Towards a Common Goal: Collaborative Ways of Managing Conflicts in Africa

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February 5, 2013

Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AU	the African Union
CEWARN	the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CEWERUs	Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Units
CEWS	Conflict Early Warning System
COMESA	the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPA	the Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPMR	Conflict Prevention, Management and Response
GPA	the Global Political Agreement
IDPs	Internally displaced peoples
IGAD	the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
IGADD	the Inter-Governmental Authority for Drought and Desertification
JDZ	Joint Development Zone
MCC	Maputo Corridor Company
MCLI	Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative
MDC	Maputo Development Corridor
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NBI	the Nile Basin Initiative
NPCA	the NEPAD Planning and Co-ordination Agency
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU	the Party of National Unity
RAIDS	the Resource-based African Industrialization and Development Strategy
SADC	the Southern African Development Community
SSRC	South Sudan Referendum Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Introduction

Conflict, an inevitable phenomenon in all types of human relations,occurs at all levels of human life ranging from the intra-personal (psychological realm) to the global relations of mankind. At all levels, conflicts have significant, common characteristics and dynamics; people become involved in conflicts when their interests or values are challenged or unmet by others. (Yagcioglu, 1996) (cited in Befekadu&Diribssa, 2005).

Conflict can also be defined as hostile encounters or collisions of interests, principles, ideas, policies or programs that characterize many of the interactions carried on within or between political systems. It is also understood as a struggle over values and claims to scarce statuses, power and resources in which the aim of the opponents is to neutralize, injure or eliminate their adversaries. This definition shows that conflict discourages cooperation and does not necessarily involve physical fighting. Conflict also includes verbal expressions of disagreement as well as a range of other forms (Jeong, 2008).

Since time immemorial, communities have been competing for the ownership of various types of resources and dominance. These competitions inexorably lead individuals as well as social, political, economic, and religious groups to conflict. One can therefore say that conflict is inherent to the social, economic and political organization of mankind and can even be taken as a driver for change and development. Conflicts can be beneficial if they ultimately produce a creative element for changing societies, while achieving the goals and aspirations of individuals and groups. Conflict can be considered constructive if the outcome brings about positive changes, as demonstrated by not only apologies and compensation for the past abuse but also future prevention of victimization. Nevertheless, violent conflict has devastating effects to the wellbeing of mankind in every aspect.Whether from state or non-state sources, many forms of violence are subtle and embedded in political and social dynamics, which can adversely affect the development of every society. Besides, it diverts resources that could have otherwise been used productively, reflecting the undesirable nature of conflict (Alexander, 2005). It is therefore undisputable that violent conflicts pose fundamental challenges to peace and development.

Violent conflicts that transcend national boundaries have adverse impacts on regional stability, adding a new dimension that complicates the livelihood of citizens (Marino, 1999). When violence acquires a regional dimension (an inter-state nature[1]), the number of actors and players increases, the interests of the belligerents multiply and the resolution of the conflicts becomes complicated with multiple impacts to the security and well-being of citizens.

It is with the intention of looking into the regional dimension of conflicts that this paper opted to focus on conflicts in Africa. The paper has six sections. The first section is a brief summary on the causes and types of African conflicts. Section two discusses the cost of war while section three deals with formal and alternative mechanisms for dealing with conflicts. Section four discusses African experiences where political disputes and conflicts were resolved through negotiation. The fifth section covers the role of elected representatives in conflict prevention and peace-building while the last section contains the conclusion of this paper.

I. Brief summary on the causes and types of African conflicts

The causes of conflict in Africa are multiple; they include political, economic, social and cultural causes.

Political:
- The struggle for power;
- Lack of visionary leadership;
- External influences;
- Lack of good governance and transparency;
- Non-adherence to the principle of human rights;

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[1]While intra-state conflict refers to conflicts that occur within the borders of a sovereign state, inter-state conflicts are conflicts between or among two or more sovereign states (Acikalin, 2011)

- Unsettled borders issues.

Economic:
- Poverty;
- Inequitable distribution of resources and national wealth;
- The negative effects of the external debt burden of the international financial system.

Social and cultural:
- Social inequality;
- System of exclusion and ethnic hatred;
- Role of the political class in the manipulation of ethnic and regional sentiments;
- Cultural detachment and the search for identity with extra-African culture;
- Religious mismanagement;
- Lack of security, psychological fear of political uncertainty (Bujra, 2002).

Conflicts can be categorized into various forms depending on the type of criteria one uses. For example,Salim (1999) cited in Bujra (2002) classifies conflicts in Africa as follows:
- Boundary and territorial conflicts,
- Civil wars and internal conflicts having international repercussions,
- Political and ideological conflicts,
- Transhumance and irredentism, and
- Secession.

Other types of conflicts include ethnic conflict, religious conflict and class-based conflict.

II. Thecost of war and violence in Africa

Africa suffers enormously from conflict and armed violence. Armed conflict costs Africa around $18 billion per year, seriously derailing development. 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(Hillier, October 2007).Moreover, between 1960 and 2005, about 1.6 million battle deaths were recorded in Africa, which constituted about 24 percent of the global total of battle deaths(African Development Report, 2008).

UNDP reported that more than 20 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa was directly impacted by civil war during the 1990s. Losses to agricultural production from armed violence in Africa were estimated at $25 billion for 1970 – 1997.In addition, violence had reducedthe income from tourism in several African countries by up to 50 per cent in the late 1990s, depriving them of valuable foreign exchange (IANSA, 2006).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, it is estimated that 35 African countries were at war or engaged in armed conflict that directly or indirectly affected over 550 million people, with young people often the largest category of participants and victims. Studies in Africa have shown that, although the level of involvement of young people in armed violence has varied from conflict to conflict, they have been involved in all armed conflicts and have been responsible for some of the worst atrocities ever committed on the continent (Mutto, October 2007).

In addition to capital flight and excessivephysical destruction (such as infrastructure and livelihood assets), there is high expenditure on military and rehabilitation due to casualties, injuries and disability(Hillier, October 2007). Similarly, the African Development Report (2008) lists the following social costs of war:

- Causes disability due to injury or increased disease burden,
- Leaves civilians traumatized because of shootings, rape, torture and murder of family members,
- Violent conflict affects children, girls and women in various ways,
- Destroys social infrastructures such as schools, hospitals and roads.

As indicated in table 1, the following sample countries lost billions because of violent conflict.

Table 1: Selected country results for the cost of conflict

Country	Conflict years	Number of years	Actual growth during war years	Loss as % of GDP	GDP loss ($bn)
Burundi	1993–2005	13	-1.1%	37%	5.7
Rwanda	1990–2001	12	2.8%	32%	8.4
DRC	1996–2005	10	0.10%	29%	18
Eritrea	1998-2000	3	-3.8%	11%	0.28
Republic of Congo	1997–99	3	0.03%	7.1%	0.70
South Africa	1990-96	7	1.2%	2.7%	22

Source: (Hillier, October 2007)

Regional spillover effects due to displacement

According to the African Development Report (2008), Africa is home to about 12 percent of the world's population; however, 31 percent of the world's refugee population originates from Africa. As indicated in the following tables, the report also shows African emigrants by origin, African immigrants by country of asylum as well as internally displaced persons in 2006.

Table 2: African emigrants by origin, 2006

No	Country	Refugees
1	Sudan	686,311
2	DRC	401,914
3	Burundi	396,541
4	Angola	206,501
5	Liberia	160,548
6	Rwanda	92,966
7	Western Sahara	90,614
Total		2,035,395

Table 3: African immigrants by country of asylum, 2006

Refugees from the following countries constituted about 28 percent of the world's refugees.

No	Country	Refugees
1	Tanzania	485,295
2	Chad	286,743
3	Uganda	272,007
4	DRC	208,371
5	Zambia	120,253
6	Algeria	94,180
7	Rep. of the Congo	55,788
Total		1,522,565

Table 4: Internally displaced persons in Africa, 2006

42 percent of global IDPs were displaced in the following nine African countries:

No	Country	IDPs
1	Uganda	1,586,174
2	Sudan	1,325,235
3	DRC	1,075,297
4	Côte d'Ivoire	709,228
5	Somalia	400,000
6	Central African Republic	147,000
7	Chad	112,686
8	Burundi	13,850
9	Rep. of the Congo	3,492
Total		5,372,962

The above-mentioned data uses only a sample data set of a few African countries to show the magnitude of the cost of conflict. Countries in conflict or immediate post-conflict also generate a massive number of economic emigrants leaving their countries in search of a better livelihood because the economies of immediate post-conflict countries provide limited livelihood opportunities for their citizens. If we examine the following data (Table 5) on migration in the Horn of Africa, we can see that the number of migrants leaving their countries include economic migrants. The data in table 4 indicates that most of the countries receive (all of them are post-conflict countries) as much immigrants as the migrants they produce. One can therefore see that the migrants from those countries also

include economic migrants while the migrants from Somalia and Eritrea are basically refugees.

Table 5: Emigrants and Migrants in the Horn of Africa (2010 data)

No	Country	Total pop. in millions(2009 data)	Emigrants	Emigrants of the total pop. in %	Most recipient countries of emigrants	Immigrants
1	Eritrea	5.1	941,200	18%	Sudan and Ethiopia	16, 500
2	Somalia	9.1	812,700	8.7%	Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya	22, 800
3	Sudan	42.3	967,500	2.2%	Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia	753,400
4	Djibouti	0.9	13,500	1.5%	Ethiopia	114,100
5	Kenya	39.8	457,100	1.1%	Uganda, Tanzania	817,700
6	Ethiopia	82.8	620,100	0.7%	Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti	548,700
Total		180.0	3,812,100			2,273,200

Source: (The World Bank, 2011)

III. Formal and alternative mechanismsfor dealing with conflicts

Disputes are a critical part of human relationships, and mankind has developed different mechanisms for managing disputes to maintain cohesion, economic and political stability in the life of citizens and states. The mechanisms can broadly be categorized as formal or informal. The formal mechanisms are mechanisms related to formal legal institutions while the informal ones are mechanisms that range from the traditional mechanisms with lots of variations to the broader areas of preventive diplomacy, mediation and other related activities. Litigation is the dominant method of resolving disputes in formal mechanisms. Litigation is a process of conflict resolution in a court. The court can be a national court created by national legislation as part of the justice system of the country or, an international one created by the law of international or multilateral institutions. Such mechanisms are useful in handling individual conflicts but constraining in addressing the

multiple effects that may arise as a result of the original cause of dispute. (Agarwal, 2001).

Because of the limitations of the judicial system in providing comprehensive solutions to disputes, alternative methods of dispute resolution have developed in varying forms. Some of the forms of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms include negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms provide expedited justice and cost less when compared to the formal judicial mechanisms (Ibid).

Negotiationis avoluntary and informal process by which the parties to a dispute reach a mutually acceptable agreement. As the name implies the parties seek out the best options for each other, which culminates in an agreement. It involves back-and-forth communication between the parties to the conflict with the goal of trying to find a solution. In this process, no third person or party is substantially involved and the parties to the conflict will finally conclude an agreement (Contract) (Owasanoye, 2001).

Differing from negotiation,**mediation** requires the services of a neutral, third party person or institution to arrive to a consensual agreement. It is also considered as a friendly interference of a neutral person or nation for the purpose of keeping the peace between the disputants by adjusting their difficulties. Here, the mediator's role is not to unilaterally decide on the appropriate resolution to the parties' dispute. Instead, the mediator acts as a facilitator who guides disputing parties' discussions in order to assist them with understanding the nature of the problem, the underlying interests of all parties, and the various alternatives that may exist which can help resolve all, or part, of the problem. By doing so, the mediator is often able to help the parties reveal the interests underlying each party's positions, and thereby assist the parties with formulating a collective settlement agreement that satisfies each of the parties to the fullest extent possible(Adams, 2010)**.**

Arbitration is also another mechanism of resolving conflicts in a peaceful way. This is a voluntaryprocess of dispute resolution in which a neutral third party (arbitrator) renders a

decision after a hearing. In the hearing both parties must be given an opportunity to be heard. Parties to the conflict can select their own arbitration with the power to pass a binding decision. In this regard, it is clear that parties to a contract can choose to resolve any dispute that arises between them without reference to the regular courts. It applies to both domestic and international disputes and is founded on the present or future agreement of the parties to submit any dispute between them to arbitration (Owasanoye, 2001).

Fact finding missions are also supportive mechanisms of resolving conflicts when the dispute arises right from the establishment of the facts on the ground. It is an informal process whereby a neutral third party is selected by the disputants to investigate the issue in dispute and submit a report or come to give evidence at another forum such as a court or arbitration. The outcome of a neutral fact finding mission is not binding but the result is admissible for use in a trial or other forum. The method is particularly useful in resolving complex scientific, technical, sociological, business or economic issues (Ibid).

IV. Cases of African experiences where political disputes and conflicts wereresolved through negotiation

Violent conflicts of one type or another have afflicted Africa and caused a heavy toll on the continent's socio-economic and political sectors, thereby adversely affecting their developmental potential and democratic possibilities. The causes of the conflicts are as complex as the challenges of resolving them.

1: Africa has experiences of ending civil wars through negotiated and UN-monitored referendums. The 1993(4) referendum of Eritrea and the 2010 referendum of Southern Sudan could be cited as case examples in this regard.

A. The UN-monitored referendum for Eritreans

The historical and political connection between Ethiopia and Eritrea is long standing and complex. Following the end of World War II, Italy was forced to give up its colonial territories in Africa, of which Eritrea was one. Pursuant to a United Nations

recommendation, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown. In the early 1960's however, Ethiopia dissolved the federation and annexed Eritrea as a province, which ledto a war of independence that lasted for three decades. While the war effort originated with Eritreans fighting for independence, it was later joined by other Ethiopian groups whose primary objective -wasto overthrow the then existing Ethiopian government. These joint efforts became successful in 1991, when the incumbent military regime was overthrown from power (Klein, August 1998).

Following the oust of the military regime, a United Nations monitored referendum on Eritrean independence was scheduled for 1993 with the approval of the new Ethiopian government; it resulted in a vote of over 99 percent in favor of independence. Following this, Eritrea became an independent sovereign state (Connell, 2011).

B. The CPA and subsequent referendum for South Sudan

The conflict in Sudan reflected historical hatred and ethnic discrimination between Northern Arab Muslims and Southern African Christians and Animists. The crisis had been lingering since the independence of Sudan from the British, including armed insurrections from time to time. The second and longest civil war began in 1983 and lasted up until the adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). This conflict claimed 2 million lives from both sides and displaced almost 4 million people from the South (Ahmed, A. G. M., 2008).

In January 2011, South Sudan held a referendum to decide between unitywith or independence from the central government of Sudan as called for by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). According to the South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), 98.8 per cent of the votes cast were in favor of separation. In February 2011, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir officially accepted the referendum results, as did the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the United States, and other countries. On July 9, 2011, South Sudan officially declared its independence (Dagne, 2011).

2: There are also several experiences in Africa that exhibited peaceful resolutions of conflicts and disputes over the use and management of resources between states. In this regard, the Joint Development Zone created by Nigeria and Sao Tome to jointly develop the off-shore oil resources in the disputed maritime boundary and the creation of the Maputo Corridor to manage the Maputo port and its corridors shared by Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland can be cited as good examples. The Nile Basin Initiative among the 10 riparian states of the Nile can also be taken as an innovative way of managing shared water resources.

A. Boundary: the Nigeria and Sao Tome Joint Development Zone (JDZ)

Joint development of trans-boundary resources in maritime areas constitutes one of the recent major trends of international practice in the law of the sea. Delimitation of boundaries or division of overlapping claim areas to the continental shelf or the exclusive economic zone by coastal countries is a very difficult policy (Biang, 2010). Nevertheless, if the interested countries have the will to set aside the formidable issue of delimitation in favor of prospective economic profits with the result of a provisional compromise settlement, they have a chance of devising a joint development scheme or zone. It is also possible that they may defuse the tension of a provisional period until such a time they are ready to address the contested issue comprehensively.

As Mensah (2006)outlines, joint development zones are often established either because the parties find it difficult or impossible to agree on a single boundary between them or because the resources straddle the agreed boundary in such a way that it is not feasible for the resources to be exploited effectively and equitably by the individual States acting alone. Accordingly, one should at least admit that they deal with those two issues: sharing and exploiting trans-boundary resources on the one hand, and settling or preventing a deadlock in maritime boundary delimitation negotiations through a provisionary agreement on the other hand.

The JDZ Treaty between Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe in the area of overlapping claims can be taken as an exemplary practice. Following a number of discussions, the Presidents of the two States agreed in August 2000 that they would not seek to reach an agreement on a definitive maritime boundary. Instead, in the interests of co-operation between the two States, and having regard to major unresolved differences in their positions, it was desirable to create a joint development zone (JDZ) in the area of overlapping claims. The two Presidents created a Joint Ministerial/Technical Committee to draw up detailedprovisions for the JDZ. After three rounds of negotiations and meetings, the Treaty was signed in Abuja on 21 February 2001 by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both countries (Biang, 2010).

The Treaty itself includes fifty-three articles. These articles consist of the substance of the Treaty and divide up into a Preliminary and twelve Parts. For example, Article 3 of the agreement deals with the "Principles of joint development," which sets out three major principles known as the principle of joint control of both parties over the exploration and exploitation of the resources in the JDZ; the principle of optimum commercial utilization of these resources; and the principle of 60/40 per cent split of benefits that favors Nigeria.

The provision of Article 3 of the agreement reads as follows:

> Within the Zone, there shall be joint control by the States Parties of the exploration for and exploitation of resources, aimed at achieving optimum commercial utilization. The States Parties shall share, in the proportions Nigeria 60 per cent, Sao Tome and Principe 40 per cent, all benefits arising from development activities carried out in the Zone in accordance with this Treaty. (Santos & Tiny, 2005, p. 5).

Moreover, Article 17 of Part Six of the agreement deals with financial matters, which states thatthe Authority should be financed from revenues collected as a result of its activities. The Authority is responsible for managing the funds for the JDZ institutions and staff and is subjected to an annual audit by external auditors approved by the Council.

States parties share the burden of any deficit that could affect the budget at any time in the proportion of 60 per cent for Nigeria and 40 per cent for Sao Tome and Principe. The surpluses of revenues over expenditure and subject to established reserve funds should be paid to national treasuries of the parties in the same proportions (Ibid).

B. Access to the sea: The Maputo Corridor

The Maputo Corridor is a major import/export route that connects the northeast provinces of South Africa with the capital and main port of Mozambique. It also serves the South African provinces of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng, as well as Swaziland and southwest Mozambique. The corridor runs through some of the most industrialized and productive regions of Southern Africa such as Johannesburg and Pretoria (USAID, 2008).

President Mandela of South Africa and President Chissano of Mozambique initiated the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC) as a shared project in 1996. The two presidents shared a vision of a unified region, built on co-operation, economic success and access to global markets. They saw the opportunity to rebuild national trust and re-vitalize communities which had been devastated firstly by colonialism then by the South African policies of apartheid and destabilization as well as the 16-year long civil war in Mozambique from 1976 – 1992. It also incorporates parts of Swaziland and is also essential for transporting goods from Botswana, Zimbabwe and the industrial centre of South Africa, Gauteng. This corridor has sound economic sense due to the fact that it is the shortest route to the sea (Tate, 2011).

The MDC has a multimodal transport system comprising a toll road, a railway line and a gas pipeline. The Maputo Corridor Company (MCC) initially managed the corridor. However, in 2004, due to its ineffectiveness, the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) replaced the MCC. The MCLI was established as a public–private sector partnership to create greater awareness of and improved use of the corridor. Through a memorandum of understanding, the South African Department of Transport (DOT) provides support to the MCLI. The membership of the MCLI is drawn from stakeholders

across South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland(United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2010). From this, one can infer that the governments of South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland have promoted the revival of the Maputo Development Corridor with bilateral policies and substantial public and private sector investment, designed to stimulate sustainable growth and development in the region.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) plan to utilize such corridors as a means to promote their economic development through regional integration. Moreover, the African Union (AU) recently began to promote development corridors as a way to enhance economic and social development. In 2008, corridors were incorporated into the Resource-based African Industrialization and Development Strategy (RAIDS). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has also endorsed them. The NEPAD Planning and Co-ordination Agency (NPCA) is currently on the way to implementing a continent wide corridor strategy along with the AU and the African Development Bank (ADB) (Tate, 2011).

C. Share of water resources: The Nile Basin Initiative

There are over 260 international water basins, which comprise about 60 per cent of the earth's freshwater supply (Giordano & Wolf, 2003). In spite of this, there is no agreeable international water law.Management of these vital resources is of tremendous mutual benefit.

The Nile River is the world's longest river, travelling more than 6700 Kilometers and crossing ten States, whose combined populations constitute 40 per cent of the entire population of Africa. The main tributaries of the Nile River are the Blue Nile and the White Nile. The source of the Blue Nile, which constitutes 86 per cent of the volume of the Nile, lies in Ethiopia. On the other hand, the contribution of the White Nile is shared amongst Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The two lower riparian states, Egypt and Sudan, are traversed by the Nile that joins in

Khartoum. However, historically, the river was exclusively used by the two lower riparian states and this was strengthened by colonial and post-colonial agreements such as the 1959 Agreement on the Full Utilization of the Nile Water between Egypt and Sudan (Ibrahim, 2005).

As a remedy to the previous agreements and practices, the Nile Basin Initiative was jointly established by the countries of the Nile, namely Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda in 1999. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was established to harness the potential gains of cooperative management and development of the Nile Basin. It is built around a shared belief that countries can achieve better outcomes for all the peoples of the Basin through cooperation rather than competition. At the heart of this challenge is the imperative to eradicate poverty. Moreover, the partnership has been built around a shared vision for the betterment of the Nile River Basin (The Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat, N.D).

Albeit challenges from the lower riparian states, as well as the challenges of moving from planning to action, the objectives of this initiative include:
- To develop the water resources of the Nile Basin in a sustainable and equitable way to ensure prosperity, security and peace for all its peoples.
- To ensure efficient water management and the optimal use of resources.
- To ensure cooperation and joint action between the riparian countries so as toprevail win-win gains.
- To target poverty reduction and promote economic integration (Ibid).

3:Africa has good experiences in resolving election related disputes through peaceful means. The post-election crises of Kenya and Zimbabwe can be taken as examples that minimized the damage the triggered post-election violence could have had.

An electoral process is an alternative to violence as a means of achieving governance. When an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside of the

established norms to achieve their objectives (Ndulo & Lulo, 2010). Mirroring the same idea, the African Union Panel of the Wise (July 2010) indicated that if it is not constructively managed, elections could potentially destabilize the fabric of states and societies. Therefore, elections have spawned conflicts, violence and scrambled ethnic and regional alliances that sometimes threaten the social order, economic development, and efforts to strengthen regional integration.

With the steady decline of some of the historic causes of African conflicts, elections have emerged as one of the major recent sources of conflict across Africa. However, there have been good attempts at managing such problems in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The experiences of conflict resolution in the Kenyan and Zimbabwean election-related disputes in 2008 have a positive impact on African democracy and are relatively a good signal for other African states in managing their election-related problems.

A. Kenya

Immediately after the announcement of the 2008 Kenyan election results, widespread violence engulfed the country, escalating along party-political and ethnic lines, resulting in more than 1,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of people displaced as well as countless injuries. Many observers stated that the Kenyan electoral process was characterized by mismanagement or excessive political influence which created a deeper and serious social conflict, which undermined the advance of human development(United Nations Development Programme, 2009).The fighting only stopped with the signing of an agreement mediated by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan between the Party of National Unity (PNU) under presidentMwaiKibaki and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) led by RailaOdinga.This resulted in the formation of a coalition government where Kibaki remained as president and the position of prime minister was created for Odinga(Hoffman, 2010). The power-sharing pact between the two conflicting parties was considered as the most exemplary and successful AU experience (African Union Panel of the Wise, July 2010).

B. Zimbabwe

Five days before the June 2008 Zimbabwean second round runoff election, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) candidate Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew himself from the contest by accusing ZANU-PF supporters and security forces of their alleged intimidation and violence against his party's supporters. However, his name remained on the ballot and the election was held. Incumbent President Robert Mugabe won that contest, which led supporters of candidate Morgan Tsvangirai to revolt against the result (Hickman, 2009).

To reverse the problem, the AU encouraged SADC to lead the mediation. Following this, in September 2008, President Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA). South African President Thabo Mbeki became the guarantor of this agreement, which came into effect in February 2009 and established a unity government in which Mugabe remained President and Tsvangirai assumed the position of Prime Minister (African Union Panel of the Wise, July 2010).

As can be inferred from the above two distinctive cases of managing election related disputes, Kenya and Zimbabwe revealed approaches that were born of different but complementary continental and regional institutions with distinct comparative strengths. More importantly, in both AU and SADC mechanisms, the role of eminent African statesmen and leaders was crucial in generating momentum to resolve the crises.

4: Experiences in conflict prevention and early warning mechanisms:

Recent changes in this area came with the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into African Union Commission with an expanded political and security related mandate, and the transformation of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Drought and Desertification (IGADD) into the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) with an expanded mandate of new mechanisms for conflict prevention. The Conflict Early Warning System (CEWS) of the African Union and the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) are good examples in this regard.

A. The CEWARN mechanism of addressing pastoralist conflicts in the Horn of Africa

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) is the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism of the seven Member States (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda) of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Horn of Africa sub-region. CEWARN was established by a Protocol signed by Member States during the 9th summit meeting held in Khartoum, Sudan, in 2000. The Mechanism has been focusing on cross-border pastoral and related conflicts (Mwagiru, 2002).

The main achievements of CEWARN, since it began isits work in Early Warning and Early Response, include:

- A well to do database providing timely, constant and accurate information on cross-border pastoralist conflicts.
- Attempts to cope with the dynamism of conflicts and combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of field data.
- Reports offering a good basis for developing intervention options and mechanisms for response.
- Capacity building for Conflict Prevention, Management and Response (CPMR) in the region through skill training of Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Units (CEWERUs), National Research Institutes, Field Monitors and local committee members in IGAD Member States.
- Increased awareness among governments, civil society actors and other stakeholders regarding the nature, intensity and magnitude of cross-border pastoralist conflicts.
- Managing to bring together state and non-state actors to work together and adopt strategies toward addressing violent cross-border pastoral conflicts (CEWARN Unit, November 2006).

Among others, since 2004, CEWARN has been tracking incidents related to pastoral conflicts in some of the member states essentially in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, and

appropriate state authorities and other stakeholders have the ability to take actions to stop them(Siebert & Epps, 2009).

B. CEWS of the AU

A major example of a regional warning and response system is the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) in Africa, which was initiated in 2002. It is intended to contain crisis situations and prevent them from further escalation into large-scale violent conflict. The system was generated by the African Union (AU) and is part of an integrated conflict prevention mechanism. Intelligence is gathered and analyzed and the AU can send additional fact finding missions. Following this, the Peace and Security Council can then decide whether or not to intervene. The African Peace Facility Fund and the African Standby Force are used to implement the interventions. Despite fund related challenges, recent missions include: Burundi (2003), Darfur (2004-06), Somalia (2007/08) and the Comoros (2008)(Dunne & Hoeffler, April 2012).

V. The role of elected representatives in conflict prevention and peacebuilding

The primary role of elected representatives in any country is to enact legislation. But it isnow widely accepted for them to be key actors in the field of conflict prevention and peace building. They can play the crucial role of embracing differing groups in a given country and can foster peace building and conflict prevention by setting-up the legislative and institutional framework to help prevent conflict. Apart from controlling the executive branch of government from employing violent ways of conflict management, the representatives can also organize public hearings in various geographic areas where efforts relating to peace building are most relevant. This helps them to become more sensitive to the needs of conflict-affected communities and individuals both at national and regional levels (Al-Ali & Beydoun, 2010). This shows that the role of elected representatives extends well beyond that and can play an effective role in the promotion

of tolerance and reconciliation by adopting laws focusing on peace education [2](Freeman, 2005).

An electedrepresentative is able to contribute to peace building through parliamentary debates and negotiations in parliamentary committees. Accordingly, political parties and constructive opposition politics should be strengthened for better and fruitful results of debates and negotiations.Elected representatives should adopt development policies and good governance as well as decentralize powers to reduce some of the pre-conditions that could be used by unscrupulous actors to instigate conflict. Moreover, they should play an indispensible role in strengthening the rule of law ina given country. The rule of law is able to contribute to peace building not only by building a framework of laws based on social norms, which the community will voluntarily adhere to, but also by providing stability through justice. Finally, elected representatives should develop regional relationships, in particular because the diversion of scarce resources can differ from other priority areas. This would help to prevent potential conflicts at regional levels(O'Brien, 2005).

VI.Conclusion

Africa suffers enormously from conflict and armed violence caused by multifaceted socio-economic and political factors. Most of the conflicts are related to, among others,boundary and territorial conflicts; civil wars and internal conflicts having international repercussions; political and ideological conflicts; transhumance and irredentism and secession. These can, and have, resultedin high levels of casualities including human deaths, adult illiteracy, refugees, internally displaced peoples, losses to agricultural production, income depletion from tourism, etc.

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[2]Peace education is an indispensable element in any strategy to prevent discrimination, intolerance and conflicts(Faggian, 2008)

However, Africa has experiences of ending different types of conflicts. In this regard, the 1993(4) UN-monitored referendum of Eritrea and the 2010 referendum of Southern Sudan could be cited as case examples. The post-election crises of Kenya and Zimbabwe could also be taken as examples that minimized the damage of triggered post-election violence. Moreover, the case of Conflict Early Warning System (CEWS) of the African Union and the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) of IGAD are good examples in addressing different types of conflicts.

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