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Hussein Solomon and Sally Mathews

DPMF Occasional Paper, No. 3



DPMF

**Development Policy
Management Forum**

Addis Ababa

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Printed in Ethiopia

Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF)
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-1-515410/(DL) 443197
Fax: 251- 1-515410
Email: dpmf@uneca.org
Website: <http://www.dpmf.org>

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Hussein Solomon and Sally Matthews¹

1. Introduction

Africa cannot be described as a peaceful continent. Conflicts rage in many regions across the African continent. These conflicts result in the tragic loss of life, the devastation of communities, and the displacement of millions of people. The apparent insolubility of several of these conflicts compromises hopes that Africans have of a Renaissance on their continent. The conflicts undermine economic development, and result in the further marginalisation of Africa within the global political economy.

Given that the majority of these conflicts are intrastate as opposed to interstate, it is vital to consider the role of states and civil society in conflict and the management of conflict on the African continent. The state structures of many African countries are weak and compromised resulting in a need for a careful evaluation of ways in which the state's role in preventing and resolving conflict can be improved. Because of the weakness of the state, it is critical that attention also be given to the role of civil society as civil society has been playing a pivotal role in conflict situations across the African continent. This role must be affirmed and improved.

Before attempting to discuss the role that the state and civil society can play in the resolution of conflict on the African continent, it is important to make some brief comments on the characteristics of the African state and the role of civil society in Africa.

2. The State in Africa

According to Danziger (1998, 106), the state is 'a territorially bound sovereign entity'. Ranney (1987, 35-36) provides five requirements of statehood: a particular territory, a definite population, a government, formal independence or sovereignty, and a sense of national identity. The state is supposed to have complete authority over a certain area and to be the ultimate source of law within its boundaries. It supposedly has absolute sovereignty and the rules made within the state are not supposed to be able

¹ Prof. Hussein Solomon and Ms. Sally Matthews lecture in the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria.

to be overruled by any other body (Lawson 1997, 35-36). Other scholars approach the concept of statehood slightly differently: they argue that a state is not only a sovereign territory, but must have both territorial and governmental legitimacy (Clapham 1996, 10).

The current state system in Africa is a relatively new phenomenon and a foreign import which has been grafted onto existing political and social systems (Bayart 1993, 8). Colonialism resulted in the molding of Africa into a hybrid of the state system which had gradually developed in Europe. In a period of about 80 years, Africa was divided into a number of artificial states according to the preferences and whims of the colonialists, with little regard for the desires or needs of the inhabitants of Africa (Cornwall 1999, 62). This has meant that post-colonial African states often have borders which make no economic sense, and which result in several political and social problems (Thomson 2000, 12-13).

Despite the arbitrary nature of state boundaries in Africa, very few have changed since the end of colonialism. This is partly due to international pressure to maintain these boundaries (Ohaegbulam 1995, 146). In addition, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) decided in 1963 that the boundaries of the states in Africa should be left alone; subsequent to this it gave little recognition or support to secessionists and other challengers of African states' boundaries (Ohaegbulam 1995, 147-148). Another factor protecting the boundaries of states in Africa has been African rulers' attitudes. Many African rulers believed that in order to secure their own survival and prosperity, it was necessary to preserve the state over which they ruled (Clapham 1996, 4-5). Thus the borders of African states have been protected despite the dubious way in which they came into existence.

The way in which African states came into existence has meant that the African state does not always fulfil the functions expected of a state. Many African states have been labelled 'shadow' states (Reno 2000), 'quasi-states' (Jackson 1990), 'disrupted' states (Saikal 2000) or 'collapsed' states (Zartman 1995; Cornwall 1999). Because of the inability of such states to fulfil the expectations expected of them, they may also be unable to control brewing conflict within their borders, and their inability to meet their citizens' basic needs may provoke conflict. Such states are also not optimally able to participate in conflict resolution and in peace building once conflict has been resolved. In addition, national governments are often key players in the violent conflicts on the African continent, compromising the ability of the state to resolve the conflict.

All the above indicate the need for the capabilities of African states with regard to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building to be improved. The African state in its current form is not able to manage conflicts within its borders. This inability also draws attention to the need to look to actors other than the state when addressing conflict in Africa. It is thus important for the role of civil society to be examined.

3. Civil Society

According to Camerer (1996, 11), civil society is an

...inherently pluralistic realm distinct from, yet interacting with the state and processes of production, consisting of numerous associations and organised around specific interests with the following in common: communally organised, independent, voluntary, autonomous, able to form links with other interest groups and do not in any way seek to set themselves up as an alternative to the state.

Complementing Camerer's definition, Zuern (2000, 97) argues that, "The concept of 'civil society' incorporates activities in the public sphere between the household and the state. This social space encompasses a very broad range of human associations with very different interests and objectives".

It should be clear from the above two definitions that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are organs of civil society. Instead of giving a broad account of the role of civil society, the paper will be focusing on the role of NGOs on the African continent.

According to Weiss (1996, 437),

Non-governmental organisations are formal institutions that are intended to continue in existence; they are not ad hoc entities. They are or aspire to be self-governing on the basis of their own constitutional arrangements. They are private in that they are separate from governments.... NGOs operate beyond and beneath the states in which they are incorporated.

This latter point – that NGOs operate beyond and beneath states – is especially important to the subject at hand. In an increasingly globalising world one sees greater interaction between Northern and Southern NGOs because geographical distance has ceased to be an impediment to their activities. This paper will discuss the role of organised civil society in Africa, that is, NGOs working within the African context, whether they are Northern or Southern-based.

4. A More Holistic Understanding of Peace

According to Samarasinghe (n.d., 2), any violent conflict has five basic phases. These can be described as:

- the pre-conflict phase,
- the conflict emergence phase,
- the conflict and crisis phase, which is characterised by chaos and complex emergencies,
- the conflict-settlement phase, and
- the post-conflict phase.

Such a neatly compartmentalised, linear understanding of internal conflicts seems to be dominant in much academic thinking. In this way, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation are supposed to be firmly located within the post-conflict phase. However, research conducted by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on transitions in war-torn societies seems to contradict this dominant view. The UNRISD study noted that,

The historical timespan from war to peace is a long period in which both seem to co-exist, where peace has come to some areas, but not to others, where conflict lingers and remains an omnipresent threat and occasionally flares up a gain. Reconstruction and rebuilding take place throughout this period (UNRISD 1995, 5).

The challenge for peacemakers then is to engage in peacemaking between belligerents while at the same time making efforts towards reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Although at first glance, the prospects of rebuilding in the face of the destructive forces of war might seem a contradiction, the complex interaction between the various variables can make this possible. This is graphically seen in the interaction between poverty and conflict. Relating poverty to the occurrence of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Rupesinghe and Anderlini (1998, 12) note:

...in Rwanda, one of the world's poorest countries, a rapidly increasing population, coupled with decreasing agricultural productivity, few opportunities and uneven government support for rural areas, exacerbated social tensions. This, combined with a drop in tea and coffee prices in the late 1980s and structural adjustment policies in 1990, led to even harsher living conditions and eroded the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the people. These factors in themselves did not create sufficient conditions for the outbreak of civil war or the genocide in 1994. Within the wider context,

however, they were instrumental in the build-up of tension and grievance in a country with a history of social and ethnic divisions and recurrent communal violence.

Further underlining the relationship between economics and violent armed conflicts are the following statistics:

- Since the mid-1980s, 15 of the 20 poorest countries have experienced violent conflict.
- Half of the world's low-income countries are either engaged in conflict or are in the process of transition from conflict.
- Almost every low-income country shares at least a border with a country in conflict if not embroiled in its own conflict.
- In the 1990s, 70 million of the world's poor were displaced from their homes as a result of conflict. In Africa alone, one-third of its countries have produced refugees (Samarasinghe, n.d., 1)

These statistics underline an important truism that economic recovery cannot simply be dealt with in a post-conflict reconstruction phase. Indeed economic development should also be viewed as a conflict preventive measure and should occur in all phases. This once more emphasises the point made in this paper - that one cannot separate peacemaking from the processes of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Rather, they need to be viewed as parallel processes that are complementary to each other, and, if approached in this holistic manner, can contribute to sustainable peace. This more holistic understanding of peace, of course, dovetails with the work of Ohlsson (1995, 5), who distinguished between two notions of peace. Whereas negative peace exists when there is mere absence of war, positive peace is more embracing and holistic, and also includes issues such as prospects for social development.

This more positive understanding of peace considerably expands the role civil society plays in conflict situations. Both state and civil society actors must be involved in arriving at sustainable (positive) peace through structural and non-structural measures. According to Reyhler (1997, 37), such structural measures include:

- political democratisation,
- economic reconstruction,
- reconstruction of the judicial system,
- education and training,

- health and housing, and
- arms control.

Non-structural measures relating to reconciliation include:

- healing the past,
- commitment to the future,
- reconciling values, and
- developing a belief in ‘us’/plural loyalties.

If peace is more than the absence of war, and if peace is something that must continually be sustained, rather than something which can be achieved and then effortlessly maintained, then it is necessary to carefully examine the role of the state and civil society in conflict in Africa. While this necessity is emphasised here, it is also acknowledged that this topic is very broad and complex. It is impossible in the scope of a single paper to comprehensively address the issues related to the role played by both the state and civil society in conflict in the whole of Africa. This paper will thus limit its focus to selected issues related to the broad topic. The focus will be limited to intrastate, rather than interstate conflict. The discussion on the state will address only a few issues, and the discussion on civil society will focus on the role of NGOs rather than on civil society as a whole. It is hoped that, despite these, this paper can provide a contribution to the understanding of the role played by the state and civil society in conflict in Africa.

5. The Role of the State

Disputes, demands and dissatisfactions are part of national politics in each state. No population is ever completely satisfied with the arrangements of power and the distribution of resources within their state. This does not, however, mean that violent conflict is unavoidable. Many states manage to regulate the demands of their populations and to settle disputes before they result in violence. The capacity of African states to address and manage conflict must be improved.

When examining the role of the state in conflicts in Africa, there are many competing issues which require attention. While all of these cannot be addressed in this paper, three questions will be posed here and attempts will be made to answer them. Firstly, in what way have the characteristics of African states exacerbated conflict in Africa? Secondly, can changes made

to the form of state assist in the management of conflict? And thirdly, can change made to the form of government assist in managing conflict?

6. Characteristics of the African State and Conflict

Nkundubagenzi (1999, 280-283) notes that the two most frequent types of conflict in Africa are disputes about borders between states and intrastate wars involving groups competing for power or demanding secession from the state. Both of these can be related to the nature of the state in Africa. As mentioned earlier, most African states came about according to the whims of colonialists. This meant that borders were arbitrarily drawn up, without paying attention to historical boundaries between groups, nor to the way in which these states included people of different ethnicities and religions. In addition, the borders of African states were drawn up without taking into consideration the economic viability of the state created. Where states are not economically viable, there is likely to be considerable conflict over resources in the states. Thus border disputes and conflicts between competing groups could both have been avoided if Africa had not been divided up so arbitrarily.

But this was not the only colonial legacy. In order for the colonial power to extract economic largesse from their newly acquired territory, they needed to install a repressive state apparatus. In this way Drame (quoted in Solomon 1999a, 1) thus argues that

... the colonial state was above all a military state. Colonisation was often imposed by force of arms, or through intimidation based on the threat of force. The colonial order established by conquest was typically a military order which coerced the colonised peoples into submission.

In this way, any activity outside the control of the colonial state was regarded as a threat to the status quo and therefore had to be crushed. Democratic African institutions of governance were either destroyed or redesigned to serve the whims of the colonialist. The institution of African chieftainship, for instance, was transformed into one of "indirect rule". Chiefs could no longer be removed from office by their people and were no longer accountable to them. Instead, the chief was accountable to London or Paris local representatives and his position was held at the whim of the colonial power. As a result, chiefs grew more despotic and the gulf between government and citizen, state and human security started to widen.

This repressive, tyrannical legacy was then bequeathed to the independent African state, as the new elite internalised the behaviour of their

predecessor. In this way, the fate and trajectory of the independent African state was, to a large degree, determined by its colonial predecessor. Thus, in the words of Makau wa Mutua (quoted in Solomon 1999a, 2),

The mere changing of the guard and the transfer of politics from Paris to Dakar and from London to Nairobi were not transformative, rather they were a continuation of the politics of subjugation – utilising a battery of repressive laws whose origins lie in the colonial State, the [African] leadership criminalizes dissent and all independent political activity and quashes all attempts to create a civil society or an independent non-governmental sector.

The stage was therefore set for greater confrontation between newly-independent African states and their citizens.

In addition, the existence of several ‘disrupted’ or ‘collapsed’ states in Africa means that there are regions where there is no over-arching authority to arbitrate between disputing groups. The weakness of African state structures means that African states have a limited ability to respond to disputes within their borders and to resolve these disputes before violent conflict breaks out.

How can this situation be improved? With regard to the arbitrary nature of the borders of African states and the resulting problems, the obvious solution appears to be to change these boundaries so that boundaries which correspond to historical identities can be drawn up. Indeed, there are some writers who recommend that this be done. Ohaegbulam (1995, 153) is one such writer. He recommends that borders be reconsidered so that ‘more rational territorial or regional jurisdictions’ can be created. Others recommend that a whole new form of organisation should replace the state in Africa. For example, Herbst (1997, 393-394) believes that in state collapse lie the seeds of a new form of international society. He argues:

A far more revolutionary approach would be for at least parts of Africa to be re-ordered around some organisation other than the sovereign state. While such reforms would be a dramatic change in international society, their adoption would be an important acknowledgement of what is actually happening in parts of Africa where many states do not exercise sovereign authority over their territories.

While few analysts would suggest that the current borders of African states are ideal, most would consider the measures promoted by Ohaegbulam and Herbst as impractical and too radical. In the place of such measures, it may be suggested that nation-building can help reduce the potential for conflict between the various ethnic and religious groups who co-exist within a

single African state. Nation-building involves reducing disparities between groups and promoting the idea of a common shared nationhood (Horowitz 1985, 599). Nation-building can promote an identity based on a common territory, or common history rather than one based on ethnicity, and so can be considered an effective ethnic conflict management strategy that addresses the multi-ethnic nature of African states without aiming to radically change boundaries in Africa. However, nation-building has not had considerable success in Africa thus far.

It can be concluded that attention must be given to the nature of the African state when identifying roots of conflict in Africa, and when trying to prevent the outbreak of further conflict. States that are 'failed' or 'collapsed' need to be built up, or else replaced by some other form of organisation. The borders of African states must be reassessed, and ways of creating national identity must be explored.

7. Managing Conflict by Changing the Form of State

If African states in their current form are here to stay (as it seems they are) it is vital to examine ways in which they can be structured to best manage conflict within their borders. When looking at the form of state in Africa, some writers have suggested that a federal form of state can be an effective conflict management mechanism.

A federal arrangement can increase the confidence of the conflicting ethnic groups and allow them to feel less threatened by other ethnic groups (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 61-63). It can also appease demands for secession. Federalism has been used extensively in Nigeria in trying to reduce conflict between Nigeria's various ethnic groups. While federalism cannot be considered to have had uncompromised success in Nigeria, Diamond (1988, 324-325) praises federalism as a 'crucial resource' for Nigeria and argues that decentralised power and local autonomy are essential in Nigeria. Akinrinade (2000) concurs, stating that the Nigerian experience illustrates the need for 'the development and practice of true federalism'.

There are, however, several problems with federalism. Firstly, federalism usually refers to the devolution of powers to a specific geographical region and is thus only a solution where the conflicting ethnic groups are territorially based (Welsh 1993, 77). There are some forms of non-territorial partitions, such as the cultural councils of Belgium (Cohen 1997, 610), but generally federalism is taken to involve devolution to a particular geographical area. Another problem with federalism is that there are definite costs to federalism and these costs may be seen as outweighing the

benefits of federalism. The costs include the duplication of function, the expense of having state capitals and other expenses related to the running of separate federal administrations (Horowitz 1985, 621-622).

Changing the form of state in such a way that power is devolved can have the positive effect of making the various groups in society feel less isolated from the state and diminish feelings of powerlessness. However, it is not always possible to devolve power through federalism, and it may sometimes be advisable to try to seek out ways to devolve power without having to divide a state into federal units.

8. Democracy, Governance and the Management of Conflict

Democracy is often suggested as a cure-all for the problems of African states. Can it be said that adopting a democratic form of government will aid in the management of conflict? Or is there another form of government better suited to the management of conflict on the African continent?

Given that intrastate conflicts in Africa frequently centre around competition between different groups for power or for resources, it can be argued that a form of government that improves the ability of groups to peacefully manage competition for power and resources would be best suited for conflict management in Africa. It is thus necessary to consider various ways in which governments can best be structured to manage conflict.

While democracy may be commended for giving people a say in the way that they are governed, it has been noticed that if not carefully introduced, democratisation can exacerbate conflicts. Welsh (1993, 64-67) argues that democracy widens the scope for ethnic politics by providing incentives for ethnic mobilisation which can aggravate tensions between ethnic groups, sometimes resulting in conflict. Political parties in Africa are often ethnically-based, meaning that elections become competitions between ethnicity-based rather than interest-based groups. This means that democratisation needs to be implemented in such a way that it does not result in concentrating power in the hands of certain ethnic groups at the expense of other groups. Cohen (1997, 628) posits that democratisation should include proportionalism if ethnic conflict is to be prevented, and Glickman (1995, 407) proposes that democratisation in Africa should include some form of federalism if ethnic conflict is to be managed effectively.

Power-sharing or consociational models of democracy have been suggested as potential ways in which conflict in Africa can be regulated politically. According to Lijphart (quoted in Adekanye 1998, 26), power-sharing has four characteristics: it involves the participation of all significant groups in executive power-sharing; it allows for considerable internal autonomy where groups desire it; it involves proportional representation and proportional allocation of public funds and positions in the public service; and it includes the possibility of minority veto on certain vital questions.

Power-sharing allows for each group to have influence and authority and prevents minorities from being oppressed by dominant groups. However, there are certain prerequisites for the success of power-sharing measures. There must be legitimate leaders of each group and these leaders must be willing to compromise (Rabie 1994, 61). Power-sharing must be a continuous process and the way power is distributed needs to be continually renegotiated. This means that successive generations of leaders must be motivated to maintain the power-sharing system or the success of the system will be short-lived (McGarry and O'Leary 1994, 113).

The high incidence of conflict in Africa makes it imperative that careful attention be given to conflict management when trying to introduce political reforms. The way in which a state is governed can help prevent conflict from breaking out where it is latent, and can serve as a way to manage conflict in states which are emerging from situations of violent conflict.

9. The Role of Civil Society

It is impossible to deal exhaustively in this short paper with many possible roles that civil society can play in preventing, resolving and managing conflict in Africa. This paper will focus on the role of NGOs in three areas: early warning, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

9.1 Early Warning

Early warning has been defined as being concerned with forecasting the potential for violent conflict and, where necessary, framing an appropriate response that seeks not only to resolve the current conflict, but also to create the conditions that will result in sustainable peace (Solomon 1999b, 36).

For an early warning system to be effective, it needs to be comprehensive and practical. It needs to be comprehensive in that all five aspects of insecurity – military, political, economic, environmental and socio-cultural – need to be tracked and analysed. It is important to recognise that the

criteria used will determine the kind of interpretation of the analysis that results. This, in turn, will determine the kind of conflict resolution tools one will employ in a given situation, be it informal consultation, civilian fact-finding missions, arms embargoes and other punitive sanctions, or military confidence-building measures.

NGOs can play a key role here in terms of compiling such early warning reports. Indeed, several NGOs on the African continent have already established early warning systems. These include the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, the Institute for Security Studies and the Nairobi Peace Initiative.

However, as was alluded to in the definition given above, early warning is a tool for action whose immediate aim is to end the conflict. This is an arena where many NGO early warning reports too often fail. It is no use to provide a brilliant analysis of a problem and then provide no solutions for the policy-maker. As such, a comprehensive early warning report would need to include the following information:

- What are the political and other objectives of the parties concerned? Is there any interface between their agendas? If such an interface exists, could a third party use this as a starting point to defuse the conflict?
- Who or which third parties would be acceptable to all parties as neutral mediators?
- Is there an effective strategic peace constituency inside the country? If so, how can they become involved in the peace process?
- What incentives and/or punitive measures can be brought to bear on recalcitrant parties on the part of the international community?

Having a comprehensive early warning report is only a necessary first step. Such a report by an NGO would next have to be incorporated into a wider response system. Often one hears from NGOs the lament that they know hostilities were going to flare up in this or that country, but in spite of their having informed particular structures of government or the international community, no action had been forthcoming. The hiatus between track one preventive diplomacy efforts and early warning reports produced by NGOs on the ground can be clearly seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The inability of track one initiatives to identify and react to the disintegration of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) delayed the signing of the Lusaka agreement by all parties to the conflict (Solomon and Mngqibisa 2000, 15). It would have been beneficial for track one

peacemakers to have worked with NGOs on the ground in order to monitor developments affecting the negotiation positions of the parties. If this had been done effectively, there would have been early detection of the disintegration of the RCD, and proper mechanisms could have been devised to ensure that the negotiations were not adversely affected.

The need for greater integration between track one initiatives conducted by governments and intergovernmental bodies and track two initiatives conducted by organs of civil society does not only exist in the arena of early warning, but throughout the peace process. Writing on the need for more effective liaison between NGOs and a peacekeeping force, Williams (1995, 104-105) notes that the following measures can be of assistance:

... the creation of joint forums at strategic, operational and tactical levels where NGOs and the political and military representatives of the peace force can meet and discuss co-operation; creating a unity of objective between NGOs and the peace force; involving NGOs as early as possible to prevent mistrust from developing; identifying a lead agency (for example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to take responsibility for the leadership of the different NGOs within a sector or responsibility; and building trust through the sharing of information between NGOs and the UN peace force in question.

9.2 Peacemaking

The roles played by former United States President Jimmy Carter in defusing the crisis in Haiti in 1994 and by those Norwegian academics who initiated the secret negotiations that culminated in the Oslo Peace Accords suggest the growing importance of track two preventive diplomacy. Why is this so? According to Rupesinghe (1997, 16):

Away from the spotlight, second-track diplomacy avoids embarrassment of 'losing face' for all sides and can be useful in setting an agenda for official talks. This can be conducted in the pre-negotiation phase while conflict is still alive. Second-track initiatives are particularly important in building trust between the parties to the conflict and the mediator.

There are numerous examples of this approach at all levels of society. In Mozambique, for example, the Italian-based Catholic lay community of Sant' Egidio initiated the talks which led to the cease-fire between the *Resistência Nacional Moçambique* (RENAMO) and the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO). In Somaliland, traditional leaders have used kinship networks to resolve conflicts. In Burundi, women's networks were mobilised for conflict resolution training for the broader

community. But it is Angola which provides a very useful case study that shows the role of civil society in peacemaking, and also the limitations of that role.

The last two years have witnessed a greater involvement of local actors in the search for peace in strife-torn Angola. One of these actors is the Church. March 2000, for instance, witnessed Angola's Roman Catholic Bishops appealing to the UN to promote peace talks between the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) and the *União Nacional para a Independência Total d'Angola* (UNITA). In a passionate plea, the bishops called on the UN to review its current policy in Angola and to play a more efficient role, claiming that 'closing the doors to dialogue would be opening them to war with no end in sight' (IRIN 2000a). Other church leaders also called on the two sides to seek a negotiated settlement. For example, in April 2000, the Angolan Episcopal Church, the Protestant Council of Christian Churches and the Angolan Evangelical Alliance said in a joint statement that they were ready to mediate between the MPLA and UNITA. A 12-member panel of church officials was subsequently set up to pursue 'possible avenues for peace' (IRIN 2000b). Meanwhile, the Angolan Lutheran Church organised a meeting between UNITA and MPLA women to help bring about reconciliation.

One of the most positive developments in recent months has been the fact that, for the first time in Angolan history, all of Angola's churches formed a joint body in May 2000 to campaign for peace and national reconciliation. This is likely to be a powerful force for peace in war-ravaged Angola since, combined, '... Angolan churches have a larger support base than any other organisation in the country' (*The Economist* 2000, 42).

Of course, the churches are not the only actors concerned with peace. As early as March 1997, the Forum of Angolan Non-Governmental Organisations (FONGA), in co-operation with the American Friends Service Committee, held a training workshop aimed at community workers representing 30 NGOs from Lubango, Huilla, Kwanza Sul, and Luanda itself. The workshop aimed at teaching participants about non-violent means of conflict resolution at community level. FONGA remains one of the few NGOs that maintains a presence across the UNITA-MPLA divide.

Another local NGO is Action for Rural Development and the Environment (ADRA). In operation since 1990, ADRA aims to organise local communities around development projects, while at the same time raising their political awareness and self-reliance. Yet another NGO, the Angolan Group of Reflection for Peace (GARP), was established in April 1999 as a

civil society peace advocacy organisation (Angolan Group of Reflection for Peace 1999).

While successful track two diplomacy on the part of Angolan NGOs remains a possibility, it is true that many problems are likely to plague such a venture. Three reasons account for this. Firstly, within the Angolan political context, there has always been suspicion regarding the neutrality of such NGOs. For instance, ADRA is unacceptable to UNITA because of its close ties to the Luanda government. Secondly, Angolan NGOs are weak and do not have the necessary material and human resources to sustain a long-term conflict intervention. This is further complicated by the fact that many of these actors suffer from severe internal divisions. For instance, the Catholic Church's hierarchy is known to be divided along political lines. Finally, these actors often compete with one another, engaging in useless (and expensive) competition while working at cross-purposes. In July 1999, for instance, unionists and intellectuals launched a 'peace manifesto'. The Catholic Church did not back the manifesto, and set up its own independent 'movement for peace'.

What is clear is that there is a great need for co-ordination between these NGOs. In addition, dynamic partnerships between local and international NGOs should be established to improve co-ordination and also to encourage the transfer of skills from international to local NGOs. The imprisonment of journalist Rafael Marques, a senior GARP member, also suggests that there is a need for greater interaction between track one and track two initiatives. Under the circumstances of political repression faced by NGOs advocating for peace in Angola, track one initiatives could, for instance, open up the space for track two efforts conducted by the churches, FONGA or GARP.

The above leads us to conclude that if we are to approach peace holistically and at a practical level to prevent useless duplication, then we need to adopt a more integrated approach to peacemaking. One such integrated approach to peacemaking is that of multi-track diplomacy. According to Rupesinghe and Anderlini (1998, 1):

Multi-track diplomacy is the name given to the involvement of a variety of actors (i.e., governments, agencies, regional organisations such as the Organisation of African Unity, non-governmental organisations, citizens groups, civic leaders) at different levels of a conflict, with the intention of bringing greater accountability and adherence to human rights and humanitarian law by all sides. This approach is based on the idea that different efforts in peacemaking can be complementary to each other and part of a larger framework of initiatives. For example, while NGOs

may monitor human rights abuses at grassroots level, economic institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank could discreetly press for peace coalitions to bring pressure on the government and rebels to negotiate.

9.3 *Peacebuilding*

Building a sustainable peace includes reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Sub-themes here include the demobilisation and re-integration of former combatants; the ensuring of effective democratic governance; the restructuring of the judiciary; de-mining; and the repatriation of refugees.

As has been noted in the previous sections on early warning and peacemaking, there is a tremendous need for greater co-operation between the work NGOs do and the efforts of governments and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs). Once again this point can be illustrated by using Angola as a case study.

In Angola, a German NGO, MGM (the German acronym for Peoples Against Landmines) is engaged in important work - demining roads for the resettlement of refugees. However, MGM finds that this work is often undone by the very government it is trying to assist. Explaining this, Boulden (1998) notes:

The beneficial demining work of MGM and others not only clears mines from the roads, it also removes vegetation and turns the soil into a usable, asphalt-ready, road bed surface. When a bridge needs repair, the de-miners complete this task as well, rather than leave a road in good condition but still unusable. However, without any government action to create finished roads, the rain and jungle will soon obliterate all of MGM's efforts. Within months, these dirt roads form culverts and mudholes that are impassable, or else the proliferation of greenery recovers the tracks.

On the other hand, Costy's (1996, 18) analysis of the role of NGOs in Mozambique gives a different perspective on the need for co-ordination. Costy notes the important role international NGOs play in the provision of infrastructure rehabilitation, health, education, water and sanitation, demining, agricultural extension and vocational training. Costy then notes that the individual annual budgets of over \$200 000 of these NGOs far exceed the resources of local government for that particular region, which often results in growing antagonism between NGOs and local government authorities. In this uneven contest, one finds the legitimacy, effectiveness and credibility of local government being undermined by the NGOs. Thus Costy (1996, 19) notes:

Increasingly marginalisation also appears to define the relationship between district authorities and the community. Where it can, government routinely takes credit for the material benefits which NGOs bring to communities in the form of clinics, wells and new bridges or schools. But inhabitants are well aware of the overwhelming economic superiority of the outside NGOs operating in their midst. NGOs easily become the primary food or wage providers in a district, in some cases employing dozens of local labourers, extensionists, technical and logistics personnel, drivers and guards. As a result, wages and food quotas become inflated to the point where district authorities are unable to compete. By contrast to NGOs [sic] which so efficiently vaccinate, rehabilitate, build and employ, local government is seen to have little to offer on its own. Once again, on the eve of decentralisation, district administrations are being drained in advance, not only of the valuable resources, but also of the popular legitimacy and support upon which, paradoxically, they must increasingly depend.

Obviously, this is an untenable state of affairs. A much closer synergy between the efforts of the state and NGOs is required so that scarce resources are not wasted.

10. Conclusion

This brief overview of the role of the state and civil society in addressing conflict in Africa, has shown that both the state and civil society have a key role to play, and that care should be taken to ensure that their attempts to address and manage conflicts should be complementary. This discussion has also shown that responding to conflict in Africa is a complex and multifaceted process. No easy solutions are on offer. There is no simple origin for the conflicts that ravage Africa, and solutions must be flexible and innovative.

The discussion on the role of the state has shown that the various processes occurring in Africa influence each other. For example, the process of democratisation can either alleviate or exacerbate conflicts in a state, depending on the way in which it is implemented. The various aspects of African politics need to be considered holistically so that their impact upon each other can be understood. The structure and governance of African states have fundamental implications for the management of conflict in Africa.

When considering the role played by NGOs in Africa, it is clear that NGOs are important actors in conflict resolution and management. NGOs are already playing a vital role in the development of early warning systems and in making and building peace in Africa. This role needs to be affirmed

and strengthened, and co-ordination between the role of the state and civil society in Africa must be improved.

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