General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session of the provisional agenda*
Item 39 (b)
Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable
peace and sustainable development

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa**

Progress report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/235 of 23 December 2003, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of that resolution, taking into account recent developments relaStweesocent deat

I. Introduction

1.   The progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) has been monitored and reported to the General Assembly since 2000. Following its

efforts are directed at economic reconstruction and at combating poverty and under-development, including through NEPAD. All of them are signatories to the Algiers Declaration adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in 1999,[1] which emphasizes, inter alia, the need to change government only through constitutional means. They continue to make efforts to consolidate democracy in their respective countries by holding regular multiparty elections and establishing constitutional order, together with the necessary checks and balances.

4.   African countries and regional organizations on the continent have made serious efforts to deal with the scourge of conflict by promoting peace negotiations and brokering peace agreements in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia and the Sudan. They have also established, under the auspices of the African Union, a legal framework and structures which will enable them to deal effectively with conflicts, such as the Peace and Security Council and the Protocol relating to its establishment, and the Committee of the Wise which supports the work of the Council. They have also deployed peacekeeping forces and military observers in a number of African countries and are currently establishing an African standby force to enable them to undertake and participate more effectively in peace operations.

5.   The number of military coups on the continent has diminished and countries that have experienced a coup d'état or an attempted coup d'état (Central African Republic, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Sierra Leone) have quickly restored or are working towards the restoration of constitutional order. There have also been efforts made in Africa to improve governance and human rights records. For example, 23 countries have now acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism of NEPAD, which was established to assess, monitor and promote good political, economic and corporate governan

action taken, the progress made and the constraints encountered are described below.

Responding to situations of conflict

Envoy tendered his resignation, stating that he had now done all that he could to assist the parties in finding a solution to the conflict. He also stated that, while progress had been made in a number of ways during his seven years of involvement, the international community had not been able to resolve the underlying dispute. The mandate of MINURSO has since been extended until 30 October 2004, and the Mission has continued to promote peace through confidence-building measures such as facilitating the exchange of family visits between Western Sahara and the refugee camps in Algeria.

12.   Efforts at promoting and reconciling the parties in conflict continued in West Africa, where the United Nations Office in West Africa is closely working with my special representatives in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Addressing regional instability and preventing the escalation of conflict through peace-building has been the main focus of my special representatives in West Africa who, apart from mobilizing donor support to revive the Mano River Union, have been working with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to address cross-border issues affecting the region, such as the strengthening of the moratorium on small arms and light weapons, reform of the security sector, adoption of a regional approach to youth unemployment, protection of children and women against sexual exploitation and combating the use of mercenaries. An encouraging development in West Africa is the increasing engagement of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, which have undertaken joint missions and made specific recommendations to address the issues affecting the region.

13.   **However, it should be noted that, while special mediators and special commissions continue to offer a medium for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the primary responsibility rests in the hands of Member States, including by the implementation of the recommendations of these independent actors**.

2.   **Mobilizing international support for peace efforts**

Challenges and constraints

16.   The commitment of the Group of Eight to enhancing the capacity of African regional organizations will certainly help Africa to engage effectively in conflict management and resolution. However, the international community needs to be sensitive and responsive to the African quest for enhanced coordination and coherence, including the ambit in which the support is required.

17.   The political and material support from the international community and the collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in post-conflict situations have been instrumental in peace consolidation. In the post-conflict recovery phase, there is a need for immediate peace dividends, which may help the parties to convince their followers and the general populace of the benefits of peace. In this regard, it is important that international support is also directed at

4.   **Stopping the proliferation of arms**

to seven years. As regards the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council, in resolution 1533 (2004), requested all States to report to the related Council Committee on the actions that they had taken to implement the arms embargo and to provide it with information on those found to have violated the arms embargo or to have supported them in undertaking such activities.

24. The Security Council is also engaged in efforts to identify the air and maritime companies whose aircraft and vessels have been used in violation of the arms embargo. Since the entry into force in 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of

international community in general converged at a critical time to make the mission

ground for post-conflict and peace-building activities. In this regard, the international community has begun to develop a more coherent strategy for addressing short-term stability while undertaking efforts to ensure durable peace and stability.

33. The United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire is assisting the parties to implement the Linas-Marcoussis agreement which seeks to address issues such as citizenship, identity status of foreign nationals, the electoral law, land tenure and economic recovery, while in Burundi and in Liberia, United Nations missions have been making strides in assisting these countries to reconcile their deeply divided societies, and to face up to the humanitarian and economic challenges. In the Sudan, I have appointed a Special Representative in anticipation of the signing of the

Task Force will be boosted to operate at the brigade level, while the remaining 1,500 would constitute a reserve force.

Challenges

37. At the summit meeting of the Group of Eight held in June 2004, some member countries made specific proposals with regard to the training and equipping of the African standby force. The African Union and the Group of Eight countries will need to reach an agreement with regard to the modalities and eligibility criteria for this support and how the support will be channelled.

38. The African Union and African Governments will also need to address the issue of the relationship between the Union and regional organizations. While on the economic front African leaders have already decided that the regional economic communities are the implementing pillars of NEPAD and that all have a role to play, the situation on the security front is not the same. The proliferation of regional organizations and their overlapping memberships make it difficult to decide which organization would play a role in security issues, especially in East Africa.

8. Supporting regional and subregional initiatives

39. There has been a positive trend on the continent regarding conflict prevention and management. The African regional organizations are increasingly taking the lead in conflict prevention and management. The African Union and African subregional organizations, in particular ECOWAS, have been playing an important role in the management of conflicts in Africa, in some cases taking the lead in actual peacekeeping operations. SADC and the African Union have taken the lead in resolving the conflict in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. SADC is also helping to find a solution for the issue of land in Zimbabwe. In 2003, SADC launched a mutual defence pact to promote regional cooperation in regard to politics, defence and security. The pact, which is also intended to help pave the way for the creation of an SADC brigade as part of the proposed African standby force, allows for enforcement measures as a last resort, with the authorization of the Security Council. IGAD has been instrumental in facilitating the talks in Somalia and in the Sudan. In West Africa, ECOWAS has played an important role in facilitating the end of the conflict in the Mano River Union countries. I welcome the supportive efforts of Canada, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union in this regard. The United Nations system has been working closely with these countries and organizations, lending its political, technical and financial support.

40. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has had preliminary contact with some subregional organizations, including ECOWAS, ECCAS and IGAD, to identify the support needed to enhance their peacekeeping capacity. The Department has also been engaged in various peacekeeping training programmes, including training of African trainers at the various centres of excellence in Africa. It has carried out a series of pre-deployment training in peacekeeping for African troop-contributing countries. The United Nations is also cooperating with bilateral donors and other organizations involved in strengthening African peacekeeping capacity so as to ensure that all efforts in this area are closely coordinated and meet the broader United Nations peacekeeping standards.

41.   The Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have assisted in the formulation of the concept of the establishment of the African standby force and the Military Staff Committee in the framework of implementation of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which was endorsed by the African heads of State in Syrte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 28 February 2004. Currently, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is considering areas in which the United Nations could provide further assistance to the African Union, including the development of realistic plans of action to establish the African standby force and the reinforcement of the capacity at African Union headquarters to plan, launch and manage peacekeeping operations.

42.   The United Nations system, through the Department of Political Affairs, has also worked closely with the African Union and subregional organizations and with countries which have taken the leadership role in peace initiatives, for example, the Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi, the IGAD-led peace processes in Somalia and the Sudan, the mediation efforts between the Government of the Sudan and the rebel movements in the Darfur region, and the African Union with regard to the inter-Congolese dialogue, which includes the convening of a conference on peace and

to finding a negotiated solution and when the regional organizations have played an active role in facilitating the finding of that solution.

9. Protecting civilians in situations of conflict

46. The promotion and protection of human rights has been increasingly mainstreamed in the work of the Organization. Most United Nations activities and programmes today are guided by a rights-based approach. Recent peace operations in Africa have included a human rights component as an integral part of the mission, financed through assessed contributions. However, where peacekeeping operations have not been established, independent human rights monitoring is the only means for the United Nations to monitor and report on the situation. Reporting by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Security Council on Côte d'Ivoire in March 2004 and on the situation in Darfur was based on such an operation. Such human rights missions continue to be undertaken through voluntary funding and hence are rarely carried out, despite the greater need for them in providing a means of protection for civilians through their monitoring and reporting activities which help to mobilize international support.

47. The concept of protection of civilians in armed conflict was first introduced in my 1998 report (A/52/871-S/1998/318), in which I identified the protection of civilians in situations of conflict as a humanitarian imperative. This stemmed from the reality that, in recent years, civilian populations had become increasingly the main targets of armed groups rather than the indirect victims. However, much progress has been made in this regard. The Security Council has heeded my recommendation that more attention be paid to the monitoring and reporting of

assistance. The Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs continues to provide the overarching policy framework for the work of the Organization in the humanitarian field. The Committee's Implementation Group on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict provides a platform for improved inter-agency coordination and for facilitating a system-wide approach to the issue. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has strengthened its coordination activities in relation to African emergencies by reviewing situations of individual countries in regular working group meetings. The Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs has adopted a more systematic and coordinated approach to transitional issues.

54. The Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has played a key role in

entrepreneurs with their business ventures, which in turn create new jobs. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization has initiated programmes, such as that on rural energy development for productive use in Africa's post-conflict countries. Integrated programmes on post-conflict activities are about to be finalized for the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone; the programmes focus on industrial rehabilitation, with specific attention gi

17. **Managing natural resources**

65.   The management of natural resources deserves further attention on the continent and by the international community. **The United Nations family of organizations has been paying particular attention to this issue by supporting local efforts with the expertise and resources needed to develop good management schemes for natural resources. For example, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to provide technical support to the Niger Basin Authority and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to strengthen their management of water and energy resources.**

66.   As most of the intractable conflicts on the continent come to an end, the durability of peace will depend greatly on the capacity of each new Government to take control of the natural resources and manage the wealth of the State in a transparent and accountable manner that will benefit its people. The illicit exploitation of columbo-tantalite, alluvial gold and silver, diamonds, semi-precious stones, timber and cash crops such as coffee and cocoa have provided rebel movements with revenue to rearm and prolong the fighting or the State parties to conflict to train and equip the rebels to fight surrogate wars and to deprive millions of people of the benefits to be derived from the exploitation of these resources.

67.   The international community has supported the creation of an environment that will allow greater control over the illicit exploitation of natural resources. The emerging coordination between the private sector and Member States in developing a regime to help to reduce the flow of resources to warring parties is welcomed. In this regard, the Kimberley Process has developed a means of preventing conflict diamonds from entering the marketplace. The Process is an important instrument for maintaining peace by helping to deny resources to rebel movements and by strengthening legitimate Governments.

18. **Emphasizing social development**

Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women

68.   The United Nations, in particular through the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has adopted a proactive approach in assisting African States to close gender gaps in governance and education, to meet the nutritional requirements of expectant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls, to empower women (e.g., through asset-creation interventions, changes in food distribution mechanisms and increased participation of women in food distribution committees) and to make progress towards the achievement of gender equality in the workplace. The implementation of this gender policy is based on four pillars: guidelines, training, baselines and good practice case studies. Gender focal points from more than 30 countries were trained to implement the survey. However, as at June 2004, only 17 African States had ratified the Optional Protocol adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 to accelerate the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. At the African Union summit meeting held in Addis Ababa in 2004, African heads of State and Government pledged to sign and ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa by the end of 2004 and to support the launching of public campaigns aimed at its entry into force in 2005. Meanwhile, it is a welcome development that 50 per cent of the commissioners of

the African Union are women and the First Speaker of the new African Parliament is a woman. In southern Africa, UNIFEM supported the SADC Parliamentary Forum to build the skills of the women's caucus in leadership, gender and human rights, and lobbying and advocacy in order to move closer to attaining the goal of a 30 per cent representation of women by 2005, as envisaged in the SADC Gender and Development Declaration of 8 September 1997.

69. The humanitarian community has also developed strategies aimed at preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations. Gender sensitivity is part of security, health, humanitarian and development programming in every post-conflict context in Africa. Practical policies and guidelines have been adopted and improvements made in the structure of peacekeeping and assessment missions to include gender advisers and child protection advisers. UNFPA has also taken steps to provide protection to victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Through an internal bulletin issued in 2003, I have instructed that the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children in armed conflict by United Nations personnel must be addressed and that a minimum standard of behaviour should be followed and measures taken to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

70. Since the issuance of my previous report in 2003, further progress has been made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in my 1998 report. In this regard, while steady progress is noted in areas such as peacemaking and peacekeeping, in other areas — such as the strengthening of democratic governance, enhancing administrative capacity and ensuring the independence of judiciary and promoting transparency and accountability — progress has been modest and slow. Slow progress is also shown in poverty reduction, despite the great efforts made by African countries to implement NEPAD and create an enabling environment for economic growth and sustainable development. Greater efforts are also being made to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicitp

HIV/AIDS and who must be involved in all efforts to halt its spread. The growing loss of personnel in the military forces and police through HIV/AIDS undermines the ability of African countries to protect their citizens and borders and to fight against civil and international terrorism. **Increased efforts need to be directed towards fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa.**

73.   The illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources have also been a major source of continued instability on the African continent. **Some progress has been made through the Kimberley Process to regulate the trade in diamonds, but Member States need to seek ways of tightening the rules and controls in order to ensure compliance in this regard.**

74.   Demographic pressures are increasing in many poor and ecologically fragile zones in both urban and rural areas in Africa as a result of high fertility rates and a shortage of arable land. Demographic pressures threaten to undermine all of the positive efforts of the United Nations and African Governments in areas such as peace-building and the promotion of good governance and democratization. **Member States need to pay attention to the demographic pressures and issues of migration that are becoming an increasing source of tension in West, Central and East Africa.**

75.   **There is a need for the international comms.5(need)5.k778 0 TD2-5.8(.5(neeghdemogra}ok778 0t Ev**

[6] International Campaign to Ban Landmines, *Landmine Monitor Report 2003: Toward a Mine-free World* (see http://www.icbl.org, 2003).

[7] General Assembly resolution 54/263, annex II.

[8] Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments, vol. II: Regional Instruments (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.XIV.1), sect. C, No. 39.

————————