

Remarks by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim

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NEPAD: Aspects and Examples of Conflict  
Resolution And Peace Building in (East -)  
Africa

I want to thank the Organizer and Sponsors of this Forum for inviting me here today. More importantly however, I wish to pay tribute to them - Agenda Participation for a Culture of Democracy, FES and SDC for conceiving, organizing and hosting this important forum whose significance and relevance are self-evident.

Within the context of promoting, strengthening and consolidating a culture of democracy, understanding and peace in our country, it is important that representatives from various sectors of our society are able to sit together and engage in a meaningful dialogue especially on issues, which affect the

destiny of our nation. Clearly one such issue of great importance has been the MUAFAKA reached between CCM and CUF.

In the interest of peace and stability in our country it is important not only to do our utmost to support the implementation of that Agreement but also draw lessons therefrom. These lessons and experiences-both the rewarding and not so rewarding ones- are of relevance not only to Tanzanians but also to all those within our continent and I dare say even beyond our continental frontiers who may have encountered or are likely to encounter conflict situations within their respective societies and are searching for a genuine way out.

At the same time in the case of Tanzania we must look beyond the MUAFAKA. We must see how to make use of this historic political rapprochement In order to enhance even greater cooperation and understanding among our people and within the political class. Put differently, our challenge should be how to

capitalize on the spirit of MUAFAKA and use it as an effective building bridge towards an era of greater cooperation and Understanding among our political parties and within the context of strengthening the foundation of democracy, and the rule of law- in sum good governance. Above all, let the spirit of MUAFAKA assist our leaders of all political parties and persuasion in promoting the dynamic of political debate based on policies, disagreeing when we must, but doing so without being disagreeable

My role today is not to talk about MUAFAKA per se and its implications. Rather I have been specifically requested to make a short presentation on "NEW AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: Aspects and Examples of Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in (East -) AFRICA". In this respect, I would like at the outset to highlight the following:

NEPAD and its conflict prevention, management and resolution dimension should be seen as a continuation of Africa's efforts to



deal with the scourge of conflicts. NEPAD is an Instrument of the African Union and endeavoring to operationalize the issue of promoting peace and security by creating conditions which make that goal realizable. Those enabling conditions include institutionalizing a commitment to core values such as democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance as well as building the institutional capacities for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. Consequently, in reviewing NEPAD's role in this vital area we must do so within the larger context of O.A.U.'s role and soon to be AU's role. In other words, it is appropriate to consider this topic within the totality of the overall architecture for peace and security in the continent.

Whether one refers to the examples and experiences of Eastern Africa (which by OAU geographical regional definition includes the three East African countries as well as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Sudan, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles and lately Rwanda) or of the other African Countries,

these are certain common factors as far as conflicts are concerned. In the first place the nature of those conflicts with the exception of the Ethiopia and Eritrea War, are invariably intrastate. Secondly, while the magnitude and dimension may vary from one conflict to the other. There is considerable identity on their causes - denial of people's fundamental rights, including the right to choose how they are governed, by whom and for what period, social exclusion, abject poverty and loss of hope of its amelioration etc.. Significantly, in their historic declaration of 1990 on fundamental changes in the world and their impact on Africa, African Heads of State inter alia pledged for reinforced respect for human rights and the further democratisation of their societies. In NEPAD which is the latest African initiative, African Leaders declared as follows:

"It is generally acknowledged that development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance.



With the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Africa undertakes to respect the global standards of democracy, the core components of which include political, pluralism, allowing for the existence of several political parties and workers' unions, and fair, open and democratic elections periodically organized to enable people to choose their leaders freely."

My third observation takes me back to the Political Accord of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2001 signed by CCM and CUF as well as the measures that were subsequently taken to ensure its implementation and overcome the hiccups that unfolded. The point I want to make is that this Agreement serves as an eloquent testimony as to what can be achieved to avoid a deterioration of situation with incalculable consequences once the parties to a conflict or a potential conflict are determined to deal seriously with a crisis or potential crisis. In many ways therefore, the Zanzibar Agreement, which must be sustained, can be a point of reference in Africa's quest in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

At this juncture, I wish to give a short historical perspective on how the Continent has dealt with the scourge of conflicts, which as you know, has over the years caused havoc, mayhem and destruction in our continent. This has included death and injury inflicted on millions of our people while many more millions have been forced to vote with their feet.

The critical importance of peace and security, and specifically the component of conflict resolution was recognized at the very inception of the organization of African Unity. For those of you who have had the opportunity of referring to the OAU charter, you may be aware that among the cardinal principles enshrined in the charter is that of the "peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

It is in this regard that among the 4 principal institutions of the continental



organization provided for in the charter is the commission of mediation, conciliation and arbitration. The anticipation of the founding fathers at that time was that the nature of conflict that was to be major concern in the continent was the one between states; little did they anticipate the phenomenon that was to grip the continent with devastating consequences – that is, the conflicts within states.

Indeed, the commission was deployed in addressing the conflict between Algeria and Morocco, but on the whole it did not take off effectively.

To a large extent, conflict resolution during this early period was through ad hoc arrangements mostly using the personality of statesmen to mediate.

Unfortunately, the hopes and expectations of African people were dampened not too many years after independence by the



increasing wave of intra-state conflicts and insecurity.

The situation was further compounded by the economic crisis of the 1980's and also by the misuse Article III clause 2 of the OAU charter that underlined the adherence to the principle of "non-interference in the internal affairs of states."

I have already referred to the 1990 declaration and its impact. Let me just point out the added significance of this declaration was in its assertion in no uncertain terms that peace and security in the continent is a collective responsibility of all Africans. It cannot be exclusively left to the idiosyncrasies of individual states, in the name of "non-interference" within internal affairs of a ..... State.

It is this declaration that constituted the basis for the establishment in 1993 in

Cairo of the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution – with its various components of central organ/ early warning system/ and peace fund. During the decade of the 90's, we also began to see the development of conflict management mechanisms within the Regional Economic Communities such as SADC, ECOWAS, ECCAS and IGAD and the others. During the past decade, these mechanisms have been deployed in various conflict situations.

By the end of the 1990's (and the advent of a new century and new millenium) it was realized that the structures and collective capacities that have been developed in the continent cannot sufficiently cope with the overall challenges facing us.

There was a need for revitalizing these structures and accelerating our collective programs. Thus on 9.9.99 our leaders pronounced the sirte declaration



promulgating the decision to establish the African Union. This is an elevated framework for cooperation and integration in the continent. The principles and objectives of the constitutive act of the African union underline the importance of promoting peace, security and stability in the continent by addressing conflicts and more prominently by fostering the conditions that prevent the breakdown of peace and generation of insecurity and instability. Among the important components of the African union are the new partnership of development (NEPAD) and the conference on security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA).

It can be said, therefore, that the question of peace and security has been central to our continents development concerns and remains a central tenant for sustainable development and for the realization of our national and continental ideals.

Throughout the history of our continental organization there has been an endeavor to develop architecture for peace and security and revitalize the mechanisms.

One may legitimately ask why then despite all these efforts Africa continues to suffer from the scourge of conflicts? I can't attempt to provide a definite answer to this question but what I cannot do is to merely assert the experiences we have accumulated in dealing with the and related crisis situations. Put succinctly we have been able to draw the following lessons:

There is no military solution or a violent settlement to a conflict situation. Only through peaceful negotiation and mutual agreement can a conflict be resolved.

While the process of conflict resolution immediately has to address the aftermath's



and consequences of conflict, in the long run and unavoidable challenge is to deal with the causative factors of conflict. Indeed, issues of cessation of hostilities, negotiating cease-fires, mediation and negotiating for peace, and peace keeping are very important and may take a long time to achieve, but in the long run, the experience of our continent has demonstrated that the causes of conflicts which often times these lie in the areas of democratic governance, respect of human rights, abiding to the rule of law, social inclusiveness – generally what is now referred to as good governance have to be addressed.

The successful resolution of conflicts is not only dependent on the skills and capacities of the mediator. It is determined mainly by the goodwill and disposition of the parties of conflict to attain peace. Durable peace cannot be imposed from outside.

In resolving conflicts it has to be recognized that the stakeholders for peace are not only those who are at the table. The multiplicity of the stakeholders has to be recognized and every effort has to be made to ensure that every sector of society is onboard, otherwise peace will only prevail temporarily.

Conflict resolution and peace building is resource demanding. It requires finances, expertise, equipment and facilities. Conflicts have sometimes dragged and compounded due to inadequacy of resources in our continent. (Give briefly the ~~one~~ OAU experience).

Conflict resolution and sustainable Peace requires that commensurate attention is given to post-conflict reconstruction both in dealing with the damage, destruction and trauma, but also in promoting social reconciliation among the communities.



It is critical that mechanisms for conflict resolution are embedded within the structures and institutions of governance so as to ensure that differences do not easily degenerate into conflicts.

Finally, it is important to promote culture of peace and tolerance in our societies. Our diversities should be a basis of strength rather than weaknesses and tension. Our values and practices should engender unity and emphasize our common humanity. Africa is a continent with a mosaic of ethics, racism, colors, cultures, religions. We must use well their diversity. This is true of the continent as a whole. It is equally true in respect of our individual countries. The case of Sudan comes particularly into ones mind.

## **TO CONCLUDE:**

The ideals of the African union at the continental level, and even when translated to the national and local level, as well as the operational instruments of NEPAD, CSSDCA and all other initiatives underscore the fact that peace and security is not only a prerequisite for our development but it is an integral part of our existence.

We in Tanzania have been blessed by establishing a foundation for unity, peace and stability. Let us not erode this treasure. Let us protect this asset so that we can harness collectively the peace dividend;

It is the responsibility of all of us, whether in the state, in political parties, private sector or the civic movement to endeavour towards this ideal. It is the most coveted



and precious asset that we can bequeath to the future generations.

I thank you.