenditure due to the insecurity.
Diversion of resources from productive expenditure

There are two factors at play which reduce productive expenditure:

1. Total income to governments and the vast majority of households falls in times of armed conflict. At state level, the collection of domestic and border taxes dwindles catastrophically due to losses in taxable production, tax evasion, and low administrative capacity. This is exacerbated by decreasing external balance, soaring foreign debt, accelerating inflation, and budget deficit.

2. The proportion of state expenditure diverted into conflict-related activities – both military spending and combat-related health care – will probably rise at the expense of investment in essential services. At household level, families may have to spend money on healthcare for injuries, which will prevent them, for example, from sending their children to school.

Government social expenditure per head fell dramatically during the wars in Angola, Ethiopia, Liberia, Somalia, and Uganda. According to the World Health Organisation, treating large numbers of patients with gunshot wounds in Africa ‘has a draining effect on basic health care and diverts much-needed resources from other health and social services’. The same is true at household level; in South Africa, a significant proportion of non-fatally injured patients are forced into debt to pay medical expenses resulting from firearm injuries.

Proportions of direct, indirect, and intangible costs

Although no studies have been undertaken in Africa, studies from elsewhere clearly show that for societal violence and crime, intangible quality of life costs are the greatest, followed by the indirect cost of productivity losses, and finally by direct medical costs. If indirect costs are higher for societal violence, then this trend will be even more pronounced for conflict situations.

There are too few data to say how the GDP loss during armed conflict is apportioned. There is only one example in Africa where there has been an attempt to quantify the costs of conflict by counting individual costs (rather than modelling). This study of the cost of conflict in northern Uganda found that the key costs were:

- Military costs (relating only to the war in the north of the country): 28 per cent of total costs;
- Losses to agriculture and livestock, the mainstays of the region: over 20 per cent;
- Lost income from tourism: almost 14 per cent;
- War-related medical costs: over 10 per cent.

It is expected that different costs will be more prominent in different contexts. For example, the cost of the material damage during the Rwandan genocide was around $1bn, whereas reconstruction for the DRC is estimated at $20bn.

As an illustration, each category of cost is briefly explored below.

Direct costs, with a focus on medical expenditure

Direct costs arise directly from violence and necessitate real payments. Direct costs include the cost of maintaining security – such as increased military expenditure and costs for policing and justice – as well as the cost of dealing with refugees and IDPs and the loss/depreciation in assets (both in terms of major infrastructure and also
Medical costs are one of the most obvious direct costs caused by armed violence. It is important to note that often these costs are not actually met; one study in Ghana found that in rural regions only 51 per cent of persons with gunshot injuries receive care at a hospital or clinic, and elsewhere the chronic shortage of hospital facilities and the limited access of poor people to these facilities results in wounds becoming infected and in the death or disability of victims.

Costs cannot be generalised and, obviously, are specific to different situations and injuries. Box 1 below gives one example. In Uganda, the direct costs of treating firearm injuries are around $0.5m per year, around 80 per cent of which is paid for by the government. The out-of-pocket costs average $58 per victim, more than several months’ salary for most victims, a significant burden. In Kenya, a spinal injury caused by firearms costs around $23,815 per year; this includes the cost of a wheelchair, treatment, food, drugs, etc.

Gun violence especially impacts young men, who may have long productive futures ahead of them. Men aged 15–29 account for half of all non-conflict firearm homicide victims globally. Anecdotal evidence from Africa suggests that men are the major victims of gunshot injuries. In four studies from Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda, the male:female ratio for such injuries ranged from 6:1 to 12:1. In South Africa, homicide primarily involving firearms was the leading cause of death among men aged 15–21.

It is worth noting that violence committed with firearms generates higher costs than violence committed with other weapons, due to the serious nature of the injuries caused. For example, the average gunshot injury in the USA costs 50 times more than the average cut/stab wound. In armed conflict, the medical impact of combat injuries is dwarfed by the other medical impacts of the conflict. These include higher rates of disease and infection (from population movements, concentrations of people, and lower levels of resistance due to poor nutrition), water- and sanitation-related issues, malnutrition, higher rates of sexually-transmitted diseases, etc.

Studies show that although women are often not targeted in combat as directly as men, women experience as much or more mortality in the long run. Women suffer seriously and exclusively from lack of maternal health services, as well as facing extremely high levels of rape and HIV infection. During the conflict in Sierra Leone, more than half of women experienced some type of sexual violence.

Indirect costs, with a focus on lost production

Indirect costs result from opportunities lost. Much of this involves the diversion...
of resources – development projects that are suspended due to insecurity, income from natural resources siphoned away from the formal economy (thus lining individual pockets rather than benefiting the country) - and the impact of severe economic decline (rising inflation, increased debt, reduced exports, etc.).

One key cost is reduced economic activity, which can be an enormous loss in armed conflicts. In agriculture, this goes beyond the personal tragedies of families and communities who have their livestock or crops destroyed, are too afraid to work their land, or are forced off it. The cash crop sector suffers significantly from the destruction of crops and irrigation networks, the killing of livestock, interruption of credit, the unavailability of inputs, transportation bottlenecks, and marketing problems. Net losses to agricultural production from armed violence in Africa are estimated at $25bn between 1970 and 1997, equivalent to three-quarters of all aid in the same period.

Although a limited number of people benefit from armed conflicts – through the exploitation of resources and, of course, by selling arms – most do not. Manufacturing and construction companies, for example, tend to be major losers in violent conflict, suffering severely from the disruption of supply and marketing channels as well as from looting and destruction.

Services such as tourism and transport are also hit – and this applies significantly to situations of armed crime, as well as conflict.

### Snapshot 2: Tourism in Africa: running from the gun

Tourism is important to Africa. In 2004, the continent's share of global tourism revenues was twice its share of global GDP. It is an essential source of foreign exchange to many countries, and for Kenya the largest source.

However, armed violence deters millions of potential visitors. The chief director at South African Tourism admitted that the reality and reputation of South Africa as a country beset by gun crime had lost it 22 million visitors in five years.

Oxfam’s 2007 research of international opinion showed that more than half of people from the world’s top tourism spenders (France, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the USA) said they would be less likely to go on holiday to a country with a reputation for armed violence or gun crime than to a country without such a reputation.

### Intangible costs, with a focus on social capital

Although intangible costs are extraordinarily difficult to quantify, they have a clear impact in reducing development. The exposure to brutality and subsequent displacement and civil disorder leave individuals psychologically scarred and less able to function. In some cases, this amounts to ‘collective trauma’.

Serious armed violence, and particularly civil war, also erode institutions of civil society. Family, community, and inter-community links are severed, and a culture of violence spreads. The destruction of trust leads to more opportunistic behaviour that is not likely to disappear rapidly after war. Ethnically-accentuated conflict is particularly detrimental, since hatred and mistrust deepen divides.
The impacts on children can be severe. In a survey of more than 300 child soldiers in Uganda, over 90 per cent had post-traumatic stress of clinical importance. In IDP camps in northern Uganda, boys and girls play games ‘only about violence, about the war, abduction, and death. Not about family life – cooking, hunting, and digging – like it used to be.’

Conflict leads to lost educational opportunities for children, as it destroys education infrastructure, reduces spending on schools and teachers and prevents children from attending classes. While one in 11 primary-school age children in low-income countries are out-of-school, this figure rises to one in three in conflict-affected fragile states, according to a recent Save the Children report.

In situations of armed conflict, societal violence, and armed crime, young men use small arms to bypass traditional power structures, which are often weighted towards elders, and seize power by force. Young men perceive small arms violence as a means to reach positions of social or economic status that they feel entitled to, becoming what are often known in Africa as ‘big men’.

Other key costs
The above costs are incorporated, sometimes in complex ways, in our estimation of the cost of armed conflict. There are two other highly significant costs for Africa that are not reflected in our calculation, as the methodology for doing so could not be robust. Nevertheless, a brief examination is needed.

Economic impacts on neighbouring countries
Severe economic costs to a whole region can be caused by the disruption of trade and loss of investor confidence, which translates into lost business potential and lower GDP. A civil war in one country reduces the growth rate of neighbouring countries by around 0.9 per cent; thus the combined growth loss to neighbours can exceed the loss to the country itself. Effects become more marked as the conflict intensity increases.

Snapshot 3: Trade and finance for Côte d’Ivoire’s neighbours

*Without peace in Côte d’Ivoire, practically our entire economy will need to be reoriented.* — Malian Finance Minister Bassari Touré, 2002

In 2002, when fighting in Côte d’Ivoire made access to the key Ivorian seaport of Abidjan virtually impossible, foreign trade was disrupted in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

- Mali’s cattle exports halted almost completely and Burkina Faso’s total exports of cattle and animal products fell by 65 per cent.
- Transporting a container by train from Burkina Faso to Abidjan cost CFA290,000, whereas transporting the same goods by road to Lomé in Togo cost CFA700,000.

The economic disturbances caused by the Ivorian conflict have weakened the financial position of the affected countries. Burkina Faso and Mali each lost nearly $30m in government revenues in the first three months of the war in taxes, customs duties, and other sources of revenue.

The spillover effects of armed conflict, and the perceived or real fear of violence spreading, also translate into increased military spending by neighbours. After tensions increased in Côte d’Ivoire in 1999, Mali purchased military equipment worth CFA8bn ($13m) while Burkina Faso increased military investments by 52.6 per cent in 1999 and continued spending in 2000.
An inflow of refugees can be costly and the return of migrant workers can lead to a major decrease in remittances. This was particularly significant for Burkina Faso, where several hundred thousand Burkinabé from Côte d’Ivoire stopped sending home remittances – where previously such remittances made up 70 per cent of financial private net transfers.

**“War overhang”: long-term costs**

Our calculation has only looked at the period of armed conflict. However, economists find that economies often remain essentially at conflict levels for many years; this ‘war overhang’ is more common than the expected ‘peace dividend’.

If, during peacetime, the average military spending of a developing country amounts to 2.8 per cent of its GDP, this increases to around five per cent during civil war, and remains elevated to 4.5 per cent during the first post-conflict decade.

Mortality rates also remain high: approximately half of lost years of life expectancy arise after the violence is over, mainly due to degraded health and sanitation conditions.

Economies also change. Economic behaviour shifts towards activities which bring short-term returns. In Angola, landmines have created an extra burden, as land remains inaccessible and unproductive. The movement of people from rural to urban areas during armed conflicts is not reversed; Freetown in Sierra Leone and Monrovia, Liberia have seen their populations triple. As well as rapid urbanisation increasing the likelihood of armed violence, it can lead to labour shortages in rural areas, slowing down reconstruction, and can boost the informal economy in urban areas. In Somaliland and Mozambique, informal economies that provided a basic means of survival in wartime have been partly responsible for the collapse of formal rural market networks and have been an obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction.

**4.0 Where do Africa’s weapons of war come from?**

What weapons are used in Africa’s conflicts?

This section focuses on the most numerous weapons used in Africa’s conflicts: small arms and light weapons. However, it is worth underlining that heavy weapons have played a major role in some of Africa’s conflicts with a very heavy humanitarian and economic toll.

To identify which small arms are used in Africa’s conflicts, we investigated arms collection programmes and government stockpiles.

**Arms collection programmes:** We collected quantified information from seven arms collections in Africa, mostly as part of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes (in South Sudan, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda, Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone), and received anecdotal/non-quantified evidence from seven other sources. A wide variety of weapons was reported, but the Kalashnikov assault rifle and its derivatives (the most well-known being the AK-47), were ranked as the first or second most numerous weapon in every case.

**Government stockpiles:** An examination of government inventories revealed that the most popular assault rifles are from the Kalashnikov family: 27 countries hold the AK-47 and 28 countries hold the AKM. Government forces are not the only users of weapons from state stockpiles. Rebel army groups and bandits typically obtain their arms and ammunition by seizing
them from police and army stockpiles. This was illustrated during the 1990s in conflicts in the Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. And while the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda has stockpiles of weapons obtained many years ago, it continually acquires weapons by capturing them from Ugandan defence forces. The primary weapons used by the LRA are Kalashnikov derivatives – most commonly Chinese Type 56.

This problem is compounded by the fact that many African governments distribute arms to non-state forces. Recipients might be militias in-country, militias in other countries, or ‘local defence forces’. The governments generally do not have adequate ‘command and control’ over the groups using these weapons and there is an increased risk of diversion of these weapons to the illicit trade.

Thus the most commonly used weapon in Africa’s conflict zones is the Kalashnikov and its derivatives.

The rest of this section looks exclusively at weapons used in Africa’s conflicts rather than in crime, due to length constraints. However, it is worth noting that whilst criminals in other countries might typically use handguns, military assault rifles are often found in the hands of African criminals, particularly where DDR programmes have been inadequate.

For example, in Cameroon’s Northern Region, more than half the highway bandits are former combatants and have brought their weapons primarily from the Central African Republic, Chad, and Nigeria. In Nigeria, armed criminals and secret cultists in Lagos, and armed gangs in the Delta, have stocks of sophisticated small arms, including Kalashnikovs.

Where are these weapons manufactured?

Weapons made in Africa are rarely used in African conflicts. A respondent to our survey of disarmament programmes, from UNDP in Sudan, said ‘I have not seen any African-manufactured weapons’ – and this response is typical of African arms specialists and field workers.

While small arms and their components are produced in a number of African countries, the scale of this production is small, both in comparison with the number of weapons produced in the rest of the world and with the number of small arms used in Africa. Small arms and their components are produced by 22 companies in South Africa, seven in Egypt, and one in Nigeria, while Uganda has one facility for reconditioning arms.

It is worth noting, however, that even this African production depends mostly on technology and licences from outside the continent. There is also skilled craft production in some countries (for example, Ghana and Nigeria) of weapons that appear to be used primarily in armed crime, rather than armed conflict.

To get a picture of the scale of African purchases of small arms, we looked at the UN COMTRADE database. This revealed that, of $59.2m-worth of small arms imports to African countries in 2005, $58.5m, or 99 per cent, came from outside Africa and only one per cent from African countries. This is only an estimate of state-sanctioned trade, but it shows that the vast majority of African weapons are imported from outside the continent.

Looking more specifically at Kalashnikovs, most producers are located outside Africa, in at least 13 countries. Currently Egypt and South Africa are the only African countries that produce Kalashnikov derivatives (respectively, the M194, a high-quality copy, and the
Vektor R4 and R5, more distant relatives), although Nigeria announced plans in 2006 to produce and export its own version, the OBJ006.\textsuperscript{101} We believe that Misr weapons are in service in Central Africa and that the R4 is in service in Zimbabwe, although it does not appear that Egypt or South Africa are exporting significant numbers of these weapons in Africa or elsewhere.\textsuperscript{102}

Of the two arms collection programmes we surveyed which have some data on manufacture, these reveal a low level of African-manufactured Kalashnikovs:

- Of 891 assault rifles found in the 2002–03 DDR programme of the Central African Republic, 660 were Kalashnikov derivatives and 23 (3.5 per cent) were South African Vector R5s.\textsuperscript{103}

- Of 1,100 weapons collected by international peace-keepers in Ituri, eastern DRC, 605 were Kalashnikov derivatives and one was Egyptian-manufactured, i.e. less than one per cent were African-made.\textsuperscript{104}

Thus the best evidence available suggests that the vast majority – more than 95 per cent – of Africa’s most commonly used conflict weapons (Kalashnikov derivatives) come from outside the continent. This is borne out by the experience of experts in the field and by other supporting data on arms manufacture.

**What about ammunition?**

Ammunition is spent quickly during conflict and needs to be resupplied constantly. There are cases where the lack of ammunition has helped to prevent armed violence – albeit sometimes only temporarily. For example, in Liberia, the rebel LURD group ran out of ammunition in late June 2003 and had to retreat. However, both LURD and the opposing government forces used this respite to resupply, and the fighting resumed with even greater intensity.\textsuperscript{105} A shortage of ammunition in Mali during the 1990–96 northern insurgency was the principle reason why armed groups imposed strict rules governing when and where guns could be fired.\textsuperscript{106}

In general, ascertaining the origins of ammunition used in Africa is not easy. Spain is the biggest supplier of ammunition to sub-Saharan Africa.\textsuperscript{107} The UN COMTRADE database showed that, of imports of ammunition to African countries worth $109.2m, 98 per cent came from outside Africa.\textsuperscript{108} Very little, if any, military ammunition is produced in West Africa.\textsuperscript{109} In East Africa, however, researchers report finding Kenyan-, Ugandan-, and Sudanese-manufactured ammunition in the hands of non-state armed groups in several countries.\textsuperscript{110}

Where does the ammunition come from to feed the most prevalent weapons in Africa’s conflicts? Most Kalashnikovs use 7.62 x 39mm ammunition\textsuperscript{111}, and ammunition of this calibre is produced in 19 countries outside Africa,\textsuperscript{112} as well as in Egypt, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.\textsuperscript{113}

Exactly quantifying African production and export of ammunition of this calibre is not possible, as most production figures are not public. We know that the Tanzanian factory now only produces one million rounds per year;\textsuperscript{114} however, the Al Shajara/Yarmuk complex in Khartoum was upgraded in around 1996,\textsuperscript{115} so will probably have an output in the tens of millions.\textsuperscript{116}

There is only one report of African-manufactured ammunition of this calibre being found in African conflicts: ammunition manufactured in North Sudan, found in South Sudan.\textsuperscript{117}
Although we cannot quantify precisely the amount of ammunition manufactured in Africa that contributes to Africa’s conflicts, we do know that the quantities are extremely small and that the vast majority of ammunition comes from outside Africa.

5.0 Arms control in Africa – and beyond

The problem of armed violence in Africa is a complex one, requiring solutions at local, national, regional, and global levels, from conflict prevention to enforcement of national gun laws, to DDR, to effective peacebuilding strategies. This report does not attempt to list all the positive efforts that African governments have made, nor provide a comprehensive range of solutions. However, African control efforts can be undermined if the supply of weapons is poorly regulated, so this report will highlight the importance of preventing irresponsible arms transfers.

Some African initiatives on arms transfers

Some countries in Africa have already made significant efforts to prevent irresponsible transfers of weapons. In particular, two instruments have created new regional standards for arms control in a whole range of areas, including robust controls on international arms transfers:

- The 2004 Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which applies to countries in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa.

- The 2006 ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, and other Related Materials.

African governments are also seeking changes at national level. Between 2001 and 2005, at least ten African countries revised their laws and procedures on export controls, nine did so in relation to import controls and five on transit controls.118

There have also been national initiatives to try and reduce losses from stockpiles; at least six African countries reviewed their standards and procedures for the management and security of stockpiles between 2001 and 2005.119 The Nairobi Protocol has led to the development of best practice guidelines on stockpile management.

These are extremely welcome developments but it is too early to report definitively on their implementation and impact. In any case, the arms trade is highly globalised; the changing pattern of ownership and production since the early 1990s means that national or even regional regulations are insufficient to prevent arms from reaching the hands of abusers;120 they need to be complemented by international controls. It is not surprising that many African governments feel let down by the failure of the international community to commit serious resources to implementing the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons or to act to control arms transfers. Effective control of a globalised arms trade requires new international standards and regulations based on international law.

Africa and the Arms Trade Treaty

The vast majority of arms used in Africa – both in conflict and non-conflict zones – are imported. Tough international controls on arms transfers are one important tool in the effort to prevent armed violence in Africa and worldwide.

In December 2006, 153 countries agreed to start developing an ATT. A UN Group of Governmental Experts (GCE) will
begin their work in January 2008 and will present their recommendations to the General Assembly in October 2008.

African support for the ATT has been key in its success to date: Africa has hosted key international meetings in Tanzania (February 2005) and Kenya (April 2006), as well as many regional meetings. Forty-two African countries (91 per cent of those present) voted to start the process of negotiating an ATT in the UN General Assembly in December 2006, and 21 have made submissions in 2007 to the UN Secretary-General’s consultation process, the vast majority of which were positive.

The view of IANSA, Oxfam, Saferworld, and many other non-government organisations is that the ATT should crystallise and reinforce, in the context of international arms transfers, commitments already assumed by states under the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions, the two international covenants on human rights, other widely supported international conventions, and established principles of customary international law. We have brought together these obligations – the minimum necessary for an ATT which will reduce the human cost of armed violence – in a set of Global Principles for Arms Transfers. They can be summarised in the ‘golden rule’: the ATT must prohibit arms transfers if they are likely to be used to:

- Commit serious violations of international humanitarian law (the ‘rules of war’);
- Commit serious violations of international human rights law; or
- Undermine sustainable development.

Provisions that are broadly consistent with the Global Principles have been incorporated into the ECOWAS Convention and the Best Practice Guidelines for the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol.

However, we have seen that the vast majority of arms used in Africa’s conflicts originate from outside the continent, so African states and arms producing states share responsibility for the irresponsible arms trade. Arms producers must take responsibility for ensuring their weapons are not diverted to misuse, and African states have a responsibility to prevent internal diversion of these weapons. This is why a global ATT is so necessary and, to be effective, it is important that it comes with a mechanism to enhance transparency in arms transfer and also significant and long-term capacity-building support, to enable compliance and implementation.

**Preventing irresponsible arms transfers**

The ATT will not prevent the responsible transfer of weapons for defence, policing, peacekeeping, or other legitimate purposes. It will not prevent a transfer if it is legal under the national laws of all countries concerned, legal under international laws, and upholds current best practice, particularly in ensuring that the arms are not likely to be diverted to another user.

Thus many arms transfers would not be affected. But the ATT would impact on the following transfers:

**Irresponsible transfer to a state:** Such a transfer may be irresponsible if it was not authorised by all of the states concerned (through import, export, brokering, transit, or transhipment), or if the transfer was in violation of international law. For example, the transfer would be prohibited if it breached an arms embargo, or if the arms were likely to be used for serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law.
Amnesty International’s report ‘DRC: Arming the East’ provides an extensive list of questionable arms transfers to countries involved in the DRC war. 

Rwanda imported millions of rounds of small arms ammunition, grenades, and rocket launchers from surplus stocks in Albania and there have been large flows of arms from Eastern Europe to the DRC transitional government and to Uganda. Until April 2005, only rebel groups within the DRC were under UN arms embargo, so it appears that these transfers did not breach any embargo. However, there is a strong possibility that at least some of these arms did ultimately reach rebel groups in the DRC. The ATT would put a legal obligation on exporters to seriously investigate and consider the possibility of diversion. It is not sufficient simply to accept an end-user certificate at face value. Under the ‘Golden Rule’, an exporter would be in breach of the ATT if that exporter should have known of a risk of diversion or misuse.

Transfer to an illegal armed group – Without authorisation by all states with jurisdiction over the transfers, transfers to armed groups would be illegal under the ATT. The UN Panel of Experts on the arms embargo on Somalia provides details of several countries alleged to have supplied arms to actors in Somalia, in breach of the arms embargo. For example, one report refers to at least three separate consignments containing arms and ammunition from Iran, including machine guns and MANPADs. 

While the findings of the report have been contested by a number of the governments named, such shipments would be in violation of an existing arms embargo, and therefore are already illegal. The ATT would help prevent such transfers by strengthening the implementation of UN arms embargoes, in particular by requiring them to be incorporated into national legislation.

Recirculation of weapons: Weapons cross borders in Africa relatively easily, in what is often called the ‘ant trade’. But the quantities are not always small. In the first six months of 2002, the Nigerian Customs Service reported that it had intercepted small arms and ammunition worth more than $34m on their way into the country. Much of this had come through the border with Benin, and was being brought into Nigeria either overland or by sea.

The crossing of national borders is an international transfer of weapons and the ATT would require such transfers to be brought under control by the countries involved. This obviously requires investment to control weapons flows, such as building customs, border control, and law enforcement capabilities. Efforts to this end are already underway, and an ATT would complement this and provide a legal framework for increased donor funding.

Diversion from stockpiles: As stated in Section 4, leakage from state stockpiles are a key source of weapons for armed groups, and also a key contributor to armed crime.

According to Gun Free South Africa, an estimated 16,893 weapons were stolen or lost from the South African Police Force between 1990 and 2002, and 1,759 from the South African National Defence Force, the majority of which were assault rifles, between 1994 and 2003. 

The ATT would put a legal obligation on arms exporters to consider the possibility of diversion from stockpiles before agreeing to transfer arms. Again, increased funding for improvements to stockpile security may be required and, in some cases, exports should be preceded by a
programme to improve stockpile management.

6.0 Conclusions

Every effort must be made to limit the enormous social and economic cost of armed violence. Our rough estimate is that armed conflict alone has cost Africa around $300bn (constant year 2000 $) since 1990, or around $18bn per year – costing each conflict country, on average, 15 per cent of its GDP.

Many things need to be done to reduce armed violence, and of course the poverty that lies behind much of it. Preventing arms proliferation is a multi-faceted issue and one that requires a plethora of measures, which address both supply and demand. In terms of supply, we estimate that 95 per cent of Africa’s most commonly used conflict weapons (Kalashnikov derivatives) and the vast majority of other arms and ammunition are not made in Africa. It is true that many weapons used in Africa are recirculated, but there are still continuous new supplies of weapons and ammunition to state and non-state actors.

Indeed, preventing the supply of ammunition into zones of armed violence is an often overlooked strategy in limiting armed violence. According to the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia, ‘When a serious confrontation is anticipated, larger quantities of arms and, more importantly, ammunition enter the Mogadishu market.’ At a minimum, a shortage of ammunition is likely to impose a ‘shooting discipline’ that could prevent some violations of human rights.

Thus there is an urgent need to address the international supply of arms and ammunition. An effective ATT, based on the ‘golden rule’, is vital to reduce the human and economic costs of armed violence in Africa and across the world. Such an ATT would need to come with support and capacity-building to ensure effective implementation.

Economic growth and the lives and livelihoods of people in Africa are being held back by armed violence. In failing to control the arms trade, the international community has let Africa down. The disarmament community must play its part to help Africa achieve the MDGs and lift people out of poverty.

We are now at a crucial stage. As well as sustaining dynamic arms control efforts at national and regional levels, African governments, arms-producing countries, and the rest of the international community, must vigorously and proactively support international discussions to achieve a robust ATT, to protect Africans from the daily effects of armed violence.

After 153 votes for ATT discussions to begin and 97 submissions to the Secretary-General’s consultation, there is a strong expectation that the GGE meeting in 2008 will recommend that negotiations should start on a tough ATT.

All governments have a role to play in ensuring its success, so that women, men, girls, and boys across Africa are spared the human and economic impact of armed violence.

Appendix: Methodology for cost to Africa calculation

The methodology used is very similar to that used by Stewart and Fitzgerald of the University of Oxford in War and Underdevelopment (2001). We have also taken advice from academics and experts, including Anke Hoeffler of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University and Graham Harrison of the University of Sheffield.
The calculation was done as follows:

1. **Determining where and when conflicts happened in Africa from 1990.**

   The basic source of data used was the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK)’s register of conflicts (new methodology, not yet published) which does not rely on a narrow definition of combat deaths. Of HIIC’s five levels of violence, we used a ‘severe crisis’ (level 4) or a ‘war’ (level 5). These results were cross-checked against the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and other sources such as the BBC, The Economist, and the UN’s IRIN.

2. **Predicting what GDP should have been (the counterfactual).** Each conflict country was assigned to a broad economic grouping using World Bank categories: low income, low-middle income or upper-middle income. The GDPs of all countries (constant year 2000 $) were taken from the World Development Indicators. It should be noted that data may not be totally reliable and in some cases is dependent on estimates. For each grouping, the annual growth rate was calculated for each year, 1990–2005.

3. **Calculating a measure of the cost of conflict = the cumulative loss in GDP.**

   Starting with the GDP at the beginning of the conflict, the growth rate of the economic grouping was applied for every year that the country was in conflict. The difference between the predicted GDP and the actual GDP was calculated for each conflict year and summed.

**Limitations to this methodology**

There is no perfectly accurate way of developing the counterfactual; however, our method is reasonable and reflects the typical performance of a country of that economic level. The large number of countries in each economic group (around 45) smoothes peculiarities due to particular countries. As a form of comparison and verification, we have used other counterfactuals (for example, predicting a country’s GDP according to its previous non-conflict growth), and these suggest that our estimate is satisfactory. The comparison with growth projected from past performance was not used to generate the total cost figure because it was impossible to generate a non-conflict growth rate for some countries, due to the length of the conflict or its cyclic nature.

For most of the conflicts considered, conflict had an overwhelming effect on the economy and therefore the fall in GDP can be used as a reasonable proxy for the cost of the conflict. However, if the conflict is geographically limited and situated away from main economic zones, the impact on the national economy may not be so marked. For example, the conflict in South Africa in the 1990s was geographically confined and so only had a small impact on the economy. In a few situations, other factors also have an impact on GDP: e.g. major changes in world commodity prices or drought in an agricultural economy (the impact of which would obviously be made much worse by conflict).

Our figure is likely to be an underestimate because it does not include the effects on neighbouring countries (of reduced trade and remittances, refugee movements, etc.) or the social costs of conflict (propensity to increase crime, loss of social capital), and it only looks at the period of conflict, not the war overhang.

All countries showed a loss due to conflict, apart from Uganda. The major reason for this peculiar and unconvincing result is the booming Ugandan economy. Our methodology compares actual growth with predicted growth, but
the Ugandan economy has grown much faster than average.

In addition, the conflict is confined to the north of the country and although this has had some economic impacts at national level (cotton production has suffered), other economic drivers (including coffee, the country’s main export) have not been affected.

A 2002 study, updated in 2006, used an accounting methodology (i.e. counting individual costs, rather than modelling) to estimate the economic cost of the war in the north of Uganda as $1.7bn over 20 years, or $85m per year. This is clearly significant and has major opportunity costs, particularly in the north. $85m represents 1.1 per cent of GDP in 2005.

For more details on the methodology, please email: africaattreport@controlarms.org

Notes


3 See SIPRI 2007 Yearbook, chapter 2 and the work of the Human Security Centre: www.humansecuritycentre.org


8 See, for example, Batchelor P. and S. Demetriou (2005) ‘Securing Development: UNDP’s support for addressing small arms issues’, UNDP. Also, according to the 2005 Human Development Report: ‘Insecurity linked to armed conflict remains one of the greatest obstacles to human development. It is both a cause and consequence of mass poverty.’


13 Average of physicians per 1,000 people: 0.14 for conflict countries, 0.37 for non-conflict countries. Source: World Bank (2007) World Development Indicators 2007, op. cit.

14 This data was not calculated by Oxfam. It applies to sub-Saharan Africa during 1970–93. Source: Messer, E., M. J. Cohen, and J. D’Costa (1998) ‘Food from peace: Breaking the links between conflict and hunger’
Average of HDI value: 0.408 for conflict countries, 0.540 for non-conflict countries. Source: UNDP (2006).

Average GDP per capita: $1839 for conflict countries, $2997 for non-conflict countries. Data is PPP, averaged from 1990-2006. Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2007


Pkalya R., Adan M. and Masinde I. (2003) ‘Conflict in Northern Kenya: A focus on the internally-displaced conflict victims in Northern Kenya’, ITDG. Of 251 people killed, 54 were children, 64 were women, and 133 were men.


Statement By The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Raphael Tuju, while addressing Ministerial Summit On Armed Violence And Development In Geneva, Switzerland, 7 June, 2006

http://www.mfa.go.ke/statement%20by%20the%20Minister.htm


Algeria, Angola, Burundi, CAR, Chad, DRC, Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda. Somalia had to be omitted due to lack of data.

OECD data, from DAC2a dataset. DAC donors to all Africa at constant 2005 $ = $279,303

www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/17/5037721.htm (last checked by the author 20 August 2007).


Using World Development Indicators 2007 from The World Bank

Public expenditure on education – per cent of 2005 GDP – Average for Africa = 4.76 per cent

Total health expenditure: percentage of 2004 GDP – Average for Africa = 5.2 per cent


37 This includes the work of UNODC (Information in Africa initiative) and the forthcoming AFRO/WHO African Report on Violence and Health.


41 GDP can be calculated using the expenditure method:

GDP = private consumption + investment in goods and services + government spending + (exports minus imports)


51 Pinto A. D., Olupot-Olupot P., and V. Neufeld (2007) op. cit.


53 Ratios were:

- 6:1 in two rural and two urban hospitals in northern Nigeria (from Muggah, 2007: forthcoming, op.cit.);
- 7.2:1 in eastern Uganda, most not from conflict (from Pinto A. D., Olupot-Olupot P., and V. Neufeld (2007) op. cit.);
- 9.8:1 in two urban hospitals in Kenya (from Muggah 2007: forthcoming, op. cit.);
54 Fleshman (2001) op. cit.
58 Stewart and Fitzgerald (2001), op. cit., p.94.
60 Ibid., p.159.
61 Collier (1999) op. cit.
76 Harsch (2003), op. cit.
78 Harsch (2003), op. cit.
80 Kipping (2004), op. cit.
81 Collier et al. (2003) op. cit.
82 Ibid., p.2.
83 Ibid., p.20.

85 Freetown: 550,000 inhabitants in 1995 to more than 1.6 million in 2003; Monrovia: 400,000 to 1.3 million during the civil war. See Kipping (2004) op. cit., p.16.

86 Researchers have shown that large-scale and rapid urbanisation may lead to armed violence where availability of weapons is high and community and public security institutions are weak – i.e. conditions occurring during and after conflict. See Small Arms Survey (2007) Small Arms Survey 2007: Guns and the city, p. 189. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Comments/non-quantified information from Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA), covering Horn, East, and Central Africa; UNMIS in Akobo, South Sudan; UNDP DDR Programme; Small Arms Survey 2006 (p.283) concerning the weapons most frequently used by the Lord’s Resistance Army in northern Uganda; Control Arms Campaign, from a survey in eastern DRC; ‘Small Arms Survey Sudan Working Paper 4’, Sudan/DRC border; Burundi, from Pézard S. and N. Florquin (2007) ‘Small Arms in Burundi: Disarming the Civilian Population in Peacetime’, Small Arms Survey Special Report.

89 Collated by James Bevan of Small Arms Survey, based on information from Jane’s Infantry Weapons 2004.


95 Lochhead D., correspondence with the author June 2007.

96 Omega Research Foundation databases (2007).

97 UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database, data for 2005, the most recent year for which reasonably comprehensive data are available.

98 Information from UN Comtrade DESA/UNSD (download date 3 August 2007). The appropriate customs codes were taken from the Small Arms Survey(2005) Small Arms Survey 2005 - Weapons at War, Geneva, and are intended for classification HS 1996. Information for both reported imports and exported reports was compiled, with a careful attempt to avoid any double-counting. Data available upon request.


101 Its aim is to ‘produce the rifle in large quantities for both the nation’s military needs and those of neighbouring countries’. People’s Daily Online (October 2006) ‘Nigeria to mass-produce Nigerian version of AK-47 rifles’ http://english.people.com.cn/200610/02/english20061002_308128.html (last checked by the author June 2007).

102 Omega Research Foundation.


108 Information from UN Comtrade DESA/UNSD: see note 97.

109 NISAT database.


111 The most frequently used Kalashnikov variants in Africa – AK-47, AKM, Chinese Type 56 – use 7.62 x 39mm. Other variants which use different calibres (see Small Arms Survey 2007: Guns and the city, p. 260. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) are not used so much precisely because the ammunition is not so available.


113 James Bevan, researcher, Small Arms Survey, correspondence with the author August 2007. It is possible that Kenya and Zimbabwe also produce this ammunition, but there is no information available to confirm this.


119 Biting the Bullet and IANSA (2005), op. cit., p.201.


122 ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, 2006; Best Practice Guidelines for the Implementation of the Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2005.


129 Stewart and Fitzgerald (2001), op. cit., p.94.

130 For a discussion of data sets, see SIPRI yearbook 2007, Appendix 2C.

131 www.pcr.uu.se/database/


134 Economist Information Unit (2006), Uganda Country Profile 2006, EIU


Upholding Human Rights as the Most Cost Effective Option in Averting Violent Conflicts in Africa

Patrice E. Vahard

Conscious of the fact that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda.


Approaching conflict as a manifestation of differences in perspectives, views, inter alia is part of life and often a sign of change. The merit of going through conflict therefore lies not in perpetuating it, but in transforming it into an opportunity for positive change. The paradigm for anticipating and the methods for dealing with conflict matter more as they determine the outcome of the conflict resolution mechanism. For the sake of focus, this paper is particularly limited to internal armed conflicts in Africa.

The author argues that conflict prevention interventions such as development related investments, the realization of basic rights such as decent work, food, health, education and the freedoms of expression, participation and religion, cost far less to Africa than their denial. According to him, human rights, as a system of knowledge embedded with standards and principles believed to be culturally blind and of universal applicability, is relevant to conflict resolution in Africa. The often-neglected African indigenous systems are also vital in addressing some of the root causes of conflicts in Africa in a sustainable manner. The challenge that however remains is, among others, the knowledge gap that blinds the globalising world from realising the potentials of the African indigenous knowledge system.

1.0 Historical Centrality of Human Rights in the Resolution of Armed Conflicts

In 1945, when the Charter of the United Nations (UN) was adopted in San Francisco, it seemed clear that both then victors and the defeated had measured the cost of armed conflicts and opted for peace, security, development and human rights as the legacy they wanted to leave for future generations. The commitment at that time was so eloquently put thus:

_We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generation from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom._

The United Nations tasked its commission on human rights with the

---

1 The author is Regional Advisor with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The views expressed herein are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations. The author is grateful to Amadu Shour, David Omozuofoh, Eke Ubiji, Emile Yanaki, and Pamela Ashanu for their inputs. E-mail: zakpa@yahoo.com


3 UN Charter, preamble. San Francisco, 26 June 1945
Sixtieth anniversary of the UDHR, much has certainly been done to save succeeding generation from the scourge of war, which... has brought untold sorrows to mankind. The UN, the AU and their partners continue to mobilise enormous resources for peace and security. African-led initiatives under the auspices of the AU or regional bodies such as ECOWAS have borne positive fruits in many parts of the Continent for example in Côte d'Ivoire and the Comoros. It only takes a simplistic observation of the immediate impact of armed conflicts and wars on countries in or emerging from conflict on the African continent to appreciate the importance of peacekeeping.

2.0 The immediate and medium to long-term costs of conflicts in Africa

The reality of the figures provided by a recent joint study by IANSA, Oxfam and Saferworld on international arm flow and the cost of conflict reveals that Africa loses around $18bn per year due to wars, civil wars, and insurgencies. On average, armed conflict shrinks an African nation’s economy by 15 per cent, and this is probably a conservative estimate. The real costs of armed violence to Africans could be much, much higher. This study points to the fact that conflict prevention interventions such as development related investments, the realization of basic rights such as decent work, food, health, education and the freedoms of expression, participation and religion, cost

---


---


far less to Africa than their denial. African leaders recognize that at the dawn of the 21st Century, Africa portrays the image of a Continent that has taken very little advantage of the economic globalization, which has been gathering momentum since the 80s and is evidenced by tremendous wealth creation. Whereas Asia and Latin America have succeeded in ameliorating their economic situation and integrating themselves into the global economy to their own advantage, Africa seems to be experiencing much difficulty doing the same. Counting 832 million inhabitants, who represent 13% of the world population, Africa accounts for only 1% direct foreign investment, 1% global gross domestic product (GDP) and around 2% of world trade, figures which represent a net regression in relation to the 60s.

However, the fundamental, yet obvious question and perhaps also an issue of morality remains: Why spend so much in armed conflicts and so less on development, human rights and conflict prevention? What is the rationale? Is the adage “prevention is better than cure” irrelevant to armed conflicts? These questions are subject to theoretical speculations.

Beyond the immediate, direct and quantifiable financial losses caused by conflicts, their mediums to long-term costs are more worrisome. For instance, conflicts aggravate the debt situation of countries in or emerging from conflict, as they invest huge amount of their capital budget and foreign aid in reconstruction, reconciliation and reintegration to mention but a few. The longer the conflict persists, the longer it takes to recover from it.

A few examples would suffice to demonstrate the impact of armed conflicts on development in Africa as follows:

2.1 Conflicts undermine national program on access to clean water and health-care

Debt has a direct bearing on some rights such as access to clean water and affordable health-care. The example of Rwanda is illustrative of the global trend.

Rwanda case study

In the late seventies and early eighties, Rwanda borrowed and invested prudently in physical infrastructure and clean water systems. But the total stock of external debt rose rapidly after 1985, as regional recession and a collapse in world coffee prices hit the Government’s earnings. Between 1990 and 1995, Government revenue as a percentage of GDP fell from 10% to 7%, one of the lowest ratios in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time,

_________________________


society became increasingly militarized as communal tensions and violence increased. Public spending on arms rose sharply, crowding out social sector budgets. Poverty levels rose, while investment fell. Against this backdrop, the Government soon found it was unable to meet the demands of creditors. Arrears rapidly accumulated, and the debt stock became increasingly unsustainable. Between 1985 and 1997, the stock of external debt more than doubled, from US$400m to over US$1bn. Rwanda also built up a large public domestic debt, reaching the equivalent of US$220m in mid-1997. In common with other African HIPCs, the share of the multilateral creditors in Rwanda’s external debt had steadily risen, as the debt crisis had progressed. At the end of 1997, Rwanda’s external debt stood at US$1164m including arrears. This debt was large even by the standards of other HIPCs, and equivalent to 65% of Rwandan GDP. Debt-servicing after the war carried high social costs in Rwanda. Child mortality, literacy, and nutritional indicators were extremely poor, and had deteriorated significantly since 1992. The genocide in 1994 and its devastating aftermath eroded the Government’s revenue base and its capacity to deliver basic services. In 1998, the UNDP ranked Rwanda 174th out of 175 countries, using a composite of welfare indicators in its human-development index. Prior to the genocide, Rwanda’s human-development indicators were better than the regional average.

In effect, external debt problems were eroding the Rwandan government’s capacity to direct domestic resources to where they are most needed. In 1998, servicing the external debt absorbed one quarter of the entire budget. This is equivalent to more than the health-care and education operational budgets combined.

### 2.2 Generations of Africans miss the opportunity of quality and uninterrupted education

Several African conflicts have left generations of African youth with interrupted education or no education at all. People perish from lack of knowledge, goes the saying. One of the unseen and yet far reaching effects of conflict is its potential to undermine social ethics and education in its fullest meaning, long after the conflict has ended. The situation of higher education in Liberia is not peculiar.
The impact of the armed conflict on the Liberian higher education system

In Liberia, education at all levels faced serious crisis. The crisis ranges from the near total absence of institutional and human resource capacities as a result of war damages, the lack of basic facilities and infrastructure for meaningful learning, and to the presence of obsolete and irrelevant curricula, compounded by the lack of funds to tackle the crisis and to redress the painful situation. Before the war, which began in 1989, the education system of the Republic of Liberia was beyond the rudimentary stage it currently is. The higher education in Liberia was assumed to have met international standards comparable to any such programmes in the Western world. There were two major state-owned institutions of higher education: the University of Liberia, which was funded in 1862 as Liberia College and chartered as the University of Liberia (U.L.) in 1951, and the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology. There were also four private/church operated tertiary institutions, prominent among which is Cuttington University College (CUC) which, though operated by the Episcopal Church, received a subsidy from the Liberian Government. Also, there were two higher education institutions mainly for the training of primary school teachers and directly managed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). These institutions had a combined enrolment of approximately 6,000 students, with the University of Liberia constituting two thirds, (4,000) of this figure. Except for the two Teacher Training institutions which granted certificates, the others were non-specialized degree-granting institutions, the only exception being the William V. S. Tubman College of Technology which specialized exclusively in Engineering (i.e. Agricultural, Civil, Electrical, Electronics and Mechanical Engineering). All institutions, however, catered to the production of middle and high-level labour force. Liberia did not operate a unified "system" of higher education and there was no functional national body coordinating all tertiary institutions. They were autonomous and operated under the control of Boards of Trustee in which the Ministry of Education (MOE) served as member. The Commission on Higher Education, which was established in 1989 to evaluate, accredit and monitor quality performance of tertiary institutions, could not take off before the civil war.

The civil war dealt a devastating blow to all the achievements, not only in universal basic and secondary education, but equally to the higher education sub-sector. Almost all public and private educational structures, materials and supplies, libraries, research centres, and laboratories were looted or destroyed. University/college campuses, which were not destroyed, were either occupied by internally displaced people or used as military bases for combatants. Several lecturers, staff and students were killed, internally displaced or fled into exile. Moreover, the requisite

“\textit{The cost of reconstruction is far too excessive}”

database for appropriate planning in the education sector was destroyed.

2.3 The challenge of ownership of reconstruction

The cost of reconstruction is far too excessive for the country to bear alone. This often necessitates the intervention of third countries or development partners in providing the needed intervention – reconstruction, reconciliation and reintegration. The resources to be channelled to reconstruction, would definitely have pushed the country to attain a higher level of development if the violent conflict had not occurred. Internal conflict in particular compromises domestic ownership of the destiny and management of the country when eventually the conflict would have ended. Most war-affected countries rely on foreign expertise while nationals offer themselves to cheap and casual labor for a relatively long period. The return of the expertise in exile or the Diaspora at large is often too minimal to match the immediate demand; and commensurate to the degree of good governance displayed by the leaders. In this context, the efforts of the African Union through its NEPAD project to reverse the brain drain are most relevant. NEPAD is an African home grown continental initiative to help address the numerous challenges that create or instigate conflicts. If we can critically look at the NEPAD initiative, it will help us address the challenges of conflict prevention, resolution and management; and thereby create a conducive environment for the African expertise to participate in post-conflict reconstruction.

Social defragmentation and the challenges of learning to live together again in Communities that used to coexist peacefully will, as a consequence of conflict, take decades to overcome the trauma of distrust and hatred in order to live together again. Forced displacements with their related natural and supernatural de-linking leave many totally disoriented, with no sense of belonging and only memories of peace followed by nightmares of sudden and brutal uprooting in the name of survival. For many children, youth and in some cases adults, violence would become the only means for resolving any conflict. The large-scale displacement of people has become a defining characteristic of sub-Saharan Africa. During the past four decades, millions of people throughout the continent have been obliged to abandon their homes and to seek safety elsewhere, often losing the few assets they possessed and suffering great hardship in the process. Even in places where they have taken refuge, the continent’s displaced people have often been confronted with serious threats to their welfare and restrictions on their rights. For many, moreover, displacement has proven to be a protracted experience, lasting for years and even decades on end.

2.4 Women, children, elderly and persons with disability pay the greatest price

Women, children, elderly and persons with disability pay the greatest price

Because of their limited mobility and reduced physical strength, older persons are less able to have access to assistance. They may be left behind to guard

---

property, or abandoned in the chaos as other family members flee. Similarly, persons with disabilities are at heightened risk of injury or death if they are not assisted in seeking safety. They may have lost mobility devices such as wheelchairs, and the physical environment is often transformed by destruction. Support networks are often disrupted, leading to increased isolation and neglect.

It used to be a taboo in most African societies and families to abandon the elderly. Those who fail to take care of their older relatives (no matter how well-off they may be) are considered worthless. However, older persons tend to lose such respectability in times of conflicts. Even when persons with disabilities reach settlements for the displaced, mobility remains problematic, limiting their access to services. For example in January 1999, when RUF rebels besieged Freetown, the Sierra Leone capital and its surroundings a seventy-two year old parish priest who got trapped for days in his church at Waterloo, eventually died from hunger. Everyone including his parishioners had fled the village.

In an open letter to the UN Security Council, 71 Congolese organizations representing the women of DRC, expressed their grave concerns about the tragedy sexual violence inflicted on women and young girls in the DRC, particularly in the east. It is common knowledge that women suffered greatly during the years of war. Due to a combination of factors including widespread fear, shame, stigmatization, isolation and impunity; war related violence against women and girls are often under reported. These Congolese organisations drew the attention of the international community on the effects of extermination of their society due to acts of sexual violence, which, once committed against one woman, has consequences for her children and the entire community. All the armed groups and even the Congolese army brought sexual violence to the DRC, and now, after several years of destruction, this threat has unfortunately become a part of Congolese culture. In the province of North Kivu, just in the month of April 2008, over 880 cases of rape were documented by NGOs and United Nations agencies.

2.5 The dimensions of conflict-lead displacement in Africa

While Africans constituted only 12 per cent of the global population, at the beginning of 2005, more than a third (i.e. 2.7 million) of the world’s 9.5 million refugees and around half of the world’s 25 million internally displaced persons are to be found in Africa. The total number of displaced people in Africa thus stands in the region of 15 million. Of the 10 top ‘refugee-producing’ countries around the world, five - Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Liberia - are to be found in Africa. Africa also has three of the world’s top-ten refugee-hosting states (Tanzania, Chad and Uganda). 17 African states have

---


2 A Coalition of 71 Congolese NGOs, representing the women of DRC.


refugee populations in excess of 50,000. According to the US Committee for Refugees, eight of the 20 countries with the highest ratio of refugees to local people are member states of the African Union (AU). With respect to IDPs, the figures are equally striking: Africa provides 9 of the 24 countries with the largest IDP populations.

The principle and practice of asylum

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Africa established a largely well-deserved reputation as a continent which treated refugees in a relatively generous manner. The newly independent states of Africa readily acceded to the main international refugee instruments, and in 1969 established a regional refugee convention which introduced a more inclusive definition of the refugee concept than that which applied in other parts of the world. At the same time, the OAU Refugee Convention of 1969 – unlike the 1951 UN Refugee Convention - unambiguously stated that the repatriation of refugees to their country of origin should take place on a voluntary basis. In these respects, Africa established new and improved legal standards for the treatment of exiled populations. While there were certainly occasions on which states failed to act in accordance with these laws and standards, the period from the 1960s to the 1980s has with some justification (if a little exaggeration) been labelled the “golden age” of asylum in Africa. In general, governments allowed large numbers of refugees to enter and remain on their territory. Many refugees enjoyed reasonably secure living conditions and were able to benefit from a range of legal, social and economic rights. Considerable numbers of refugees were provided with land and encouraged to become self-sufficient. In some states, refugees were allowed to settle permanently and to become naturalized citizens. While the deportation and expulsion of refugees was not unknown, the principle of voluntary repatriation was broadly respected across Africa.

Pressures on asylum

Today, there is a broad consensus amongst refugee agencies and analysts that these conditions no longer prevail. Indeed, refugee protection principles are now being challenged and undermined in many parts of Africa. Boanventure Rutinwa, a Tanzanian scholar, captures the current trend as follows:

African states have become less committed to asylum. Instead of opening their doors to persons fearing harm in their own states, African countries now prefer refugees to receive protection in “safe zones” or similar areas within their countries of origin. African states now routinely reject refugees at the frontier or return them to their countries of origin even if the conditions from which they have fled still persist. Refugees who manage to enter and remain in host countries receive “pseudo-asylum”. Their physical security, dignity and material safety are not guaranteed. As for solutions, African states are less inclined to grant local settlement or resettlement opportunities to refugees. What they seem to prefer is repatriation at the earliest opportunity, regardless of the situation in the countries of origin.\(^1\)

2.6. Accelerated degradation of the environment

When fear and want become a constant concern, the enjoyment of human rights and the preservation of the environment become very distant aspirations for populations in desperation. Armed

conflicts have severely affected the relationship between ordinary African and his/her environment. The absence of alternative coping mechanisms have forced many to aggressively exploit forests and rivers to the extent of compromising the ecosystem and threatening the biodiversity.

Liberia\(^1\) is thought to be the only country in West Africa that was once entirely covered by tropical rain forest. Due to uncontrolled deforestation, forests now account for only one-third of land cover and continue to disappear at a rate of roughly two per cent per year (UN 2007). Farmers cope with Liberia’s generally poor soils by practicing shifting cultivation, which is the major driver of forest loss. Logging, dependence on fuel wood, and rubber production are also factors. Liberia’s forests are biologically rich, but species are threatened by habitat fragmentation and poaching. Wild animals are a major source of protein for most people since livestock production has been set back by prolonged civil war. Uncontrolled cutting of logging roads through virgin forests facilitates the bush meat trade. The Mount Nimba Nature Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has exceptional species diversity due to the variety of habitats created by unique high altitude grasslands laced with montane forests. The area is still recovering from iron-ore mining activities in the 1990s, which left over 300 million metric tonnes of mine wastes (UNEP 2004). Nearly 14 per cent of Liberia’s surface is covered with water. After 14 years of civil war, waste collection services all but ceased, leaving raw sewage to pollute surface and groundwater. In addition, gold, iron, and diamond mines, the majority of which are unlicensed, discharge toxic metals and cyanide into rivers. Finally, leaking oil storage facilities are known to contaminate coastal waters. Water pollution is a threat to Liberia’s fisheries, which provide over half of the population’s protein intake and ten per cent of its gross domestic product.

In Mozambique\(^2\), the civil war during the 1970s and 1980s disrupted conservation efforts taking a heavy toll on the nation’s wildlife. Although still among the poorest countries in the world, Mozambique is now expanding its protected areas. It shares a section of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park—Africa’s largest wildlife refuge that spans 35 000 km\(^2\)—with South Africa and Zimbabwe. Wildfires remain a significant threat to Mozambique’s forests and wildlife. Every year, approximately 40 per cent of the country is burned by fire, of which 80 per cent is forest. Human activities and particularly slash-and-burn agriculture are suspected to be responsible for 90 per cent of all fires.

Sierra Leone\(^3\)’s forests are rich in biodiversity, including over 2 000 plant species, 74 of which are found nowhere

---


else in the world (CBD). It is estimated that dense tropical forests once covered 65 per cent of the country; these have been reduced to only five per cent today (UNCCD 2004). There are many human pressures on the forest, including logging (both legal and illegal), slash-and-burn agriculture, mining, and dependence on fuel wood by 85 per cent of the population (CBD). The country’s marine and inland fisheries are biologically rich. Although production significantly declined during the decade-long civil war that ended in 2002, the sector is again on the rise. Widespread illegal fishing is increasing concerns about overexploitation. Although not yet believed to be overexploited, several fish stocks may be in decline.

In Sudan, human activities have greatly altered the natural open-savannah woodlands. Population growth, especially in the latter half of the 20th century, coupled with an influx of refugees from drought and conflict in Northern Darfur have put increasing pressure on this fragile ecosystem. Tree loss in the foothills of Jebel Marra region of Sudan occur at an alarming pace.

3.0 Is there any way out?

Like the moult determines the shape of the clay pot, so does the paradigm influence the final outcome of conflict prevention, management and resolution. Across the African Continent, Africans declare that they will no longer allow themselves to be conditioned by circumstance. They will determine their own destiny and call on the rest of the World to complement their efforts. There are already signs of progress and hope. Democratic regimes that are committed to the protection of human rights, people-centred development and market-oriented economies are on the increase. African peoples have begun to demonstrate their refusal to accept poor economic and political leadership. These developments are however, uneven and inadequate and need to be further expedited.

3.1 The human rights based approach to development

Governments across the continent would ensure that the common understanding in applying the human rights-based approach to development are adhered to as follows:

1. All programmes of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments,

2. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process,

3. Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations and/or of ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights

3.2. The human rights based approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution

If a choice has to be made between spending huge sums of money in armed conflicts and investing in the fulfilment of
human rights expectations, I will argue that upholding human rights is not only preferable in the quest for peace, security and sustainable development; it is also the cost effective option. The human rights based approach implies the inclusion of the following three points in conflict prevention, management and resolution:

1. To further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. The pursuit of human rights appears today as generic objective of all AU organs and institutions as well as regional economic communities.

2. To be guided by human rights standards contained in, the principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. The principles of universality, inalienability, interdependence as inherent features of human rights; and equality, non-discrimination, accountability and adherence to the rule as element of the process of addressing conflicts.

3. To develop the capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations to respect, protect and fulfill human rights and international humanitarian law and/or ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights before and after the armed conflict. In the final analysis, many of the conflicts that divert Africa’s resources (both owned and borrowed) could be significantly reduced in terms of human and finances if duty bearers do not ignore but have the capacity to attend to the legitimate claims of the rights holders. When individuals and groups are free from poverty, discrimination, injustice and from oppression, chances are that they constructively and creatively participate in consolidating and preserving the system that promote their dignity and welfare; as well as in the creation and preservation of wealth. The opposite is also verified.

3.3. Validity and use of African indigenous knowledge

We have to understand our culture and know what kind of people we are. Are we the kind that are willing to accept other people’s mistakes without pointing fingers? Are we the kind of people who can confess truthfully and forgive wholeheartedly?

There are numerous studies that point to the value of exploring indigenous conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms. Often they appear cheaper without necessarily being of temporary effect. Sometimes they fall short of so-called international standards of justice and fair trial. While the court-based approach to conflict may not be the only available solution, it is up to us, contemporary Africans and citizens of this world at large to think creatively about how to blend approaches that may prima facie appear to be at symmetry.

---

The Acholi Traditional Approach to Forgiveness and Reconciliation
(Northern Uganda)

Forgiveness and reconciliation are said to be at the center of the traditional Acholi culture. The traditional Acholi culture views justice as means of restoring social relations. In other words, justice in the traditional Acholi culture should be considered as restorative.

Paramount Chief Rwon David Onen Acana II pointed out that, "The wounds of war will be healed if the Acholi practice their traditional guiding principles." He pointed out the following as the guiding principles:

- Do not be a troublemaker,
- Respect, one of the core content-pillars of human rights obligations
- Sincerity, a moral value constitutive of human dignity
- Do not steal, an imperative of life in society prohibited by criminal law
- Reconciliation and harmony, as constitutive of peoples' right to peace
- Forgiveness, core in indigenous conflict resolution
- Problem solving through discussion, the principle of peaceful resolution of conflict, and
- Children, women, and the disabled are not to be harmed in war, a cardinal principle in international humanitarian law

Most of the principles emphasize the need to live in harmony with others and restoring social relations. This shows that traditionally, the Acholi are a peace-loving people. The Acholi traditional culture encourages individuals to accept their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions. It is important to note that an individual does this voluntarily. Individuals are encouraged to forgive and not to seek revenge. One of the mechanisms for forgiveness and reconciliation among the Acholi is the Mato Oput (drinking the bitter herb).

Mato Oput is both a process and ritual ceremony that aims at restoring relationships between clans that would have been affected by either an intentional murder or accidental killing. It helps to bring together the two conflicting parties with the aim of promoting forgiveness and restoration, rather than revenge. The Acholi conduct the Mato Oput ceremony because they believe that after the ceremony the "hearts of the offender and the offended will be free from holding any grudge between them."

The Liu Institute for Global Issues and the Gulu District NGO Forum points out that, the Mato Oput ceremony itself has 'various forms across different clans.' "The drinking of the bitter herb means that the two conflicting parties accept "the bitterness of the past and promise never to taste such bitterness again." The payment of compensation follows the ceremony. The victim or his/her family is compensated for the harm done, for example, in the form of cows or cash. Is such kind of compensation is enough to satisfy people? It is believed by many Acholi that Mato Oput "can bring true healing in a way that formal justice system cannot." It doesn't aim at establishing

Accessed:18 jun.2008

2 The two others are the obligation to protect and fulfil.
whether an individual is guilty or not, rather it seeks to restore marred social harmony in the affected community.

The Acholi elders consider the formerly abducted persons (FAPs) as their sons and daughters, hence the need for them to undergo the forgiving and reconciliation process after returning from the bush. If it is the case that the FAPs are forgiven and reconciled to the community without compensation, then we have a model of reconciliation without justice in Northern Uganda.

4.0 As a way of conclusion

In my opinion, the new Africa is the one that does not have to choose between a romantic and distance cultural heritage of its post-colonial era and an exogenous paradigm in which she is condemned to occupy a marginal seat. Reconciling the past and the present only takes commitment to change. This is doable! Africa has long mobilised the rest of world around its conflicts. It is time to draw from Africa the recipe for transforming conflicts into opportunities for sustainable development, mutual acceptance respect and support. Under the auspices of the African Union, several mechanisms have the potential to achieve cost-effective conflict prevention, resolution and management. The Peace and Security Council and its the Panel of the Wise, the NEPAD/APRM, the Panafriican Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child- all have a role to play. At regional level, almost all regional economic communities have in place institutional and normative frameworks to address armed conflicts. What has been worryingly lacking is the translation of wishful decisions into concrete interventions. Some of the pertinent policy decisions, which are generic to African or international conferences on conflicts in Africa, include the followings:

1. Institutionalization of democracy and good governance
2. A strict adherence to the principles of rule of law
4. Promotion of the right to development, as well as economic, social / cultural right, and civil and political rights.
5. Upholding the principle of the separation of powers including the protection/promotion of the independence of the Judiciary.
6. Promotion of the principles of Transparency and Accountability in governance, and the eradication of corruption.
7. Promotion and protection of the rights of women, children minorities and other vulnerable groups.
8. Africa-wide adherence to and institutionalization of the NEPAD/APRM process.

These recommendations are still valid and relevant to the prevention, management and resolution of armed conflicts in Africa. The process of turning them into reality should include the use of the human rights based approach and indigenous methods of conflict prevention and management.

The failure to live up to the pledges of halting armed conflicts that have the potential to adversely affect present and future generations as well as the overall development of the continent, will hunt Africans in any position of leadership or
authority. On the contrary respecting pledges will no doubt contribute to the creation of peaceful and stable environment that is a pre-requisite for the accelerated development and integration agenda of Africa.

Bibliography


UN Charter (1945), preamble. San Francisco, 26 June.


Executive and Managing Editor
Dr Maxwell Mkwezalamba  Commissioner for Economic Affairs, AUC

Editor in Chief
Dr René N’Guettia Kouassi  Director of Economic Affairs, AUC

Editorial Board
Dr Maxwell Mkwezalamba  Commissioner for Economic Affairs, AUC
Dr René N’Guettia Kouassi  Director of Economic Affairs, AUC
Mme Habiba Mejri-Cheikh  Head of Communication and Information Division, AUC
Mr. Yeo Dossina  Statistician, Department of Economic Affairs, AUC
Mr Baboucarr Koma  Policy Officer, Private Sector Development, Department of Economic Affairs, AUC
Ms Hiwot Tifsihit  Editorial Assistant, Department of Economic Affairs, AUC

Web site: Mrs Christiane Yanrou, Senior Website Administrator, Communication and Information Division AUC
Mr Asmerom Girma, Web Administrator, Communication and Information Division AUC

Photographer: Mr Engida Wassie, AUC
“Fridays of the Commission” are trimestrial conferences/debates on current socio-economic, and political issues of Africa.

Organized by: the Department of Economic Affairs in collaboration with Communication and Information Division. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact:
  Mr Yeo Dossina, Email: dossinay@africa-union.org
  Ms Hiwot Tifsihit, E-mail: tifsihith@africa-union.org
  Tel.: (251 11) 5 51 92 87
  Fax: (251 11) 5 51 02 49

Organisé par: le Département des Affaires éonomiques en collaboration avec la Division de Communication et Information. Pour vos questions ou suggestions, veuillez contacter :
  Mr Yeo Dossina, Email: dossinay@africa-union.org
  Mlle Hiwot Tifsihit, E-mail: tifsihith@africa-union.org
  Tel.: (251 11) 5 51 92 87
  Fax: (251 11) 5 51 02 49

www.africa-union.org