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Establishing the Future State of the Peacebuilding Commission:

Perspectives on Africa

Kwesi Aning and Ernest Larrey



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Working Paper

The Future of the Peacebuilding Architecture Project

Establishing the Future State of the Peacebuilding Commission

Perspectives on Africa

Kwesi Aning and Ernest Larrey

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Preface – From the Project Director

At the 2005 World Summit in New York City, member states of the United Nations agreed to create “a dedicated institutional mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction and to assist them in laying the foundation for sustainable development”. That new mechanism was the UN Peacebuilding Commission and two associated bodies: a Peacebuilding Support Office and a Peacebuilding Fund. Together, these new entities have been characterized as the UN’s new peacebuilding architecture, or PBA.

This Working Paper is one of nine essays that examine the possible future role of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture. They were written as part of a project co-organized by the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. All of the contributors to the project were asked to identify realistic but ambitious “stretch targets” for the Peacebuilding Commission and its associated bodies over the next five to ten years. The resulting Working Papers, including this one, seek to stimulate fresh thinking about the UN’s role in peacebuilding.

The moment is ripe for such rethinking: During 2010, the UN will review the performance of the PBA to date, including the question of whether it has achieved its mandated objectives. Most of the contributors to this project believe that the PBA should pursue a more ambitious agenda over the next five years. While the PBC and its associated bodies have succeeded in carving out a niche for themselves, that niche remains a small one. Yet the need for more focused international attention, expertise, and coordinated and sustained assistance towards war-torn countries is undiminished. It remains to be seen whether UN officials and the organization’s member states will rise to the challenge of delivering on the PBA’s initial promise over the next five years and beyond, but doing so will at least require a vision of what the PBA can potentially accomplish in this period. The Working Papers produced in this project are intended to provide grist for this visioning effort.

Roland Paris
Ottawa, January 2010

Summary

The paper discusses the strategic role of the PBC as a vital component in the attainment of the new peacebuilding vision and architecture and examines its potential implications for sustainable peace in Africa. Furthermore, it examines the various dimensions of peace-building strategies by evaluating what has been achieved so far. In reviewing the PBC's peace-building approaches, analysis is undertaken to identify specific gaps in the current methods of operation. Consequently, an analysis of the expected strategic changes that should reflect the future outlook of the PBC's engagement in Africa is developed that categorizes the potential strategic changes that should occur in the future. Three main areas are identified as being crucial in attaining both the objectives of the PBC and visioning its future, namely: (a) a need for regionally integrated dimensions of peace building; (b) understanding and appreciating the context of international politics in peace building; and (c) having a nuanced and differentiated grasp of the potential transformative impact of peace building in Africa. These are the critical dimensions of the PBC's future outlook in Africa. However, in working towards attaining the envisioned future, critical care must be taken to:

- Neutralize the potential tensions that may ensue between regional and national ownership of peace-building programs;
- Distinguish the possible sources of strategic outcomes between regional and national impacts and its likely implications for capacity building, resource mobilization and impact sustainability; and
- Engage Africa's regional and continental institutions in identifying and defining response mechanisms.

Background

Africa is often perceived and described as the poorest and most conflict-prone region in the world. As a result of its continued state of political instability, its scarce resources are often channeled to respond to insecurity and for conflict resolution activities. This detracts from providing attention for the provision of essential services. This relates to the question of how best to coordinate the transition from conflict to sustainable peace and development. Furthermore, considerably more

needs to be done in terms of strategies and policy coherence to achieve durable peace and also to prevent a relapse into conflict in areas where conflicts have occurred.¹ Indeed, the question of state instability in Africa raises concerns about the nature of political governance in Africa. These concerns are articulated in this paper partly as the uncharted paradoxes of Africa's political necessities.

Peace building is practiced largely on the assumption that the causes of state failure lie in the rapid establishment of –‘nation-states’– imposed by external players. It is argued that “the phenomenon of the weak and ultimately failed states is ...above all a problem of the present system of international relations.”² The implicit assumption here is that, it is the Westphalian state closely related to the colonial and post-colonial processes in Africa that partially account for state failure. While state collapse has been a common feature in Africa's political process, it became more manifestly evidenced by the scores of armed conflicts that devastated the continent in the 1980's and beyond. While solutions were sought at the political level to address these conditions of state fragility and collapse in Africa, the pervasive political instability caused the region to initiate different forms of adaptive political transitions. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) for example, metamorphosed through a number of institutional processes into the African Union (AU). Starting with the Sirte Declaration in 1999, for instance, it ushered in a new vision for institutional change that led to the transformation of the OAU into the AU with a Constitutive Act adopted in 2000. As part of the transitory nature of these institutional reforms to respond to Africa's security challenges, the Commission of the AU was transformed into an African Union Authority in February 2009. But even more crucial in this transformational exercise of the AU was the establishment of its Peace and Security architecture which has improved the AU's options to engage more directly in conflict situations and contribute to sustainable peace building in a more coordinated, holistic and strategic manner.³ To compliment the AU's efforts, it's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)⁴ have also de-

¹ Collier, Paul, Anke Hoefler and Mans Soderbom, *Post-Conflict Risks*, (Centre for the Study of African Economies. 2006), Working Paper Series paper 256.

² Wolfgang, Heinrich and Manfred Kulessa, *Destruction of States as an Opportunity for New Statism? The Example of Somalia and Somaliland*. In Hippler, Jochen (ed.), *National-Building. A Key Concept for Peaceful Conflict Transformation?* (Pluto Press: London, 2005).

³ Aning, Kwesi, *Africa Union's Peace and Security Architecture: Defining an Emerging Response Mechanism*. (Uppsala: The Nordic African Institute, 2008).

⁴ See Agbo, Osita, *West Africa's Trouble Spots and the Imperative for Peacebuilding*, (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), 2006).

veloped their own security mechanisms to significantly improve peace-building activities in their respective regions.⁵

Apart from the AU and its RECs' role in conflict resolution and peace building in Africa, there are other key actors who also operate at the bilateral and multilateral levels such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) who continue to make crucial contributions to the post-conflict reconstruction of countries in Africa. But the presence of these bilateral and multilateral arrangements outside the AU and RECs' structures means that their operations occur without any strategic coordination among them as each of these actors operate independently of each other. Moreover, all these actors often operate under different conditions which are often difficult to align with goals of other actors directly or indirectly operating in various peace-building missions.⁶ The challenge has been to find the most appropriate synergies to streamline such activities in order to achieve a common vision. The United Nations (UN) cluster and lead agency approach was widely adopted to serve this coordinating purpose in the humanitarian and peace-building missions but the concept was largely restricted to the internal organizational structures of the UN agencies.⁷

Significantly though, the United Nations (UN) takes the overall responsibility of ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security and more importantly, it takes appropriate measures within the framework of the UN Charter to restore peace and security to conflict situations.⁸ But the critical issue that keeps recurring as lacking in the UN's overarching responsibilities in most post-conflict peace-building responses is the overall strategic approach and coherence with which it applies resources in such operations to achieve the desired outcomes.⁹ This strategic approach to peace-building challenges was subsequently to be given greater attention by the UN starting 2005.¹⁰

⁵ Particularly for the Economic Community of West African States, see its ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, www.ecowas.int/publications/en/framework/ECPF_final.pdf. Accessed: 31 August, 2009.

⁶ . Eide, Espen Barth, *From Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding*. (FIIA Report. 2006). 7.

⁷ See Holmes Homes, "Humanitarian Action: A Western-Dominated Enterprise in Need of Change". <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR29/4-5.pdf>. Accessed: 31 August, 2009.

⁸ See UN, "United Nations Charter", (UN, 1945).

⁹ UN, "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission in its First Session", 2007.

¹⁰ See paragraph 97 of the "2005 World Summit Outcome" document. A/RES/60/1, UN; Rugumamu, Severine, M. 2009. Does the UN Peacebuilding Commission Change the Mode of Peacebuilding in Africa?. *Dialogue on Globalisation*. Briefing Papers. (New York: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung); See UN, 2008. *Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund*. A/63/218-S/2008/522. Established in December, 2005 as part of the internal reform agenda of the UN, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) ushered in a renewed commitment by the international community to take charge of peacebuilding activities in a more coordinated approach. Its creation was in direct response to the lack of strategic perspectives to the overall coordination of peacebuilding interventions in post-

In this paper we discuss the strategic role of the PBC as a vital component in the attainment of the vision as set out in the new peacebuilding architecture and its potential implications for sustainable peace in Africa. The subsequent sections examine various dimensions of peace building in Africa. After evaluating peace-building strategies in Africa, a review of the PBC's peace-building approaches is undertaken to identify specific gaps in the current methods of operation with specific reference to Africa. An analysis of the expected strategic changes that should reflect the future outlook of the PBC is developed in a separate section that, categorizes the strategic changes that should occur in the future in three main areas, namely: regionally integrated dimensions of peace building; international politics in peace building; and transformative impact of peace building in Africa. These are presented as the critical dimensions of the PBC's future outlook in Africa. The conditions that should prevail in order to attain the envisioned future are also discussed in greater length in the last section of the paper.

Peace-building Strategies in Africa

Establishing the appropriate political framework that will make the vision of sustainable peace building achievable especially in Africa remains a dilemma that the international community will continue to grapple with for a long while. It will be an exercise of complete futility to conceive a vision for an entity such as the PBC existing in a political vacuum. One of the strategic ways to have a workable vision in any developmental setting is to create an environment, which is conducive enough to safeguard the desired impact of the envisioned future. At both bilateral and multilateral levels, the responsibility of identifying long-term goals for any executable task lies largely within the domain of political governance. This means that if the political framework at the state level is premised on a wrong footing, the strategic vision of that state is bound to fail. Thus the political process within states and inter-governmental bodies should define how far the significance of a peace-building vision can impact on society. Strategic vision requires long-term political will for execution. There is also the need to mobilize adequate resources and coordinate strategies for

conflict countries, and has, as its main objective, the responsibility to ensure a concerted action by both UN and non-UN actors and also to mobilize bilateral and multilateral financial resources for sustainable peace. Four years into its routine operations, the PBC seem to be on course in its quest to ensuring sustainable peace and development, especially in Africa where most of its activities are concentrated. However, it is still grappling with the challenge of carving a long-term vision around which its strategic objectives and operations can be anchored.

such vision to become real. Hence, the *political will*, as always, provides direction for the attainment of the vision, while *resources* provide the necessary push for the execution of the vision, and the *strategy* determines the approach used to follow the direction set out in the political framework to achieve the vision.

At the global level, the United Nations has the responsibility to set out strategic vision for the world. Since the end of the Second World War, the maintenance of international peace and security has fully been entrusted in the hands of the UN. But the UN's responsibility of rebuilding the post-war inter-state era failed to anticipate the likely threats that were to be ensued as a result of lack of attention and appropriate strategies to prevent the internal dynamics of fragile states from lapsing or relapsing into conflicts. The strategic drift in fashioning out a coherent peace-building vision for the world rather impacted adversely on Africa and since the 1980s the continent has experienced incoherent peace-building approaches, exacerbated by the continuous ascendancy of conflict patterns in the region.¹¹

The failure of the international community to envisioning a coherent peace-building strategy to address the new challenges in post-war reconstruction became a key issue within UN circles, prompting the former UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to outline what then became known as "*An Agenda for Peace*" in 1992. One of the key intentions in "*An Agenda for Peace*" was to have an integrated vision in peace-building approaches to both fragile and post-conflict societies. It was conceptualized as a set of actions taken to "identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace [and] to avoid a relapse into conflict."¹² The goal of peace building was integrated into the conventional conflict resolution mechanism that ideally enforces a schematic conflict management strategy that logically flows from preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping to peace building. The utility of peace building had a uni-dimensional role of ensuring that post-conflict states do not relapse into conflict after a resolution has been found. This understanding of a peace-building outcome is further corroborated by the concept of the "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" which emphasizes the collective responsibility of states to rebuild post-conflict societies.¹³ The R2P norm requires commitments from both states and the interna-

¹¹ De Coning H. Cedric, 'Coherence and Coordination in the United Nations and Integrated Missions: A Norwegian Perspective', *Security in Practice* No. 5, (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. 2007).

¹² UN, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*. Report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/47/277-S/24111, (New York: United Nations, 17 June, 1992): 21.

¹³ See Aning, K & Samuel Atuobi, 'Responsibility to Protect in Africa: An Analysis of the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture' *Journal of the Global Responsibility to Protect*, Vol. 1, No. 1. (2009).

tional community to do more in protecting populations from extreme conditions of harm triggered by excessive political arbitrariness and violent conflict of which Africa has tragically been a key example.

While the R2P norm views peace building as a strategic exercise to prevent a reoccurrence of conflict in fragile and post-conflict societies, it essentially locates the peace-building function in the post-conflict resolution phase. Peace building, therefore, becomes an event in post-conflict state-building rather than serving as process of building sustainable peace and development, thus perpetuating the state-centric tradition of peace building which was always pervasive in the Cold War era.

To understand Africa's conflict context, Richard Dowden describes the conflict puzzles of African "reputation", in which the African "reputation" is often cast in the indivisible realities of poverty, diseases and war.¹⁴ The "reputation" of Africa seeks to convey an argument, supportive of the fact that post-war peace building must integrate these factors in both physical and structural violence. The reason why these three conditions are rife in Africa is partly due to lack of integrated and comprehensive analysis of, and approaches to conflict resolution and peace-building mechanisms. For now, the international community's concern is about its obsession with the war component of Richard Dowden's conflict equation, thus ignoring the key aspects of poverty and diseases since they do not exhibit direct manifestations of physical violence. Hence the structural violence of disasters, poverty and diseases which are frequent occurrences and conflict accelerators in Africa are ignored in peace resolution processes, and therefore does not become a preoccupation of peace-building interventions. The effect is that the strategic value of the need to understand the "hard" and "soft" elements of conflict, which is required to create sustainable peace-building strategies are often compromised, leading to the designing of "blueprint strategies that tend to look like shopping lists."¹⁵ More critically, there is the "need to better take into account 'soft' elements such as trust, confidence, legitimacy and cooperation that form the fabric of [African] society" in peace building.¹⁶ A key point to note in this regard is that if peace-building strategies are designed to focus only on the physical aspects of conflicts - as it is presently the case in Africa - then one will not be far from right to remark that only half-hearted solutions and defective peace-building strategies are currently being deployed to address peace-building challenges in

¹⁴ Dowden, Richard, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. (London: Portobello Books Ltd, 2009).

¹⁵ See the report of the Peacebuilding Roundtable, titled: *Bringing Research Perspectives to Inform the UN's Peacebuilding Work*. International Development Research Centre, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Carnegie Corporation of (New York, Ottawa, December 10-11, 2008).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Africa, and the suitability and sustainability of such incongruous strategies in the future remains highly uncertain.

Despite the numerous political challenges facing Africa, the AU continues to serve as the champion of regional peace and stability. It has undertaken a number of steps aimed at transforming its political structures and agendas in order to position it strategically, becoming more relevant in, and responsive to current security challenges. Some of the steps taken have had significant impact on peace-building strategies in Africa, and have also evolved a new vision that is directed towards the promotion of good governance, rule of law, human rights protection and development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme evolved in response to the stark reality of not being able to effectively coordinate the components of political governance, security sector stabilization, poverty reduction and development programmes. As a single collective vision for Africa's development since 2006, the NEPAD programme has been designated as a special agency of the AU and is partly charged with the responsibility of "supporting post-conflict reconstruction and mobilization of resources for the AU Peace Fund."¹⁷

Even though, the AU Peace Fund has existed since 2002 and continues to support the peace-building activities of the AU, little is known about how it is linked with the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Much remains to be seen how these two bodies take steps to streamline their interventions in Africa. While recognizing that the AU Peace Fund and the UN Peacebuilding Fund have similar, if not the same, orientation to peace building, it will be more commendable should they work in ways that are more complementary than duplicative of each others efforts. Given that the PBC has been mandated to, as it were, draw international attention to peace building in many diverse respects of post-conflict considerations, and also having the endorsement of the UN to mobilize financial resources to operate the Peacebuilding Fund from resources generated from the donor community, there is the potential of this strategic role undermining the usefulness and effectiveness of the AU Peace Fund. One critical challenge regarding this issue is that since the two bodies generate their operational resources from the same or similar development partners to source for funding to operate their Funds, there could be unhealthy competition arising between them which may culminate in non-cooperation between both bodies. This may even lead to a division in the ranks of the donors with one group deciding to go with the PBF, the other group going with the AU Peace Fund, and the third option being bilateral with the individual countries while the fourth group may decide to stay indif-

¹⁷ John Akokpari, *The African Union and Its Institutions*, (Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2008).

ferent from the three options that may have been created as a result of the unhealthy competition between the PBF and AU Peace Fund. In the end, the very purpose for which the PBC was established may be defeated by its own failures to recognize existing parallel structures and streamlining its operations with them.

A key element of the AU's increasing role in peacebuilding is its policy framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) which was adopted in 2006. The PCRD framework outlines a number of key areas where the AU will focus its peacebuilding responses. The PCRD framework consists, first and foremost, of five key principles that underpin action across all post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes. The principles are: African Leadership; National and Local Ownership; Inclusiveness, Equity and Non-Discrimination; Cooperation and Coherence; and Capacity Building for Sustainability.¹⁸ The framework also contains six indicative elements that are "self-standing and cross-cutting", representing the key pillars upon which all PCRD efforts will be based. The indicators are the following: Security; humanitarian/Emergency Assistance; Political Governance and Transition; Socio-Economic Reconstruction and Development; Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation; and Women and Gender.¹⁹ The framework also has provisions for resource mobilization and processes, including key actors and governance mechanisms.²⁰

With this, a comprehensive peacebuilding architecture has been developed by the AU, but the critical question is; will the AU be able to carry out these fine ideas if need be? While it is important to have an architecture to deal with post-conflict peacebuilding challenges, it is even more crucial to develop the operational mechanisms to make it work. Currently, such operational structures do not exist and are not functional at the continental level."

The PBC and Current Peace-building Strategies in Africa

The Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) adopts an Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPS) to carry out its national programmes. The IPS

¹⁸ African Union, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy*, (African Union Commission, 2007), 6.

¹⁹ African Union, 7.

²⁰ African Union, 12.

is the grand scheme that coordinates the different actors and integrates national priorities and goals for each sponsored country. Even though the IPS is a common strategy for all participating countries, it allows individual countries to exercise some level of flexibility in determining their goals and priorities. However, the IPS does not allow for inter-country integration which is a major challenge in the way the peacebuilding architecture is organized. The Working Group on Lessons Learned is designed to address this challenge but it has not been able to achieve this level of regional coordination to a large extent.²¹

In order to make integration of peace-building activities in post-conflict environment less cumbersome and complicated, the Peacebuilding Fund has established three operational windows through which funds are channeled and disbursed for specific peace-building activities. These three windows were set up in order to address specific needs and priorities of countries that are earmarked for international support by the UN.

Window I: Countries before the Peacebuilding Commission. The countries in this cluster are Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau.

Window II: Comprises countries declared eligible for Fund support by the Secretary-General. They include: Central African Republic, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Nepal

Window III: Emergency window. Countries in the "Emergency Window" include: Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Liberia, Burundi, Haiti and Kenya.²²

The countries that are currently sponsored under *Window I* are perceived to have a longer-term programme with the PBC. Such countries have national integrated programmes in peace building but are not strategically coordinated with each other in their various regions. The effect is that despite the expected peace-building benefits that will accrue at the national levels, the net-impact of such benefits at the regional level may not significantly be sustainable in the long-run.

A comparative analysis of programme areas in Burundi and Sierra Leone, for instance depicts that the PBC focuses on key areas of post-conflict peace building categorized as: Security Sectors Reform; Democracy and Good Governance; Human Rights and Land Reform. In Burundi, a total of US\$27.9 million was disbursed on 15 projects as of May 2008. The distribution of priorities is given as: security sector-

²¹ See UN, Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its Second Session. A/63/92-S/2008/417, (New York, 2008).

²² UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund. A/63/218-S/2008/522. (New York, 2008).

46 percent; democracy and good governance- 43.6 percent; human rights- 7.9 percent; and property and land issues- 2.5 percent. On the other hand, a total of US\$ 15.7 million was spent within the same period in Sierra Leone on 7 approved projects in the following priority sectors: Justice and Security- 64.5 percent; Youth Employment and Empowerment- 25.5 percent; and Democracy and Good Governance- 10 percent.²³ The distribution of peace-building programmes between these two countries shows the existence of internal dynamics and flexibility in determining peace-building responses, aided by the IPS for the participating countries. But while the idea of allowing flexibility in setting local priorities is appropriate to promote local ownership, it does indicate an overbearing inclination to prioritize security factors over and above other equally important development priorities. In both Burundi and Sierra Leone, for instance the security sector alone takes over 40 percent of the entire peace-building budget. Such a pattern of prioritization may not be sustainable in the long-term.

There are as many as five West African countries, namely: Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea currently participating in peace-building activities under the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA). This makes it more strategic for the PBC to adopt regional approaches to its peace-building responses in Africa. Already ECOWAS, for example has adopted a number of mechanisms and instruments for regional peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace-building activities, such as the Protocol for the establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the 2008 ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (CPF).²⁴ These mechanisms and the lessons learned from peace support experiences by ECOWAS in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire have made significant contributions to the formulation of an overarching ECOWAS peace and security architecture that makes coordination of joint initiatives in West Africa more integrated. Given the fact that ECOWAS and PBC both have shared interests in, especially Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, including Cote d'Ivoire, and with the presence of United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) based in Dakar, Senegal, it will be more prudent to have shared vision and integrated strategy in peace building between these key peace-building actors within the sub-region.²⁵

²³ UN, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund," 13.

²⁴ See Peacebuilding Support Office, "Promoting Collaboration and Improving Coordination between the PBC and Regional and Sub-Regional Organisation: A Briefing by ECOWAS and the OAS". Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned, 2009.

²⁵ For a discussion of the work by ECOWAS and UNOWA, see Aning, K & A, Sarjoh Bah. *ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention: Confronting the Triple threats* Centre on International Cooperation, (New York University: 2009).

Peace-building Interventions in Africa

A majority of African countries are currently in a phase requiring one form of peace-building need or the other. This is because peace building is considered in this context as addressing both physical and structural conflict factors that inhibit the progress of state building in Africa. The level of state fragility in Africa varies in degrees and scope of security threats that prevails in specific countries.

There are five clusters of peace-building priorities in Africa as indicated in the Table 1 below. The more one goes down the table, the less physical conflicts become and hence the greater the need to adopt a more comprehensive and strategic approaches to peace building. It also means that integrated and coordinated strategies with regional and long-term perspectives will facilitate the work of the PBC in Africa.

The key peace-building priorities for Africa include: restoration of national political authority in countries such as: Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Cote d'Ivoire; post-conflict peace consolidation involving: Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, Guinea Bissau and Liberia; transformed political leadership and good governance in countries such as: Zimbabwe, Kenya, Madagascar, Gabon, Guinea, Niger and Mauritania; and democratic and electoral transparency and accountability to be deepened in countries such as: Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, Benin and Senegal. These peace-building priorities respond respectively to a wide range of governance transitions that are scaled down from conflict and security zones such as in cluster 1; conflict transitions (cluster 2); democratic transitions from conflict (cluster 3); unconstitutional democratic transitions (cluster 4); and democratic and electoral consolidation also indicated in cluster 5 as in Table 1 below. But above all, it is significant to note that all these political transitions, irrespective of the level of a country's political stability and development experience one form of conflict or other.

Table 1: Peace-building Priorities in Africa

Clusters	Political Transitions	Typology of Conflict	Examples of States	Peace-building priorities
1	Conflict and Security Zones	Physical and Structural Violence	Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan	Restoration of national political authority
2	Conflict Transitions	Physical and Structural Violence	Cote d'Ivoire	Restoration of national political authority
3	Democratic Transitions from Conflict	Structural Violence	Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, Guinea Bissau and Liberia	Post-conflict peace consolidation
4	Unconstitutional transitions	Structural Violence	Zimbabwe, Kenya, Madagascar, Gabon, Guinea, Niger, Mauritania	Transformed political leadership and good governance
5	Democratic and Electoral consolidation	Structural Violence	Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, Benin, Senegal	Democratic and Electoral transparency and accountability

Source: Authors' Construct.

It does appear that African countries will continue to remain and oscillate between the three operating windows designated for peace-building responses by the PBC. But more importantly, there is a clear indication that more countries have lined up for peace-building support, a trend which will continue to be perpetuated in the long-term. One way of overcoming this challenge is to adopt a regional peace-building strategy with mechanisms that ultimately address both physical and structural conflicts in Africa.

Strategic Priorities for the Envisioned Future of the PBC

For a start it is important to note that the task of managing the transition from state collapse to post-conflict stability is, without doubt, an arduous exercise which can not be overemphasized. While it requires the mobilization, motivation and utilization of all available resources in order to offset the long period of missed opportunities and expectations through armed conflicts, such processes demand a superior strategy for a coherent peace-building outcome in the long term. Since the

inception of the PBC some four years ago, it has understandably been more visible in Africa than any other part of the world. This amplifies the fact that Africa has been a region of instability for which attention in terms of resources, capacity and coordination strategies should be focused.

Regional Integrated Dimension

Regional integrated dimension means that peace-building activities in Africa needs to have a coordinated approach integrated at the regional level. The PBC has been extending its operational activities to cover more countries since 2006. Starting with two countries, namely Burundi and Sierra Leone at the commencement of its operations, the number of countries participating on the PBA has increased sharply to eleven (11) by 2008. The other countries involved are Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic and Comoros. The rest are Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, Kenya, Nepal and Haiti.²⁶ In addition to the increased number of participating countries, and with the possibility of more countries coming on stream in the near future, especially from Africa, the emerging trend is that the peace-building project has so quickly assumed a critical regional dimension. The implication is that the PBC should begin to fashion out regional integrated strategies to its peace-building activities, especially in Africa in addition to the already existing national coordination strategies for those countries who are currently on its operational radar. But in creating the strategic regional coordination responses, care must be taken to:

1. Neutralize the potential tensions that may ensue between regional and national ownership of peace-building programmes; and
2. Distinguish the possible sources of strategic outcomes between regional and national impacts and its likely implications for capacity building, resource mobilization and impact sustainability.

No doubt the implications of the financial burdens of such regional strategic architecture will be enormous to be sustained by the PBC, the efficiency, economy and cost-effectiveness of resources in the application of such regional coordination strategies cannot be overstated. This approach will require a bit of restructuring of the internal dynamics of the current peace-building architecture. But the key challenge really is, given that the UN has been used to conducting country-specific strategies in most of its peace support operations without any strategic inter-country and inter-regional coordination in Africa, it

²⁶ UN, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund*. A/63/218-S/2008/522 UN, 2008).

may lack both the capacity and experience in conducting regional strategies such as the one being proposed in this paper. This lack of capacity of the UN to undertake integrated regional coordination stems from the fact that in all the fourteen peace support missions scattered in various regions in Africa²⁷, it is only in West Africa where coordination support capacity and strategy by the UN has been integrated. Such architecture is under the strategic coordination of UNOWA based in Dakar, Senegal. Following from this, the UN will need skilled personnel and strategic leadership to drive the regional integrated coordination strategies in Africa. The key advantage in this approach is that the AU and the RECs will know how to properly reconcile and integrate their peace-building strategies into the overarching peace-building architecture of the UN and also to be more committed to the peace-building project in terms of shaping their internal structures in order to provide direction and leadership to peace-building activities in Africa.

International Political Dynamics

International political dynamics refers to the strategic role of the political interests in peace-building activities. The critical concern is that the PBC may become politically polarized as competition for its capacity and resources intensifies. Like other UN agencies, the foundation of the PBC's establishment is deeply entrenched in international politics where the relations among the major powers of the global politics determine the future of these key agencies. In effect, the procedural processes set out to independently appraise and dispatch peace-building cases may be subjected to the internal dictates and pace of commitments by the major powers, especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Already, the structure of the PBC is loosely attached to the UN system as its only acts as an advisory body to the General Assembly and the Security Council with no apparent powers to directly influence strategic political decisions regarding peace-building activities.²⁸

The priority given to the permanent members of the UN Security Council over and above other considerations such as troop and financial contributing countries in making a determination on peace-building responses may raise potential tensions among these key actors which may in turn derail the strategic coordination objectives of the PBC. In the final analysis, it will be Africa which will be greatly

²⁷ See the number of Peace Support Operations in Africa in the "Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2009". Centre on International Cooperation. (London & New York: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009).

²⁸ Rugumanu, M. Severine,. *Does the UN Peacebuilding Commission Change the Peacebuilding in Africa?*. Briefing Papers. (New York: FES, 2009).

affected by the institutional undercuts of the UN if such processes do happen in the future.

It is important to avoid a situation whereby countries earmarked for peace-building sponsorship will be selected based on appropriately or inappropriately such countries behave in their bilateral relations towards those key permanent members of the UN Security Council. Subsequently, the PBC may be able to function better if the reform agenda within the UN Security Council is allowed to be implemented. Even though the United States has reservations against the proposed reforms in the Security Council, such reforms will go a long way to ease the envisioned political pressure that would be mounted on the strategic coordination role of the PBC as it takes on more global and regional responsibilities.²⁹

Transformative Impact of Peace building

The transformative impact of peace building is expressed as the process of scaling up peace-building responses in ways that stimulate productive capacities of post-conflict countries. In terms of programming and priority setting, it will be necessary for the PBC to envision a policy shift from security sector stabilization to economic sector integration in the long-term. Currently, the PBC seem to be operating with the traditional notion of peace building which prioritizes security sector stabilization over economic stimulation and social cohesion in a post-conflict context. But while this notion of security sector stabilization is useful for internal security of post-conflict countries in the interim, it connotes a Cold War ideological strategy in peace building where state security is appropriated privileged status over and above human development, thus emphasizing state sovereignty as an end state of post-conflict peace building. On the contrary, the state's role has to be minimal on sovereignty while strengthened more profusely on human rights and civil society protection, more so in an African context where the notion of security is considerably being shifted from state security to human security. But again, shifting the long-term role of the PBA from security to social cohesion and economic stimulation will mean reducing the role of the Security Council in the policy decisions of the PBC. As has been argued by the UN itself, there is a "growing sense that as the peace-building agenda becomes more operationally focused on economic and social issues, and less on security issues, the added value that the [Security] Council can bring is less clear."³⁰ More preferably, the Economic and Social Council

²⁹ Birenbaum, E. David, UN Reform: Progress, Prospects, and Priorities. Project on Leadership and Building State Capacity. (Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2007).

³⁰ UN, "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding". Security Council Update Report. 2009.

(ECOSOC) should begin to assume more prominent role in determining peace-building options and priorities.

Peace-building activities continue to be treated as humanitarian operations rather than a tool for economic take-off in the respective countries that are currently being reconstructed under the schedule of the PBC. In this respect, more emphasis is often put on aid, donations and charity that often bring in little resources as opposed to emphasis on trade and investment which may yield more resources to the participating countries.³¹ Concerns have been raised that “dependence on these kinds of aid is disempowering. They undermine the self-confidence of the recipient countries’ governments and peoples, and erode policy space”.³² In many regards, there seem to be no strategic attempt at using peace building as a tool to directly stimulate industrialization and economic self-sufficiency in the current national coordination strategies. The conventional areas of response that prioritize areas such as security sector reform (SSR), disarmament and demobilization among others cut across all the selected countries with none of the countries being used as centers of industrialized enclaves which will transform local and regional economies for long-term growth and development. More critically, the lack of investment in infrastructure such as energy, transportation, irrigation and technology means underdevelopment and poverty will continue to undermine future peace-building efforts in Africa.

Yet another key factor which may hinder the attainment of the long-term vision by the PBC, especially in Africa is that peace building is still structured in a way that reinforces the colonial legacies and the neo-liberal economic structures. Such structures make African countries concentrate on the production and export of raw materials that yielded very little foreign exchange while importing processed goods at higher prices from the Western countries. Such unfavorable terms of trade imposes on many African countries increased import bills and huge balance of payment deficits which in turn leads to high indebtedness, constituting a drain on and depletion of national reserves and assets of African economies. In the recent past, trade liberalization policies by the IFIs opened the door to cheap imports from outside, and several of the cost-inefficient African industries were shut down in the face of increased competition. In the process, “instead of making them [industries] more efficient in the heat of the competition, they simply shut down and set thousands of workers onto the streets.”³³ This trend in economic management has not been reversed

³¹ Collier, Paul et al, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. (New York, Oxford University Press and World Bank, 2003).

³² Tandon, Yash, *Ending Aid Dependence*, (Cape Town: Fahamu – Networks for Social Justice, 2008.).

³³ Tandon, 61.

in the current peace-building responses. In effect, the countries which are currently being sponsored by the PBC are only being assisted to become more integrated into the neo-liberal economic structures and more importantly shaping them into becoming more import and donor dependent in the post-conflict phase of their national development. It is, therefore, vital to note that so long as the World Bank and the IMF do not change their financial policies and the economic strategies towards developing countries in Africa, more conditions will be created to precipitate more conflicts and underdevelopment. This will culminate in the PBC moving in a perpetual culture of vicious cycle in unending peace-building coordination efforts in Africa.

Strategic Conditionalities for Successful Peacebuilding in Africa

It is important for the PBC to match its strategic vision and capacities with emerging trends in African politics. The future state of the PBC in Africa will largely depend on a set of factors described in this section as: the quality of strategic African leadership, visionary leadership in the mediation of conflicts and transitional governance processes. This section is devoted to a discussion on these key areas as conditions precipitating the success or otherwise of the PBC in Africa.

Strategic African Leadership

Firstly, it is important to situate the future state of affairs of the PBC within the emerging political context in Africa. Some African leaders have assumed a style of leadership that only points to an elitist and exclusivist rule which disconnects them from their populations. Such leadership style is not visionary and does not inspire trust, confidence and unity of purpose. Political leadership invariably is about adherence to the principles of accountability, engagement, transparency, delivery of public goods and responsibility.³⁴ And without such key principles in political governance in Africa, leadership has little or no value of legitimacy upon which strategic purposes of sovereign authority can thrive. Part of the problem with African governance is that there has always been the tendency to equate presidency to leadership. But while accepting that the two do not mean the same, they have conveniently been used in a way that is proving more detrimental to the political progress of African people. Consequently, Africa will

³⁴ Maisiri, Trevor, *A New Political Leadership Discharged*. (African Reform Institute, 2009).

continue to produce dynamic personalities emerging out of politics that will only emerge as presidential elites and not as leaders. This is a sad commentary that the region is profoundly suffering from leadership crisis, at a point when it needs a visionary leadership, capable of mobilizing the population and directing their energies and aspirations from violence means of attaining power toward a common vision of wealth creation and development.³⁵

Because politicians see politics and state power as avenues to advance their self-seeking interests, they do everything, however contemptuous of capture and retain political power, many a times totally oblivious to the unpopular and injurious consequences that their actions may have on their populations. Recent political developments in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Madagascar and Niger are all clear demonstrations that African politicians only seek power for its sake rather than applying it for the achievement of the welfare of their populations³⁶. But seeking political power without a commitment to responsibility and accountability to the people will only make such self-seeking politicians presidents and not leaders.³⁷ Peace building is a long-term activity and therefore requires visionary leadership to inspire confidence in the process in order to attain the futuristic goals set out to bring sustainable peace in Africa. In the next ten years to come, the success or otherwise of the PBC in Africa will largely depend on the type of political leadership that will emerge on the African continent. But more critically, much of the success of the PBC in Africa will require that its mandate is made more flexible to directly engage the political processes in Africa instead of always remaining aloof only to respond when the harm had already been done. It is instructive to note that preventive responses in political matters in Africa are always better than knee-jerk responses to conflict situations which often put emphasis on security.

Mediation of Conflicts

Secondly, Africa's attempts at resolving most of its political crisis, some of which have prompted and undermined peace-building activities in the region, have involved responses that only tended to reinforce the status quo of always settling for nothing more than a compromised vision, thus lowering the capacity, incentive and standards that should be associated with visionary leadership in mediation during conflict resolution efforts.³⁸ The lack of visionary leadership in

³⁵ Van, Wyk Jo-Ansie, *Political Leaders in Africa: Presidents, Patrons and Profiteers. ACCORD :Occasional Paper Series*, Vol 2: No. 1. (2007).

³⁶ Aning & Bah, op cit.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ There have been several cases in point where both the AU's and ECOWAS's political principles have been set aside because of political expediency to engage with leaders in Mauritania, Guinea and Niger.

mediation outcomes speaks volumes about how convenient it is for African leaders to always rush into compromised options in critical instances such as peace agreements without minding to systematically consider the long-term repercussions of such compromised solutions on the envisaged peace-building activity that will ensue thereafter to ensure sustainable peace. In effect, such actions rather culminate in prolonging, spreading and multiplying peace-building responses in Africa. What it does to the envisioned future of the PBC is that it may derail the integrated strategies in peace-building coordination in Africa which may subsequently affect the confidence in the current architecture to deliver greater outcomes in the future. This may prompt another series of institutional reform which may be contemplated by the UN as a consequence to the unintended failures of the PBC. The PBC needs to revise its position and strategies on peace agreements support in Africa.

Transitional Governance

Following from the lack of visionary mediation outcomes in most conflict resolution efforts in Africa, power sharing arrangement has suddenly become a universal panacea to most political crisis in Africa. While such arrangements may be useful as a short-term measure to restore political stability in a post-conflict environment, it might be overly detrimental to peace-building efforts in the long run, principally because it serves as a political incentive and means to reward political actors who use unconstitutional means to achieve their political goals. Such practices may become catalyst for other potential “spoilers” who may wish to use similar means of acquiring or perpetuating political power.³⁹ The AU and ECOWAS’s new governance and security architecture clearly prohibits such unconstitutional means of retaining and changing governments⁴⁰ but the commitment to enforce this provision has always been lacking.⁴¹ In the few instances where enforcement measures have been invoked through regional peacekeeping and mediation efforts such as ECOWAS in Sierra Leone and Togo, it was fraught with regional hegemonic controversy.

The PBC can be more proactive in strengthening the capacities of political parties and provision of electoral support to election management bodies in order to create a leveling playing field for both in-

³⁹ See UN, “Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict”. A/63/881-S/2009/304, (New York: UN, 2009).

⁴⁰ Williams, D. Paul, “From Non-Intervention to Non-Indifference: The Origins and Development of the African Union’s Security Culture”. *African Affairs*. Vol. 106, No. 523. (2007): 253-279.

⁴¹ See Aning, K. & Samuel Atuobi., “The Economic Community of West African States and the Responsibility to Protect” in Andy Knight & Frazer Egerton, (eds), *The Responsibility to Protect* (forthcoming): 2010.

cumbent and opposition parties while ensuring that election management institutions retain their independence in conducting free and fair elections in Africa. Democratic reforms, especially in post-conflict countries should ensure that those who take part in transitional governments do not directly take part in future democratic elections. Such provisions should be captured in peace agreements before they are supported by the PBC. The pursuit of criminal justice and efforts to end the culture of impunity in African politics are critical ways of building a sustainable peace in any post-conflict situations and should be a key priority for the PBC in Africa. However, the decision taken by the African leaders to suspend cooperation with the International Criminal Courts (ICC) on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity to some African Leaders has a far reaching implication for future peace-building activities in Africa. Such a collective decision by the African leaders has again exposed them to their often compromised approaches to regional peace and security matters. The decision may lead to a contraction in the flow of support to the PBC to finance its peace-building programmes in Africa. Again, it may result in a lack of cooperation by other state actors who genuinely believe in the doctrine of the 'Responsibility to Protect' in the strategic coordination of peace-building efforts by the PBC.

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that Africa has experienced endemic political insecurity and as a result constituted a drain on peace-building resources, it nevertheless provides critical opportunities and entry points for the institutional reform agenda required within the UN in moderating the way in which it responds to threats posed by state fragility and eventual collapse.

It is therefore critical that the PBC begins to examine more critically the formulation and implementation of integrated regional strategies on peace-building coordination. Furthermore, it should also focus on being more proactive in its engagements with the political processes within the internal structures in the UN and that of Africa as well. It is also equally important to begin the processes of using current peace-building strategies as pivots of industrialization to stimulate local and regional economic growth in Africa. Admittedly, though, it is not going to be an easy task to embark on the proposed reforms discussed in the paper but the proposals are worth considering if the PBC is to step up its strategic responses in Africa in the longer term.

List of Working Papers – The Future of the Peacebuilding Architecture Project:

Kwesi Aning and **Ernest Lartey**: *Establishing the Future State of the Peacebuilding Commission: Perspectives on Africa*

Thomas Biersteker and **Oliver Jütersonke**: *The Challenges of Institution Building: Prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Commission*

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www.statebuilding.org

About the Contributors

Kwesi Aning, Head, Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Department, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana

Thomas Biersteker, Gasteyer Professor of International Security, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Cedric de Coning, Research Fellow, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Rob Jenkins, Professor of Political Science, Hunter College and the Graduate Center, and Associate Director, Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, City University of New York

Oliver Jütersonke, Head of Research, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva and Research Fellow, Zurich University Centre for Ethics (ZUCE)

Ernest Lartey, Research Associate, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana

Carolyn McAskie, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, and former Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding, United Nations

Erin McCandless, Founder and Co-Executive Editor, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, and Adjunct Professor, New School for General Studies, New York and New York University, New York

Roland Paris (Project Director), Director of the Centre for International Policy Studies and Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa

Angelika Rettberg, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Research Program on Peacebuilding, University of the Andes, Bogotá, Colombia

Eli Starnes, Senior Research Fellow, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Necla Tschirgi, Research Associate, Centre for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa, and former Senior Policy Advisor, Peacebuilding Support Office, United Nations

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