



Critical Issues for AU-EU Collaboration on Health and Science

At the occasion of the AU-EU Summit

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Capacity Development for Peace-Building in Africa as a precondition for
Collaboration

Key Note Address Speaking Notes

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Introduction

Africa was almost succeeding in putting off embers of conflict fires which devastated the continent over sixty decades when the covid19 pandemic struck. The Ebola endemic of 2014 and 2015 was well managed and contained by WHO. In 2017 Kenya had led the way with the famous 'handshake' between the sitting president and the opposition to show the world that peace building requires great humility and humbles because the nation is bigger than individual egos. South Sudan followed and other countries too. Even the USA is copying the Kenya model for peace building to address internal inner-city conflicts. After any elections we witness heads of state swearing by their respective constitutions to protect their people and boundaries. In these people there are no enemies. They are one people who deserve support to meet basic needs like medicine, vaccines, water, decent housing, education, employment, free movement across ethnic divide. But when there is no peace every good desire goes up in smoke. There have been nine attempted coups in Africa and six have been successful. There is need for a study to measure the relationship between military coups and covid19 pandemic. Capacity development then calls for getting the right leaders who can unite their own people and extend a hand of peace building on the continent.

Anna Marriot, Oxfam's Health Policy Manager, while speaking on BBC same time (November 2021), criticized vaccine producers for boasting to have the experience and expertise of vaccine development, production and manufacture life-saving medicines and vaccines, but have nothing to show of how they were helping developing countries to have enough doses for their populations. That time only 3% of Africa had been vaccinated while the rich nations were hoarding vaccines. Oxfam had estimated from available records that Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna would make pre-tax profits of \$34 billion by end of 2021 between them. It meant over a thousand dollar per second, \$65,000 per minute and \$93.5 million per day. Five new Billionaires had been produced from these monopolies during the pandemic, with a combined net wealth of \$35.1 billion.

Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus appreciated the call and added that 'vaccine nationalism threatens to prolong the pandemic'.

In the policy paper 2021 ACCORD¹ peace building in Africa has been affected by covid-19 pandemic. And not just Africa, but the current COVID-19 pandemic has changed the dynamics of human security globally. In Africa, the weak socio-economic outlook for states and citizens has been further exacerbated due to the negative impacts of the pandemic. COVID-19 has made disparities in security indices, known as the root causes of conflicts in Africa more obvious, and also exposed how health issues are intricately interwoven with peace and security. ²In a press statement released on 20th June 2020, the UN Commission on Peacebuilding in the Great lakes region underlined the intersection between covid19 pandemic and the disruption of economic activities in key sectors, such as health, education, transport, trade and tourism. National budgets were put under pressure, making it hard for the countries capacities to cope and address peace and security challenges.

Peacebuilders have recognized the intersection between peace and security, on the one hand, and the health pandemic on the other, and are responding in innovative ways to ameliorate the multiplier impacts in their communities. While some of them are strictly adhering to the ‘social distancing’ imperatives of the pandemic and biding their time for the pandemic to pass so they can return to their core peacebuilding mandates, others have adapted themselves to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Those already mobilizing adaptive measures are in two categories: one group is responding to the pandemic as a threat to peace and security while the other is responding directly to the pandemic as a health issue. Irrespective of the categories countries in Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa, the call is for all stakeholders and the networks institutions, local and international organizations one belong to, the common denominator is the resilience and innovations they are mobilizing for the common good of the affected citizens under their care people and to add value to Africa’s peace and security efforts now and beyond the covid19 pandemic. over.

Q. What must we do then? Capacity development, addressing peace building within each country, promoting the principles and values that uplift each person irrespective of ethnicity, clan, region, or political affiliation: ubuntu or utu does not discriminate. Among FBOs and African culture the imagery of the circle is very important: the centre is for the divine and everyone else belongs to the circle. The circle does not discriminate nor separate anyone due to gender, race, or colour. Once you remove

¹ The African centre for the constructive resolution of disputes ACCORD is a non-governmental, non-aligned conflict resolution institution based in Durban, South Africa.

² Press Release by the UN Peacebuilding Commission on the meeting on the Great Lakes Region 15 June 2020

God from the centre of the circle and place a human person you will experience a dictator, oppression, extrajudicial killings, extermination of the other (Jonas Kaleli, Ali Mazrui, Desmond Tutu, . Why must the other suffer? Why must leaders punish those they do not like? Who says those are enemies and us are the good ones? In the African democracies, the context is all are part of the circle and all will face justice for their crimes.

What kind of capacity development is required for peacebuilding in Africa?

For better health service delivery in Africa, peace among nations and within the nations is key. Ordinary people are not interested in war but services that contribute to the common good, uplift each other's dignity and spread humane desires as human beings. Like in most well-known practices among faith institutions there are African proverbs which state that when my neighbour bleeds I bleed, when my neighbor is hungry I am hungry too, when my neighbour is not vaccinated and I am the only one vaccinated then I am not safe.

Capacity building then calls for actions that build, strengthen, maintain necessary and required competences and harnessing resources needed to sustain, improve health services for all people vulnerable and underserved populations whether in enemy zones or not.

Some of the capacity development activities in better public health delivery include technical assistance, training, fair data collection technologies for easy sharing, data interoperability, analysis and reusability for high quality material development and improving research.

Universities in the north and west can collaborate with Universities across Africa in this skill exchange to move towards developing own vaccines and other vital medicines to meet local demand.

The role of respective Governments Africa is to improve on capacity development of its leaders not to discriminate against its own citizens who are found in conflict zones.

They should build capacity in public health and peace building, by improving on capacity development at all state levels, local regional levels, strengthen the health care safety net, advance shared public health goals with health resource and services administration.

International collaboration means stopping Politicization of healthcare and covid19

- Actors- FBOS, National integration and cohesion commission in Kenya,
- Region: All Africa Conference of Churches, with their partners across the globe, (Tangaza University , EEPA, American Friends, recognizing cohesion and peaceful coexistence and sharing in the common goods like vaccines to all citizens.
- Through AMECEA Countries all concerned for peace and mobilizing adaptive measures for peaceful solutions and amicable handshakes for development, for better delivery of services.
- West-Europe-Africa peace initiatives, local community actors -across border initiatives call for collaboration from the international community to build capacity that understands its own context and recognizes the international law. Geneva conventions for rights observances etc.
- President of Kenya and UN Security Council initiatives recognize the nexus between peace building and health care delivery as a right for all citizens. It means even prisoners, prisoners of war, those in captivity deserve the same rights as free people, whether passing through as refugees, migrants or stranded passers-by. PRESIDENT OF KENYA: leading IGADD and UN Security Council for warring groups to shake hands. If it has worked in Kenya, it can work anywhere. But the right capacity of leaders immersed in humility and humbles are key.

Conclusion

We recognize the intersection between peace and security, on the one hand, and the health pandemic on the other. But capacity development has been hampered by conflict due to poor leadership. It calls for innovative ways to ameliorate the multiplier impacts in their communities.

Therefore, capacity development for peace building in Africa should be taken as a precondition for collaboration among nations, across continents and with donors.

Key references

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