

The Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa Framework and the Role of the Regional

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Introduction

In the 1980s, which are sometimes referred to as Africa's lost decade, it appeared that the continent needed to undertake a series of initiatives in order to deal with its problems. These initiatives were to be based on an African agenda, managed and designed by Africans but with the active involvement of the international community, especially those states variously denoted as 'friends of Africa'. Perhaps the most significant initiative that emerged was the Kampala Document, which contains the proposals for a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA).

The end of the Cold War in 1990 exposed the leadership and administrative inadequacies of African states. African citizens and leaders felt a discernible loss of confidence in the various institutions of governance, and questioned both the fundamental nature of their states and the rationale for their existence. During this period of uncertainty there occurred numerous crises, orgies of violence, genocide, state disintegration and combinations of these. The obvious lesson to be drawn is that African interests are excluded from the current socio-political and economic paradigms applied in

the rest of the world.

For Africa, a continent that has remained volatile and vulnerable to external factors and factions, there is a need to develop and implement paradigms, concepts and new attitudes to increase institutional capacity and make progress toward the goals of stability and prosperity. An African agenda on issues of stability, integration, human security, socio-economic development and democratization must evolve within the overall framework of collective African solidarity.

African political leaders responded to these needs and emerging trends by proposing a variety of initiatives in regional institutions. In the first place, there appeared to be a consensus that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Africa's primary political continent-wide framework, had recorded demonstrable successes in pursuit of the objectives of Article 2(d) in the OAU Charter: 'to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa'. These achievements paved the way for a recommitment to unity and solidarity, the defence of territorial integrity and the independence of all states. To this end, individual efforts to achieve a better life for African people were to be coordinated and intensified. In a similar vein, the OAU achieved varying degrees of success in pursuit of the principles articulated in Article 3 of its Charter, particularly in the areas of diplomatic and political cooperation, but also in other spheres such as the economy, transport, communication, health, science, technology, and defence and security cooperation.

Yet African leaders and the OAU could not deal decisively with challenges to peace and security, and the continent was inundated by a wave of conflict. Indeed, the importance of social and political stability grew as the changing international political framework began to marginalize the African continent and its concerns. There was also a growing awareness that the continent had not recorded enough progress in the sphere of economic development, and that poor economic performance was a contributory cause of the rising wave of domestic conflict.

Responding to the challenges

Accordingly, in designing a new strategy for confronting the critical challenges presented by the new international milieu, the need was felt to link the requirements of economic development and the

demands for peace and security. In fact, any effective method for tackling the challenge of the new era had to be one that integrated both areas. This realization informed the landmark Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World, adopted by heads of state and government in 1990.¹ That Declaration not only presented an objective analysis of the state of affairs within the continent, but also contained a range of suggestions on methods or procedures for changing the situation by tackling some of the apparently intractable challenges that confront the continent. In the Declaration the leaders stated:

We are fully aware that in order to facilitate this process of socio-economic transformation and integration, it is necessary to promote the popular participation of our peoples in the processes of governance and development... We therefore assert that democracy and development should go together and should be mutually reinforcing.

This new thinking was also captured, in part, by the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, signed by heads of state in Arusha in February 1990. The Arusha Charter moved a step further by pointedly maintaining that:

We realize at the same time that responsibilities of achieving these objectives we have set will be constrained as long as an atmosphere of lasting peace and stability does not prevail in our continent. We therefore renew our determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolution of all the conflicts in the continent.

Coming from an organization often labelled (wrongly or rightly) a conservative club of the African political oppressors, the Declaration broke fresh ground. It was the first frank and honest assessment of African reality since the earliest wave of independence in Africa in the late 1950s and 1960s.

CSSDCA: An African agenda for peace and prosperity²

In response to the enmity of the political, strategic, economic and social upheavals resulting from the end of the Cold War and the consequent changes in the configuration of global power, the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), convened a high-

level expert meeting in Paris, France, in 1990, on the theme 'Developments in Eastern Europe: Strategic Implications for Africa'.

At the Paris meeting it was observed (quite correctly) that, with the end of the Cold War, resources previously directed at Africa by the West and the Soviet Union would be redirected elsewhere, and that this was likely to lead to the marginalization of the continent. The immediate puzzle to be resolved was: How will Africa be affected by the end of the Cold War polarization? Will the industrialized countries, which had previously channelled considerable resources of development assistance to Africa, now turn their backs on the continent and divert official development assistance towards the states of Eastern Europe, for reasons of geographical contiguity and affinity?

The 1990 Paris meeting recognized the need for Africa to rise to the challenge; to tackle the interrelated problems of security, stability, development and cooperation through its own means, and to engage the rest of the world within a holistic and composite framework designed, owned and driven by Africans. Inspired by the experience of Europe and the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), a scenario emerged in subsequent discussions: Africa should identify a process capable of providing a holistic and comprehensive approach to its myriad developmental challenges.

The ALF accepted the challenge of driving this process forward. In November 1990, it convened a meeting of prominent Africans drawn from government, business, and academic, international and non-governmental organizations, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On this occasion, the ALF was acting in collaboration with the secretariats of the OAU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The stated aim was to consider concrete strategies to cope with the world's new realities. Recognizing the need to develop a framework for Africa along the lines of the CSCE, the Addis Ababa meeting set up a steering committee. In early 1991, the ALF and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) joined forces to examine what relevance the European (Helsinki/CSCE) process held for Africa. The meeting brought Africans together with Europeans who had been involved in the CSCE process. Subsequently, a series of other technical and consultative meetings were held to refine the concept and agree on possible modalities for moving the process forward. These meetings culminated in the Kampala Forum, held in May 1991.

The Kampala Forum attracted over five hundred people from all

walks of life. Trade union leaders, representatives of the private sector, peasants and presidents, students and professors, leaders from international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, ministers and other political leaders, participated in the meeting. The host, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, was joined by, among others, Presidents Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, Dr Quett Masire of Botswana and General Hassan Omar El-Bashir of the Sudan. Former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere also attended, as did the former President of Cape Verde, Aristides Pereira, and Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo. The African National Congress sent Alfred Nzo (soon to be Foreign Affairs Minister) as its representative.

This historic meeting adopted the Kampala Document, which contained proposals for the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, grouping the four cardinal issues into 'calabashes'.

Subsequently, in June 1991, the Kampala Document was introduced at the OAU Summit in Abuja, Nigeria. The ALF's immediate expectation was that the OAU Summit would accept the CSSDCA proposals and launch the process. During the course of the Summit there were promising signs that this might happen. The Zambian President at the time, Kenneth Kaunda, pointed out during his address that the CSSDCA provided the political side of the African Economic Community Treaty that was about to be signed in Abuja, and enjoined his colleagues to accept the CSSDCA proposals. President Museveni of Uganda spoke in a more or less similar tone, and the OAU Summit noted these mentions of the CSSDCA. Contrary to the ALF's initial expectations, however, the Summit stopped short of accepting the CSSDCA proposal, but it reaffirmed and recognized the strong linkage between peace, security and development. Having noted the contents of the document, the Summit recommended it to the OAU Council of Ministers for further consideration.

The decision by the OAU Summit not to adopt the CSSDCA process was a direct consequence of the fears of a few vulnerable African governments, though within the OAU itself there was no concerted opposition. The two main states that expressed opposition to the CSSDCA process did so on matters of national policy.

Over the years, the CSSDCA proposals - often described as Africa's Magna Carta - won the support of numerous African states, non-governmental organizations and influential individual and opinion leaders, but failed to garner full acceptance by the OAU. The Kampala

Document remained a widely used resource base for policy formulation in some states, and also in some regional and subregional organizations.

Though the ALF never lost hope, the period of activism was long and sometimes frustrating. Nevertheless, the ALF stood by its original mission and vision. The liberating breakthrough eventually occurred in 1999, with Nigeria's return to democracy and the subsequent election of Olusegun Obasanjo as President. This brought about a return of the CSSDCA proposals to the mainstream of policy-making in Africa. At the Algiers and Sirte OAU Summits, President Obasanjo obtained the support of his fellow African leaders for the resumption of the consideration of the CSSDCA, based on the Kampala Document. The ALF was thereafter invited to become closely associated with the intergovernmental OAU-led process that was to consider the CSSDCA.

The recommendations of the Algiers Summit meeting precipitated a series of events that eventually culminated in the adoption in 2000 of the 'Solemn Declaration' by heads of state at the 36th OAU Summit in Lomé, Togo.

The CSSDCA Declaration

The full Declaration is divided into five parts. The introductory part is followed by a list of general principles; thereafter the specific principles and plan of action and an implementation mechanism are described. The general and specific principles are divided into the four calabashes of security, stability, development and cooperation.

The general principles are:³

- The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Member States must be respected.
- The security, stability and development of every African country are inseparably linked to that of other African countries. Instability in one country affects the stability of neighbouring countries and has serious implications for continental unity, peace and development.
- The interdependence of Member States and the link between their security, stability and development make it imperative to develop a common African agenda. Such an agenda must be based on a unity of purpose and a collective political consensus, derived from a firm conviction that Africa cannot make any significant progress without finding lasting solutions to the problem of peace and security.

- Disputes should be resolved by peaceful means, with the emphasis on seeking African solutions to African problems.
- The prevention, management and resolution of conflicts provide the enabling environment for peace, security, stability and development to flourish.
- The responsibility for the security, stability and socio-economic development of the continent lies primarily with African states.
- While recognizing that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the United Nations Security Council, the OAU, now the African Union (AU), in close cooperation with the United Nations and the Regional Economic Communities, has the responsibility for promoting security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa.
- Democracy, good governance, respect for human and peoples' rights and the rule of law are prerequisites for the security, stability and development of the continent.
- Africa's resources should be used more effectively to meet the needs of African peoples and to improve their well-being.
- The fulfilment of the objectives of the CSSDCA requires the strengthening of Africa's solidarity and partnership with other regions of the world, in order to meet the challenges of globalization and avoid further marginalization.
- HIV/AIDS and other pandemics on the continent constitute a threat to human security as well as to short- and long-term sustainable growth in Africa.
- Member States should adhere in good faith to all CSSDCA principles and ensure their implementation.

The Declaration stipulates that peace, security and stability are the preconditions and the basis for development and cooperation in Africa. It also emphasizes that the security, stability and development of African states are inseparably interlinked. The erosion of security and stability is thus one of the major causes of the crises that continue to plague African states, and one of the principal impediments to economic growth and human development on the continent.

The CSSDCA Declaration also noted that peace constitutes the basis of all wholesome human interactions and that with peace should go security. Lack of democracy, denial of personal liberty and abuse of human rights are causes of insecurity. The concept of security transcends military considerations and includes conflict prevention,

containment and resolution, all of which relate to the aim of collective continental security. Security also embraces all aspects of society, including the economic, political and social dimensions of the individual, family and community, to take in national and regional stability. The Declaration posits that the security of a nation must be construed in terms of the security of the individual citizen, not only to live in peace but also to have access to the basic necessities of life, to participate freely in the affairs of society and to enjoy fundamental human rights.

The promotion of political and social stability in individual African countries is another key component of the CSSDCA process. Under the stability calabash, all African states are to be guided by strict adherence to the rule of law, popular participation in governance, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Political organizations should not be based on religious, ethnic, regional or racial affiliations. There should be transparency in public policy-making, and an absence of fundamentalism in religious practice.

The CSSDCA Declaration also provides a framework for collective action and for cooperation at various levels: continental, regional and international. It provides for cooperation between African states, between South and South and between North and South; for the economic integration of African states in the African Economic Community; for the joint development of common natural resources; for interdependence based on beneficial cooperative relations with other developing and industrialized nations; and for supra-nationality based on the need to devolve certain key responsibilities to continental institutions. The CSSDCA Declaration has thus charted a framework for Africa's development based on self-reliance, effective and responsive governance, regional integration and international cooperation.

The March 2001 OAU Summit meeting in Sirte was briefed on progress made with the implementation of the CSSDCA. Ironically, while the newly formed AU itself does not provide for the Conflict Management Unit, the Summit agreed on a CSSDCA implementation mechanism as a unit to be situated in the AU Secretariat. This mechanism also envisages negotiations at expert level on all issues to be incorporated in the calabashes (security, stability, development and cooperation). These negotiations will be followed by a review at ministerial level, which must take place before the OAU Summit in South Africa. The latter will be the first Summit to review progress on the implementation of the CSSDCA agenda.

The adoption of the AU has revitalized the long-stalled project to revise the OAU Charter. However, the process is sure to be slow if the preceding efforts are any indication.

A crucial aspect of the CSSDCA is that it entails a biannual standing conference. Members are expected to adhere 'in good faith to all CSSDCA principles and ensure their implementation'. This particular provision is important because the standing biannual conference will involve the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs). In furtherance of the provisions of the Lomé Solemn Declaration on the CSSDCA, the OAU secretariat or the AU will convene a number of expanded discussions on the four calabashes of the CSSDCA with the following possible objectives: to agree on specific principles and actions to give practical meaning to the home Declaration, and to codify them in a binding agreement.

The CSSDCA framework facilitates a constant engagement of African leaders and strengthens the capacity to hold them to their commitments, to which they have freely subscribed within their own organizations.

What then might be the role of CSOs in such an endeavour? The CSSDCA is principally designed to assist in the search for a common set of values, to which all of Africa might subscribe. That in itself defines in clearer terms the challenge for CSOs, be they regional or national in scope and orientation. The overriding challenge to CSOs remains that of helping to identify the parameters of a just order, and then preparing society to think in terms of those parameters. The task will involve the continuous expansion and defence of the liberal political space. This was a major concern of the ALF when it proposed a standing conference on security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa. The CSSDCA process aims to create a new political dispensation in the many and various societies in Africa. That political culture is premised on centrality. Without peace, no development can take place. Without development, Africans are doomed to remain hewers of wood and drawers of water. The development process in Africa, if it is to be sustainable, must be premised first and foremost on justice, which is the only way to accommodate the continent's desire to build a culture of peace.

Every society aspires towards a better-organized social structure, better service delivery from its political leaders and better governance. In particular it wishes for a government that will take overall development of the society as its priority. Given the current state of knowledge, democracy, with all its defects, remains the best

form of governance known to humanity. Democracy is the liberal ground upon which freedom, the rule of law, justice and fairness to all in Africa can grow. As an ideology, democracy develops; it improves itself by the day; each new experience, each new compromise, each new conflict that challenges its claims and its postures adds to its strength. Democracy grows with the people, over time. For all these reasons, democracy is the ideological ground upon which the African structure of nation-state should be constructed.

When we speak of democracy, what do we have in mind? What are the tenets of democracy? The most universal of its elements is justice. Justice here rises above court rulings in judicial controversies; it also includes being just, considerate, law-abiding, fair, accommodating, tolerant and so on. As a tenet of democracy, justice is all-embracing; it captures all our various claims to 'democracy dividends' - the delivery of electoral promises, the openness to critique and fairness in political action. It is a manifestation of the dictum: do unto others as you would have others do unto you. This could be converted into the injunction that every citizen should seek a just society, where the rule of law and the supremacy of the governed over those in government is held dear. In such a society, the importance of the collective interest is greater than narrow, selfish aims.

If justice, as described above, is so significant to democracy and democratic claims, how do Africans arrive at that frame of mind? Is it an inborn quality or a way of thinking that can be learnt? If the former is the case, then there is nothing we can do! Our society is doomed to fail. But if it is the latter, if it is the case that we can train ourselves to have respect for others, Africans can modify and influence the sort of society they want, starting with the school system and young people, the future custodians of society,

Justice makes it possible for a society to be governed in a level-headed and equitable manner. It enhances the basic principle that law in the land is supreme and above all personal interests. It ensures that elected politicians have respect for the system and maintain a state of order, transparency, accountability, social justice and the freedom of the people. This includes respect for variance in opinion and religious orientation. Justice promotes cultural differences because it recognizes and accommodates plurality. Most significantly, justice also ensures that the spending and planning of the present generation is mindful of the interests of the generations yet unborn.

It is only within the context of a just society that we can talk of