Armed conflict bane of africa's development: causes and prevention assignment

ARMED CONFLICT BANE OF AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: CAUSES AND PREVENTION By Colonel JJ OGUNLADE NIGERIAN ARMY INTRODUCTION 1. The end of the Cold War between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA) was expected to usher in relative peace, security and stability globally. The corresponding calm was to facilitate meaningful economic and technological growth in most nations of the world. Unfortunately, these expectations have not been realised, as the world began to experience new form of conflicts, more complex and devastating. 2.

The 2 gulf wars (1991 and 2003), the Yugoslavian civil war, the war in Kosovo, Afghanistan and the multiple ethnic wars in Africa. These wars are among the conflicts which ended with massive destruction of lives and properties along with gross violations of human right. Kornblum stresses that the post Cold War proliferation of local conflicts have strained the resources and credibility of governments and international community almost to a breaking point. [1] 3. These conflicts have dampened the initial euphoria and raised doubts about the present strategies for conflict management and resolution.

While there is increasing rapprochement among actors in some regions, those in Africa have taken perennial crises proportions. The situation has became more critical with the breakout of inter and intra-state conflicts that resulted in the death of millions and an upsurge of refugees and displaced people. These conflicts lacked appropriate management at global and regional levels. They have resulted in the collapse of the Somalian state, genocide in Rwanda and an unending circle of violence in the Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan and Angola to mention but a few.

4.

Basically, conflict is seen as a state of opposition. It is said to exist when individuals or groups express different views, interests or goals, and perceive their views as incompatible. [2] The term has also been defined as an " interaction between interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and who expect interference from the other party in an attempt to achieve their goals". [3] On the other hand, armed conflict has been defined as " a political conflict in which armed combat involves the armed forces of at least one state, or one or more armed factions seeking to gain control of all or part of the state". 4] Whether armed or unarmed, it is evident that, incompatibility and opposing views or interests exist in all forms of conflict. 5. In the last decade, Africa has witness more armed conflicts than any other region in the world; increasingly, the conflicts have taken a regional character especially along the Great Lakes Region. [5] Between 1970 and 1997, over 30 wars have been fought in Africa. The wars involved a quarter of the continent and accounted for more than half of the entire war related deaths world wide, while leaving almost 8 million refugees around the continent. 6] 6. The African conflicts, most of which are still on going, are threatening the stability of the continent. Many countries within the continent are still being afflicted by wars since independence. Apart from massive destruction to lives and properties, the conflicts have also created an upsurge of refugees within the region. Besides, they provided excuses for extra African powers to interfere in the region's domestic affairs, while giving

way for arms trafficking and other African states to interfere in neighbouring states.

These have contributed in no measure to the underdevelopment of the continent. [7] 7. The causes of conflicts in Africa are many and they frequently reoccur. The precarious position of African states is brought into sharper focus vis-a-vis the globalisation of the rest of the world. Consequently, in the face of erupting horrors, Africa's collective and global attentions have been diverted from the developmental needs of the continent to the management of tension, human misery and militarism. 8.

It is such concerns for peace and stability in the continent that led to the creation of the African Union (formerly known as OAU). At the sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was created in 1975 to promote economic co-operation and integration in the sub-region. [8] Due to necessity, ECOWAS objective was later amended to include cooperative security. Similarly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), was originally formed to promote investment and trade within the region.

In 1996, SADC inaugurated the Defence and Security Cooperation organ with the mandate for preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. With this organ and determination, SADC intervened in the post election conflict in Lesotho in 1998. [9] 9. Africa's violent conflict is being addressed through the tripod of conflict prevention, management and resolution. This requires preventing occurrence of disputes, restricting existing ones from escalation,

and resolving on-going conflicts. However, the rhetorical enthusiasms for prevention and management have not been matched practically.

Often, political sensitivity ensures that, a developing conflict is kept out from the agenda of international and African regional organisations until it is sufficiently manifest. Considering the enormity of the damage caused by conflicts in Africa, it is most important to prevent crisis early enough from escalating into violence. Preventing a conflict is much cheaper for the international community, it saves lives and property from destruction, prevent refugee crisis, and above all avert the spread of violence into neighbouring states. It is against this background that this paper is written. 0. The purpose of the paper is to appraise the causes and how to prevent armed conflict in Africa. It is written for the Commandant, Infantry Corp Centre and School (ICCS), in partial fulfilment for the Commanding Officers Course (COC). The paper will first discuss concepts of conflict. Secondly it will assess the causes as well as the effect of armed conflicts on the continent. Thirdly, resolution action and management in past conflicts will be considered. Finally, preventive action and methods for promoting coherence and sustainable development would be discussed.

AIM 11. The aim of this paper is to examine the causes and prevention of armed conflicts in Africa with a view to making recommendations. CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT 12. In the past few years, efforts at interpreting African conflicts have generated heated debates. Recent study of the dynamics underlying some of the violence has resulted in a number of theories. To understand the issues of armed conflicts in Africa. It is essential to

understand what is conflict, before putting armed conflict into perspective. DEFINING CONFLICT 13.

Conflict can be defined as ' the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups'. [10] Commentators often distinguish between ' social conflict', which refers to conflict between groups and ' political conflict' when the nature of the incompatibility is political. Stagner describes conflict as a situation in which 2 or more parties desire a goal that they perceive as being obtainable by only one. The parties consider each other as a barrier and mobilize their energy and resources to embark on the objective of attaining to that goal. 11] Stedman, offers an insight into the nature of conflict in Africa. He argues ' that African conflicts arise from problems basic to all populations, the tugs and pulls of different identities, the different distribution of resources, access to power and conflicting definitions of what is just, fair and right. '[12] Paul Collier's on his part, argues that economic agenda appears central in the understanding of why conflicts breakout, he further posits that conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance. 13] 14. Burton express conflict in utilitarian context. He sees it as ' a means to a change by which our social values of welfare, security, justice and opportunities for personal development can be achieved, it is an essential creative element in human relationship that is neither to be deprecated nor feared. '[14] The contradiction is that this utilitarian principle has not benefited African states. The conflicts have rather, compounded their problems as it is a major obstacle to the economic and socio-political development of these states.

This study therefore identifies with Stedman's definition that African conflicts are largely caused by quest of interest groups for access to power and distribution of resources. 15. Conflict can be further categorised as non-violent and violent. Non-violent conflict is expressed without the use of force and is seen by many as a natural element in human society and an essential driving force for social change. Violent conflict on the other hand poses a threat to society and, it represents one of the central causes of poverty and ' failed development'. The focus of this paper will be restricted to violent or armed conflict. 6. A conflict can be categorised as violent when force is used by one or more party. Violent conflict can include one-sided violence such as genocide[15] against civilians and can range from a single attack on a civilian to full-scale war. An armed conflict is defined as a situation where both parties resort to the use of armed force, in the form of manufactured weapons or sticks, stones, fire, water, etc. [16] Violent or armed conflict is categorised as interstate when waged between governments and intrastate when it occurs within a country between a government and a non-governmental party. 7. Most other definitions of armed conflict tend to focus on the number of battle related deaths. The Uppsala Peace and Conflict project defines an armed conflict as; ' a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year'. [17] 18. Other scholars have preferred to look at the cumulative number of battle related deaths.

For example Marshall and Gurr only consider episodes of political violence that have reached minimum threshold of 1, 000 battle related deaths to be

major armed conflicts. Miall also use the cumulative indicator of 1, 000 or more battle related deaths in defining major armed conflicts. However, accurately measuring battle-related deaths in chaotic conflict conditions can be problematic. Even if we assume that the statistics are accurate, judging the severity of a conflict based on the number of battle-related deaths can be problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, in many of today's wars civilian casualties outnumber those of combatants. secondly, the knock-on effects of armed conflict, including malnutrition, lack of access to health-care, increased incidences of sexual violence and forced displacement, are not captured in this approach. Thus, while the battle related deaths indicator provides a useful starting point, it should be support by detailed case by case analysis which incorporates information from a wide range of sources. ARMED CONFLICTS IN AFRICA 19.

As discussed above, there is much debate regarding the relevance and reliability of statistics that measure armed conflict in terms of battle related deaths. However, in order to gain an overview of the current level of armed conflict in Africa, the cumulative battle-related deaths indicator provides a useful starting point. Marshall and Gurr's Peace and Conflict ledger incorporates data from 161 countries in the world with a population greater than 500, 000 in 2005. The ledger highlights those countries with a very real threat of major armed conflict being fought in 2005.

In the authors' analysis, episodes of political violence must have reached 1, 000 battle related deaths to be considered an armed conflict. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the Marshall and Gurr's analysis in

relation to armed conflict in Africa. Red indicates an ongoing (low, medium or high intensity) major armed conflict in early 2005. Yellow indicates either sporadic or low intensity armed conflict, in the same period, or an armed conflict that was suspended or suppressed between early 2001 and early 2005.

FIGURE-1 LEVEL AND LOCATION OF ARMED CONFLICT IN AFRICA IN 2005 Source: Marshall, M and Gurr, T 2005 20. The International Crisis Group (ICG) note that, ' in Uganda the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) strategy of ambushing humanitarian vehicles and crossing into neighbouring countries has seriously disrupted the peace process in Sudan and the DRC'. [18] Another area of regional conflict diffusion includes Sudan/Chad. Human Rights Watch (HRW) have highlighted the grave implications of the crisis in Darfur region of Sudan on neighbouring Chad.

The organisation noted that over the past 3 years there have been attacks on both Chadian villagers and Darfurian refugees, as part of cross boarder raids by the Sudanese ' Janjaweed' militias. [19] These are not isolated cases nor is regional conflict diffusion new. For example, Miall note the phenomena of regional conflict spill-over in the great Lakes and West Africa during the immediate post-Cold War period. [20] 21. Considering regional dynamics is not only significant when analysing factors that precipitate conflict but also those that generate peace.

For example, many analysts believe recent developments in Liberia, including the democratic elections which installed Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president could have positive repercussions for West Africa as a whole. The

ICG note that ' just as Liberia once dragged its neighbours into a horrific war, it could now , with good policy and strong donor support , become an anchor for stability in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire'. [21] ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT 22. It is widely accepted that understanding addressing the root cause of a conflict is essential to successful and lasting resolution.

While there is no unified theory on the cause of armed conflict there are a number of factors that have been cited as explanations. The observation that ' lesser developed' countries tend to experience higher levels of violent conflict has led some scholars to assume a causal link between poverty and war. However, it is now widely accepted that poverty by itself does not cause conflict. 23. The role of structural inequality that is, economic and social inequality and access to political power, is considered one of the central causes of violent conflict.

Whilst some analyst focus on differing group identities such as ethnicity, religion or economic class as a source of conflict. Others view identity an idiom through which other interests are expressed. 24. Other factors that have been cited in the propensity to conflict include the relationship between military expenditure and economic growth and the prevalence of small arms. The scarcity or abundance of natural resources as well as the role of economic agendas has been explored by a number of scholars. Some analysts locate the origins of armed conflict in the broader historical or development process.

They look at issues such as state formation in the post-colonial era or the role of rapid market-orientated economic reforms such as structural

adjustment policies in generating instability and in turn violent conflict. 25. More recently commentators have started to look at issues such as unequal trade relationships between ' developed' and ' developing' countries and the role this plays in generating economic decline and violent conflict. [22] There is rarely a single cause of armed conflict; rather there are multiple causes, conditions and contingent factors that cause social conflict to become violent or armed.

However, it can be argued that for the purpose of conflict resolution and prevention, it is both necessary and useful to look for the shared characteristics and patterns. CAUSES OF ARMED CONFLICT IN AFRICA 26. Historically, most African states had democratic traditional institutions with their political systems that were represented by kings and chiefs. These systems satisfied most of the aspirations of the people. Unfortunately, at the Berlin congress of 1885. European countries including Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Britain and France partitioned the African kingdoms and communities into protectorates and colonies.

This partitioning was carried out arbitrarily without any consideration to the existing boundaries or socio-political structures. The result was that people with different cultures and traditions, from different nations, kingdoms and communities were arbitrarily joined together. 27. It was here that the stage was set for most of the conflicts that were to erupt in future (the Nigerian civil war is a good example). Most African countries gained their independence in the 1960s. The post colonial regimes inherited the boundaries, economies and laws from the colonial authorities.

They were left with the challenge of building nations out of people that share little or nothing in common. They faced this challenge by centralising political power and suppressing any form of political pluralism. However, the political monopoly eventually resulted in corruption, nepotism and abuse of power. [23] Meanwhile, agitations started brewing from the communities that were being marginalised. 28. The political, commercial, educational and social order and infrastructure established by the colonial powers in Africa were designed to satisfy their need. This need was the production and transportation of raw material to Europe.

Little was done in terms of education and physical infrastructure to support the ever increasing indigenous population and its economy. 29. The post independence period coincided with the Cold War era. The ideological contest between the 2 blocs availed political and financial support to their friendly and allied oppressive regimes in Africa. Hence these regimes were able to sustain physical, financial and social securities of their states. With the end of the Cold War, the African states no longer enjoy the relevance they had, the super power support was withdrawn and they were left to cater for themselves.

Most of the states that could not meet up their security requirements became prone to internal unrest. Even when the signal for such unrest was clear, the international community showed little interest. The identity problem that resulted from the partition is the major source of disunity amongst the African people. It has been argued that if Africans had been left with their indigenous pre-colonial boundaries and political system, with time

they would have improved on it just like others did. This would have suited their future requirements and perhaps averted the present conflicts. 0. The desire by an individual, ethnic group or a section of a society to capture and retain political power in a multiethnic and/or multicultural society is another very significant source of conflict in Africa. Most often the ' winners' share neither political power nor the privileges attached to it with others. Any form of protest against the rulers is always crushed with brute force. In the absence of justice, transparency, accountability and the adherence to the rule of law, the disadvantaged party feels marginalised, unsecured and its very survival threatened.

With no peaceful means of accessing resources or political power, they resort to violence. 31. This ' lack of relatively equitable distribution of scarce but allotable resources, and the monopoly of political, social and economic power by a dominant group to the exclusion of all other groups, aggravated by greed and poor leadership, has created a significant source of insecurity in the form of social cleavages in Africa. '[24] This is also the major reason for the coups and counter coups, and over politicization of religion and ethnicity in Africa. 2. Another causative factor is the external interference. It was expected that the end of the Cold War would also end external interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. This is not completely the case in Africa. Countries with natural resources like oil, diamond, gold, etc still witness interferences in their domestic affairs both from distant powers and neighbouring states. Other interferences are neither for political or economic reasons but the settlement of personal grudge.

The Ivorian leader Felix Houphouet-Boigny was said to have supported Liberian rebels because the Liberian leader (Samuel Doe) executed his (Felix's) son in-law during the bloody coup of 1980 that brought Doe to power. [25] In the same vein, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi trained and armed the Liberian rebels in order to punish Doe for closing down the Libyan embassy in 1981, in support of US anti Libyan policy. [26] Interference could be in the form of instigating, fuelling or sustaining conflicts. 33. There are other catalytic factors to African conflicts.

Not minding the devastation caused by conflicts to human and material resources and the environment, there are those who benefit from it. The armed factions, international armed dealers and other foreign companies were identified to have benefited immensely from the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Adeleke argues that Charles Taylor (a rebel) derived $75m per annum from the export of resources in the area under his jurisdiction and $10m from a consortium of North American, Japanese and European miners. 27] He further claims that diamond and gold worth between $300m and $500m, $53m timber and $27m rubber were exported to Europe and South East Asia by the Liberian warlord during the Liberian civil war. [28] In Sierra Leone, the quest to plunder resources and loot central bank was also identified as the key motivation of the rebel groups that toppled the elected government of Ahmed Tijjan Kabbah of Sierra Leone in May 1997. [29] 34. The issue of ownership of land and other resources has also resulted in several conflicts in Africa.

Claims over farmland or water sources by a family or a community have resulted into severe internal conflicts in the continent. In communities where precious resources like oil, gold, diamond, etc are extracted, several complains of inadequate compensation or governments insensitivity to environmental degradation and pollution arise. This is currently the cause of conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. There is the need for African leaders to pay serious attention to environmental issues to avert the conflicts arising from the issue. 5. Similar to the above mentioned is boundary disputes (both land and maritime) among states, though the OAU decided in 1963 to accept the inherited colonial boundaries of African states. Nevertheless, there are still some cases that have been causing serious tension. Amongst them are the disputes over the Bakassi peninsula between Nigeria and Cameroon, and that of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea over the Islands of Mbanu, Cocotiers, Corisco, Elobey Grande and Elobey Chico. 30] Some of the disputed areas are rich in mineral resources such as oil, and hence of strategic importance to the countries in question, particularly with the present decline in the economies of the region. 36. Once hostilities breakout, there is every likelihood of outside interference both from far and near with arms traffickers also exploiting the situation. Another catalytic factor to African conflict is poverty aided by illiteracy. Collier once more argues that a country with large natural resources, many unemployed young men and little education is much at risk of conflict. 31] Even though this theory did not explained why countries with similar or worst proxies manage to avoid conflict. Undoubtedly, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment facilitates the ease with which rebel groups and warlords recruit fighters in

Africa. Therefore, African leaders need to seriously look into the issues of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment as a way of preventing conflict in Africa. EFFECTS OF ARMED CONFLICT ON AFRICA 37. The costs of armed conflict for Africans, their cultures, societies, and economies have been immense.

As was experienced in Nigeria, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone and guinea, civil wars devastates the lives of civilians. It also damages the environment, wreaking havoc on social, educational and health services. It also traumatises whole generations and forces people to abandon homes and farming land, engulfing once stable family units into a flood of refugees. The direct consequences of war can best be appreciated by looking at its effects on people and the economy. 38. Armed conflict in the Continent has take tolls in human lives on an unprecedented scale.

Millions of people have died as the direct or indirect result of war. Estimates of the number killed in the Nigerian Civil War alone run as high as 1 million. In 1998, the UN secretary general claims that armed conflicts in Africa has accounted for more than half of all the war related deaths in the world. [32] Africa has experienced many internal conflicts including coups, riots and demonstrations that had little potential for escalating into war, yet they are marked by high death tolls. Such is the case with the religious strives between the Christians and the Moslems in Nigeria. 9. Injury is one of the tragic hazards of war, creating destitute who will not be able to support themselves in the future. It is a heavy burden which relatives bear in caring for the wounded for years to come. Also, injuries caused to civilians either

directly or indirectly by rebels are of very grave concern. With the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, civilian populations rather than being afforded protection have become both targets and tools of war. Here, several thousand civilians amongst them women and children were dastardly amputated.

Refugee camps and hospitals are full of victims who have had one or more limbs amputated. 40. Africa accounts for one third of the World's refugees. The increasing burden resulting from refugee situations constitute a severe drain on the already lean resources of most African states. Africa's wars are also typified by human rights violations. War has brought widespread violations of personal security and integrity. Summary executions, mass kidnappings, forced labour, rapes, robbery, mass murders, mutilations and torture characterise most wars in Africa. 41. War undoubtedly devastates the economy of a country.

The empirical evidence of this is overwhelming. It also destroys capitals, leaving shattered infrastructure in its wake. It diverts portfolios away from domestic investment, and triggers massive capital flight. [33] Armed conflict also distorts foreign aid budgets, which are now being increasingly devoted to emergencies. Fundamentally, massive government expenditures are diverted towards military expenditure, rather than provision of economic and social services. Disruptions to agriculture, transportations, mining, and industry have further drained national economies. 34] Regrettably, there can be no serious thought of development in the countries that are undergoing war of any dimension. The effect of these conflicts on the people and the

environment has posed a serious obstacle to peace and development of Africa, and the integration of the region into the global society. It has also impacted on the security of some developed countries that are already suffering from immigration related problems. African leaders would need to do everything within there powers to prevent conflict in other to avert all this sufferings. RESOLUTION ACTIONS IN PAST CONFLICTS 2. The pattern of external involvement in African conflicts greatly changed following the end of the Cold War. The major powers became reticent to get involved in African crises, while they became champions of democratisation. This reluctance was particularly strong when there was demand for the use of external African military personnel in African conflict situations. The reluctance was further reinforced following the Somali operations when American forces were attacked and their bodies desecrated by Somali militias. Recent indicators however point to a change of attitude.

One of such indicators was the French intervention in 1995 in the Comoro Islands. This followed a coup d'etat facilitated by a group of French mercenaries led by Bob Denard. The French intervened to reverse the coup and establish a transitional government with the mandate to organize elections for a democratically elected government. [35] Similary, France also intervenes in the current Cote d' Ivoire's crisis, by sending her troops as intervening force. 43. The action by the French military was preceded by a similar threat of intervention in Lesotho by the members of SADC.

By threatening to intervene militarily, SADC successfully prevented a coup in that country. [36] This action was taken with the approval of the member

states of the sub-region and the tacit approval of the OAU. The OAU also gave an approval to the French action in the Comoros. 44. At its creation in 1964, the OAU developed tools that were meant for the effective mediation of inter-state conflicts. The OAU Charter provided for a Commission on Mediation, Reconciliation and Arbitration (CMRA). This legal mechanism was created to encourage member states to submit their disputes for regional arbitration.

Most of these disputes were expected to arise from disagreements on the definition of colonial boundaries. The commission's facility was hardly ever used. This was why the OAU evolved a more traditional African concept of intervention through respected elders and heads of states. This use of ad hoc apparatus to mediate and facilitate dispute settlements expanded the scope of the regional organisation to include interstate disputes. 45. These envoys and heads of states sought to prevent disputes from escalating by encouraging the parties to allow third party mediation.

This was the case, for example, in the territorial disputes between Algeria and Morocco in 1971, Somalia and Ethiopia, and Somalia and Kenya. The mechanism was also used for Nigeria and the Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula, as well as Ghana and Togo over the Volta region. The use of ad hoc apparatus to mediate and facilitate dispute settlements could therefore be encouraged by the AU and the sub-regional bodies. 46. Most post-Cold War conflicts had not been confined to specific geographic areas but often engulfed the entire society.

The use of traditional intervening peacekeeping forces for the management of such conflicts has often been difficult. In most cases, intervention was required even when there was no peace to keep. The UN, OAU and sub-regional organisations including ECOWAS and SADC had initiated different levels of intervention at various times. These included political and election monitoring, military and civil police observer groups and peace enforcement operations in Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. There were also humanitarian support missions in Liberia, Somalia and Rwanda.

In Southern Africa, SADC appears to be evolving a set of political principles and codes, which would guide their interaction and collaboration with each other. It successfully reversed a coup d'etat against an elected government in Lesotho in 1998, insisting on adherence to democratic principles by its members. 47. The UN has had the larger dominance in peacekeeping efforts. Either by observer missions or inter-position of forces, the UN has been involved in Somalia, Rwanda, Morocco, Congo, Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In these cases, the UN has had to prevent further decline in internal security. The rganisation however did not show as much commitment to peacekeeping operations in Africa as it has done in Europe and elsewhere until of recent. In the former Yugoslavia, the organization spent 4, 616, 725, 556 US Dollars on the peace efforts between February 1992 and March 1995. [37] Western countries including Denmark and Britain willingly took part. In Sierra Leone between January 2000 and December 2002, it had only spent about 855 million US Dollars. [38] It is thus evident that, successes recorded in UN peacekeeping efforts in Africa have been the direct result of the determination of Africans on these missions.

Resources have been sub-standard, while western countries have largely refused to take part. The western nations will need to pay more attention to solving Africa's conflicts in order to reduce the burden from the African's. 48. Enforcement action in post-Cold War conflicts in Africa has had varying degrees of success. In Somalia, the initial objective of the UN intervention led by the US in 1992 was the support of humanitarian relief action. This was expanded after the death of American Rangers and a group of Pakistani soldiers on 5 June 1993.

The American efforts did not only fail, but also caused serious damage to the confidence of the Somali people in the sincerity of the multilateral force. 49. With this failure, the mission was replaced by the UN Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM), in peacekeeping role. Many of the force contributing states however lost interest in the mission and withdrew due to constant attacks on their personnel by various Somali factions. These attacks necessitated a change in mandate, authorising enforcement action in support of restoration of order to Somalia.

Since the enforcement measure was not conducted as a full Chapter VII operation, military support was inadequate. [39] This was because enforcement mandate was given to a force that was configured to perform peacekeeping roles. At the later stages of the mission, UNOSOM was tasked to demobilise fighting forces and restore certain institutions including the police and the judiciary. The process ended in March 1995 with neither peace nor order restored to Somalia. 50. Some have concluded, based on

events in Somalia that, the UN enforcement action resulted in complications and damaged the concept of impartiality.

They therefore believe that, the UN especially, should not apply it again as a tool of conflict management. This conclusion was partially responsible for the reluctance to allow effective and timely international action to prevent the massacre of over 500, 000 people in Rwanda in 1994. 51. While the international community was reluctant to employ enforcement action in Somalia, West African states did use enforcement action in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This was justified by the need to prevent attacks by Liberian warring factions and the RUF on ECOMOG forces.

These forces had earlier been deployed by the ECOWAS to manage the conflicts in these states. ECOMOG operations in Liberia began after more than 150, 000 people had been either killed or displaced in the civil war, which started in 1989. By July 1990, a large number of civilians, many of them nationals of member states of ECOWAS and Liberian refugees, were trapped in Liberia. The warring factions, including the government forces, openly violated international norms, attacking and killing unarmed civilians. 52. In Sierra Leone, the RUF had held a nation incapacitated by years of corruptive hostage.

With alleged support of Liberia's Charles Taylor, the RUF leadership plundered the rich diamond reserves of Sierra Leone for personal enrichment and sustenance of the conflict. ECOMOG forces battled the RUF until a negotiated ceasefire in 1999. UN forces later took over Sierra Leone from ECOMOG and successfully restored peace. Their ability to get into the

country was made possible by the ECOMOG enforcement efforts. 53. In Burundi, countries of the Great Lakes had assumed the lead role in the political mediation of that country's crisis.

Under former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, the sub-regional states had called for an international enforcement action into Burundi to stop the killings there. The former government of Burundi strongly opposed international intervention. They initially endorsed the concept of an African military intervention, but powerful interest groups within Burundi were opposed to any form of external military action. [40] The sub-regional states had to impose punitive sanctions, including an embargo on the transport of all but essential humanitarian services to Burundi. 54.

The Cold War period saw a commitment of the big powers to African conflicts. The fact that there was reluctance to get involved during the post-Cold War era is indicative of the selfishness in the initial commitment. The power of their commitment was thus shifted to institutionalisation of democracy, like the French in the Comoros. The UN has basically been involved with peacekeeping. This is probably because their only attempt at enforcement action in Somalia ended in disaster. This of course, could be because the force itself was ill composed for enforcement action.

Regional organisations, especially ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone and SADC in Lesotho have boldly, and successfully too, carried out enforcement action. Commitment and African brotherliness would have been the key to these successes. 55. The lessons learnt from conflicts in Africa in the period since 1990 brought to the fore, the need for a wide range of management

approaches. First, by a variety of actors, acting individually or collectively in a well-coordinated fashion. Again, there has been the need to provide a hierarchy of responses in given conflict situations.

There is also the need for AU and UN to coordinate these varying efforts in order to achieve a concerted endeavour. PREVENTING ARMED CONFLICTS IN AFRICA 56. ' Conflict prevention is the long-term activities to reduce structural tensions or prevent the outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violence. Conflict prevention denotes the full range of activities oriented to this aim including early warning, crisis management, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict management, resolution and transformation'. 41] Considering the enormity of the damage caused by conflicts in Africa, it is most important to prevent crisis early enough from escalating into violence. Preventing a conflict is much cheaper for the international community, it saves lives and property from destruction, prevent refugee crisis, and above all avert the spread of violence into neighbouring states. Conflict prevention and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing activities. An investment in national and international efforts for conflict prevention could be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development.

This is because the latter can best take place in an environment of sustainable peace. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR EARLY WARNING 57. Early warning is considered by some analysts as essential to conflict prevention. It has been described as ' any information from any source about escalatory developments, be they slow and gradual or quick and sudden, far enough in advance in order for a national

government, or international or regional organisation to react timely and effectively, if possible still leaving them time to employ preventative diplomacy and other non coercive and non-military preventative measures'. 42] The escalation of African crises has not been due to the lack of information on specific conflict situations, but the failure to respond early enough. In most conflict situations, the problem often lies in the lack of political will of states. Regionally and internationally, states have displayed lack of will in agreeing to invest the necessary and appropriate resources for timely action. [43] 58. In internal conflicts, the search for an acceptable point of entry is often a politically delicate task for regional organisations.

This is because states are particularly sensitive to the impression that they would lose control of the situation within their boundaries. In Sierra Leone at the start of the crisis in 1990, the government of Valentine Strasser sought the assistance of the OAU to encourage the RUF to negotiate. The insurgents were, however, reluctant to accept the regional initiatives, believing they would lose territory under their control. 59. The OAU had, during its existence, recognised the need to develop its institutional networks and capacity for monitoring and analysing evolving conflicts in Africa.

This was so especially since the organisation, unlike the UN, had no political representation in most African countries. The OAU had recognised the need to develop linkages with national institutions and individuals that could support its early-warning mechanism. The paucity of the communication linkages, however, affected its operational efficiency. Information was

getting to Addis Ababa late, further hampering the ability of the Secretary-General to provide timely response to emergencies. 60.

Even at that, the sub-regional and regional organisations are close to, and understand the political and cultural environment in which the conflicts on the continent occur. Thus they have the comparative advantage in taking the lead to prevent the escalation of conflicts. This they could accomplish by informing and coordinating from inception, with the UN before the conflicts escalates beyond their resource capability. 61. In order to be effective partners with the UN in international security management, the AU and the sub-regional bodies could develop an early-warning capability.

It would collect and analyse information on African countries to provide the organization with the capability of acquiring knowledge of impending conflict situations in advance of their eruption. This early warning capacity would enhance preventive action and effectively exploit the appropriate entry points of intervention, especially in intra-state conflict situations. The follow-up of this information with appropriate preventive action would be an integrally linked process between early-warning and timely prevention. 62.

In developing its early-warning systems, the AU and the sub-regional bodies needs to acquire 3 levels of information, which would be properly managed. First, it requires comprehensive and standard demographic and population distribution information on each of its member states. Information is also required on the political developments, the armed forces including their structure and facilities available to support regional security. This would include information on the defence spending of states, their military

acquisitions, agriculture and food security, urban violence, social and educational trends.

Second, more specialised and focused information would be required on those states in which conflicts are already in ferment. Finally, a more detailed and regular monitoring of fully blown conflict situations would inform the organisation of the developments and the potentials for escalation. OTHER PREVENTIVE MEASURES 63. The OAU had traditionally employed several methods of preventive intervention. These included mediation methods such as the use of good offices missions, special envoys, political and military observer missions and election monitoring.

In many cases, the OAU had the comparative advantage over the UN in assuming the initiative in these areas as was shown both in Rwanda and Burundi. Appealing to the sentiment that what happens in the neighbourhood is everybody's business, the OAU Secretary-General had to fawn upon those crises. [44] The OAU successfully established this system of mediation and facilitation backed by technical experts. 64. The AU inherited this system but it needs to develop its capabilities for preventive action. These OAU, important initiatives were sometimes compromised or could not be developed due to lack of necessary resources.

For instance, the Special Envoys to both Liberia and Burundi were not able to establish an effective presence in those conflict zones to provide a regular assessment. During the Chadian operations in 1982, the OAU Force Commander had no means of direct communication with the OAU Secretariat. The same was true of the OAU observer mission that was

deployed to Rwanda and withdrawn in 1993. The AU could thus be assisted to develop its capacity for conflict prevention in 2 broad fields. 65. First, it could maintain a data bank of resource people and eminent persons.

This would include civilian-diplomatic, military and technical support staff. They could be called upon for deployment to states in politically tense situations, with a small field office having direct communication links with the AU Secretariat. The UN and Africa's ' strategic allies' could provide the financial and technical support for such missions. The AU political missions could be similar to UN special political missions deployed to countries such as Sierra Leone and Burundi. They would form part of an early warning and intervention system. The objective is to evelop the facility to monitor events as they develop and suggest options for intervention, while providing a platform for early action. 66. Again, it could develop a concept of using the civilian police and a Pan-African team of professionals for the restoration of law and order. This would also include institution building in collapsed state systems or in countries where the social structures have been badly weakened or destabilized. 67. The UN could also play a vital role in conflict prevention in Africa, considering the universality of promoting core values of human rights and good governance.

The organisation could commission a pilot study, in partnership with the AU, to investigate the development of conflict indicators. This would complement the emphasis of the OAU's New Africa Initiative on good governance, democracy, human rights and sustainable development[45], which the AU has adopted. The project could eventually involve the civil society,

governments and sub-regional organisations. These conflict indicators could be used as benchmarks and early-warning mechanisms for the identification of focussed programmes of action.

The process of developing these indicators would include the input of private organisations, policy-making and academic institutions in Africa. 68. Early warning mechanisms and the challenges to translate them into early action is crucial to conflict prevention on the continent. These mechanisms need not necessarily be inter-governmental, sub-regional or regional. They could be located in appropriate African research institutions with focus on non-military aspects of conflict related issues. Presently, the ISS is a major civil society institution that is engaged in such early-warning projects. 69.

Employment of preventive action would involve a wide variety of actors including eminent persons, private international organisations, the UN and regional organisations. The OAU had initiated a series of preventive actions especially in mediation. The AU, in partnership with the UN, could develop its capacities in this respect. It would draw from the human resource commitment of member states, and financial resources from the UN and international donor agencies. The UN, its agencies and regional organisations could identify and deal with specific areas of conflict such as militarization of politics, religious and ethnic intolerance.

Civil society institutions such as the ISS have been engaged in early warning projects over the years. There would be the need to commission these research institutions to monitor conflict indicators on the continent. This would be translated by appropriate regional or sub-regional organisations

into early action for conflict prevention in Africa. PROMOTING COHERENCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 70. It is obvious that sustainable development would be secured when people participate freely and effectively in decision making processes. The AU and other regional organisations would ensure democratization in Africa.

African states could be provided with comprehensive support in the area of governance and the rule of law, particularly one of the major conflict areas which is the electoral process. In this regard, the regional bodies could tap from the experience of the UN Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD). UNEAD has provided assistance in more than 150 electoral processes worldwide with administrative capacity to hold credible, transparent and fair elections. [46] 71. Sustainable and long-term development includes a focus on strengthening respect for human right and addressing core issues of human rights violation.

This is in the areas of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development. The International Criminal Court (ICC) would play a vital role in deterring flagrant violations of human rights through the enforcement of international criminal responsibility. The ICC statute lays down sets of rules that must be followed by states in respect of the rights of their citizens. Thus, the AU could urge member states that are yet to ratify the statute to do so. This would ensure caution in dealing with human rights issues by political leaders. 2. Africa also requires developmental assistance to enhance sustainable development. Developmental assistance facilitates the creation of opportunities which indigenous actors can identify, develop

and use to build an equitable, peaceful and just society. Such assistance would need to focus on decreasing the key structural risk factors that fuel violent conflicts including inequity, inequality, injustice and insecurity. The AU would require the assistance of the UN agencies and other developmental aid organisations in this regard.

These other organisations include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the British Department for International Development (DFID). Developmental strategies adopted would incorporate concern for their impact on tensions that could lead to violence, and promote measures to counteract such tensions. 73. Young people with limited education and few employment opportunities often provide fertile recruiting ground for parties to a conflict. Their lack of hope for the future can fuel disaffection with society and make them susceptible to the blandishments of those who advocate armed conflict.

African nations could promote youth movements for peace and meetings of adolescents across perceived ethnic boundaries. Access to education, especially for marginalised groups would be a priority. Through educational programmes, a culture of peace based on respect for human rights, tolerance, participation and solidarity would be fostered. It would be expedient for government policies to target the needs of the youth, as this is an important aspect of sustainable development and means of reducing equipments for armed conflict.

ROLES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN PREVENTING ARMED CONFLICT IN AFRICA 74. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can have a huge

influence on preventing armed conflicts in Africa. Often CSOs can act quickly and flexibly to respond to conflict situations. This is because of their inside knowledge of unfolding events and their non-political nature, which is especially important when official actors are immobilised due to mandates, political will and their own official status.

The greatest need for accomplishing effective prevention is the formation of partnerships and interaction between CSOs, governments, international governmental organisations and other local actors. There is a need for mechanisms and resources for this interaction so that the capacity for prevention can be institutionalised. Also, there is a need for official acknowledgement of the legitimacy of CSOs in peace and security matters. Although the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments and other local actors.

CSOs have a great potential for contributing to creating more legitimate processes and sustainable outcomes in conflict prevention. Some of the areas the CSOs could collaborate are discussed below. 75. Elections have been a major cause of conflict in Africa. CSOs, political parties and governments can research and assess the strengths and weaknesses of electoral processes and inform citizens thoroughly to encourage participation. The computerisation of votes as it is currently going on in Nigeria in addition to making the process as transparent as possible would contribute to efforts in preventing vote rigging.

Thereby encouraging an efficient and fair electoral process, hence preventing conflict. 76. CSOs could develop regional youth policies that

would be included in national conflict prevention policies. It could focus on youth skill development as well as in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. Effective cross border networking between youth groups can facilitate sharing experiences and best practices. 77. Governments and CSOs could research and document the chieftaincy lineages in communities.

By now, CSOs are in a position to build on the capacities of traditional leaders in conflict prevention. As most conflicts centre on natural resources, CSOs should advocate for the implementation of an effective resource administration policy. In addition to this, CSOs can facilitate the establishment of a council of traditional rulers who can mediate in conflicts in their regions. 78. CSOs can campaign for the fight against small arms proliferation and lobby governments and National Commissions on Small Arms to form a convention from the existing Moratorium on Small Arms.

National Commissions can work together with security agencies to reduce the spread of small arms across borders. 79. Creating a greater understanding and promotion of gender in conflict prevention is an effective way for CSOs to build their own capacities. Organisations such as Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) and Manor River Union Women in Peacebuilding Network can work to advocate women's involvement in conflict prevention, management and resolution. 80. The faith-based organisations are to exhort their followers to reject fanaticism and tolerate other believers.

Regional interfaith councils could collaborate with governments, sub-regional bodies and the UN to influence policies at the national, regional and international levels, and to prevent faith-related violence. 81. The African Network for Peace (ANEP) and the African Civil Society Forum (ACSOF) can facilitate and coordinate the formation of media networks across Africa to build the capacity of the media, especially in reporting warning on conflicts before it escalate. REGIONAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT PREVENTION 82.

Regional approach to conflict prevention is the view that the dynamics of conflict (causes, impacts and resolution) lie within a regional context. At the same time, this approach strives to link regional conflict dynamics with the local, national, sub-regional, continental and international context. In Africa, the regions are represented by West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa (including the Great Lakes area) and Southern Africa. 83. Conflict has always had regional ramifications in Africa. What has changed, especially since the 1980s, is the scope and nature of global and egional interconnections. Better understanding of the regional dynamics of conflict has also emerged and is increasingly reflected in policies of the AU and its member states. Though conflict has tended to be intra-state in origin, due to strong cross-border dimensions it has often spread to destabilise a whole regions as indicated in Figure 1. 84. The overview of the continent as a whole, illustrated in figure 1, helps us to build a picture of regional conflict dynamics. Scholars and practitioners in the field of armed conflict have observed that internal wars invariably have external effects.

Regional conflict diffusion or ' overspill' can result from the spread of weaponry, refugee flows, when ethnic groups straddle border or when non-state armed actors operate from neighbouring countries. [47] In this respect the level of stability in one country can have serious implications for its neighbours. Over the past 10 years, conflicts in, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sudan and Angola have all had strong regional dimensions. Together they have embroiled 14 African countries in strife.

Thus, in dealing with armed conflict in Africa it is essential to combine country specific analysis with an understanding of regional conflict dynamics. As the causes and impacts of these conflicts are regional, so must be the solutions. AU and UN could always evolve regional solutions to solving African conflicts. 85. African governments have become increasingly aware of the need to react when conflicts flare up in neighbouring countries. To do this without interfering in the internal affairs of their neighbours, many turn to existing regional organisations to intervene in the collective interest (e. . , IGAD's role in the mediation process between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the role of SADC in the current peace " negotiations" in the DRC and the ECOWAS peacekeeping interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone). Not all regions in Africa, however, have a suitable regional organisation. Nor can it always be assumed that, when they do, these have the capacity and legitimacy to positively impact on regional peace and development. The AU and other African institutions must therefore take a broader regional view that incorporates building constituencies for regional conflict prevention ith all stakeholders including civil society, local and multinational business and parliamentarians. 86. One component of the changing African institutional

context has been the role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Although principally established for the purpose of regional economic integration, conflict prevention is fast becoming an issue of great concern for them. Some of the RECs, notably ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD, already have conflict prevention instruments in place.

Others acknowledge conflict prevention as a pertinent issue but are yet unable to develop effective strategies that could lead to policy implementation. The capacities of the RECs differ hugely. Thus, while capacity development in conflict prevention should be a key concern it must also be recognised that this is often difficult to achieve in a straightforward or traditional manner. 87. The functions and set-up of different RECs are important determinants of their potential to be effective in conflict prevention.

Moreover, relations between the different RECs are complicated by overlapping memberships and duplication in functions and capacities is therefore a danger to be avoided. This calls for an assessment of which organisations are best positioned to put into place conflict prevention measures and the coordination required between them. The AU needs to be aware of this issue. Its strategy could conceives regionalism as the platform for continental cooperation, it could commence a process of dialogue with the RECs to improve coordination and harmonisation of their roles and policies.

The aim would be to establish vertical links between the RECs and the AU and horizontal links between the different RECs. STEPS TOWARDS AN

INTEGRATED INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK 88. The policy context in Africa is changing. Most recently, there is a new impetus from within to tackle the continent's proliferating conflicts. A range of new initiatives prioritise conflict prevention, and there appears to be a new political will to address conflict-related issues. The evolving nstitutional framework is particularly evident in the conflict prevention mechanisms of the AU, in the emphasis on conflict-related issues in NEPAD and increasingly in the RECs. Equally important are the numerous CSO that have developed programmes to tackle conflicts at the grassroots and other levels. The widening spectrum of African organisations and initiatives now addressing conflict issues – at the supra-national, regional and non-state levels – marks a process of change that needs to be sustained by policymakers and supported by donors. 89.

One key issue is how the different efforts cohere and link so as to strengthen one another. Based on earlier experience of the OAU that were discussed earlier, a far-reaching framework is provided by the AU. In its Constitutive Act AU adopted a proactive stance towards conflict prevention and is building a strong peace and security pillar in its work. As the emerging continental body, the AU has stated its aim to work through and reinforce the peace and security capacities of the RECs and to promote civil society involvement in its conflict prevention initiatives.

This marks a shift away from the non-intervention principle of its predecessor, OAU, and indicates growing opportunities to promote conflict prevention at a range of levels. At an institutional level, the legal mandate of the AU Peace and Security Council offers a broadened scope for concerted

efforts at conflict prevention and for collective response strategies to curb governments that propagate conflict. The Peace and Security Directorate, as the implementing arm of the Council, includes both a Conflict Management Centre (CMC) and a Peace Support Operations Division.

In addition, the planned establishment of an African Standby Force (ASF) would give the AU a military capacity to support crisis management or post peace agreement operations from 2010. 90. Aside from these formal structures the AU has 2 special programmes which include conflict prevention aspects. The Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) is a monitoring mechanism intended to make African leaders more accountable and transparent in their actions. The CSSDCA was initiated by African civil society and later adopted by the AU.

NEPAD, in contrast, is an initiative of African leaders, first proposed to the G8 and then included in the AU. 91. In a very real sense NEPAD is a deal between Africa and the international donor community in which African leaders themselves take concerted action to tackle the continent's major problems, such as conflict. An innovative aspect of NEPAD is its African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which could contribute significantly to reduce some causes of conflict. This is a voluntary process through which African states submit themselves to a governance review by other APRM members.

These programmes if properly implemented, they could have far-reaching implications for Africa's ability to deal with governance problems and to reduce sources of conflict. Thus, AU needs to ensure proper implementation of these policies. CONCLUSION 92. The observation that ' lesser developed'

countries tend to experience higher levels of violent conflict has led to the link between poverty and war. However, it is now widely accepted that poverty by itself does not cause conflict. Another catalytic factor to African conflict is poverty aided by illiteracy.

Poverty, illiteracy and unemployment facilitate the ease with which rebel groups and warlords recruit fighters in Africa. African leaders need to seriously look into the issues of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment as a way of preventing conflict in Africa. There is also the need for them to pay serious attention to environmental issues to avert the conflicts arising from the issue (Pragraphs 22-36). 93. The lessons learnt from conflicts in Africa in the period since 1990 brought to the fore, the need for a wide range of management approaches.

The sub-regional and regional organisations are close to, and understand the political and cultural environment in which the conflicts on the continent occur. Thus they have the comparative advantage in taking the lead to prevent the escalation of conflicts. This they could accomplish by informing and coordinating from inception, with the UN before the conflicts escalates beyond their resource capability (Pragraphs 55-60). 94. In order to be effective partners with the UN in international security management, the AU and the sub-regional bodies could develop an early-warning capability.

This early warning capacity would enhance preventive action and effectively exploit the appropriate entry points of intervention. In developing its early-warning systems, the AU and the sub-regional bodies needs to acquire comprehensive and standard demographic and populati