

## Africa: Conflict Prevention and New Development Initiatives

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### Final Text

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Excellencies, OAU Ambassador Sy, Ms. Derryck, President of the African-American Institute, Mr. Lucas, President of Africare, Former Mayor Dinkins, UN Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am grateful to you, Ms. Derryck, for the opportunity to speak about Africa. I believe that as a longtime and trusted partner of Africa, UNDP must speak out in these crucial times. I come before you today to announce several initiatives that UNDP will undertake in cooperation with African leadership and to call upon the international donor community to support these critical efforts.

Two strikingly contrasting events are unfolding in Africa today. In South Africa, after decades of racial separation, vast inequalities and conflict, there is a reaching out of hands in the spirit of unity and reconciliation. We join in applauding Nelson Mandela, F. W. De Klerk and all others for these historic accomplishments. Then, there is Rwanda, where we witness with horror the degeneration of political conflict into barbaric acts of destruction and mayhem. We must condemn these atrocities in the strongest possible terms. I fear that the international community has merely watched as this horror has unfolded into genocidal proportions.

Whatever is done, it will almost certainly be too little, and by definition it will be too late. Three days before the plane crash that killed the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, Oxfam reported that more than 850,000 people - one eighth of the Rwandan population - urgently needed food to prevent starvation due to drought. Six months before this occurrence, UNDP had met with the country's main donors and urged them to relax the conditions that would have enabled us to proceed with a program of demilitarization and resettlement. This agreement was not achieved. Virulent ethnicity and virulent fundamentalism flourish in conditions of declining opportunity. Where control of the State is the primary and sometimes the only source of social power, prestige, and comfortable lives, it will be fought for fiercely, often to the death. Where true power resides with military authorities, we can expect they will use the means at their disposal. And the means have been increasing. One diplomat on the scene in Rwanda was quoted as saying, "Blood was in the air for months". But, still, the arms kept flowing in. Since the end of the cold war, affluent nations' arms merchants have compensated by dumping arms into the Third World, including Rwanda.

The events in South Africa and Rwanda epitomize the contrasting

situation all across Africa -- hope and despair, progress and destruction, decency and depravity.

These events do not in themselves provide enough insight into a region which, like many others before it, is struggling to come to terms with its often tumultuous history, to rationalize and reorganize its national identities, and to build upon its cultural strengths and historical foundations.

One might say that history has not been fair to Africa. Two externally imposed experiences - the slave trade and colonialism - interrupted the process of indigenous state formation and development of the several great empires of the region and introduced artificially imposed systems of administration and production.

We conveniently forget Africa's history. We forget that the transatlantic slave trade robbed Africa of about 12 million of its able bodied men and women. We forget that colonialism which followed the slave trade introduced a system of exploitation of Africa's natural resources to feed the industries of the West. We forget the 1884/1885 Colonial Conferences of Berlin which crudely balkanized and divided Africa into geographic areas of control by the West, with scant regard for ethnic groupings. We even forget that during the period of the cold war's geopolitical fight for spheres of influence, Africa became a focal point for the ideology and the arms that today contribute to the havoc we find in Rwanda and Burundi, in Zaire and Angola and Somalia.

Even independence, which restored self-rule and self-determination to Africa, was unable to counter the effects of this history. It could not reverse the character of Africa's state systems that resulted from an arbitrary forging of nation states from disparate tribes and ethnic groups. This set the stage for the many conflicts which we find today.

The consequences have been profound: virtual destruction of productive assets and physical infrastructure in Angola, Liberia and Somalia; collapsed economies in Togo, Congo and Zaire; sharp reversals of economic gains in Cameroon; dislocated structures and systems in Mozambique.

Yet for two decades improvements in Africa were impressive for a region that for the most part become independent states only thirty five years ago.

Gains in education and health, in communication and roads, and in housing and water supply were no less than those achieved by other regions at similar stages of development. From 1960 to 1980 average GDP growth rate exceeded that of population, with the 1967-74 period particularly successful for Africa, with average GDP growth rate at 6 percent. Even greater improvement occurred with regard to social indicators. Primary school enrolment nearly doubled from 41 per cent to 79 per cent. Under five mortality rates dropped from 300 to 200 per 1,000. Between 1960 and 1980, the overall Human Development Index for Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 50 percent from 0.200 to 0.306, reflecting improvements in literacy rates, life expectancy and incomes

per head.

Even in the area of democracy and political pluralism, progress has been made. In the past three years, twenty-four African countries have embarked upon programmes to improve the national climate of politics and governance. This year alone, twelve countries are scheduled to hold elections.

Yet, despite the gains, the challenges Africans face today are unprecedented by any standard. Today the total wealth of Africa, with twice the U.S. population, is little more than that of Belgium. At the World Bank's projected growth rates for Africa, Africans will have to wait two generations to reach even the standard of living they had in 1975.

In too many countries, poor governance continues to impede reform and development, thereby reducing domestic savings and discouraging domestic and foreign investment. Too many Africans remain marginalized in their own countries. Too many face repression and deprivation and torture from what can rightly be called terrorist states.

Then, there is the economic challenge. The economic performance of the region in the sixties and seventies was not sustained, and, in fact, average real per capita incomes fell during 1981-93 at over 1 per cent a year. It is estimated that half the people in Africa south of the Sahara will be living in absolute poverty by 2000. Despite its capacity to feed itself, Africa is the only region to produce less food per capita today than at the beginning of the 1980s.

Resource flight, capital and human, continue to inhibit economic potential. For example, at the end of 1991, for sub-Saharan Africa, the stock of flight capital, at over \$200 billion, representing about 90% of GDP, is ten times the stock of direct foreign investment. Evidence of the African brain drain is equally alarming. Between 1985 and 1990 Africa lost an estimated 60,000 middle and high level technicians, while at the same time importing under donor technical assistance programmes some 100,000 high level specialists.

There is also the social challenge -- the need to bring under control the rapid population and urbanization growth, which give rise to the many jobless unemployed who are ready participants in civil unrest and strife. The statistics are telling. The maternal mortality rate in Sub-Saharan Africa at 700 per 100,000 live births is the highest in the world. Average years of schooling at 1.6 in 1992 was the lowest in the world. Life expectancy at birth at 51 years in 1992, is still the lowest in the world. The number of chronically undernourished in Africa continues to increase, from 101 million in 1969-71 to 168 million in 1988-90. That figure is projected to double by 2010 when perhaps a third of the African people will suffer the scourge of chronic undernutrition, according to FAO estimates.

Then there is the environmental challenge, finding the means and the will to address widespread environmental degradation including the continuing losses of fishery, forest, soil and water resources. Sub-

Saharan Africa's fuelwood consumption is running 30 to 200 per cent ahead of the average increase in the stock of trees. Africa loses an estimated 4 million hectares of tropical forest area. Land degradation is estimated to affect about 230 million hectares annually.

Therefore, at this critical juncture in the continent's history, UNDP is proposing some concrete steps that could be taken. Africa could consider a change in its development approach while the international community could take some bold steps to support Africa in the areas of conflict prevention, debt relief and the promotion of South Africa as a growth pole.

It is a given that the primary responsibility for the development of Africa rests with Africa itself. As Professor Adebayo Adedeji has written, "Africa must grapple with the reality of developing itself primarily through reliance on its own resources, no matter how difficult this may be." In this regard, Africa's tenacity in staying the course of appropriate economic reforms, thereby laying the foundation for growth or expansion in production, should provide the base for an increase in the jobs and incomes that are necessary for development. But economic reforms will never be enough by themselves; nor will a myopic fixation on aggregate indicators of national economic growth and performance. Governments must not worship at the altar of GNP. It's the quality of life for people and the quality of the environment in which the people live that truly matters.

Africa can therefore move one step further, being bold and decisive in adopting those policies and programmes that center on people and on sustaining its resource base. In UNDP, we call this goal sustainable human development. It is development that does not merely generate growth, but distributes its benefits equitably. It is development which regenerates the environment rather than destroys it. It is development which empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It is development which enlarges people's choices and opportunities, providing for their participation in the decisions that affect their lives. It is development that is pro-poor, pro-jobs, pro-nature, and pro-women.

To achieve sustainable human development, economic reforms must be complemented by equally powerful initiatives to ensure that economic growth benefits the poor more than the rich, that it is job-led growth, and that the environment is protected. We at UNDP are committed to working with African countries in an urgent search for this package of complementary initiatives - not a one-sided macro-economics only agenda - but a balanced agenda for the people. And we will work with Africa to try to ensure that this more complete agenda receives as much international support as economic reforms have received.

The good news is that Africans are insisting on political liberalism and better governance in their societies. Many have already begun to take the hard measures to mobilize and efficiently allocate domestic resources. The New Agenda for African Development (UN-NADAF) for the 1990s articulated by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali is African initiated and driven by a growing cadre of development leaders who have the self confidence to be in charge of their countries' destinies.

To build upon this initiative, Africa needs, first, to empower the greater number of its peoples through a sustained move towards political pluralism, transparency and accountability and through insistence on performance and better efficiency and productivity in national development efforts.

Second, Africa needs urgent support as it rethinks its development models, recognizing that past approaches have not only failed to meet the aspirations of the African peoples but, more importantly, have not reduced the poverty that is a critical factor in the current crises. I hope, in fact I am assured, that African leaders will put more emphasis on sustainable human development, the new development approach to which I earlier referred.

I believe this new approach is consistent with Africa's own prescriptions and initiatives as called for in the Lagos Plan of Action, The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, and the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. They need now to be transformed into living programmes of action, with the full support and the unstinting backing of the international community.

And now to the international community - what can and should we do?

Let me suggest that great as it seems, the needs of Africa are moderate and well within the means of the international community. Helping Africa to succeed is a do-able proposition! For example, the \$30 billion in annual flows called for by the UN-NADAF represent less than 1 per cent of the GDP of the smallest economy of the G-7 member states. We have yet to achieve this since UN- NADAF was launched in 1991. In fact, the trend suggests a decline. After a peak of \$25.7 billion in 1990, ODA flows fell to \$25.1 billion in 1991 and \$24.8 in 1992. Enhanced and assured flows are needed to consolidate African development gains. It would be unfortunate if, in the push for the legitimate needs of other regions, Africa's urgent call for development assistance is crowded out.

The quality of the assistance to Africa also has to improve. The May 1994 issue of The Economist, in noting the transfer since 1960 of some \$1.4 trillion (in 1988 dollars) in aid from rich countries to poor ones, asked: Has this aid relieved poverty? Has it stimulated growth sufficiently? UNDP's Human Development Report has also raised similar questions in producing figures that show that not much aid reaches two-thirds of the world's poorest, and that, even within those poor countries, aid is rarely concentrated on the services that benefit the poorest. In sub-Sahara Africa in the 1980s, only \$1 of aid went to primary school pupils compared with \$575 to each university student. I might add, at UNDP, we know we must do a better job in our capacity building work with Africa to address our own shortcomings.

Accordingly, I take this occasion to issue an urgent plea to the OECD donor countries to review their priorities, with the goal of elevating dramatically the support given to international development cooperation in general and support for Africa in particular.

Together we must tackle the difficult job of rekindling public and political support for development assistance. Logically, it should not be that hard a job, for none of the goals for which the community of nations is working - not peace, not human rights or democratization, not environmental protection, not reduced population pressures, not disease control - can be achieved except in the context of development.

Yet, despite the centrality of development to the concerns that so capture our political energies, international support for development is under attack and threatened, perhaps as never before. The threat comes from many sources, including aid fatigue, competing domestic priorities, sluggish economies, and lack of public understanding. The resources being devoted to peacekeeping, to humanitarian relief, and to support for political and economic reforms in the former Soviet Bloc are all increasing; the support for development assistance to the poorer countries is increasing hardly at all.

Armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies fill the daily headlines and attract resources, with good reason. Yet, underlying many of these tragic events are the silent crises of underdevelopment, of chronic and growing poverty, of mounting population pressures and widespread environmental deterioration. As efforts to respond to acute crisis through peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, assisting refugees grow larger, so must our efforts to respond to the silent crisis through the promotion of sustainable human development. It is far cheaper and more humane to act preventively, to address the root causes rather than the tragic symptoms. Moreover, whatever the causes of particular instances of violence or social disintegration, development is surely the major ingredient of the cure. Lasting peace and security depend on development that eliminates great disparities and great hardships, that binds societies together, and offers hope for the future.

Which brings me to the urgent requirement for the international community to assist Africa in the area of peace building and conflict prevention. Civil war and strife have been major constraints on the development of many African countries. Already one third, or sixteen, African countries are involved in one form of civil conflict. There are over six million refugees in areas beyond their own borders. An additional 17 million are internally displaced. There is simply no way that development can proceed under these conditions.

The picture of military expenditures which enflame these conflicts is disturbing. In 1992 military expenditure totalled \$8 billion, a close comparison with the roughly \$11 billion spent on debt servicing.

Conflict and wars claim resources that would otherwise be spent on education and health and housing and other areas of development. An estimated per capita public expenditure on the military in Sub-saharan African countries averaged \$11 in 1990, compared with \$13 in education. In one African country, the military budget was five times that of health and education; in another the amount allocated to purchase 80 tanks could have covered the cost of immunization of two million children and family planning services for nearly 17 million of the 20 million who required such services.

A large part of the blame for this trading in death rests with the industrial countries who, while giving aid on the order of \$60 billion a year, earn much in arms sales and otherwise from the estimated \$125 billion per year in military expenditures of the developing world.

For the poor countries in Africa, the poor people in Africa, this madness should be brought to an end. Therefore, I propose a phasing out of all arms trade and military assistance to Africa, over the next three years. This call might form the basis of UN-supported talks as to how this phasing might be achieved. Discussions should start with a focus on those countries that risk being on the verge of conflict.

More broadly, those states that promote peace, security and development within their borders should be rewarded by the international community with substantially higher levels of assistance.

In Africa, action to change the situation, to address the potential and emerging conflicts within countries, is already underway. At the June 1993 Annual Summit of the Organization of the African Unity, African Heads of State established a management mechanism in the OAU Secretariat to address such internal conflicts. The mechanism underscores regional ways of preventing political tensions from escalating into armed conflict. Specifically, the mechanism provides for the anticipation and prevention of conflicts, the undertaking of peace-keeping and peace-building activities, including the deployment of civilian and military missions of observation and monitoring in identified crisis-prone countries.

But, the OAU lacks both the resources and the capacity to act on these intentions. The international community must therefore help, and this means urgent contribution to the OAU Peace Fund which was established for this purpose. Already, the international community has spent \$3-4 billion on conflict resolution in the region, and the tab is rising. I believe that a mere 10% of this amount, or \$300 to \$400 million, provided to the OAU for its Peace Fund would do much more, would get better mileage than what the international community has been able to get thus far. I therefore propose and recommend to the international community a \$400 million African Peace Fund. The key in this regard is to provide the resources upfront -- now -- to enable the OAU to effectively mount pre-emptive responses to potential conflicts. It is not enough to scramble when a conflict is full swing as we have found in the case of Rwanda. We should act preventively.

UNDP, which is already assisting the OAU with the implementation of the African Economic Community, and assisting several African countries in various governance interventions, would be prepared to help the OAU develop this programme and the terms and conditions to enable them to discharge the responsibilities related to the operation of the Fund.

More importantly, although facing financial constraints ourselves, UNDP will be the first to contribute to this preemptive Peace Fund by providing three million dollars to be used as seed money to strengthen OAU's capacity for the development of the programmes to operationalize

the activities envisioned under the Fund.

I would also like to propose that the international community do more to address the issue of African debt.

The question of debt relief for Africa has been under consideration for several years, and there have been significant responses on the part of the international community. Some creditor nations have unilaterally canceled a significant portion of the debt of the poorer African countries; others have provided relief through the Paris Club arrangement. In addition, several bilateral donors are supporting World Bank schemes allowing for the re-purchase of African commercial debt.

Yet, more is required to remove this major constraint on African development, a constraint demonstrated by the fact that African debt servicing arrears, at \$46 billion at the end of 1993, is still equivalent on average to 55 per cent of Africa's export earnings. Moreover, according to the latest report of the OECD, the ratio of sub-Saharan Africa debt stock to GNP was on average 109 per cent, compared with an average 37 per cent for the developing countries as a whole.

At the least, therefore, the international community, as a first step, should urgently endorse the G-7 Trinidad Terms, which represents the most far-reaching debt relief mechanisms, for application to all African countries, big or small, poor or not so poor. Essentially, these terms would imply a cancellation of two-thirds of all official bilateral debt and a rescheduling of the balance over a longer period of 25 years including a five-year grace period.

Such an across-the-board approach would provide the necessary breathing space for Africa to launch its sustainable human development strategy and to halt dangerously declining living standards. Moreover, UNDP is giving thought to proposing a mechanism, the Poverty Dividend Accounts (PDA), which would require recipient countries undergoing debt relief to commit at least 25 percentage of the value of debt relieved to poverty reduction programmes, aimed at the poorest segments of their population. This proposal would result in a longer term and more comprehensive debt reduction strategy than the ad hoc approach to date and, importantly, would link debt relief to performance criteria for improving the living standards of all the people.

My final word has to do with South Africa. While rejoicing in the political changes that have taken place, the international community must move quickly to help South Africa succeed in its economic transformation by providing the means to address the development needs of the vast number of its citizens who were by-passed by the apartheid system. In doing so, we not only help South Africa and, particularly, the poor people of that nation, but we also give impetus to the development of a growth pole for the entire African subregion.

The Secretary General recently indicated that UNDP, along with other UN agencies, would be gearing up to respond to South Africa's needs and priorities. Since 1979, UNDP has spent approximately \$15.5 million in assistance to South Africa in the area of human resources development,



mainly education and training. Currently there are additional \$5 million of ongoing programmes. We are now reviewing these programme of assistance with the Government of South Africa and expect to present to our Executive Board during its upcoming June meeting a management proposal for a country programme in South Africa which is directed at meeting the needs of the majority population, whose per capita income is roughly estimated to be no more than \$100 compared with the \$2,300 officially listed by the World Bank as the national per capita income. Thereafter, a UN Resident Coordinator and other staff will take up residence to guide the implementation of the programme that would have been agreed with the South African Government and approved by UNDP's Board. UNDP will also within six months be co-sponsoring with other donors an international donors' conference which will focus on and mobilize resources for South Africa's human resources development.

Madam Moderator, let me suggest that in responding to the African crisis, along the lines I have described today, the international community not only ensures the potential of an expanding global economic pie, but also its own security. To do otherwise, or to do nothing, is to ensure equally the transfer of Africa's poverty and underdevelopment to our own shores in the form of illegal aliens, refugees, drugs, crimes, etc. There will be no borders big enough, no army strong enough to suppress the human instinct of survival. In closing, let me say that Africa remains for UNDP a region of utmost importance. Nearly half of our resources are directed toward the region's development and, to a large extent, UNDP's own success will be determined by Africa's success.

As I said before, helping Africa is a doable proposition. Providing annual official flows of \$30 billion is doable. Mobilizing \$400 million to support programs aimed at preventing conflict is doable. Implementing a more comprehensive debt relief program is doable. Curbing the arms trade to African nations is doable. Helping South Africa to consolidate its political program is doable.

I hope that my suggestions will find positive reception in UNDP's programming and partnership countries alike, and I stand ready with my colleagues at UNDP to work even more assiduously with African governments and African institutions and with the African people in the realization of their development aspirations.

I thank you.

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