Advancing an African Peacebuilding agenda: Lessons for South Africa

Conference Report

Kievits Kroon Pretoria, South Africa

11th and 12th February 2015
Key Note Address: Annette Leijenaar, Conflict Management and Peacebuilding (CMPB) Division Head

Ms Leijenaar welcomed conference participants noting that the conference was a result of the project “Enhancing South Africa’s Post-Conflict Development and Peacebuilding Capacity in Africa”. While this project focus has predominantly been on South Africa, the project had naturally engaged with a wide range of actors and international processes, which fed into the broader peacebuilding activities that the ISS carries out.

Ms Leijenaar stated that 2015 presents a significant turning point in peacebuilding debates. The forthcoming UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding reviews offer many opportunities for more effective peacebuilding, as does the development of south-south cooperation frameworks, which offer a compliment to traditional donor activities. She also noted a recent speech by Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant of the UK Mission to the UNSC, which highlighted some important lessons on the effectiveness of peacebuilding. The first of these lessons involves the changing context of peacebuilding support – increasingly seen less as a post-conflict endeavour but rather one that begins during high-intensity conflict and with changing drivers of conflict. This changing context requires a greater analysis of conflict drivers, with sequenced and prioritised recommendations. Relating the second important lesson in the speech, Ms Leijenaar referred to the primacy of politics, the importance of creating political space for peacebuilding activities, the need to align peace, security and development activities into a coherent strategy and, whilst acknowledging the principles of national ownership, also being aware of its limitations. The third lesson, she noted, is that peacebuilding requires sustained political attention and support.

Ms Leijenaar thanked DFID for giving the ISS the support needed to bring peacebuilding issues to the fore. She also noted her expectations for the conference as being to generate a number of recommendations that can take peacebuilding work forward in the future.
Theme 1: Improving the effectiveness of peacebuilding

Chaired by Annette Leijenaar

Lauren Hutton, Independent Consultant

In a video address, Ms Hutton focused on a paper written for the ISS in which she questioned the relevance of peacebuilding within the external interventions in Africa. These interventions, she argued, are characterised by flawed statebuilding processes, liberal intentions, the lack of individual rights, and patronage-based, closed networks of power. Ms Hutton argued that peacebuilding needs to engage with the restructuring of political and economic power, especially through giving substance to individual political and economic rights. She emphasised that violence continues to be a means of ordering, i.e. creating, sustaining and changing the obligations and exercise of power and therefore, for peacebuilding to be relevant it must engage with the causes of violence, such as the effects of inequality, that are sustained though networks of obligation within political systems.

Amanda Lucey, Senior Researcher, CMPB

Ms Amanda Lucey focused on bridging the evidence gap in peacebuilding and implications for Africa, noting that there was still limited knowledge over what made peacebuilding processes effective. She stated that peacebuilding was particularly relevant for Africa because it was the focus of many peacebuilding-related global processes. Referring to a recent Institute for Security Studies workshop, Ms Lucey referred to four major criteria relevant to gathering data on peacebuilding: relevance, technical criteria, timeliness and preventative focus. However she also stressed that it was also important to consider ways of influencing policy makers and translating evidence into policy.

Looking ahead, Ms Lucey noted a number of important opportunities for 2015 in peacebuilding. This included designing more realistic assumptions for peacebuilding and focussing more on the country context, promoting an African voice in the United Nations (UN) peacebuilding review, improving links between the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding reviews, examining the role of big data, developing a framework for SSC and its links to peacebuilding and developing strategies to influence policy makers.
Dr Anita Mathur, United Nations, Department of Political Affairs

Dr Anita Mathur focused on the role of south-south cooperation (SSC) and emerging powers in peacemaking and peacebuilding. Noting that SSC was an alternative partnership model to traditional cooperation, she outlined the context for engagement by emerging powers and South Africa in particular. Dr Mathur stressed the importance of national ownership and the need to support national civilian capacity development and institution building. She suggested that South Africa could do more in terms of peacebuilding and noted that it is a good case study to be used by other African countries due to its own process.

Dr Mathur stressed the imperative of mainstreaming SSC into peacebuilding initiatives and suggested ways of doing this both nationally and in the UN. Nationally this included: the development of national frameworks that systematically integrate SSC in activities relating to peacebuilding, the identification of niche capacities and resources, the identification of the nature of UN support required to scale up SSC, the facilitation of a coherent policy framework across the UN that promotes expansion of SSC in the peace and security pillar as a cross-cutting issue, the facilitation of a policy dialogue that harmonizes fragmented approaches to conflict. She noted the important role that the UN can play and stated that UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and others can play a major role. Furthermore, she added that the UN Office of South-south cooperation (UNOSSC) and the Special Envoy should utilise their unique position as coordinators to lead efforts to expand and adapt existing SSC conceptual consensus and architecture and the define UN’s role as a catalyst.

Discussion

The discussion centered on the following points:

- Whether evidence actually has an impact on policy.
- The difference between theory and practice
- The need to view conflict holistically rather than as individual States or geographic regions
- The point where the peacebuilding continuum ends
- The roles of different actors (particularly southern actors) in peacebuilding
Theme 2: Partnerships and opportunities for peacebuilding

*Chaired by Professor Yolanda Sadie*

**Mr Sam Nyambi, African Solidarity Initiative**

Mr Nyambi noted that peacebuilding and conflict resolution is challenging in the African context. The irony about Africa is that it is a rich continent yet its inhabitants are poor and dependent on external stakeholders. There is need for a paradigm shift in Africa through seeking to work towards Agenda 2063, where Africa has to focus on human development, conflict resolution and peacekeeping.

Mr Nyambi stated that one had to look at the role of the AU as a game changer. The AU Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) objectives are to lay a foundation for social justice and sustainable peace, in line with Africa’s vision of renewal and growth. With the specific objective to encourage, fast track planning and implementation of reconstruction activities. Mr Nyambi described the ASI a continental flagship initiative, for mobilization and support for PCRD, promoting and expanding intra-Africa mutual support. He concluded by suggesting that the AU can mobilize African countries in promoting reconstruction and development. Mr Nyambi suggests that the time had come for Africa to help Africa; self-reliance for development in general is vital. The objective for the AU PCRD framework is to engage all parties from the grassroots levels to the stakeholders so that there is solidarity and the same vision. Mr Nyambi concluded by stating that it is also important to note that without peace in Africa there won’t be any transformation or development.

**Ihab Awad Moustafa, United Nations PBSO**

Mr Ihab Awad Moustafa stated that the landscape of the 2005 peacebuilding review is not different from now, since it still looks at the evolution of peacebuilding architecture and the opportunities of Africa to engage in the broader aspects. However, the challenges and complexity of peacebuilding in countries and the nature of conflict has changed. He added that there is a major institutional gap in addressing peacebuilding challenges.
Mr Moustafa also stated that there was limited appreciation from the African caucus for the 2010 review, due to the fundamental differences of the knowledge in which PBA operates. To be effective, the 2015 review will therefore need to strengthen the voice of the south instead of the traditional donors. The panel of experts will gather evidence from five case studies in post conflict countries, namely Sierra Leone, Burundi, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Timor Leste. In particular they will address the following questions: What led to notable progress in the country case studies? What were the international and regional responses? What was the evolution in UN responses? What was the nature of impact of components on UN if they were engaged?

In speaking towards future opportunities to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding, Mr Moustafa noted that the panel had undertaken a trip to Ethiopia to consult with various stakeholders. He noted that the methodology for their work provided for extensive consultations. He also noted that there was enough space in the design of the process to focus on the Africa to Africa relationship. Moreover, think tanks have a lot of leeway to engage and influence the process. He outlined the body of research coordinated by the UN University, which focuses on themes such as gender (extension of state authorities) and regional perspectives and noted that this could also be drawn upon in the process. Finally, he stressed the role of African caucus in New York and how it is linked to respective capitals and the AU Peace and Security Council.

**Naomi Kok, Independent Consultant**

Ms Kok stated that due to a growth in intra-state conflict in Africa and the trend for such conflicts to spread across national boarders, regional organisations are increasingly well placed to respond to regional peace and security issues. Referring to a paper written for the ISS, Ms Kok discussed the role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in terms of how they can implement PCRD and outlined opportunities for South Africa to work more closely with SADC to implement PCRD. She noted that South Africa has already contributed to several developments at both African Union and SADC levels.
Ms Kok stated that there are four main considerations for implementing PCRD through SADC, and South Africa in particular. The first of these involves perception of South Africa acting as a hegemon. Secondly she pointed to the nature of South African foreign policy, which emphasised the importance of SSDC. Thirdly she noted limitations in the SADC structure, and finally, challenges with the SADC documents, namely the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ SIPO II.

Ms Kok recommends that the SADC organ be capacitated with more staff appointments. There should also be a review of SADC’s decision-making processes as it currently has no decision making power outside member states interest and thus struggles to implement anything. Naomi stated that South Africa can either help supply or fund for new personnel to facilitate the implementation of PCRD at SADC level. SADC can also improve its liaison with international partners.

For South Africa, Ms Kk recommends that it should explore possibilities of collaboration for SADPA and the SADC Regional Development Fund for the purposes of implementing PCRD activities. South Africa should also be instrumental in harmonising the visions of the AU and SADC.

**Discussion**

The discussion outlined the nature of RECs, focussing on

- The interests of member states vs the interest of the organization
- The political nature of SADC and this influence on its effectiveness.
- Internal politics in Department of International Relation and Cooperation (DIRCO) which have an effect on its engagement with SADC
- Is there a strategy or policy behind South Africa’s limited representation in terms of quotas in all regional bodies?
Theme 3: South Africa’s global peacebuilding experiences: innovative approaches?

Chaired by Cheryl Hendricks

Ines Tofalo, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

Ms Ines Tofalo stated that SSC is very broad with almost 20 principles in SSC. She noted that the IBSA fund allies with 13 countries, mainly least developed ones, for projects addressing food security, health, infrastructure, youth and other development related challenges.

Ms Tofalo stated that there are certain criteria used for funding projects, such as a strong focus on ownership and leadership in IBSA. Whilst the funds are usually used by peaceful developing countries, the fund has also been used in fragile states such as Burundi and South Sudan for security funding. IBSA has engaged in numerous consultations and advisory boards to shape common approaches of SSC.

According to Ms Tofalo, IBSA countries have a united common voice, and ensure decision-making is done through consensus building. Quarterly consultations ensure advance clarity, a shared position and allow for the management of pressures in challenging contexts. She stated that the advantage of the approach was an emphasis on a Southern perspective and the shaping of a distinct vision and approach, that it was more independent from traditional donor mechanisms & common approaches, that the “Impact Fund” challenged the UN system from within and that it incorporated broader concerns and experiences on initiatives of limited national/thematic focus. Beyond SSC funds, Ms Tofalo argued that South Africa can play a greater role in peacebuilding by rendering its capacities for visible to the UN system.

Alexander O’Riordan, Independent Consultant

Mr O’Riordan looked at South Africa and its global architecture. He also examined South Africa’s opportunities and resources. Mr O’Riordan argued that Mozambique is of strategic importance to South Africa, but that South Africa is more interested in other African states and is confused about its diplomacy. Mr O’Riordan outlined a study where he analysed the opportunities for SADPA in Mozambique. In the study Mr O’Riordan analysed economic and political history between Mozambique and
South Africa’s economic relations as well why the Mozambique economy is important for South Africa to harness.

He stated that South Africa should engage more with Mozambique since such engagements are of mutual benefit and suggests that this should be done through the assistance of social policies, government, civil societies and private sector.

Mr O’Riordan recommends the need for open dialogue between donors and government more especially in fragile states. The South African private sector is booming and most African states come to South Africa for resources. The need for South Africa to start a relationship with Mozambique in the business sector is vital.

**Catherine Grant**

Ms Grant stated discussed a paper that she had produced for the ISS in which she notes that state-owned companies are at the forefront of economic diplomacy and can provide an important bridge between state and business interests. Ms Grant observed that that state-business relations have had a complicated history with high levels of mistrust and few platforms for engagement.

In her presentation, Ms Grant noted that the private sector can be used as anchors of trade and investment promotion activities and have some common development objectives but also suffer from the challenges of internal weaknesses. The role of the media as a component of “soft power” to enhance South Africa’s economic diplomacy policy is key. She made a number of recommendations on economic diplomacy, peacebuilding, and the role of parastatals including establish regular platforms where state and business can engage, strengthen organized-business structure, develop a comprehensive strategy on global economic engagements that reflects a commonly held vision between government and business and develop strategic engagement on economic diplomacy with a critical mass of firms.

**Discussion**

The discussion focussed on:

- The need to focus on simplicity rather than complexity in peacebuilding.
- The use of international bodies to achieve national objectives.
• The potential for expansion of certain groups, such as IBSA.
• The inclusion of other African states in international bodies such as the G77.

**Theme 4: Emerging states and the global arena of development**

*Chaired by Alexander O’Riordan*

**Neissan Besharati, WITS/SAIIA**

Mr Besharati stated that the Declining Official Development Assistance (ODA) from DAC donors is contributed to by the financial crisis in North America and Europe, which resulted in closing aid taps to middle-income countries. This led to expectations being placed on the south to share the burden of global development.

Mr Besharati mentioned that The Delhi Conference of Southern Providers revealed that SSC had poor data and information management; weak monitoring and evaluation across all southern agencies and accountability concerns. There was thus an emerging need for knowledge sharing platforms and the development of a common position among southern partners; this led to the development of NeST.

He further mentioned that the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation is still a DAC driven process. Network of Southern Think-tanks (NeST), he argued, will not follow the same rules as the north as those rules are not appropriate for southern specific type of cooperation. SSC and NSC are essentially different things; they have a different history; different paradigm/approach; different functions; incomparable volumes; and different capacities, which are not the same as seasoned DAC donors with 40 years of experience.

Mr Besharati stated that NeST is led and driven by southern think-tanks in order to develop: a common definition on SSC; conceptual framework for SSC; indicators to measure impact of SSC; systematization of data collection on SSC; and to provide a road-map for development of SSC. The purpose of NeST is to “generate, systematise, consolidate and share knowledge on South-South Cooperation (SSC) approaches in international development”. Its membership include experts, universities, research institutes, think-tanks, NGOs and CSOs, private sector,
foundations, and networks engaged in research, policy debate and analysis of south-south cooperation and international development

A global technical workshop will be held in Midrand from 3-5 March in order to develop common definitions and frameworks to measure quantity, quality and impact of south-south cooperation.

Lesley Masters, University of Johannesburg

Ms Masters questioned what countries are doing around the post 2015 development agenda. The recent trends and challenges faced by SSC highlight the need to channel research priorities, timeframes and budgets to understanding how the different approaches to SSC contribute to substantive development areas and how SSC can best support the implementation of the post-2015 development goals. Ms Masters stated that the context of the post 2015 agenda is very different to the development of MDGs; the economic crises has undermined what developed countries are willing and able to do and influence.

Ms Masters noted that there are few visible champions of the post-2015 development agenda. When one researches different country positions on post 2015 there are lots of complexities. Reconciling different expectations is the real challenge and there are different elements creating friction between agendas and different positions. There is also the question of common but differentiated responsibility, which is causing contention between the north and south on a way forward.

Ms Masters noted that the understanding of aid for development cooperation means understanding the different meanings from both the north and the south. The north understands it as being linked to particular outcomes, and accountability. Whilst the south is much more focused on impact of recipients and how it affects national plans. She noted that both northern and southern donors have a focus on poverty and sustainable development.

Ms Masters questioned the role for South Africa in the post-2015 MDG process. South Africa already assumes for itself the role of bridge-builder and mediator and is engaged with a number of different development cooperation committees This then means there is opportunity to fit across different platforms for engagement. South Africa also identifies itself as the leading voice from the South, however its two
positions are not entirely compatible as it cannot be seen as taking sides. South Africa also sees its role as supporting development across Africa but may be missing opportunities for building like-minded cooperation and linkages between developed and developing states on common positions of interest.

**Karin Vasquez, Independent Consultant**

Ms Vasquez outlined the difference between SSC and traditional cooperation based on the premise that developing countries are better positioned to mutually contribute to the solution of their own challenges. SSC exchanges are believed to benefit from similar socioeconomic, geographic and climatic characteristics, cultural and historical ties. SSC, she noted, goes beyond financial resources to include exchange of knowledge and prioritizes skills and capacity development. SSC has also been taking the form of bilateral and trilateral engagements among countries in different regions, beyond bilateral cooperation with regional and sub-regional neighbours.

Ms Vasquez mentioned that an added advantage of SSC is the absence of a regime that enshrines certain principles this allowing Southern partners to innovate in rules, approaches and procedures. However, research shows that despite the expansion of SSC in recent years, there is still little evidence-based analysis on SSC contribution to the implementation of international development commitments like the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda; to policy formulation in substantive development areas like poverty eradication, education, energy, health, agriculture, peace and security; and to global regimes like climate change, trade and human rights. There is also lack of analyses on how the success factors (or enablers) of development experiences implemented in a particular setting inform the design and implementation of SSC. Few SSC activities focus on opportunities for scaling up, often leading to once-off activities or the need for repeated events. There therefore needs to be a systematised way of conducting SSC exchanges such that they may be more sustainable and long term.

South Africa’s peacebuilding efforts can be enhanced by:

Building the evidence base: many southern partners have looked into promoting socio-economic development initiatives to complement security-oriented efforts through capacity building and transfer of experiences with high potential for local adaptation, absorption and generation of positive impact. The country can also review SSC principles, the recent trends and challenges faced by SSC highlight the
need to channel research priorities, timeframes and budgets to understanding how the different approaches to SSC contribute to substantive development areas and how SSC can best support the implementation of the post-2015 development goals. And adopt new policy thinking, development of an integrated framework that reflects and harmonizes Southern priorities, perspectives and approaches, while pressing for a more representative global governance architecture.

Discussion

In the discussion, the following points were raised:

• The role of SSC within the post 2015 agenda in terms of implementation and global partnerships?
• The legitimacy of different actors and their underlying interests
• How internal problems affect how countries and its citizens perceive development cooperation.
• The need to focus on social economic development, which tackles issues of poverty and lack of service delivery, as well as domestic and political issues.
• Is SSC really different from north/south cooperation? Northern donors are now also changing their approach and principles.
• The primacy of security in Africa and the need for security before development.
• In the post-2105 discussion, the need to focus on common views, such as the eradication of poverty and safer environments, as a basis for discussion.
• The need to develop common denominators and from those develop a framework that can work for all in the post-2015 discussion.
• The need for southern countries to define their own priorities and ensure transparency and dialogue.
Theme 4: Examining best peacebuilding practices from the south

Chaired by Amanda Lucey

Dr Hazem Fahmy, Egyptian Embassy of Partnership for Development

Dr Hazem Fahmy gave a background to the set up of the Egyptian Embassy of Partnership for Development. The country has designed a developmental programme, which focuses largely on Africa in the past 4 years with an initial focus on resources and how to secure the instruments needed in order to undertake effective development.

Dr Fahmy shared that the agency considered partnerships, as one of the main areas that could assist in gaining necessary resources and developed countries were much more open and keen to partner. In his experience, training of diplomats should be a major focus area as there are different realities on the ground which diplomats from one state may not be necessarily able to deal with.

One has to know the African agenda and its priorities in order to undertake effective development. In Africa, Egypt has developed a Free Trade Area with some African regions including SADC. There has also been a strong focus on education with Egypt having world-class universities and awarding bursaries to African scholars. Health has also been one area of cooperation between Egypt and other African states especially with assisting Ebola affected states as well as specialization on cancer treatments and training doctors.

My Fahmy stated that there is a huge information gap in Africa and Egypt assists with research and technology. Culture is also a major contributor to development and Egypt has had a focus on these cultural aspects, which has had great impact.

Sal Muthayan (National School of Government SA)

Ms Muthayan stated Southern countries with stronger economies and stable systems are well positioned to form partnerships for regional reconstruction. She noted that well intended donor interventions often do not achieve the desired outcomes because there is non-adherence to the tenets of the Paris Declaration e.g.
ownership; and because the content of the designed projects are not aligned to the context and needs of recipient counties. She mentioned that the advantage of SSC is that it has better analysis and understanding of ‘real’ context for change. There is propensity for equal relations and high levels of trust as well as peer learning and knowledge exchange.

Ms Muthayan stated that building horizontal partnerships is one of the important pillars of SSC. South led initiatives have mutual interests, common colonial histories, and similar contexts and challenge, which lead to similar goals and aspirations. It is also important to build on existing networks. According to Ms Muthayan, creating and sustaining trust in SSC requires communication and consultation at all levels. This then dispels the tendency to compete and allows for greater openness and collaboration. She also noted that measuring progress is different for Southern countries than traditional donors. Results Based Monitoring (RBM) is not possible if not accompanied by Peer Based Monitoring.

Ms Muthayan pointed out that useful protocols to be considered when working with southern people which include: acknowledging that people of the south have knowledge and insights into their challenges and know their own solutions, not mistaking a lack of development for ignorance and working with mutual respect and trust. She also stated that ownership is. “Learning by doing” leads to sustainable project implementation. Some lessons to be learned for SSC are that: leaderships from all partners is key; consistent, mutual openness, trust, respect and accountability are important; and interventions are based on strong relations especially in the absence of strong institutions.

Discussion

The discussion concerned the following issues:

- The importance of strong internal leadership and good budgeting.
- That the sharing experiences is usually more valuable than provision of funding and resources and willingness of recipients to accommodate experiences.
- The need to redefine what is meant by SSC in the context of post-conflict countries.
• The difficulty of sustainability of projects as they change with changes of governments, who come with a different set of priorities and changes in leadership, which may not necessarily appreciate the work that was being done. There also may be no proper handover.

• How countries need to be empowered on how to deal with aid and development partners.
Annexure 1

Participant list

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