Conflict Management in Africa
Diagnosis of Current Practices and Future Prospects

By : Severine M. Rugumamu

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1. Introduction

In the realm of peace and security in Africa, the 1990s witnessed dramatic and profound changes throughout the continent. With the conclusion of the Cold War, some of the major tensions between East and West over African battleground were markedly eased. South Africa and Namibia installed democratically elected governments. Relative peace and stability was established in Mozambique after three decades of confrontation between warring parties. Several dozens of African countries held democratic elections. Unquestionably, all these are positive and significant signs toward peace, stability and development. However, while many parts of the world moved toward greater stability and political and economic cooperation, Africa remained one of the cauldrons of instability. Political insecurity and violent conflicts became increasingly persistent realities of the development scene in Africa. Internal conflicts with deep historical roots flared in many countries on the continent. Ironically, while the international community paid less and less attention to African security affairs, the continent's institutional and organizational capacity to manage its pervasive conflicts was not developing at the same pace as conflict escalations. Against such a backdrop, peace and peace making in Africa emerges as one of the critical issues of great importance in global politics.

Widespread societal conflicts in Africa are often played out against the backdrop of deep poverty, illiteracy, and weak systems of governance. Undermined by unfavorable terms of trade, indebtedness and administrative failures, most states in Africa have failed to respond adequately to the critical social needs of their citizens. In the most extreme cases, Africa's insecurity has been reflected by the traumatic episodes of collapsed and collapsing states. Almost invariably, state collapses are products of long-term degenerative politics marked by a loss of control over the economic and political space. As would be expected, collapsed states in Africa have had harmful spillover effects on neighboring countries. The overflow of refugees, heightened ethnic tensions in some cases, and the resulting diplomatic conflicts, have engaged substantial resources and efforts from the relatively stable countries that share borders with collapsed states (Zartman, 1995:1-5). In the process, what were once thought to be mere domestic conflicts, out of the purview of international organizations like the United Nations (UN) and regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have now been internationalized. External actors have been drawn into what was technically civil war in order to restore peace and security. It has become increasingly apparent that Africa should develop the capacity to deal with its growing domestic security problems.

The paper has several objectives. Firstly, it seeks to describe and explain the nature and character of African conflicts. Secondly, it provides the changing national and international context within which violent conflicts in Africa are managed. Thirdly and finally, it examines various third party intervention strategies that are needed to manage conflict as well as create a sustainable environment for positive peace building.

2. Essence of Conflicts and Conflict Mapping

From the antiquity to contemporary times, competition and conflict are regarded as inherent phenomena in both nature and society. Latent or violent social confrontations have long been considered as the primum mobile for social changes and transformations. Arguments to support this proposition are that conflicts and competition are inevitable and ubiquitous in all societies at all times. Similarly, in the best of circumstances, conflicts and competition are bounded and circumscribed. Contending groups of people and rival nations get involved in violent conflicts either because their interests or values are challenged or because their needs

are not met. The deprivation (actual or potential) of any important value, induces fear, a sense of threat, and unhappiness. Whether contending groups in a particular society are defined by ethnicity, religion, ideology, gender, or class identities, they have, by definition, different needs, interests, values and access to power and resources. Understandably, such differences necessarily generate social conflicts and competition. What is at issue, therefore, is how to manage and resolve inherent social conflicts before they degenerate into violent expressions and massive destruction.

The major positive and negative changes and transformations in the world history occurred as a result of resolving old intractable conflicts through violence or war. In fact, the epochal-making social revolutions of the past centuries were the only way of resolving irreconcilable conflicts of different social formations. On the ashes of destruction and disintegration caused by the previous system, social revolutions provided societies with unique opportunities to devise more conducive institutional arrangements to meet the challenges of the new times. In this broader sense, therefore, conflict per se is not at issue.

Even the simplest interpersonal conflict has many elements. Conflicts involving multiple parties, large number of people, and complex organizations such as nation-states are enormously complicated. Every conflict has certain basic elements that permit researchers to produce a tentative road map. The mapper first gathers information about the history of the conflict and its physical and organizational settings. To be sure, a conflict does not emerge in a vacuum. Sometimes one conflict is nested with another. The second stage is to examine the parties in a conflict. Parties in a conflict differ in the directness of their involvement, and the importance of its outcome. Primary parties are those which oppose one another, have a direct stake in the outcome of the conflict and are using a fighting behaviour. Secondary parties have an indirect stake in the outcome. They are often allies or sympathizers with the primary parties but are not direct adversaries. Third parties are actors such as mediators, peacekeeping and peace enforcing forces that might intervene to facilitate the management of the conflict.

It is not always possible to distinguish a cause of a conflict from consequences. In fact, as a conflict emerges, cause and consequence tend to blend. Hostility might be a consequence of one phase of a conflict and a cause of the next. Perceived goals and interest incompatibility is perhaps the most basic cause of social conflict. Identity defense is also common, particularly in the contemporary world where group awareness and rights have assumed high visibility. Cultural differences and particularly language are yet other sources of separateness and difference. They create a sense of self and self-defense, which is probably another primary motive for conflict. It is important to distinguish clearly contending goals and interests of each party.

Moreover, a conflict is constantly moving and changing. Even if parties are at a stalemate, aspects of a conflict context will be changing. Runaway responses of parties to one another are made more visible through conflict mapping. Dynamics such as unrestrained escalation and polarization carry participants away from cooperative resolution toward greater hostility. Perceptions and changes occur within the opposing sides which reinforce the runaway responses: stereotyping opponents, seeing them as the negative mirror image of oneself, imputing to them increasingly malign motives. In this way, a conflict map is able to serve as a conceptual guide to clarify the nature and dynamics of a conflict (Wehr, 1995).

Once conflicts escalate into violence, the major concern of neighboring states, civil society, and the international community is to intervene in the conflict in order to facilitate the

mediation process and to help transform structures that produce insecurity and structural violence into positive peace.[1] It is argued in this paper that a solid foundation for effective organization and enabling institutions is a necessary precondition to sustainable and enduring peace building. For purposes of this paper, institutions are understood as sets of rules governing the actions of individuals and organizations, and the interactions of all-relevant parties and negotiations among participants. Specifically, countries as well as societies need institutions that strengthen organizations and promote good governance, whether through laws and regulations, or by coordinating the actions of many players, as in international treaties. Rule-based processes increase the transparency of policies designed to create desired outcomes, and of organizations used to implement them (World Bank, 2000:3).

3. International Context of Conflict Management in Africa

During the bipolar era, the Cold War competition and rivalries between two ideological blocs largely shaped the security environment of Africa states. On the one hand, it internationalized otherwise local conflicts. The superpower competition for global influence exacerbated and prolonged local and regional conflicts in an extensive bipolar rivalry. Each superpower, fearing the other might provide decisive support and thereby gain political advantage, was driven to assist one or the other party. By the same token, the bipolar structure of the Cold War allowed local disputants to maneuver superpowers to advance their respective interests (Rugumamu, 1997).

On the other hand, the superpower also restrained local African conflicts out of fear of escalation. In their spheres of influence, each superpower suppressed conflicts, concerned that open disputes would create opportunities for the other to intervene in its politically sensitive backyard. By whatever means, the superpowers did exercise a degree of management to counteract increased regional tensions, keep conflicts within bounds, and occasionally even imposing settlements. They restrained their client regimes by stationing troops, extending security commitments, rejecting or limiting the shipment of advanced offensive weaponry, applying political pressure, and using economic rewards and threats of punishment to elicit certain behaviour. In the process, foreign powers imposed an artificial and tenuous stability on the continent by propping up regimes of client states. Unquestionably, this is one of the major ways in which numerous dictators in the Third World in general, and in Africa in particular, were born, bred, and sustained. The blind support by Cold War worriers of many unpopular and oppressive African regimes, inevitably led to aggrieved groups to carry out coups d'etats, start secessionist and irredentist movements, and rebellions against the state. So powerful were the Cold War dynamics that they set in motion serious internal conflicts that have long outlasted the Cold War itself (Lakes and Morgan, 1997).

Once the Cold War ended, and communism was no longer considered a serious threat to Western global interests, Africa's intrinsic significance to its former allies eroded irretrievably. This led, in turn, to the relaxing of vast networks of alliances, obligations, and agreements that bound most African states to competing global security systems. The ensuing break-up of alliances, partnership, and regional support systems exposed weak African states to systemic instability. The Cold War zealots were no longer as interested in the continent's regime stability as before. In fact, Africans were increasingly reminded to learn how to fend for themselves. Slowly but inexorably, foreign powers began to withdraw their automatic support from authoritarian African regimes, and the concomitant financial, military and political assistance that accompanied that support. Expectedly, the hollow nature and character of the African state, and the unfinished agenda of nation building became manifestly

obvious. In fact, states that had been overly dependent on Cold War patronage like the former Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Zaire, Somalia, and Liberia began to disintegrate fast thereafter. Not surprisingly also, old conflicts which, for a long time had been buried under the cover of the Cold War, started to re-surface with deeper and more violent vengeance as states grew weaker and weaker, and small arms and mercenaries became readily available. The realities of the new situation have encouraged African leaders and intellectuals to seriously consider the norms of external interventions and sovereignty for purposes of settling domestic disputes (Keller, 1997; Hyden, 1993; Nyang'oro, 1999).

One of the primary defining features of the post-Cold War era in Africa is the increase in the number, scope, and intensity of domestic conflicts that have spilled, or have the potential to spill over national borders into neighbouring states. Donald Rothchild (1996:228) observed that almost half (16) of the 35 wars waged throughout the world, with battle deaths exceeding one thousand per year, have taken place in Africa. Beyond their direct toll on death, violent conflicts in Africa have periodically assumed horrendous proportions, spawning population displacements, refugees and migration. Some statistics are nothing short of staggering. By 1997, the world's recognized refugee population continued to hover around the 13 million mark. Internally displaced persons were estimated at 17 million worldwide. However, the number of countries deemed to be in violent conflicts differs widely depending on whose definition one uses (Roberts, 1996).

It is important to note that during the Cold War period, the division of labour between the roles of the subregional, regional and international organizations were clear. While the traditional role of UN was to mount peacekeeping operations, and to deploy political missions, regional and subregional organizations concentrated largely on preventive diplomacy.[23] However, such operations were few and far apart. Since the early 1990s, UN has engaged a number of simultaneous, larger, and more ambitious peace operations such as those in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Mozambique and Somalia. The financial, personnel, and timing pressure on UN to undertake these massive short-term stabilizing actions impaired its overall ability to ensure timely and effective intervention measures. There are increased worries about the Security Council's ability to consistently address serious threats to international peace and security. The Council's credibility as the dominant actor for assuring international peace and security was in serious doubt.

In recent years, a new international security management paradigm seems to be emerging. It consists essentially of regions and subregions accepting co-responsibility and sharing the burden to police themselves and, consequently, a dilution of the central responsibility that UN would play in this regard. As will be discussed momentarily, this agenda is primarily driven by the United States. It is demanding cooperation and burden sharing by all others. The most recent, and arguably, the most important indication of this trend is the United States support for the greater "European defense identity" as opposed to a "trans-Atlantic identity." In fact, this is a harbinger of what is evolving as a generalized global security management doctrine. The commonly repeated phrase that "African solutions to African problems" seems to be aptly capturing the new mood.

It bears repeating that with the conclusion of the Cold War, Africa's importance and relevance in global politico-strategic concerns of the West has diminished markedly. As Barry Buzan (1991:435) aptly argues, Africa's geo-strategic significance has become marginal to the vital interests of the West. Europe, in particular, seems to be gradually diverting its attention away from Africa in favour of those regions of the world with which it has closer cultural,

economic and strategic connections. The current intense European Union's preoccupation with the security problems of former Yugoslavia compares unfavourably with its relative inattention to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, and Sierra Leone. Relatedly, the Mediterranean states are likely to receive more EU attention and security resources in the years to come. To be sure, these states are closer neighbours than sub-Saharan African counries. European security concerns stem from the flow of illegal immigrants into Europe from North Africa as well as the specter of political Islam in Algeria and Egypt. Not surprisingly, European military bases in sub-Saharan Africa are closing down quickly, and Africans are constantly counseled by the West to fend for themselves (Rugumamu, 1999a).

Moreover and closely related to the first two arguments, Africa's intrinsic political value as ideological spoil or diplomatic asset to the West has become of insignificant import. Previously, the Cold War had created sufficient diplomatic and ideological space for African states to articulate and defend their respective national interests. The Soviet Union was a relatively reliable ally of African countries in the global struggle against imperialist exploitation, injustice, and foreign domination. By allying themselves with socialist countries in UN and other global forums, African voices were heard and African votes were sought. In recent years, however, there has developed a visible tendency toward diplomatic isolation of the African continent. This lack of concern and attention was evident at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the European Union-African, Caribbean and Pacific Negotiations on development cooperation and at the Uruguay Round on trade issues, where Africa's pressing development needs were rarely given serious attention. In all the above instances, important questions - such as the pervasive political insecurity, dumping of toxic waste, foreign debt, market access, commodity prices, foreign aid, the economic impact of globalization and desertification - were given fleeting consideration. Fantu Cheru further noted that Africa's marginalization at these important meetings was further compounded by the inability of its delegates to organize themselves effectively at caucus level in order to articulate their demands (Cheru, 1996:150).

Following the end of the Cold War, it was widely hoped that UN would be able to adopt a more balanced and enhanced role as the world peacekeeper and peacemaker. In fact, the then UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali's 1992 Report, *An Agenda for Peace*, provided far-reaching recommendations regarding UN's intervention in internal conflicts and its programs of humanitarian assistance (Ghali, 1992). In fact, in the previous year, UN had intervened in Iraq to protect the Kurds from genocidal attacks of President Saddam Hussein. This was the first time that UN had taken sides to define a country's domestic problem as an international security issue. Subsequently, the Council created two international criminal tribunals, in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to prosecute those accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity and genocide. In 1999, it also authorized virtual trusteeship or protectorates in Kosovo and East Timor in order to protect local populations.

However, the subsequent UN debacle of its peacekeeping efforts in Somalia in October of 1993 radically changed Western intervention policies in Africa. From that point on, the United States and other large contributors have required the UN Security Council to be more selective in its approach to conflicts, especially the internal variety that has been wreaking so much havoc in Africa. Following the unfortunate Somali experience, the West in general and the United States in particular, has gradually withdrawn from direct participation in Africa's conflict-management endeavours. There has developed, in fact, a distasteful mood of "afro-pessimism" and "conflict fatigue." Since then, the Security Council's slow and sometimes

feeble initial approaches to the internal conflicts in Burundi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo have reflected the more cautious approach of the United States. Evidently, the West has further demonstrated an outright willingness to appease Jonas Savimbi following his rejection of election results in Angola. It also demonstrated inaction in the face of genocide in Rwanda; vacillations during the refugee crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and reluctance to act even when the elected governments of Congo (Brazzaville) and the Ivory Coast were overthrown. Furthermore, it showed a willingness to accept governments with dubious electoral mandates and poor human rights records when such governments suited their interests in stability, as in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Gabon (Ottaway, 1999).

Subsequently, and as earlier pointed out, an implicit policy emerged which encourages the so-called "layered responses" to African conflicts: local and national organizations are expected to respond initially, followed by responses at subregional and regional level, and ultimately at the level of the broader international community.[4] According to the architects of this policy, the aim is to encourage African initiatives that seek African solutions to African conflicts. Accordingly, in recent years, OAU as well as its subregional organizations have taken bold steps to develop their organizational capacities for managing regional conflicts. It is little wonder, then, that instead of familiar UN blue helmets, peacekeepers in Sierra Leone fought under the banner of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). By the same token, when the warring parties in the Democratic Republic of Congo gathered in Lusaka, Zambia, in July of 1999 to sign a cease-fire pact, they endorsed an agreement initiated and mediated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with UN playing a secondary role. In fact, Africa is the only continent being called upon by its former Cold War allies to set up its own international force for peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance (Clever and May, 1995).

Brutally stung by the Somali escapade and prompted by the desire to reduce costly interventions in distant, non-strategic locations of the world, the United States proposed, and later launched, the idea of the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) as a response to what it perceived to be "persistent political turmoil in Africa." The substance of the Initiative is to train and equip between 5,000 and 10,000 African troops for rapid deployment in an African crisis. ACRI is not intended to be a standing force but rather a rapid-response, contingence force that can be quickly assembled and deployed under UN and/ or OAU auspices. Its broad mission is to carry out humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations. Its more specific aims are to establish and man "safe areas" in conflict zones and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance, operating under UN Chapter 6 Mandates. In addition to providing equipment and training, the United States committed itself to contributing airlift assistance to increase mobility and communications as well as to enhance intelligence and command and control abilities (Frazer, 1997:109-110).

The US proposal was immediately and enthusiastically embraced by other European powers, particularly Britain and France, as well as by some African countries. The US European Command (EUSCOM) was designated to serve as the agency that manages military training programs in sub-Saharan Africa. It seeks to enhance the capability of selected African military forces by enabling them to respond to crises by participating in peacekeeping operations in Africa. In this regard, the US Congress passed the African Conflict Resolution Act in 1994, calling for the provision of material and technical assistance to help institutionalize African conflict resolution capabilities. The resources were to be provided to the OAU, subregional organizations and national governments. Countries that were initially

earmarked to participate in ACRI included Senegal, Malawi, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mali, and Ghana. It was hoped that, ACRI would eventually create the feeling among Africans that regional states and organizations were playing a more active and responsible role in conflict management and resolution. As would be expected, the West would no longer be embroiled in complex, and never-ending African conflicts. Some African countries, including South Africa, Nigeria and Tanzania, have been wary of the initiative, suspecting that it was simply a means to persuade Africans to implement policies and decisions not of their own making.

In a similar hands-off pattern, France is slowly but inexorably disengaging herself from Africa. Historically, one of Paris's strategic roles in Africa was the provision of military support to the French-speaking African countries. In fulfilling her "gendarme role" on the continent, France maintained security and defense agreements and stationed troops in several African countries, including the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, and Senegal. France also used her interventionist forces in Chad, Western Sahara, and Zaire. This elaborate network of agreements and logistical support structures enabled the French army to intervene at least thirty times in Africa in the last four decades. However, as the Cold War has thawed, France no longer favors the use of her soldiers in solving Africa's domestic problems. In fact, she is one of the leading EU member states that proposed the creation of a special African intervention force to be equipped, trained and financed by Europe and the United States (Guy, 1995). In short, Africa is generally being left to its own devices. This is surely a welcome development. Africa should muster the courage and self-confidence to terminate the paralytic weaknesses of its individual countries' polities and economies by embracing the concept and practice of collective structural transformation.

In theory, the emerging international security management has several advantages. First, member states in regional and subregional security arrangements are the ones who are likely to suffer the consequences of instability in their region most directly. Their nations will bear the cost of providing for refugees, sanctuaries for insurrectionist actions, will have to spend more on defense, and will bear the cost of reduced economic growth. It is therefore in the interests of regional organizations to preserve their regional peace, security and stability. This vital interest ought to translate into greater political will in order to ensure that stability is secured. Secondly, members of a regional or subregional security organization are likely to be more in tune with the conflict at hand as they share the same cultural background and often speak the same language. In some cases, personal relationships have developed among the leaders which undoubtedly results in greater understanding of the situation, and may result in fruitful dialogue based on personal trust. Thirdly and finally, regional organizations, being in tune with its own area of interest may provide timely response based on better intelligence of a looming crisis. More often than not, the willingness to maintain subregional security is rarely matched with the ability to do so.

4. Conflict Management in Africa

Causes and Cycles of Conflict

As earlier pointed out, most of the contemporary violent conflicts in Africa underline the reality that the security threats to the state and the population are less external to the continent and less military than they are economic, environmental and social in nature. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the African continent has acquired a dubious honor of being number one in hosting the largest number of armed conflicts and complex emergencies. In his 1998

Report to the Security Council, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan lamented Africa's insecurity situation:

> *Since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa, the vast majority of them intra-state in origin. In 1996 alone, 14 out of 53 countries in Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for more than half of all war-related deaths worldwide and resulting in more than 8 million displaced refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The consequences of these conflicts have seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity, and peace for its people…Preventing such wars is no longer a matter of defending states or protecting allies. It is a matter of defending humanity itself (Annan, 1998).*

As the above quotation aptly demonstrates, intra-state conflicts in Africa can no longer be considered as temporary deviations from a stable national or regional security pattern. To some cynic observers, the complex emergencies of Africa seem to be chronic, insolvable problems. Be that as it may, we do not intend, in this paper, to rehash the causes of violent conflicts in Africa. Suffice it to mention that the sources of continent's conflicts are complex and multifaceted, involving many actors and thus, making them impossible to reduce to a single cause or source: local, national, regional and international forces have combined to fuel almost every war on the continent. To explain why violent conflicts happen, most theories distinguish between structural causes of conflict (or "root causes" or "imbalance of opportunities"), accelerating, and triggering factors. Structural factors include political, economic and social patterns such as state repression, lack of political participation, poor governance performance, the distribution of wealth, the ethnic make-up of a society, and the history of inter-group relations. They increase a society's vulnerability to conflict. Accelerating or triggering factors often consist of political developments or events that bring underlying tensions to the forefront and cause the situation to escalate. They can include new radical ideologies, repression of political groups, sharp economic shocks, changes inor collapse of central authority, new discriminatory policies, external intervention, and weapon proliferation (Azar, 1990; Azar and Burton, 1986; and Davis and Gurr, 1997).

It is useful to emphasize that conflicts are caused by an array of interrelated factors, involving many actors, and rarely follow any predictable standard pattern. However, for analytical purposes, the European Commission (1996) and the Development Assistance Committee Task Force of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1998) have adopted a four-stage model of a conflict cycle. The first is referred to as the "normality and peace" stage. At this stage, a country is apparently stable, but may structurally be prone to conflict. Risk assessment studies can identify the main background conditions and provide policy directions for long-term stabilizing measures. Stage two is called "rising tensions". As conflicts become manifest, tensions and mutual suspicions rise high, but violence remains only sporadic. Conflict analysis should reveal the accelerating factors and show opportunities for short-term preventive initiatives. "Open Conflict" is the third stage. At this stage, there is a high level of violence, and peaceful options are (temporarily) abandoned. Reactive measures seeking to contain violence and protect the civilian population are sought. Proactive measures should identify opportunities for peacemaking and address the factors perpetuating conflict. The fourth and last stage is referred to as "post-conflict transition". At this stage, hostilities have ceased, but political, economic and social uncertainties prevail. Old and new structural tensions need to be analyzed and addressed in reconstruction and long-term development programmes.

This widely used framework deserves some remarks. Firstly, clear progressions from one state to other, though theoretically plausible, they are rare, and most conflicts oscillate between two or three of these stages over the years. Secondly, the determinism inherent in the conflict cycle may draw too much attention to "events management" and allow little space for searching for structural alternatives that can break the cycle. Thirdly and finally, the apparent clear-cut phases of the conflict cycle detract attention from the crucial movements from one state to another. Nonetheless, the stage model is a valid tool for clarifying dynamics of a conflict situation, by delineating underlying structural factors, and developing a comprehensive approach addressing all stages of the conflict cycle in a coherent way (Costy and Gilbert, 1998).

OAU Record so Far

Although one of the primary objectives of establishing OAU was to manage conflicts among member states, it has historically played a more reactive role in addressing threats to national and regional security. For a long time, the Organization was constrained by its Charter from intervening in internal conflicts. The Charter's preference for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states rendered it powerless to address situations of poor governance and the gross abuse of human rights. Furthermore, until recently, the institutions mentioned in the original OAU Charter were either irrelevant or simply ineffective as instruments to end or manage armed conflicts. The Commission on Mediation, Reconciliation and Arbitration, which was established in the 1960s, appeared to have been doomed from the start, as it was not designed to deal with internal conflicts. Nor was it mandated to prevent the outbreak of conflicts. This legal mechanism was created to encourage member states to submit their disputes for regional arbitration. Its lengthy and costly judicial process made the Commission unattractive to many would-be clients. In fact, the Commission was never used. It was dissolved in 1977, with OAU opting for other methods of conflict management. Above all, the Defense Commission, envisioned under Article XX of the OAU Charter, was never established.

For well over three decades, therefore, various *ad hoc* commissions and committees of OAU member states undertook the responsibility of managing conflicts in Africa. Under the rubric of preventive diplomacy, OAU and later subregional communities have extensively deployed the good offices of some prominent heads of state, the Secretary-General, and elder statesmen to mediate conflicts. They included mediating disputes over border and territorial claims, allegations of subversion by member states against member states, and, in a few cases, civil wars. A few successful mediation efforts include, notably, resolving the border disputes between Algeria and Morocco, Ethiopia and Somalia, and recently between Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, more often than not, these efforts were of limited lasting impact. This was, in part, because the OAU had no credible enforcement instruments _ it could only appeal to disputing parties to adhere to the organization's principles. It was also, in part, because of the Organization's limited capacity to mount successful independent peacekeeping, peace enforcement or peace-building operations as was clearly evidenced by the Chad fiasco in the early 1980s as well as its inherent inability to restrain both Uganda and Rwanda from continued occupation of the north-east provinces of Democratic Republic of Congo from the late 1990s.

OAU's peacemaking efforts during the 1960s and 1970s were few and far apart. OAU has also contributed significantly in marshalling African military contributions for the UN peacekeeping operations at the height of the genocide in Rwanda. More recently, the

Organization dispatched military observers in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia-Eritrea border. It has also observed elections in several dozen countries, including referenda on self-determination and constitutional reform. Its support to democratic processes, which serve to ensure peaceful and routine institutional mechanisms for managing competition in any society, is a valuable contribution to conflict prevention in Africa.

As the rate of intra-state conflicts skyrocketed in the 1990s, it became increasingly apparent that *ad hoc* conflict management arrangements of the 1970s and 1980s were not up to the task. At the 1993 OAU Summit in Cairo, African heads of state agreed to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The Mechanism was charged with anticipating and preventing conflicts, and engaging in peace-making and peacebuilding activities. In cases of severe conflict, there is a provision for OAU cooperation with the UN in development of the peacekeeping strategy. Although the OAU principle of non-intervention in internal affairs was re-stated, the Mechanism was also charged with the task of dealing with internal conflicts in circumstances of gross human rights abuses and atrocities. The emphasis on anticipatory and preventive measures expressly aims at obviating the need to resort to the complex and resource-demanding peacekeeping operations that Africa can ill-afford. As OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim remarked, "given that every African is his brother's keeper, and that our borders are at best artificial, we in Africa need to use our own cultural and social relationships to interpret the principle of non-intervention in such a way that we are able to apply it to our advantage in conflict prevention and resolution" (Salim, 1992:11-12).

The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is built around a Central Organ, with the Secretary-General and the OAU Secretariat as its operational arm. The Central Organ is composed of the Bureau (the Current Chairperson of OAU, the immediate past Chair, and the in-coming Chair), three from each of the five subregions of Africa. The latter rotate annually. Ordinarily, it convenes every month at ambassadorial level, twice a year at ministerial level, and once a year at the level of heads of state. Unlike the Security Council, the Central Organ's decision-making procedures do not reflect the structural power balance of its members. Rather, decisions are taken simply by a consensus. Worse still, the OAU Mechanism does not provide for the norm of permanent members (major subregional powers) and non-permanent members on the Central Organ. The abstract norm of sovereign equality tends to reign supreme. Although it essentially performs the Security Council-type functions of reviewing the security situation of the continent, deciding on the course of action to be taken, the Central Organ lacks the requisite collective power to implement and/or enforce its decisions. If OAU's intervention into Burundi was stalled because the Burundian government opposed it, UNITA failed to live up to the Lusaka Peace Accord, or the Comoros refused to enforce the OAU-mandated sanctions on the Anjouan separatist junta, then one can imagine how institutionally weak the collective will of the Central Organ inherently is. Viewed retrospectively, both the structural weaknesses of African states collectively and individually, as well as the organizational inadequacies of OAU's Central Organ explain, in a large measure, the limited performance of the Mechanism for Conflict Management.

Most of the successful regional integration and collective security initiatives world-over have thrived on a strong and willing leadership which Robert Keohane (1980) aptly describes as the "theory of hegemonic stability".[5] The presence of a regional core or nucleus has the capacity to serve as a positive force for developing and nurturing a viable collective security arrangement. At the maximum, leaders are expected to assume a disproportionate cost burden

of a collective security project as well as serve as the paragons of compliance of the regime's rules, norms, and procedures. Their commitment, reliability, and capability are expected to be beyond reproach. At the minimum, hegemonic leadership entails being able and willing to provide a mix of incentives and disincentives to members of the security regimes in order to ensure compliance. The hegemonic leader's economic strength and political stability, for instance, would bolster the region's economic vitality and political stability. It would also champion the cause of cooperation by pulling the less willing and the less able member countries along, as it may not be possible for all countries to move at the same time and pace. Arguably, the hegemony-centered regional or subregional security order would be more workable and effective than a larger body. It would provide the necessary *leadership consensus* on crucial issues such as "entry points" in conflict management, modalities for action, and cooperation and coordination with OAU partners. Such rules of procedure would make the larger body effective (Ayoob, 1995; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991).[6] The role of the United States in NATO, Germany in the European Union and South Africa in the Southern African Customs Union are excellent success stories of hegemony-centered cooperation arrangements in recent times. By the same token South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Kenya have the capacity to play this strategic role within OAU as permanent members on the Central Organ as well as on the security and defense organs in their respective subregional organizations. It is simply common sense that countries which bear the burden of peace operations should have disproportionate decision-making powers.

Understandably, in the absence of a strong collective will and requisite intervention capacity within the OAU system, some African governments have not hesitated to by-pass the cumbersome and usually indecisive OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Recent peace enhancing initiatives include un-invited interventions by some African governments in neighboring countries in order to restore constitutional government, end threats to peace, and achieve peace enforcement.[7]

The Secretary-General of OAU and the Conflict Management Center (CMC) serve as the Secretariat of the Mechanism as well as its implementation agency. CMC was established to serve not only as the research arm of the Mechanism, but most importantly, to strengthen OAU's institutional capacity for conflict management. In this regard, the Center recruited about a dozen consultants through foreign-funded projects with the view of enhancing its analytical capacity. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the work of CMC, the Mechanism sanctioned the establishment of a continent-wide Early Warning System. When fully operationalized, the system is expected to provide reliable and accurate early warning information of developing conflicts and help experts to suggest various modes of response. Early warning and information management systems at OAU will have to be harmonized and coordinated with those at the subregional levels. However, we should hasten to add that prompt and decisive response to crisis situations in Africa would largely depend on how the Central Organ is composed and structured.

Besides the establishment of CMC, the Mechanism also created an OAU Peace Fund to support the organization's efforts relating to conflict management. The Fund is made up of financial appropriations of 5 per cent of the regular OAU budget, voluntary contributions from member states, as well as from sources within Africa.[8] Moreover, the Secretary-General may, with the consent of the Central Organ and in conformity with the principles of the OAU Charter, accept voluntary contributions from sources outside Africa.[9] The question of the Peace Fund needs to be studied urgently in order to design a resource mobilization strategy.

Included in future plans should be a comprehensive costing for the reconciliation and reconstruction activities that are conspicuously absent in the current Peace Fund mandate.

Furthermore, the Mechanism mandates OAU to cooperate and work closely with the United Nations in maintaining peace, security and stability for the continent. Various practical suggestions of cooperation and coordination between the two institutions have been offered. They include, among others, technical assistance, staff exchange, liaison offices, joint missions, training of forces and pre-positioning of equipment. As Richard Joseph (1997) has observed, despite the polite diplomatic language used in most documents, the OAU and the UN have yet to fashion out a mutually acceptable and shared vision of active partnership, cooperation, and coordination in responding to Africa's armed conflicts. While both organizations agree on the objectives of "improved consultation, exchange of information, and coordination of joint action", they are still to agree on the fine details of how to achieve them. Africa should take the lead. It should not expect `these goodies to be delivered on a silver plate'. However, Africa should be wary of seeking to stake out roles and tasks for regional or subregional organizations that are both unrealistic and relieve the international community from its primary obligation for global peace and security.

Since the establishment of the Mechanism of Conflict Management, OAU has taken a wide-range of initial measures and initiatives aimed at anticipating and preventing conflicts on the continent. They include, among others, the development of an early warning system (still in rudimentary form) and an analytical capacity to provide the organization with advance notice of impeding conflict situations. Moreover, various preventive diplomacy efforts through the use of the OAU Special envoys to crises areas (for example the Comoros, 1997; Congo-Brazzaville in 1993; Ethiopia-Eritrea in 1998; Cote d'Ivoire in 2000,) as well as limited preventive deployments to contain conflict escalation have been mounted. However, as earlier pointed out, largely because of OAU's institutional and organizational inadequacies, most of its conflict management initiatives have had limited success. Summarizing the organization's performance at the beginning of the 1990s, the OAU Secretary-General lamented… "many times, we have looked around for OAU to intervene constructively in a conflict situation only to find that it is not there, and when present, to realize that it is not adequately equipped to be decisively helpful" (Salim, 1992).

Disenchanted and frustrated by UN and OAU record in peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts since the early 1990s, various African states, civil societies and international non-governmental organizations have assumed greater responsibility for conflict management as a means of creating an environment where peace, stability and democracy are the norm. At sub-regional levels, economic cooperation and integration arrangements such as ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD have increasingly assumed the role of security cooperation and conflict management. They have gradually revised their treaties and Protocols to include the provisions for managing regional peace and security. Like OAU, the subregional economic organizations have shifted from ad hoc arrangements of conflict management to systematic approaches and procedures. They vary enormously in both capacity and willingness to play a collective security role. Thus, through a process of learning, and indeed because of international political expediency, more controversial political issues have been brought into the field of cooperation and integration. This is what the neo-functionalist integration scholars have referred to as "spill-over effects" (Caporaso, 1970).

In West Africa, the first institutional arrangements to guarantee subregional security initially consisted of a Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense matters signed in 1981. However,

the spontaneous formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in August 1990 was a direct response to the precarious security realities in the subregion. Thus, in less than a decade, ECOMOG went full circle from peacekeeping and peace enforcement in Liberia to restorative intervention in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. In June 1996, the Organ on Politics, Security, and Defense was added to the SADC Treaty. Under SADC auspices, South Africa and Botswana successfully reversed a palace coup in Lesotho by applying diplomatic pressure, threatening economic sanctions, and staging a seven-month long intervention operation in an effort to deal with the deteriorating security situation in the SADC member state. Under the same umbrella, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia intervened, with limited success in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) assumed the added role of conflict management by mediating between the government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. However, as various observers have noted, subregional approaches to peace and security in Africa can only bring limited additional capabilities to conflict management. Regional and subregional alliances of the willing and able African states do not have the necessary wherewithal to bring security to the continent without continued engagement and support of the international community (Hutchful, 1999; Anning, 1999).

5. The Way Forward

As earlier pointed out, while more internal armed conflicts have occurred in Africa in the post-Cold war era than in any other major world region, the continent is becoming increasingly marginalized in the US and European foreign policy agendas. What can Africa do for itself? How can OAU and UN achieve a shared vision of active partnership, cooperation, and coordination in responding to the continent's needs for peace, security, emergence relief, reconstruction, and development? What complementary role can subregional organizations play in the maintenance of peace and stability in their respective regions? How can Africa's subregional organizations enhance their respective internal capacities to respond vigorously and preemptively to armed conflicts? In the following section, an attempt is made to answer these and similar questions.

Early Warning Signals and Preventive Actions

In theory, it is possible to define a conflict cycle in terms of peace-conflict-resolution. In practice, however, the situation is more subtle and complex than it usually appears. As earlier noted, even in times of relative peace and stability, structural conditions in a country could, over time, degenerate to potential eruptions of violent conflict. While distinct phases can be distinguished, they do not necessarily follow a sequential order. A combination of factors will generally determine whether a conflict escalates, recedes or retains the same tempo. Hence, the passage from one phase to another is not necessarily the result of a single event at the exact moment of transition.

Preventing conflicts is essentially a long-term process. It needs long-term strategies and policies whose impact will prevent the emergency of conditions that give rise to conflict escalation in the first place. These strategies and policies are fundamental to all countries and societies that seek to minimize the possibility of conflict escalation in the long-term. It is vitally important to recognize the fact that carefully designed, and coordinated actions to address the root causes of the conflict should always be based on reliable and accurate early warning analyses. Effective early warning combines historical, social, political and humanitarian information in order to forecast the dynamics of a particular conflict, and the

instruments necessary to effectively address it before it reaches crisis proportions. An effective early warning system requires overcoming two fundamental problems: the informational problem of obtaining both the necessary quantity and quality of intelligence in a reliable and timely fashion; and the analytic problem of avoiding misperceptions or faulty analysis of the likelihood of diffusions/ and escalation of the conflict, the impact on interests, and the potential risks and costs of both action and inaction. The need for the necessary personnel and technology comes to the fore (George and Holl, 1997). OAU as well as subregional organizations will require to put in place not only quality personnel with adequate surveillance and analytical capabilities, but equally important, the right technologies to access space-based information.

The early warning analysis provides insights into developing conflicts, suggests modes of response, and feeds these analyses and suggested intervention responses to critical organs that are responsible for taking the necessary preventive actions. Because of the strategic importance of conflict mitigation, it is usually desirable to achieve a shared analysis of the main conflict issues and trends with a wide range of interested parties. Early warning may also serve as one form of preventive action when such a warning is shared with the protagonists to a conflict with the intent of tempering their conflict-generating activities, or when it is shared with a political decision-making body that can initiate prompt prevention action.

Where individuals or groups are locked in a serious conflict situation and believe that their differences are irreconcilable, high levels of tension and mistrust normally characterize their relations.Strong feelings of anxiety, anger and enmity inhibit dialogue and rapprochement. In these circumstances, the course of any organized violent conflict and confrontation can, in many different ways, be influenced by third party interventions. At this early stage of the conflict, preventive diplomacy should be called in to prevent existing disputes from escalating into violent conflict and to limit the spread of the latter when it occurs. Preventive diplomacy serves the most desirable and cost effective mechanism for peacemaking. As Alexander George and Jane Holl have observed:

> *...While there may be disagreement "on how to define the scope of preventive diplomacy and…also on the utility of various tools and strategies that may be employed in specific situations…. there is no disagreement on the central importance of obtaining timely warning of incipient or slowly developing crisis if preventive diplomacy efforts are to make themselves felt (George and Holl, 1997:1).*

However, when crisis conditions become manifest, timely preventive measures must be considered and rapidly implemented. Appropriate and timely measures can counter potential triggers that might otherwise push the conflict toward open confrontation and mass violence. Under the rubric of preventive action, there is a wide range of instruments available for mediating and settling conflicts. Preventive diplomacy, mediation, and military measures are generally utilized for moderating conflicts. A third party mediator from outside the country- a wise man or woman acceptable to all parties to the conflict becomes necessary. Humanitarian aid, where possible, is usually brought in to supplement all other efforts. In some extreme circumstances, it may require to mount a comprehensive cease-fire so that humanitarian assistance can be provided for the war victims and displaced persons. Though short-term measures to de-escalation are important and necessary, long-term efforts at peace building should be intensified. Conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and resolution initiatives need to be

closely coordinated, if they are to play an effective role in supporting other activities. In the final analysis, all efforts should seek to address the root causes of the conflict.

The third party mediation process can be viewed as one form of confidence-building exercise. The disputants' faith and commitment in the process stems largely from the expectation that the mediator will be fair and non-partisan. At all stages of the negotiations, members of the civil society should be involved as much as possible. They should participate in all the proceedings. Their collective moral pressure can play an important role in the final negotiations output as well as in the implementation of the agreement reached. Any promises made, reward offered, or assurances given must be believable and stay as such. Where mediators demonstrate a bias against or a favor of one of the antagonists, they break that bond of trust and undermine the integrity of the process. As experience has amply demonstrated, mediation is a risky process with no guarantee for success. What might be painstakingly achieved can be easily destroyed overnight as was the case with the OAU-Rwanda mediation effort of Arusha in the early 1990s. In order to be effective and enduring, conflict prevention and peacebuilding approaches must be coherent, comprehensive, integrated and aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict. A close integration of all policy instruments (diplomacy, military, trade, and development cooperation) based on their respective comparative advantage, is required to ensure coherence and coordination. Moreover, approaches to conflict prevention must take into account the potentials and pitfalls of international cooperation. The United Nations systems, regional and subregional organizations, neighboring and regional countries have essential roles to play.

Bruce W. Jentleson (2000:1) agues that the "basic logic of preventive diplomacy is unassailable… Act early to prevent disputes from escalating or problems from worsening. Reduce tensions; if intensified could lead to war. Deal with today's conflicts before they become tomorrow's crises". Yet, despite the unassailability of its basic logic, the tack record of preventive diplomacy in the post-Cold War era has been, to put it mildly, not particularly encouraging.[10] It is important to emphasize that, even where information and analyses have been made available to policy makers, there has often been a failure to respond promptly. The knowledge of an impeding conflict does not always translate into political will to act. As recent practice has amply demonstrated, the decision to intervene in a conflict situation is more often than not based on the political calculations of member states as to where their greatest national self-interest lies.[11] Sufficient political will is a vital connection between information and action. Thus, OAU and UN were unable to mobilize international forces to de-escalate conflicts in Congo-Brazzaville and the Comoros even when they had reliable warning signs. If early warning is to be useful, it must help contribute to creating the political will and the capacity to act at the national and international levels. There are several policy measures that may enhance the capacity and effectiveness of timely political action. These include among others: strengthening coordination and cooperation; elaboration of emergency procedures; and, streamlining budgetary procedures for funding preventive activities.

Violent conflict, Mediation, and Peacekeeping

Once a given conflict escalates into violent confrontation, intensive diplomatic pressure and other resources should be promptly expended in order to achieve early, and indeed decisive, conflict mitigation and peace making. A key to third party intervention is the creation of a condition of "ripeness" in the conflict _ a conflict management concept meaning that the conflict is ripe for resolution. Ripeness is most commonly achieved as a result of what is described in the literature as a hurting stalemate _ the point at which the parties no longer feel

they can use force to gain a unilateral advantage and become willing to consider other options. It is characterized by the combatants' perception that the costs and prospects for continued confrontation are more onerous than the costs and prospects of a settlement. Ripeness implies a basic power equivalence of the parties, even if their sources of power differ. When the power of each side can prevent defeat but not produce victory, the result is a hurting stalemate that favors conflict resolution. It is an essential condition that must be cultivated by a third party hoping to successfully intervene in a conflict (Zartman, 1989). However, he further observes that a mutually hurting stalemate becomes more problematic in a multi-factional, multidimensional conflicts such as those in Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo, because they provide increased incentives for defection. Genuine negotiations have proven possible when the fear for continued fighting exceeds the fear of reaching an agreement.

As peace agreements are reached, the implementation skills and political flexibility become more critical. Understandably, security fears reach their peak during the implementation phase. Negotiated agreements are often fragile and difficult to put into effect. Parties to the conflict suffer anxieties that opponents will cheat on their commitments. It is therefore important that mediators must act imaginatively to encourage all parties to live up to the agreements, and therefore produce an environment that promotes credible commitment.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) (1995) introduced the "stakeholder framework" in the conflict management literature. The framework provides a mapping of the key stakeholders, their relations to the root causes of the conflict, and to each other, their agendas and capacities, and ongoing peace efforts. The resulting analysis is capable of revealing critical entry points for peacebuilding as well as potential risks and "spoilers". It is also capable of showing which groups may require particular empowerment and assistance. This allows the formulation of a participatory peacebuilding strategy that builds on the interests and capacities of the key stakeholders and offers them concrete roles. Having analyzed the root causes of conflict, conflict trends, and relevant actors, then the next stage is to develop objectives for a peacebuilding strategy. They need to address the root causes of the conflict in a comprehensive way that takes account of the interdependence of key instruments like diplomacy, development cooperation, trade, finance and the military. The aim is to achieve maximum coherence and synergy between different activities. At the end of the planning process, a country conflict-strategy should emerge, which outlines the main strategic issues, establishes a cascade of objectives from the macro-level to the micro-level and from the short term to the long term. It should also identify the main instruments and actors, and should contain a realistic time frame and the amount of resources needed. Above all, conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies need to be operationalized in concrete programs and projects, which address certain identified problems.

Peacekeeping operations are a practical mechanism to intervene in order to prevent conflict from escalating and to provide an environment for political settlement. According to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, peacekeeping operations may take essentially two basic forms: the military observer mission and the larger peacekeeping force. The former category usually refers to unarmed military personnel sent to an area of conflict to monitor and supervise the cessation of hostility when warring parties have agreed upon a ceasefire. In the latter case, military or paramilitary operations are deployed in extensive peacekeeping tasks. Such forces, often with thousands of armed troops, are used for peace enforcement in establishing buffer zones separating warring armies and to supervise and assist the withdrawal of invading forces from the territories that they might have occupied during the fighting. In some cases, the

threat of the use of force may be sufficient to bring about a cessation of fighting, as was the case in the early Unified Task Force (UNITAF) intervention in Somalia.

Moreover, peacekeeping operations require a clear and precise mandate for operations, which can be unambiguously translated into effective action on the ground in the pursuit of clear objectives. Mandates should take into account the need for peacekeeping operations to remain impartial in implementing their mission, and to operate with the consent of all parties to the conflict. They also need to be framed with the view to the quality and quantity of resources, which the international community would be ready to commit. Above all, peacekeeping requires a combination of skills and expertise including restraint, negotiation, mediation and liaison.

There are no blueprints for rebuilding societies after the war. While the challenges faced by societies after the war are disarmingly similar in most post-war situations, the political context and configurations of actors, and quality and nature of relations between actors and institutions are unique in each case. It is not possible to replicate policies that proved successful in one case in a new situation. However, it is obviously possible to learn from past successes and failures. A comprehensively crafted peacebuilding process normally begins with the introduction of background discussions that seek to address the root causes of the conflict. A country and/or a sub-regional strategic framework, stipulating a long-term orientation that addresses the full and integrated conflict cycle must be developed. The framework sets the signposts for the long-termconflict transformation process. It involves a whole range of activities aimed at establishing and consolidating peace by putting in place necessary measures for bolstering a peace agreement in the aftermath of a conflict. It also involves transforming the political, institutional, social, and economic landscape that generated violent conflict. Once agreed and signed, coordinated international assistance is required to monitor the cease-fire, demobilization of combatants; development of civilian police; reconstruction of the state administration and creating mechanisms for participatory governance; re-establishment of the rule of law and a legitimate, effective judiciary; strengthening civil society; and, economic and psychological reconstruction. At the core of the peacebuilding process is the initiation and sustenance of a broad-based national political dialogue that seeks to address critical issues of the forms of representation, power sharing, societal healing, and ultimately government and community structures.

Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Peacebuilding

The process of reconstruction and reconciliation is usually long, arduous and expensive. The new government is likely to reign over traumatized populace, wrecked economy, easy availability of small and light weapons, disassembled state structure, and territory often heavily land-mined. Mending relations and restoring trust have been identified as one of the primary challenges of the post-war societies. Relations must be mended between the present, the past and the future to prevent bitter memories of the past from poisoning visions of the future. This does not mean restoring the past. It means defining new roles and sound relations between people, ethnic or religious groups, and between people and authorities. It also means working out a new, common order of social norms and values. The challenge of a society rebuilding itself, if approached as a common task, can heal relations and restore dignity, trust, and faith in the future as people learn to cope together with the past.

Reconciliation is a highly problematic concept, which means quite different things to different people. Nonetheless, there are distinct activities that have become associated with it in Africa.

In Mozambique, villagers have demonstrated their capacity to generate a culture of peace. South Africa and Rwanda have conducted various experiments in how to deal with war crimes and massive human rights abuses. Under the rubric of "traditional" reconciliation or conflict resolution techniques, social healing activities have included public hearings, ritual blessings, symbolic acts of forgiveness, corporal punishment, and material compensation awarded to an aggrieved party to be paid by the "guilty". In some instances, these activities have facilitated to build understanding and consensus, but in others, they have worked to benefit the office holder, his family or his immediate community. What is particularly disturbing about traditional reconciliation practices is the office holders are, almost universally men. In addition, where these practices have been seen to work, they usually exclude women from active roles, and tend to be about peace building between men. Women needs tend to be completely marginalized and excluded. There is an urgent need to mainstream gender in all future peacebuilding processes in Africa.

An equally difficult challenge to peacebuilding is how to establish and handle questions of guilt and innocence, impunity and justice, and the notion of forgiveness and reconciliation. These issues underwrite many people's understanding of the basis for a lasting peace. In some contexts, people's desire for justice is actually greater than their willingness to work for negative peace. Sometimes the acknowledgement of crimes committed during the conflict can be sufficient, but often this acknowledgement is not provided satisfactorily at the end of the conflict. What is agreed upon at a peace settlement, and even promoted in the short-term, may prejudice the chances of building positive peace in the long-term. Hastily concluded peace agreements with extensive amnesty and limited truth commissions may prejudice the chances of achieving reconciliation and conflict resolution on the ground (Pankhurst, 1998).

It is also important to emphasize that the post-conflict reconstruction consolidation phase is unquestionably fragile, extremely unpredictable and notoriously unstable. It means, therefore, that post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction, and reconciliation should be a continuous and flexible process. Circumstances can change rapidly and markedly in conflict situations, and it may be necessary to modify projects or programs once they are underway. Some opportunities for peace may only emerge after working with local people for an extended period of time. While efforts toward conflict transformation have met with short-term success in individual cases, they have failed to place most conflict-ridden countries on a secure footing for long-term stability and sustained development. This is demonstrated by the frequency with which countries that have received significant international assistance have regressed into a state of instability. To address the potential of possible renewed conflict requires an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of its background and root causes. Measures formulated to deal with the consequences of war, such as reconstruction and rehabilitation programs, should simultaneously focus on preventing the relapse back into violent confrontations.

The OAU Peace Fund is quiet on post-conflict reconstruction activities. In fact, the organization's efforts are mainly focused on providing protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees, and internal displaced persons. There is virtual inattention to post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction in Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi or Mozambique. However, even if it did, such efforts cannot make any dent without significantly mobilizing international and multilateral financial and technical assistance. As the recent experience of Kosovo demonstrated, the Security Council mandated the World Bank and the European Community to coordinate international effort to support the country's reconstruction and recovery. Under this mandate the two institutions were responsible for "coordination of matters related to the

economic recovery, reform and reconstruction of the Southeast European region," including mobilizing donor support, providing economic analysis, developing appropriate conditions and implementing projects and programs. To implement this joint mandate, the EC-World Bank joint office was opened in Brussels and a website providing information on the Balkans was launched. As the initial assessment report concluded "the international community's immediate response to the crisis in the region has been swift (World Bank, 1999). Africa's post-conflict recovery experience compares unfavorably with that of Kosovo. The much-needed assistance has not been forthcoming, and when pledges are made, the disbursement process is often too slow to mitigate the effect of conflict victims and facilitate a smooth shift from emergence to reconstruction.

As in the case of Kosovo, therefore, the Bretton Woods institutions may consider adopting peace-friendly economic reform programs, including far-reaching debt relief measures, enhanced foreign aid and investment in support of long-term development efforts and post conflict recovery. In the same vein, the World Trade Organization (WTO) may also consider adopting the "special and differential treatment" of African countries in the world trading system. In this regard, Article 34 (8) on the Trade and Development of the General Agreement on Trade and Tarifs (GATT), which allows developing countries the flexibility of not offering reciprocity to developed countries, should form an integral part of Article 24 of the WTO. Above all, OECD member countries should be encouraged to provide substantive investment guarantees to corporations based in their respective countries that may wish to invest in the post-conflict reconstruction of Africa. Such policy measures would, hopefully, go a long way toward facilitating a smooth and sustainable post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa (Griffin and McKinley, 1996; Rugumamu, 1999b).

It is important to point out that "quick impact" solutions such as infrastructure rehabilitation; social investment and/or distribution of agricultural tool kits need to be integrated into long-term programs for maximum sustainability. In order to enforce compliance, peace agreements should categorically specify both incentives and sanctions. The future expansion and upgrading of such projects should be closely tied to full compliance to the fine details of the peace agreement. Admittedly, the end of the Cold War has brightened the prospects for success of sanctions on miscreant states and regimes. The perennial Cold War "black knights" problem has almost disappeared. There is a likelihood of a broad international coalition to support sanctions efforts, as was the case in Iraq (1990), Haiti (1991-94) and Yugoslavia (1992-95).[12]

Above all, besides states and international organizations, civil society organizations have played leading roles in managing conflicts in Africa. The role of local civil society institutions like the elders' councils, business leaders, and women's groups in peacemaking has been of critical importance in most African countries. They have helped to fill institutional vacuum, particularly in areas where government institutions were either weak or non-existent. Women, who, unquestionably make up the majority of the targeted civil society during armed conflicts, are no longer mere victims of war. They have emerged as important players and valuable contributors to peacemaking processes on the continent.[13] In addition, several other civil society organizations devoted to conflict management are providing invaluable training, mediation services, and conflict analysis regionally and continent-wide. Democracy and human rights groups in South Africa were an important catalyst to major social changes that have taken place in that country. Religious organizations have worked hard to promote peace and democracy in Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan. There is a growing consensus about the need for a strong partnership involving OAU, African governments and

the civil society. It is hoped that during the ongoing processes of social and institutional renewal throughout Africa, OAU and African governments will recommit themselves to establish dynamic partnership with the civil society organizations in promoting and building the culture of peace on the continent. This will entail, more than anything else, providing an environment in which the self-organizing capacities of people can be effectively put to work. In a word, empowering African civil society organizations for peace, security and development.

6. Conclusion

The recent move toward security regionalism is consistent with the post-Cold War concept of shared responsibility between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. OAU and several subregional organizations have put in place institutional mechanisms for managing conflicts in their respective regions. Despite their initial glaring practical shortcoming, such initiatives should be seen and understood as harbingers of the new global modes and institutions of regionally based peacekeeping operations. They need all the support that can be mustered. Institutions take time to grow, mature, and endure. If the record of the UN peacekeeping initiatives is anything to go by, then Africa's current security management efforts are on the right footing. And as earlier argued, they inject an important degree of predictability into social transactions. They also set the rules and boundaries, encourage compliance, and offer the systematic way to punish transgressors. In order to properly restructure, strengthen, and equip these collective security organizations, we suggest that broadly based debates should be initiated in each African subregion in order to define its security threats and propose strategies of how best to manage them. A consensus on the types and nature of the national and regional threats to peace and security should be sought, in order to arrive at the right strategies and institutional mechanisms for managing them. This strategy will also broaden, deepen and democratize the security policy management regime, which has historically been shrouded in secrecy. It would be prudent that a realistic collective security program should start from a modest agenda that would be enlarged and strengthened over time. Such a strategy would prevent overzealous politicians from chasing inappropriate and largely illusory goals (Malan, 1999).

In order to strengthen the conflict management capabilities of OAU and its subregional organizations, it was suggested that there is need to seriously consider the organizational structure as well as norms, rules, and procedures that govern their respective decision-making mechanisms. The maintenance of collective peace and security in Africa is too sensitive to be left to the politics of equality of member states and popular consensus. Much as the equality of member states is one of the highly cherished sovereign norms in international relations, it has often tended to bog down vital decision-making in sensitive areas of peace and security in Africa. We have therefore suggested the need to structure the Central Organ of OAU along the lines of the Security Council in order to guarantee the principle of permanent seats for selected key member states which will largely shoulder the burden of maintaining peace and security on the continent in the emerging global security configurations. Similarly, it was also proposed that the decision-making procedures of the Central Organ should reflect the inherent structural inequalities of the OAU member states. At the same time, the fears, sensitivities, and suspicions of hegemonic ambitions and the potential partiality of the relatively powerful member states in the Organization, would slowly but inexorably, be counter balanced by the weight of numbers of non- permanent members.

It was further argued that even under the emerging co-sharing of security responsibilities, UN retains its central and primary responsibility of maintaining global peace and security. At the same time, OAU should negotiate mutually acceptable, yet realistic mechanisms of coordinating responses to African conflicts with UN as well as its subregional organizations. As a practical matter, it would seem that a realistic and pragmatic approach would be for OAU to address a limited set of critical areas of responsibility that would prevent overzealous politicians from chasing inappropriate and largely illusory goals. In this regard, the continental organization should assume the lead responsibility of mobilizing, well in advance, UN/OAU peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace servicing packages for African trouble spots. Such packages should identify modalities for joint peacekeeping, and specify and apportion responsibilities, according to relative comparative advantages, among various players including specialized UN institutions, OAU and subregional, and non-governmental organizations. Arguably, such packages and modalities would undoubtedly take advantage of extra-territorial powers by exploiting their moral authority, leverage, credibility, legitimacy and resources. By the same token, in order to participate credibly in large-scale peacekeeping in Africa, both OAU and its subregional organizations should consider establishing the now much debated and controversial rapid peacekeeping force to be deployed at short notice. To be sure, future peace enforcement actions in Africa will require the deployment of a force that would be overwhelming enough, both in numbers and in capability to force the warring factions to comply with a cease-fire.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that important as indeed regional and subregional collective security arrangements are, nation-states remain the basic building blocs and decisional loci for multinational economic and security regimes. Arguably, international cooperation requires, as a prerequisite, that individual member states command a critical minimum of institutional, economic, and social coherence. Indeed, as Barry Buzan argues, without strong, efficient and responsive states, there will be no security, national or otherwise (Buzan, 1991). This apocalyptic view is consistent with Leslie Brown's often-quoted assertion that "aggregating weakness does not lead to strength" (Brown, 1986). Africa's collective security arrangements are, more often than not, an aggregation of weakness. As earlier pointed out, state-building, nation-building and democratic governance in most of Africa have not produced robust foundations on which to construct larger security arrangements.

Finally, for any durable and sustainable peace and stability in Africa, nation-building and good governance should be brought to the center stage of continental politics and international relations. Africa's national and subregional politics should be rooted in a process of pluralism and popular participation. This basic yet cardinal democracy prerequisite demands that governments are not only legitimate but also have the authority and capacity to rule. Such governments can be expected to promote not only the respect for all basic freedoms but, most importantly, can create the necessary conditions for durable and sustainable peace and security. Basic stability, law and order must be provided within the country that wishes to provide the same to its neighbors. Encouraging undemocratic weak states to assist other undemocratic weak states in the provision of security would arguably be to promote political decadency. As Oboe Hutchful (1999:81) has concluded, "without acceptable standards of governance of the region…regional security mechanism is liable to degenerate into a protection of racket autocrats". In this broad sense, therefore, the ongoing economic and political restructuring in Africa deserves strong local and international political support.

7. References

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[1] . Johan Galtung makes a clear distinction between "positive" and "negative" peace. On the one hand, positive peace encompasses an ideal of how society should be. It requires that not only all types of violence are minimal or non-existent, but also that the major potential causes of future conflict are removed. On the other, the notion of negative peace is defined as the end of the widespread violent conflict associated with war. It may include prevalent social violence and structural violence. For details see Galtung (1995).

[2]. Article 24 of the UN Charter confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility…"to maintain international peace and security, and to this end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or solutions which might lead to the breach of peace."

[4] . The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in its submission "The US Contribution to Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution" initially proposed this idea. A Report of a USIP Symposium of 28 September 1994.

[5] . The theory posits that there are two important capabilities necessary for the regime leadership, namely: its capacity to act given the size, power, economic strength, and administrative efficiency. The second is its responsiveness. This is the ability of its political system to control its own behavior and redirect its own attention. For a succinct restatement of this argument see Deutsch et al. (1957:40).

[6] . A few preliminary and flexible procedures would include, among others, the use of fact-finding missions and military observer teams to avoid the escalation of conflicts; all members of the security arrangement would commit themselves to receiving such emissaries and cooperating with them fully in the fulfillment of their task; and, finally if armed conflict occurs, the Organ should be prepared to act decisively in order to bring a cease-fire.

[7] . Ugandan and Rwandan military forces supported Laurent Kabila's military campaign to overthrow the President Mobutu's military regime in Zaire in 1997. Shortly thereafter, in the neighboring republic of Congo, the Angolan government militarily supported the militia of Dennis Sassou-Nguesso to overthrow the government of President Paschal Lissouba. It is important to note that both incidents were undertaken without prior authorization of the UN Security Council.

[8]. As of September 2000, about $36 million had been remitted to the OAU Peace Fund. Of that amount, about $22.7 million or 63 percent came from outside Africa _ a robust indicator of the

OAU's dependency on foreign financial resources!

[9] . Since the establishment of the OAU Mechanism in 1993, the United States has been one of the leading donors of the Mechanism for Conflict Management. During the 1994-95 period, the US Government provides assistance valued at $5 million for the purchase communication gear, computers, transportation, and consultant services.

[10] . This poor performance has also bee attributed to the argument that internal wars are, in general, more difficult to resolve through formal preventive diplomacy than inter-state wars. For incisive discussion of the subject see Pillar (1993) and Stedman (1995).

[11] . Three classic examples are in order. While the Somalis were being killed and were starving in large numbers in the late 1990 and early 1991, attention was riveted on Suddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait; at the same time that Yugoslavia was breaking apart in mid-1991, so too was the Soviet Union. The reverberation of October 1993 failed operation in Mogadishu drowned out most else, especially another African ethnic conflict in Rwanda.

[12]. The international community could use economic and diplomatic sanctions to prevent internal conflicts if they could foresee an impeding civil war and pressure one or both of the colliding parties to adopt more peaceful stances. Governments could be pressured to adopt reforms that would diffuse impeding rebellions. Such reforms might include implementing democratic changes, granting autonomy to or sharing power with national minorities, land reform, redistribution of wealth, or refraining from disseminating hate propaganda. For thoughtful reflections on the use of sanctions see Stremlau (1996).

[13]. In 1997, the African Women's Federation for Peace was formed, with its Secretariat headquartered in Kigali. Other local efforts in Rwanda include the Women in Transition Program and the Rwanda Women Initiative, which deals directly with training, distribution of foster homes and other direct facilities to displaced families.