

**THE MWALIMU NYERERE FOUNDATION**  
In collaboration with  
**UNIVERSITY OF VENDA FOR SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY (SOUTH AFRICA)**

**NYERERE WEEK CONFERENCE**  
**AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICA'S ROAD MAP TO  
DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE: REALITY OR MYTH**  
**GOLDEN TULIP 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2004**

**PAPER:**  
**CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA AS A PROCESS:  
CASE STUDIES OF BURUNDI AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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# **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA AS A PROCESS: CASE STUDIES OF BURUNDI AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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## **1. Introduction:**

Conflict resolution and peace building are issues which have become very topical in debates and discussions on Africa. This is not only because Africa is characterised by many conflicts, but much more so due to the realization that in most cases the conflicts have negative impacts on Africa's socio-economic and political development. Thus conflict resolution and peace building processes have become very essential in solving the problem of conflicts in the continent. Mwagiru (2001:v) has underscored the importance of conflict resolution when he says:

"One of the distinguishing features of Africa's political landscape are its many dysfunctional and protracted social and political conflicts. This problem is made worse by lack of effective mechanisms to manage these conflicts. Where they exist they are weak and, thus, social and political relationships in the continent have been disrupted. This has had negative consequences, including the interruption of the development and the diversion of scarce resources to the management of these conflicts".

This paper is, therefore, intended to examine conflict resolution and peace building processes in Africa with a focus on Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as case studies. The choice of Burundi and the DRC as case studies is not accidental. These are among countries in Africa which have experienced protracted conflicts since independence. They are also countries in which serious conflict resolution and peace building processes have been, and continue to be carried out. Furthermore, both are countries of the Great Lakes Region (GLR), a region which is known to be leading in Africa in terms of the scale and magnitude of political conflicts (Mpangala, 2000). However, before examining situations in Burundi and the DRC let us first make a general survey of conflict resolution and peace building processes in Africa.

## **2. Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Africa:**

### **2.1. Conflict Resolution:**

Processes of conflict resolution in Africa are characterised by three dimensions which include the nature of conflicts, conflict resolution mechanisms and the outcome of such mechanisms. In understanding the nature of conflicts, first there is need to identify types of conflicts. There have been different ways of identifying types of conflicts. One

way is in terms of complexity. It has been observed that in Africa there are simple and complex types of conflicts (Mwagiru, op.cit:7). Most of the conflicts have been and continue to be complex.

The second way is in terms of duration. In this context there are short-lived and protracted conflicts. Protracted conflicts are the most common in most countries in Africa. Wars of liberation in Southern Africa were protracted conflicts and civil wars that came after independence in Mozambique and Angola were also protracted. This is also true of civil wars in Sudan and Somalia. The Rift Valley conflicts in Kenya in 1991/92 and again in 1997 constitute few examples of short-lived conflicts.

The third way is in terms of violence. There are conflicts which are violent and those which are non-violent. Some people have characterised the non-violent conflicts as latent or structured conflicts (Mwagiru, *ibid*). However, most conflicts which have been studied and which have drawn greater attention are violent conflicts which have involved bloodshed. Although most conflict resolution measures have been taken on violent conflicts, there have also been situations when conflict resolution measures have been made on latent conflicts. For example the latent conflict between CCM and CUF in Zanzibar from 1995 to 1999 had given rise to a process of peace negotiations under the auspices of the then Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Anyaoku (Mpangala, 2000).

The fourth way of identifying types of conflicts is in terms of the scale of the conflict. In this context conflicts in Africa have been categorised into internal, interstate and internationalized conflicts. Purely internal conflicts are said to be few in Africa. There have been a good number of interstate conflicts such as wars between Tanzania and Uganda in 1978/79, Ethiopia and Somalia and Ethiopia and Eritrea. Internationalized conflicts are the most common. These are conflicts, which in one way or another have involved other countries or affected neighbouring countries such as the influx of refugees and their implications. Given this conception, most conflicts in Africa have been or are internationalized conflicts.

The fifth way is in terms of necessity or legitimacy of conflicts. While some conflicts are regarded as necessary and legitimate, others are unnecessary and illegitimate. Sekou Toure classified conflicts legitimate and illegitimate conflicts (Nyirenda, 2000). Legitimate conflicts are mainly concerned with struggles for liberation from an oppressive and exploitative regime. The objective is to liberate the whole society from such domination, oppression and exploitation. The first stage when such conflicts took place in Africa was during struggles for national independence from colonialism. Colonised people who could not achieve independence through peaceful means, had to resort to armed struggle. In his speech to the University of Toronto, Canada, in October 1969, the Late Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, emphasized the fact that

although the principle was to struggle for independence through peaceful means, under situations where peaceful means were not possible the use of violence became inevitable (Nyerere,1974:51-52).

The second phase of legitimate conflicts through armed liberation began in the 1980s and gained more momentum during the 1990s. This is the time when people in some of the independent African countries found it necessary to fight against dictatorial and oppressive regimes. The Great Lakes Region provides us with typical examples of such struggles. Museveni (1997) noted the necessity for him to establish the National Resistance Army (NRA) which carried out armed liberation against the dictatorial and oppressive regimes of Obote from 1981 to 1985 and Okello from 1985 to January 1986.

The objective was to struggle for freedom and democracy in Uganda. Having failed to use peaceful means of reaching reconciliation with the Government of President Habyarimana, Kagame, using the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), decided to carry out an armed struggle against the Habyarimana regime from 1990 to 1994. Since independence in 1962 the Hutu based Government of President Gregoire Kayibanda and Habyarimana had been massacring and persecuting the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutu, culminating in the 1994 genocide (Kagame, 2002). With similar objectives, Laurent Kabila waged war against the Mobutu regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 1996 to 1997.

Illegitimate conflicts are not guided by the objectives of liberating societies from dominating, oppressive and exploitative state systems. In most cases such conflicts are a product of competing for political power and economic resources. In some situations those who are in power use force to suppress the people or certain sections of the people in order to perpetuate their position of power for the advancement of their personal interests. In most cases such conflicts are characterised by divisive ideologies of ethnicity, racialism, regionalism and religious antagonism. Periodic violent conflicts Rwanda and Burundi since the period of struggles for independence, clan wars on Somalia and the post independence civil war in Mozambique and Angola provide us with typical examples of such conflicts. They are based on reactionary rather than progressive motives.

Another aspect in understanding the nature of conflict is identification and analysis of causes of conflicts. Various studies which have been carried out in Africa tend to point out at economic, political, ethnic, ideological, resources and religious causes (Mwagiru, op.cit). Of these, economic followed by political causes have the highest ranking as the most common causes. Resources and ethnicity are ranked third and fourth respectively. Ideological and religious factors have the lowest ranking.

It has to be noted, however, that the ranking of causes can be true only at a general level in the context of Africa as a whole. There are peculiar

differences in the context of regions and sub-regions. For example in the Great Lakes Region ethnicity is likely to have very high ranking as conflicts in Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya and the DRC have been greatly characterised by ethnicity tendencies.

It has also to be noted that in discussing causes of conflicts in Africa it is not enough simply to enumerate the six or so factors. These need to be examined in the context of historical origins. This means that they have to be examined in terms of looking at conditions of African societies during the precolonial colonial and post-independence periods (Kagame,2002). During the latter period it is important to underscore neo-colonial forces and national building projects. This approach can, therefore, help us to identify normal causes and root causes.

Another aspect which concerns the nature of conflicts is identification of the main actors in the conflict. Actors are those who are involved in a conflict. In most conflicts in Africa the actors include rebel groups, governments, the military, militias, foreign governments and multinationals. Mwagiru (2001, op.cit) has observed that among the various actors rebel groups are involved in 93 percent of the conflicts in Africa, followed by foreign governments 78 percent, the military 70 percent and militias 40 percent. Multinationals are the least involved constituting only 28 percent. The involvement of the military goes together with that of governments, while the militias go together with ethnic groups.

An understanding of the nature of conflict is important and necessary in order to determine the most appropriate and workable approaches and mechanisms of conflict resolution. This is because the understanding of the type of causes and actors will be a very useful tool for that purpose. The most common conflict resolution approaches or mechanisms include peace negotiations, mediation and/or facilitation, traditional or indigenous methods, peace agreements and their implementations and peace keeping.

Peace negotiations and mediations always go together because most negotiations are carried out through a mediator or facilitator. The mediator can be a respected wise individual or an institution. For instance, the mediator of the peace negotiations between the FRELIMO Government and the RENAMO rebel group in Mozambique was an institution. It was a religious NGO in Rome, Italy called Saint Egidio (Romano,1998). The facilitator for the Burundi Peace Negotiations was a respected individual, the Late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere who after his death, was followed by Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa. However, Mwalimu and later Mandela worked through an institution, the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation.

It has been noted that among the various conflict resolution mechanisms peace negotiations and mediation have been the most common in most conflicts in Africa (Mwagiru, op.cit:12). Peace negotiations can be internal based or external based. Internal based

negotiations are those that are carried out within the country where the conflicting parties are negotiating with an internal mediator. The peace negotiations in Sudan from April 1996 to April 1997 provide a good example of an internalbased peace negotiations. It was a peace negotiation between the Government of Sudan and five rebel groups (The Sudan Peace Agreement, 1997:4).

External based peace negotiations are those carried out through an external mediator or facilitator. Such a negotiation can be carried out within the country or outside the country. The current peace negotiation in Sudan is external-based carried out outside Sudan in Kenya through the mediation of the Government of Kenya. In Zanzibar the mediations of both 1998/1999 and that of 2001 were carried out within Tanzania. But the first one was externally-based because it was carried out through the mediation of an external mediator the Commonwealth Secretary General as noted earlier. The second was internally-based and it was carried out between the conflicting parties without a mediator.

Besides peace negotiations another mechanism of conflict resolution is the use of traditional methods. These are methods taken from the way traditional African societies resolved their conflicts in the past. They normally made use of wise and respected elders who intervened between conflicting groups talked with both sides, listened to their concerns and used their wisdom to convince each side to stop fighting.

In case that a conflict was between ethnic groups such as an interethnic war there were traditional symbols such as waving leaves of special trees indicating that one or both sides had an intention of making peace. The parties could engage in direct talks or could seek the assistance of a respected wise elder. Very often when they agreed to end the conflict, a ceremony was organised which involved feasting with traditional brew and slaughtering a cow or cows and/or goats. To ensure sustainability of the peace agreement joking relations between the conflicting clans or ethnic groups were developed. In Tanzania such joking relations are commonly known in the Kiswahili language as "utani". It has been observed that in Africa there is a resurgence of traditional methods of conflict resolution. In some parts of Africa traditional methods have been used in 57 per cent of the cases of conflict management (Mwagiru, op.cit:14).

Peacekeeping is another important mechanism of conflict resolution in Africa. Peacekeeping involves deployment of troops by the UN or by regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), ECOWAS and the SADC, or even individual neighbouring countries. In most cases the process of peacekeeping follows the signing of the peace agreement in order to foresee its implementation and prevent the re-eruption of the conflict.

In Africa processes of peacekeeping have been increasing. In 1993 to 1994 the UN Security Council sent a peacekeeping force to Rwanda to foresee the implementation of the Peace Agreement signed in Arusha between the Government of Habyarimana and the RPF rebels in August 1993. The peacekeeping task force was known as UNAMIR (Khan, 1998). However, the peacekeeping task force proved a failure as it could not prevent the genocide of Rwanda of 1994.

Another example of a peacekeeping task force that also failed was the UN taskforce in Somalia in 1992 known as UNITAF (Mosha, 1998). The task force was deployed after the signing of a ceasefire between two fighting clan groups, one led by Ali Mahdi and the other by Mohamed Farah Aidid. The task force was the highest UN intervention since its establishment as it constituted a military force of 37,000 troops. The task force was withdrawn in July 1993 due to heavy casualties it had suffered on the 12th of July 1993 while in confrontation with one of the clan factions.

However, not in all cases in Africa peacekeeping forces have proved a failure. There have been also a number of cases of success. Peacekeeping forces deployed by ECOWAS in Sierra Leone and Liberia have made considerable contributions to conflict resolution processes in West Africa. In the DRC, as we shall see later UN peacekeeping troops, though very few compared to the size and complexity of the country, are making good progress.

In Africa conflict resolution processes have very often been carried out by various institutions. Such institutions include the UN, regional organizations, international and local NGOs and governments. We have already seen how the UN through the UN Security Council deploys peacekeeping forces. The UN has also been instrumental in financing peace negotiations and implementation of peace agreements. However, in Africa the role of the UN has often been criticised for slowness in making decisions and lack of commitment, thus leading into the problems of Rwanda and Somalia. When examining the cases of Burundi and the DRC we shall specifically examine the roles of various institutions.

In Africa an important outcome of peace negotiations has been the signing of peace agreements and ceasefire agreements and their implementations. In some cases implementations have proved successful while in other cases they have proved a failure. South Africa and Mozambique provide us with good examples of success in the process of implementing peace agreements. In South Africa the Peace Agreement was signed after peace negotiations between the African National Congress movement and the Boer Government. The two parties had been engaged in violent conflicts during the war of armed liberation carried out by the ANC and other movements. A transition period was set and democratic elections were successfully held in April

1994. This year South Africa is completing a decade of building a peaceful democratic society.

In Mozambique the Peace Agreement was signed in 1992 between the FRELIMO government and RENAMO, a rebel group. The two parties had been engaged in a protracted civil war for nearly 17 years. The peace negotiations were carried out in Rome, Italy mediated by a religious NGO called Saint Edigio (Romano, 1998). After a successful transition period the first democratic elections were held in October, 1994. Like South Africa, Mozambique is completing ten year of building a democratic society and socio-economic development.

A good example of cases of unsuccessful implementation of peace agreements is Rwanda. As noted before the Peace Agreement for Rwanda was signed in Arusha in August 1993 between the Habyarimana Government and the RPF rebel groups with its military wing, the RPA. From August 1993 to April 1994 no serious steps were taken to implement the agreement. The end result was genocide of April to July 1994 costing between 800,000 and a million lives. It appears that partly due to pressure from extremist Hutu groups the Hadyarimana Government was not committed to the implementation process.

## **2.2. Peace Building:**

Peace building is a process of making sure that a country or society creates conditions for sustainable peace. Such conditions can be created when the country is already in the state of being peaceful. In such a situation the conditions are created in order to prevent conflicts from erupting and therefore, peace is sustained. The conditions can be created in a post conflict situation. A conflict situation has been put to an end through a conflict resolution mechanism. Under such a situation the process of peace building begins with the transition period. The process of implementing various aspects of the peace agreement becomes the beginning of the process of peace building.

The process of peace building is a continuous one as it entails taking various measures. In Africa these measures include transformation of state organs, socio-economic development, democratization and regional integration. Transformation of state organs involves transformation of defence armies, the police and the security. Such transformation should be ideologically and structurally so that they can perform their duties with national spirit and commitment without tendencies of segregation and favouritism.

In recent years it has widely been recognised that socio-economic development is an important tool for peace building processes. Talking to journalist in 1997 Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere explained clearly how economic backwardness and competition for scarce resources in Burundi and Rwanda exacerbated political conflicts. He was of the view

that had socio-economic development in the two countries reached the level of Singapore, ethnic conflicts could have come to an end (Daily News, June 9, 1997). Assefa (1998) also emphasised the fact that poverty and underdevelopment were among leading causes of violence, conflicts and rebellion, with the rising population in the Horn of Africa.

During the international symposium in Kampala in 2002 on the Great Lakes Region organised by the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation with the support of the Government of Uganda, the need for socio-economic development as a means of solving the problem of conflicts and building peace was greatly discussed. It was acknowledged that in all six countries of the Region the economy was characterised by low level of development though with some slight differences. One of the indicators was that shares of agriculture in total output was still dominant in all the countries. With the exception of Kenya where agriculture accounted for only 19.9 percent of GDP, in all the other five countries agriculture accounted for between 40 and 54 percent (Wangwe, 2002). Other indicators include low level of industrialization and infrastructure, particularly in the context of transport and communication (Nasasira 2002).

Socio-economic development based on the principles of equality and justice is likely to eradicate poverty, reduce the level of unemployment, raise the standard of living of the majority and ensure the provision of social services such as education, health, water supply and good housing. Under such conditions conflicts can greatly be minimized in African countries.

The democratization has been characterized by a number of changes which include the adoption of multi-party politics, conducting multiparty elections, growth and expansion of the civil society organizations, the opening up of greater freedoms of the press and speech and demands for greater observance of human rights. In Africa not all countries have adopted the multiparty system. Uganda has been carrying out the democratization process within the context of the non-party movement system. However, recent developments seem to indicate that the country is also moving towards the adoption of the multi-party system of building democracy.

The democratization process has been viewed as one of important aspects in peace building and conflict resolution (Nnoli, 1998). The process is expected to do away or eradicate all or most negative aspects associated with origins of conflicts. This means that aspects such as authoritarian and dictatorial tendencies, ethnization of politics and practices of social injustice, marginalization and oppression are fought against.

It has to be noted, however, that for the democratization process in Africa to be able to facilitate or contribute to peace building important principles need to be observed. One principle should be taking various

steps including the step of strengthening and consolidating the multiparty system. This calls for the necessity to establish new constitutions which can ensure democratic functioning of the multiparty system. This should entail transformation towards free and fair elections. During this period of democratization new conflicts have emerged in some countries due to multiparty elections which were not free and fair, or due to ethnicity.

Another necessary step to be taken should be the establishment of people centred democracy. Such democracy calls for transformation of the state from "bureaucracy centred" and "market centred" state into a society centred state (Mushi, 2002). It has been observed that although the civil society has substantially grown in terms of numbers of civil society organizations, it has not been able to transform the state into society centred state. At best it is still at the level of a market centred state. Just as the state is still weak, so is the civil society. It is less autonomous and has not been empowered in order to play the role of ensuring real empowerment of the people (Ndebese, 2002). Thus people centred democracy entails autonomy and empowerment of the civil society, empowerment of the people at large through the civil society and hence transformation of the state into a society centred state.

Furthermore, democracy towards conflict resolution should also be based on African traditional reconciliatory structures. Among the aspects have been the establishment of the democratic model on the basis of traditional African values (Mpangala, op.cit: 128-130). Some intellectuals have opposed the idea. Sithole (1994:9) for instance has argued that incorporating traditional African values in the democratization process is sheer mystification. It entails looking for exotic experiments which cannot work.

However, we are of the view that we cannot totally ignore incorporating traditional African values in the democratization process. There are certain values, which are important, particularly in terms of establishing democracy that can facilitate conflict resolution. Mugambi (1996:34-40) has pointed out that modern African Governments have mainly been state governments while traditional African governments were community governments. In our democratization process, therefore, there is need to merge traditional community governments and modern state governments in order to establish community based states that can ensure new types of democracy.

Assefa (1996:52-59) has seen in traditional African societies "politics of reconciliation". He argues that since multi-party politics in Africa have potentially negative consequences due to deeply divided African societies, politics of reconciliation are necessary in order to avert the negative consequences of competitive multi-party politics. Politics of reconciliation in traditional African societies are characterised by cooperation and sharing. They are politics which put due emphasis on

the community rather than on individualism and competition. Such politics cultivate community spirit among the people and between different parties. Politics of reconciliation should, therefore, be accommodated in the modern multiparty system, and should be part and parcel of the democratization process to avoid political conflicts.

Another important step or principle the democratization process is the question of creating democratic leadership. The history of Africa since independence has been characterised by a mixture of good leaders with vision, commitment and democratic tendencies on one hand, and leaders whose main preoccupation has been oppressing and exploiting the people and looting their countries in order to enrich themselves. Nyerere (1997) was optimistic that the new era of democratization had brought about progressive leadership without corrupt tendencies.

While we support Nyerere's optimism we still need to make efforts to ensure that our countries and societies in the GLR and Africa as a whole produce the desirable democratic leadership. The new type of leadership can only be realized through the establishment of a democratic multiparty system, leading to democratic free and fair multiparty elections. It can also be realized through people-centred democracy and development.

Regional integration in Africa has been taken as one of important measures in the fight against conflicts and efforts in building peace. It has been observed that regional integration creates conditions of regionalism which are likely to lower the degree of conflicts (Hattne, 1998:8-15). This is because such integration can change conditions of economic stagnation and poverty which are a source of political turbulence, wars and unrest. Furthermore, through regional integration ethnic tensions between groups are likely to disappear (Gakwandi, 1996:188-189). Integrations can also create conditions which are not favourable for the survival and operations of warlords and tyrants.

During the 7th Pan-African Congress held in Kampala in 1994 Gakwandi had suggested six regional groupings in Africa on the main continent with Madagascar as the seventh. He was of the view that the six could establish regional integrations politically and economically. Later on the seven could come together and establish the United States of Africa.

### **3. Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Burundi:**

#### **3.1. Introductory Remarks:**

Burundi provides a very interesting case study in terms of conflict resolution and peace building in Africa. Currently Burundi is having a transition period which has followed the protracted peace negotiations and the signing of the peace accord in Arusha on 28th August, 2000. What makes the case of Burundi

interesting is the fact that Burundi is one of countries in Africa with along history of ethnic conflicts and protracted conflict resolution process followed by a transition period. Africa has much to learn from the experience of Burundi.

### **3.2. Historical Perspective of Conflicts in Burundi:**

Violent conflicts in Burundi have been periodic events since when Burundi achieved independence in July 1962. Within the context of the long post-independence period the conflicts can be traced into three phases. The first phase was the period between 1962 and 1966. During this period conflicts were mainly due to political competition for power based on ethnic lines between the Tutsi and the Hutu. At independence it was the UPRONA party which formed the government because it won the 1961 elections. At the time UPRONA was a non-ethnic national party, incorporating all ethnic groups.

However, the assassination of its national leader, Prince Rwegasore, in 1961 had deprived the party of a uniting leader. Thus between 1962 and 1996 UPRONA degenerated into an ethnic party dominated by the Tutsi. This was a result of violent struggles between the Tutsi and Hutu politicians such that two Hutu prime ministers got assassinated, speakers and deputy speakers of parliament, ministers and military leaders got executed and other politicians got killed (Ndarubagiye, 1995). The situation culminated into the overthrow of King Mwambutsa IV who was the head of state, and thus a republic was declared. Multipartism was also abolished in 1996 and a one party system under UPRONA was also declared. Thus conflicts during this period resulted into changes from national politics into ethnised politics.

The second phase constitutes the period between 1966 and 1993. Periodic conflicts during this period were due to ethnised politics in which the minority Tutsi who monopolized state power and controlled the army and oppressed the majority Hutu and minority Twa. The state itself was a military state arising out of military coups of 1966, 1976 and 1987. The Hutu and the minority Twa ethnic groups found themselves not only dominated and oppressed politically but also excluded, segregated and marginalized in terms of socio-economic relations (Ndarubagiye, *ibid*).

Violent conflicts during this phase were, therefore, a product of such relations. Wherever the Hutu resisted and reacted in form of riots and so on, they were faced with violent repression from state organs. This resulted into mass killings and massacres. Thus the violent conflicts of 1969, 1972/73 and 1988 were of such nature. The most serious was the 1972/73 massacres

during which nearly 300,000 people lost their lives (Mpangala, 2000).

The third phase constitutes the period from 1993 to the present. This has been a period of protracted civil war for ten years now. The civil war erupted in October 1993 after the assassination of a democratically elected Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye (Reyntjens, 1993). With the introduction of a multiparty system in 1992 the first elections were held in June (Parliamentary) and July (Presidential), 1993. FRODEBU, a Hutu based political party won the elections with a Hutu President.

These political changes threatened the Tutsi who had been monopolizing state power for nearly 30 years. Thus soon after the elections unsuccessful coup attempts were made culminating into the assassination of the President (Reyntjens, *ibid*). This instigated some Hutu groups to begin fighting the government of Burundi which again came to be dominated by the Tutsi particularly after the military coup of 1996 which brought President Buyoya once more into power. Due to the civil war up to now more than 300,000 people have been killed.

### **3.3. The Process of Conflict Resolution:**

The most important aspect of conflict resolution in the Burundi conflict was the Burundi Peace Negotiations. The first phase of the negotiations were carried out in two sessions in Mwanza, Tanzania in 1996, and the second phase was the negotiations in Arusha from June 1998 to August 2000. In the interest of our discussion in this paper we shall make a discussion of four important aspects which include the initiative for the peace negotiations, the facilitation process, negotiating parties and the signing of the peace agreement.

The initiative to begin the process of peace negotiations for Burundi was mainly made by Governments and Heads of State of the Great Lakes Region. In other words it was a Regional Initiative. The initiative was propelled by a widely shared concern by the international community on the deteriorating law and order and internal security situation in Burundi (Butiku, 2004). The international concern was associated with fear that the genocide of Rwanda in 1994 could also take place in Burundi. However, the Regional Initiative was greatly supported by the OAU and the UN.

In terms of facilitation, through the Regional Initiative, the OAU and the international community, the Late Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere was requested to mediate in the Burundi peace negotiations in 1995. After studying the situation in Burundi Mwalimu accepted the responsibility as mediator and began

work in 1996 in Mwanza. Mwalimu was chosen because he had long experience on the affairs of Burundi as a nationalist leader and President of the United Republic of Tanzania. As a retired President he was a respected national and international figure with enough knowledge and wisdom to enable him play the role as mediator for Burundi. He was also accepted by the Burundi negotiating parties in Mwanza and later on in Arusha.

Mwalimu preferred to use the methodology of facilitation rather than mediation. Facilitation created a special relationship between the Facilitator and the negotiating parties such that it provided greater freedom, openings and space for the negotiating parties to make decisions and arrive at oncesus. Given the nature of conflicts in Burundi the facilitation approach was viewed by Mwalimu as the best option compared to the mediation approach (Butiku, *ibid*). Mwalimu carried out the task as the Facilitator during the Mwanza two sessions in 1996 and during the negotiations in Arusha from June 1998 to 1999. After is death Nelson Mandela the former President of South Africa succeeded him until August 2000.

In Mwanza in 1996 there were only three negotiating parties that is the government, the UPRONA Party and the FRODEBU party. This means that many parties to the conflict were excluded. After the second session the negotiations broke down due to disagreements on basic principles of the negotiations and the coup d'etat on the 25th June, 1996. When the negotiations resumed in Arusha in 1998 the number of negotiating parties was greatly expanded to include the Government, the National Assembly and seventeen political parties. Altogether there were nineteen negotiating parties. One obvious feature of the political parties was their ethnic character with ten of them Tutsi based and seven Hutu based parties.

The issues negotiated were based on four themes that is the nature of conflict, democracy and good governance, peace and security and social and economic reconstruction and development. Four committees were established each to deal with one theme. Towards the end of the negotiations a fifth committee to deal with issues of implementation of the peace agreement guarantees was established. In each committee all the 19 negotiating parties were represented. Periodically committees presented their work to plenary sessions for overall discussions.

Negotiations took place for two years and three months. They were protracted and difficult. In some situations consensus was reached, in others it was difficult to arrive at consensus. The large number of negotiating parties and the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic dichotomy often made things difficult. In order to consolidate

certain positions groupings such as the G7, the G8 and the G3 emerged.

The final document of the peace agreement known as the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi bore many aspects with concensus and many without concensus. Among issues without concensus there were two important issues that needed to be settled before the signing of the agreement. These were the question of ceasefire and secession of hostilities and leadership of the transition period. The issues called for serious negotiations as the signing process was nearing. At last it was decided that the signing ceremony on the 28th August 2000 should take place as planned so that the issues could be resolved later.

#### **3.4. The Transition Period and Peace Building:**

The transition period is a period of implementing the Peace Agreement. To a large extent it is, therefore, part of the conflict resolution process. However, in the context of this paper we do also characterise this period as a period of peace building. This is so because all the steps and measures of implementing the agreement constitute a new long march towards building peace in the country. It is during this period that principles of democracy and good governance are established, a new constitution is made, armies are integrated and new national army and security forces are created, and social and economic reconstruction processes are carried out.

The implementation process during the transition period is carried out through various institutions. The most important institution is the Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC). Composition of the IMC comprises of representatives of all the negotiating parties, six Burundians designated for their moral integrity, and three non-Burundians each representing the UN, the OAU (now the AU) and the Regional Peace Initiative. The IMC is chaired by a representative of the UN. The role and responsibility of IMC is to follow up, supervise, and coordinate implementation of the Agreement (Mwansasu, 2004). It has to ensure that the timetable of implementation is followed and that the agreement is interpreted correctly.

Other transitional institutions include the Judiciary, the Defence and Security Forces, the National Assembly, the Senate and the Executive. The establishment of the transitional Executive became complicated because of the delay to resolve the issue of transitional leadership. Finally it was decided that the three years transitional period should be divided into two phases of 18 months each. During the first phase the transitional President

should be a Tutsi and during the second phase it should be a Hutu.

The transition period in Burundi has experienced achievements and problems. Among the achievements include the establishment of the transition period itself which will end in October 2004. So far many aspects of implementation have been carried out such as creation of the Executive the National Assembly, the Senate the IMC and the Judiciary and Repatriation and resettlement of refugees and IDPs are going on. A spirit of reconciliation can be observed among the people.

Among problems include the delay in the beginning of the transition period which began on 1st November, 2001 after more than one year after the signing of the Agreement. This was mainly due to the unresolved problems of transitional leadership and ceasefire which perpetuated negotiations after the signing of the Agreement. Other problems include the FNL having refused to sign the ceasefire, armies not having been reduced, demobilized and integrated. These processes demand a lot of funding and the donors are said to be dragging their feet.

Yet other problems include lack of commitment by some of the signatory parties to implement the agreement. For instance some parties would like the end of transition period elections to be postponed. This would entail making changes in some articles in the Agreement. Some parties view such a step as dangerous to the peace of Burundi. They see the whole question of postponing elections as a delicate issue that could lead into another coup d'etat, thus dismantling efforts of peace negotiations and the Arusha Agreement.

Another problem is that the transitional government does not get sufficient support from the Regional Initiative. While the initiative had strong backing of the peace negotiations, it appears to be somehow relaxed on the implementation process. The Heads of state in the GLR appear to be greatly preoccupied with internal affairs of their own countries, thus paying less attention to developments in Burundi.

Despite the achievements and problems the situation appears optimistic that the transitional period will be completed successfully. The big tests ahead demobilization and reintegration of the army and establish a new national army and successfully carrying out of the democratic elections in November this year. Successful completion of the transition period will create conditions for the building of peace democracy and people centred development within Burundi and the whole Great Lakes Region.

## **4. Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in the DRC:**

### **4.1. Introductory Remarks:**

Discussion and analysis of conflict resolution and peace building in the DRC entails a complex process. The complexity arises out of the fact that since 1996 the country has been involved in a complicated war situation. The complexity became more serious when the war erupted the second time in August 1998 as it involved more than six countries, some supporting the government of the DRC, while others supporting rebel groups that were intending overthrow that government. In the process of the war many armed groups emerged some based on ethnic lines.

As we shall see in this section the complexity of the war gave rise into complexity of conflict resolution processes. First it had to involve various international organizations such as the SADC, the OAU and the UN. It had also to involve individual countries. The complexity is even greater given different economic interests by actors in the war as well as other actors not directly involved with the war.

Despite the complexity of the situation in this section we shall try to examine conflict resolution and peace building processes. We shall begin by looking at the historical perspective of conflicts in the DRC, various processes of conflict resolution measures including peace negotiations, mediations, peace agreements and strategies of implementing such agreements. The we shall examine efforts and measures of peace building as well as providing recommendations for future efforts.

### **4.2. The History of Conflicts in the DRC:**

The assassination of Patrice Lumumba in 1961 as the first Prime Minister of Congo after independence in 1960 marked the beginning of political instability in that country. Lumumba was a uniting national leader with progressive programmes for independent development of Congo. After that began a period of ethnization of politics. Even before independence the Belgian colonial power had pursued the policy of dividing people along ethnic and regional lines. During the struggle for independence they actively discouraged the emergence of nationwide political parties (Institute of Security Studies (ISS) Workshop Report, 2002:7). The assassination of Lumumba was part of neo-colonial strategies of disrupting unity and stability. The ethnization and regionalization of politics came to be consolidated during Mobutu's nearly 34 years of dictatorship. During that period Mobutu played one group off against another in a complex game of shifting patronage in order to perpetuate his dictatorial rule (ISS, *ibid*).

Major violent conflicts in the DRC began in 1996 when in October of that year Laurent Kabila decided to fight against the government of

Mobutu beginning from Eastern Zaire. Supported by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, Kabila established a military alliance called Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). He mobilized the Banyamulenge of Eastern of Eastern Congo who had been threatened by the Mobutu to be repatriated to Rwanda. Due to tendencies of ethnicity by the Mobutu regime the Banyamulenge had been segregated, marginalized and even killed. Given those grievances they were easily mobilized by Kabila to fight against Mobutu.

The eruption of the war in October 1996 marked the first phase of the war in the DRC. That phase ended with the overthrow of the government of Mobutu and Kabila proclaimed as President of the DRC (Mpangala, op.cit). The second phase of the war began in August 1998. The war broke out on the 2nd August 1998. Soldiers in the Eastern DRC launched an armed rebellion against the government of Laurent Kabila. Fighting erupted in a number of cities such as Kivu, Goma, Bakavu and even Kinshasa (The East African, 4th August, 1998:1-2).

Uganda and Rwanda decided to support the rebels. This was due to misunderstandings that had developed between the Government of Kabila on one had and the governments of Uganda and Rwanda on the other (African Confidential, 10th July 1998, Vol.39 No. 14:4-6). The capture of Kinshasa by the rebels was saved due to entry into the War by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia in support of the Kabila Government.

That made the war highly internationalized. For some time even Chad supported Kabila. The entry of Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia is said to be due to the principle of providing assistance to a member of the SADC (Punungwe,1998:5-8).

The second phase of the war ended up with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of July 1999. The third phase of the war followed and to some extent was carried out concurrently with the second phase of the war. This phase involved various groups in the north and eastern parts of the DRC. These included anti-Kabila coalition groups, rebel groups aiming to overthrow the governments of Rwanda and Burundi and local militias some of which were associated with the Kinshasa regime (ISS, op.cit:4). The Mai Mai, for instance fought in order to expel the Rwandan forces from the soil of the DRC and thus they got the support of the Kinshasa government. This is the phase of the war which has taken a long time and has been complicated.

#### **4.3. Conflict Resolution Processes:**

During the three phases of the war conflict resolution initiatives can be traced into two stages. The first stage begins with the eruption of the second war in August, 1998. We do not find any conflict resolution initiatives during the first war until the overthrow of the Mobutu regime.

The first stage constitutes the period from August 1998 to the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July, 1999.

During this first stage it was the Southern African Development Commission (SADC) and President Gaddafi of Libya who played an active role. The initiative began with holding of a number of Summit and other meeting of the SADC. The first was on 7th and 8th August, 1998 at Victoria Falls, Zambia. The summit was attended by SADC Presidents as well as Presidents from Uganda and Rwanda. The second was a meeting of defence ministers called by President Mugabe as the then chairman of the SADC Organ of Inter-State Defence and Security Committee, held in Harare, Zimbabwe. It was in that meeting that it was decided that any SADC country that was able to assist Kabila in the War should do so; thus the measures taken by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia.

Other summit meetings were held in September 7th and 8th at Victoria Falls, and then 13th and 14th September in Mauritius. During the two summits support and appreciation was given to the SADC Countries which supported Laurent Kabila in the War (Munungwe, *ibid*). From September 1998 to June 1999 a number of other summits and meetings were held with the objective of finding a solution to the Congo war by the SADC.

From November 1998 to June 1999 President Muamar Gaddafi of Libya also took steps of conflict resolution. He held talks at different times with Presidents Kabila of the DRC, Museveni of Uganda and Kagame, the Prime Minister of Rwanda. Arising out of such an initiative President Museveni signed a ceasefire agreement with President Gaddafi in May, 1999. Gaddafi insisted that warring parties should agree on ceasefire to be followed by withdrawal of foreign troops from the Congo and the deployment of international peace keeping forces.

The second stage of the conflict resolution initiative constitutes the period after the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July 1999 to the present. The Lusaka Agreement tried to address external and internal concerns and identified real issues and the interconnectedness of various agendas. But it failed to pave the way to a lasting solution to the Congolese Conflict. It was weak because it left implementation to the belligerents themselves, thus creating possibilities of sabotaging the process.

Conflict resolution steps taken during this second period included the appointment of ex-president Masire of Botswana to be the mediator in the Congo crisis. He was appointed by the OAU. Masire faced problems because some parties, including Laurent Kabila, did not accept him. The Lusaka Peace Agreement came to be reconfirmed in February, 2001. On the basis of the Lusaka Peace Agreement a national dialogue was initiated to take into consideration concerns of all parties the Government the rebel groups, the Mai Mai, and the Rwandan Liberation

Army (ALiR). At the same time security concerns of Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda had to be taken into consideration.

In January 2001, the President, Laurent Kabila, got assassinated. His son, Joseph Kabila succeeded him. This change opened a new chapter in conflict resolution initiatives. While his father believed in continuing fighting until military victory against the rebels, Joseph Kabila swiftly adopted a more diplomatic approach (ISS, *ibid*:5). The national dialogue led into a series of negotiations including those of Sun City, South Africa from April, 2002. In the same month the Kinshasa Government signed a ceasefire agreement with the MLC (Movement for the Liberation of Congo) rebel group under the leadership of Bemba.

Another important peace agreement was signed in Pretoria in August 2002. The importance of the Pretoria Agreement was that it greatly addressed issues of the Lusaka Agreement particularly in terms of ensuring its implementation. Another importance of this agreement is that it committed Rwanda to withdraw her forces from the DRC and for the Congolese government to support the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of ALiR I and ALiR II. The two groups were identified in the Lusaka Agreement as negative forces (ISS, *ibid*).

In short, developments during this period have had both elements of achievements and problems. In terms of achievements the negotiations agreements and the national dialogue in general led into withdrawal of forces of Uganda and Rwanda, ceasefire agreements and disarmaments. Mechanisms of a transitional period with a transitional government have been established. A relative state of peace is being restored. Problems include the position of the UN which lacks political and military support from members of the UNSC. It lacks influence on political events.

Another problem has been weaknesses of the various peace agreements such as the Lusaka Peace Agreement, the Pretoria Agreement and the Sun City Agreements. Their main weakness is that they have failed to recognise and address serious issues of the problem of Eastern Congo which include Southern and Northern Kivus and Ituri. This problem links with the problem of the complex situation in the area. The security concerns of Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, the alliance between Mai Mai and the Rwanda Liberation groups, the Interahamwe, the Banyamulenge nationality issue and so on. The fact that the Lusaka Agreement and some other agreements viewed the Mai Mai, the ALiR I and II and other similar groups as negative forces has also created complications of disarmament and demobilization of such forces.

#### **4.4. Peace Building:**

Although the role of the UN in peace keeping mission is part of conflict resolution processes, in this context we shall also regard it as one of the

early steps in peace building processes. In its role in the Congo crisis the UN established a UN Mission known as the MONUC. The MONUC is basically a peace keeping mission through the deployment of peace keeping forces. The mission is essentially an observer mission and not a peace enforcement mission (ISS, *ibid*:11).

The MONUC has been carrying out its work in four phases. In the first phase it involved deployment of military observers (MILOBs) and liaison officers. This phase was completed by the end of 2000. During the second phase 2001-2002 new ceasefire lines were drawn and completed. During the third phase 2003, the mission has been monitoring and verifying the ceasefire lines using 90 MILOB teams. The third phase has mainly been concerned with the DDRRR programme.

The DDRRR means disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of the armed forces in the DRC. This constitutes the main focus of the MONUC during the third phase. Arising out of the objectives of the third phase the strength of the MONUC's force was raised from 4,250 to 8,700 by December 2002. The authorized strength set in January 2002 was only 5,537. The strength was raised to that level in order to enable the mission extend its activities to eastern Congo where the situation is very complex as noted earlier.

It has to be noted that the implementation of the DDRRR is carried out not by the MONUC alone but through coordination with various governments, UN agencies and NGOs. However, in carrying out its activities the MONUC has been experiencing a number of problems. One is poor logistical facilities particularly transport infrastructure. The DRC is a very large country, the third largest from Libya and Sudan. Besides being large during 34 years of Mobutu's dictatorship transport infrastructure, let alone other forms of infrastructure such as education, health and water supply forms of infrastructure, were not developed. The MONUC has, therefore, mainly been depending on expensive air transport.

The second problem has been the principle of voluntarism in carrying out the DDRRR programme. This means, for instance that armed groups have to be disarmed on voluntary basis. Those that are not willing cannot be disarmed. Some leaders of military groups would like to continue fighting. The third problem involves the complexity of some of the armed groups. For instance the Interahamwe forces require identifying the masterminds of the Rwanda genocide of 1994 and those of the lower ranks who were also involved in the genocides. There are also normal refugees not involved in the genocide. All these different groups need different modes of repatriation. Some need to be sent to the Arusha UN tribunal, others to be repatriated to a third country, while others notably normal refugees to be repatriated to Rwanda for resettlement.

The fourth phase of the MONUC was expected to be carried out during 2004. The main objective of this phase is to ensure transition to peace building. This should involve the process of reintegration of the armed forces and establishment of a new national army. However, success of the fourth phase will greatly depend on success of the third phase. It has been observed that the successful implementation of the DDRRR process is critical to building peace in the DRC and the whole Great Lakes Region (ISS, *ibid*:13).

Other important aspects in peace building in the DRC include the building of democracy and ensuring socio-economic development. So far main preoccupations have mainly been with military aspects in order to put to an end the situation violent conflicts. After the first democratic elections and the establishment of new national state machinery, preoccupations of building democracy and carrying out socio-economic development should be carried out seriously.

Establishing a democratic society would entail three types of transitions. One is transition of the multiparty system. During the period of establishing multipartism under Mobutu hundreds of political parties were formed. Such a situation certainly needs change. There is need to create conditions whereby there are fewer viable parties that can seriously compete in democratic multiparty elections. The second transition requires transformation of the civil society to have a serious and vibrant civil society organizations with a national character. In some regions such as Eastern Congo it is said that the civil society organizations are vibrant due to the vacuum created by weaknesses of the central state under Mobutu. But such civil society organizations are regional and possibly ethnic in character.

The third transition should involve leadership and legal instruments. Due to the violent conflicts and the history of the country leadership is mainly of a military character. Most of the leaders of the armed groups do not have strong following of the people at grassroot level. Such leadership needs transformation. As far as legal instruments are concerned there is need for the establishment of a new constitution arising out the views of a wider spectrum of the society in the DRC. It also requires reforms of other laws.

As far as socio-economic development is concerned the first step should be implementation of the Kassen Report. This is report of the panel of experts who investigated on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the DRC. The panel was established by the Secretary General of the UN in response to the resolution of the UNSC. The report identified two types of illegal exploitation of resources. One is by various armed forces involved in the war inside the DRC. The UN Ambassadors of Zimbabwe, Uganda and Rwanda rejected the report as their armies were implicated. The second type involved Western companies which have taken chance of the war situation to extract the resources of the country. The Kassem

Report provides recommendations as to how such illegal exploitation should be stopped. It has emphasized that illicit exploitation of resources of the DR Congo should be ended and the resources including mineral wealth should be directed towards the development of its people.

The second step in ensuring socio-economic development should be concrete national policies and strategies of socio-economic development. Congo is said to be leading in terms richness of economic resources in Africa including mineral, agricultural and forest resources. Congo is rich in a variety of minerals. It has the largest river basin in the world. Its vast thick equatorial forests are among the leading rich timber resources in the World. Thus the potential for fast socio-economic development is very high.

## **5. Conclusion:**

This paper has comprehensively examined conflict resolution and peace building processes in Africa in general and in Burundi and the DRC in particular. It has to be noted that cases of the two countries can only provide a narrow scope of in relation to so many cases in different regions of the continent. There are certainly many aspects of common experience and there are considerable aspects which are unique to the GLR. There are also aspects which are unique in other regions. For instance, there are unique as well as common experiences with conflict resolution and peace building processes in the Horn of Africa and Sub-Saharan West Africa. The role of ECOWAS in West Africa may not be the same as the role of the SADC in the GRL.

Whatever common and different experiences there may be, there are fundamental issues which need to be taken into consideration. One issue should be the strengthening and consolidation of the growing regional initiatives which have emerged in recent years such as the GLR, the SADC and the ECOWAS initiatives. The strengthening and consolidation of such regional initiatives should be carried out within the context of the strengthened and consolidated African Union. The current move of establishing a permanent AU peace keeping force is a very positive step. Time should come when dependence on the UN should be minimised in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness in conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms.

The other issue which is related to the first is the whole question of regional integration processes. So far emphasis has been on socio-economic aspects of integration. Transformations towards political integration is a matter of vital significance. The third issue is the need for the development of common principles that can ensure the building of democratic socio-economic developmental societies in Africa. The principles should include participation, social justice, equality, eradication of poverty and divisive and segregative ideologies among the people.

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