

General Assembly (GA)

PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: FROM WORDS TO ACTION

“I tell you, you cannot feel the pain of this suffering if you don’t see it physically.
If you only glance at it, a sword of sorrow will pierce your heart...”
-Ugandan School Girl

Throughout history, war has exacted a horrific toll on the world especially on women and children. Modern day conflicts are becoming more lethal with advancements in technology and the absence of practical distinctions between combatants and civilians. Today’s warfare is often marked by appalling levels of violence and brutality, from systematic rape and the destruction of crops to the poisoning of wells, outright genocide and the use of chemical and fear of nuclear warfare.

The end of the cold war raised hopes for an end to warfare fuelled by superpower rivalry. Instead the world has seen proliferation of armed conflict within states rather than between them. But even these so-called internal conflicts have regional and international dimensions due to globalisation. Frequently dismissed as “tribal wars” or “ethnic clashes” many of these conflicts are fuelled and financed by those countries, corporations and individuals with strategic interests. Struggles over natural resources like Diamonds have financed long running wars in Angola and Sierra Leone. In Sudan and elsewhere, civil conflicts revolve around crude oil. And the profits from illicit narcotics figure prominently in fighting in Afghanistan and Colombia.

None of these situations could exist for long without markets in affluent parts of the world. Global businesses (both legal and illegal) have spawned International complicity that makes wars not only possible but also highly profitable. International weapons sales especially of small arms help ignite and sustain wars. Small arms and light weapons are now readily available that the poorest communities can gain access to deadly weapons capable of transforming any local conflict into a bloody slaughter. Constrained by external debt and the demands of structural adjustment, many developing countries have been forced to restructure their economies, cut basic services and reduce the size of the public sector. In the process, they often weaken their economies and unwittingly open the gates to predatory interests hungry for power and profit.

So much has been said but not enough done about ensuring world peace and stability. It’s a fact that since the Second World War more people have been killed in wars than in both the First and Second World War. The world and all International Organisations seem to tolerate wars and its perpetrators.

Education, equitable sustainable development and respect for human rights are preconditions for preventing global conflict. Yet, the international community has not been prepared to make the necessary investments. Over 1.2 billion people live in absolute poverty; surviving on less than a dollar a day. More than 100 million children and twice as much adults, 60 per cent of them girls, have no access to education.

Security Council (SC)

STRENGTHENING CONFLICT PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND MECHANISM

Preventing armed conflict and stabilising countries emerging from conflict are at the heart of the mission of the United Nations and are central to the agenda of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Although many countries pay lip service to the potential of the United Nations, they are not ready to give it the political and financial backing it needs to take decisive action.

The flagrant violation of human rights is among the root causes of conflict and the resulting humanitarian crises but sadly the most neglected. Human rights verification as part of early warning and preventive action can help deter and defuse situations leading to conflict. Yet the political will and the procedures to assess, report, monitor, prosecute and remedy such violations are woefully inadequate. In his plan for UN reform, the Secretary-General called for human rights to be incorporated in early warning activities, as a key element of peacekeeping and peace-building efforts and in the context of humanitarian operations.

Conflict prevention and resolution relies on the efforts of civil society. NGOs and other civil groups have been behind many important anti-conflict campaigns, including the global ban on anti-personnel landmines, the global campaign to stop the use of child soldiers, the effort to curb small arms and light weapons and the promotion of the International Criminal Court.

In 1998, the UN Secretary-General called on African countries to reduce their purchases of arms and munitions to below 1.5 per cent of GDP and to commit to a zero-growth policy for defence budgets for a 10-year period. The ECOWAS and OAU moratorium on the import of small arms and light weapons has been greatly hampered by resources. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons bolsters the power of militaries, skews economic priorities, perpetuates ethnic and territorial conflicts and threatens human rights.

Governments and the United Nations should take uncompromising steps to demilitarise societies by strictly limiting and controlling access to weapons. Those who profit from the illicit sale of small arms and light weapons should be cracked down and prosecuted. In addition, fair and equal access to the benefits of sustained human development is the best defence against violent conflicts.

The world has been spending more on dealing with the consequences of armed conflict and less on preventing them. The need to spend on developmental efforts cannot be overemphasized, as peace cannot be achieved without equitable social development. In this new century, the need for the United Nations to realise its potential has never been greater, as modern warfare has achieved new and deadlier dimensions.

The UN Security Council, in cooperation with the rest of the UN system, must be strengthened to use all powers at its disposal in preventing conflicts, including early warning, preventive diplomacy and deployment of peacekeepers, preventive disarmament and post conflict peace-building.

Commission on Human Rights (CHR)

DEFINING TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

Terrorism is not a new problem, but it has become one from which no country feels safe. By their very nature, terrorist acts are grave violations on human rights and a threat to all that United Nation stands for; respect for human rights, the rule of law, protection of civilians, tolerance among peoples and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The war against terrorism therefore should be the fight to ensure human security, freedom and the sustenance of the rule of law by upholding basic human rights.

With the threat of trans-national terrorism becoming more urgent in the last six years, some government have, deliberately, seized the moment to step up repression, curtail civil liberties, undermine human rights protection and political dissent by imposing measures such as indefinite detention without trial, special courts based on secret evidence or cultural and religious restrictions –all in the name of fighting terrorism.

Security cannot take precedence over human rights and as such terrorism should not to drive the human rights agenda. Such blatant disregard for human rights and civil liberties has both immediate and long-term effects. Governments hiding under the cover of anti-terrorism to perpetuate their undemocratic acts cannot continue to go unnoticed. Such actions only help in facilitating the achievements of the terrorists' objectives, as tension, hatred and mistrust of Governments are among the places the terrorist easily find recruits for their terrorist groups.

It is therefore important that all Governments understand that the pursue of security at the expense of human rights is short-sighted, self-contradictory and self-defeating.

The delegates will deliberate on the need to set up effective norms and create strategies to implement relevant legal instruments to curb the excesses of such governments.

Peace Building Commission (PBC)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY

Post conflict recovery is a basic and important aspect of peace building. It aims at identifying and supporting structures, which can aid in strengthening and solidifying peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict in societies emerging from conflict.

Post conflict recovery essentially focuses attention on reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development in post-conflict societies and essentially comprises of three mutually, reinforcing dimensions:

1. **Security:** disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration & control of small arms and light weapons.
2. **Political development:** support for political and administrative authorities and structures, reconciliation, governance, democracy, human rights and judicial process.
3. **Social and economic development:** repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, reconstruction of infrastructure and important public functions, education, health, private sector development, employment, trade and investment.

Today, the threats we face are interconnected. This has created a need for more concerted efforts by all international organisations in ensuring global peace and stability, sustainable development and equality. We truly must strive to propose connected solutions. The development of extensive collaborations between political, military, humanitarian and development actors is one of the objectives of the Peace Building Commission.

Post-conflict recovery, as all developmental efforts, requires both financial resources and technical skills. For such efforts to be effective and timely, cooperative and coordinated action by International Security actors and Economic organisations including International financial institutions are essential.

The most important motivating factor for international assistance and cooperation in post-conflict recovery is the maintenance of stability in the international system and ensuring world economic stability. The United Nations therefore needs to establish and promote cooperation between other international organisations and financial institutions to ensure long-term development in post conflict areas.

Delegates will deliberate on the need for global partnership for recovery in post conflict societies and design mechanism to establish, promote and facilitate such partnerships. In addition, the delegates will debate on ways to influence the flow of private investments to post-conflict societies.

ECOWAS

PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN THE WEST AFRICAN SUB REGION

Small arms and light weapons which continue to pose a serious threat to global peace and sustainable development, are filling African graves in ever increasing numbers- from the killing fields of Darfur and the democratic republic of Congo to the creeks of the Nigerian Niger Delta and the streets of Johannesburg.

While the International Community searches so far unsuccessfully for an agreement on the regulation of the global trade in small arms and light weapons, a growing number of African countries, UN agencies and Non-Governmental organisations are grappling with the human and developmental consequences of gun violence and seeking to reduce both the supply and demand.

The widespread availability of small arms in the West African sub region today illustrates a contemporary phenomenon throughout conflict regions in Africa and indeed the world. Globalisation, the downsizing and privatisation of the military sector and the collapse of communism have combined to create a booming international market for weapons, underpinned by the plentiful supplies from cold war era stockpiles. Advances in information technology, the expansion of the cargo industry and the global reach of multinational weapons-trading networks that reach deep into the most volatile and remote conflict zones have contributed to the saturation of small arms and light weapons in the society.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa poses a major threat to development. Their low cost, ease of use and availability may escalate conflicts, undermine peace agreements, intensify violence and its impact on crime, impede economic and social development and hinder the development of social stability, democracy and governance.

In a bid to check the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the West African region the ECOWAS on the 31st of October 1998 adopted a three-year moratorium on the import of light weapons into the region. The organisation also established an arms register and database. The OAU followed suit in 1999, condemning the illicit proliferation and trafficking in small arms and calling for coordinated African action against the trade.

Delegates will deliberate on the creation of effective mechanisms to check the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the West African sub region.

Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM BEYOND IMAGINATION

After the catastrophic events of 9/11 so much attention has come to the Islamic religion and the need to understand the fundamental principles of one of the world's major religions has become essential.

Peace is the fundamental principle of Islam. Sadly, it has become the most misunderstood aspect of the religion. The Holy prophet (S.A.W) defined true Muslims as those who harm no one with their words and actions, and who are the most trustworthy representatives of universal peace.

The struggles between modern ideology and strict Islamic values have become more apparent in this 21st century. This struggle for the assertion of modern values over Islamic principles continues to be a major point of friction between the modern world and Islamic world.

It is also imperative that as Muslims, we must not continue to act out of Ideological or political partisanship and then dress it in Islamic garb or represent mere desires as ideas. If we as Muslims can overcome this tendency, Islam's true image will become known. The modern world, on its part should ensure that all its policies should not aim at enforcing its ideologies on Islam but should tolerate and find ways of complimenting and promoting Islamic ideologies as it does other major religions.

The world must begin to promote considerations and respect for Islam and Muslims and establish institutions and mechanism to construct bridges of understanding between the modern world and the Islamic world.

NGOs

REFORMING THE HUMANITARIAN AID SYSTEM

It is a general agreement that the humanitarian aid system is in need of an overhaul as the way the world responds to humanitarian emergencies is both embarrassing and saddening. The current system clearly does not facilitate rapid emergencies, fails to generate adequate resources and cover all needs.

Humanitarian aid is largely determined by media profile or political criteria than humanitarian need. In reality, there is no guarantee that press attention will stimulate contributions. What is certain however is the fact that the cameras will arrive in time to record the dying but never in time to prevent a looming crisis. Statistics show that urgent appeals for African countries in crisis such as Sudan and democratic republic of Congo in 2005 attracted just a fraction of the needed resources in contrast to the overwhelming response to the tsunami disaster.

In a bid to address these flaws the UN established a \$50m cash reserve for disaster relief known as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) in 1991, the fund was hampered by the requirement that agencies like World Food Programme or UNICEF obtain donor pledges of reimbursement before CERF funds can be released. Finding these donors can take months, slowing the arrival of the much-needed assistance and increasing human suffering. In October 2005 the UN Secretary General submitted a detailed proposal, which came into effect in early 2006 to the General Assembly for a fundamental overhaul of the CERF. The revamped CERF renamed the Central Emergency Response Fund would to a large extent free aid workers from the case-to-case dependency on donors enabling them respond to crisis within days rather than weeks or months enabling the prevention of full-blown emergencies.

The most important obligation for the international community is to ensure that the generous outpouring of global support to the tsunami crisis in 2005 becomes the rule, not the exception. This invariably means building a more systematic partnership between the humanitarian community, donor community, new donor governments and the private sector to ensure consistent and timely response to crisis.

Delegates will deliberate on measures to ensure;

- Humanitarian response becomes more predictable in all emergencies and its response capacity adequate, effective and timely.
- Deliberate on modalities to ensure that humanitarian workers get access and guaranteed security in the field.
- Response to unmet needs to emergencies.
- Funding for CERF does not drain money from existing programmes.

In addition, delegates will debate and reach a resolution on the “cash versus commodities” and address long term and targeted nutritional support as opposed to emergency relief operations.