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IN THIS ISSUE

- CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOKOTO JIHAD LEADERS IN DISSEMINATION OF ARABO-ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE THROUGH LOCAL LANGUAGES

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- PEACE-BUILDING IN HETEROGENEOUS COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH SUDAN: THE ROLE OF LOCAL COUNCILS

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FOREWORD

Many Muslims scholars in African feel that there is a pressing need for a journal to bridge the academic gap between Africa and the rest of the Muslim world , and also to serve as a forum through which scholars can exchange ideas and develop research ties.

This task is being taken up by the INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA. This is an academic institution set up for the purpose of strengthening islamic culture in " Africa South of Sahara". One of the challenges which we have to face is the lack of accurate information about this areas and the many misunderstandings about its history and societies , Such areas of study have , in the past , been the monopoly of a few western scholars who have not always been un-blest vis-a-vis Islam and African Muslims.

The time is now ripe for Muslim scholars, who spacialize in this area , to come forward and bring some balance to the world of research.

We are accordingly inviting our readers , to join hands with us , so that we may set this project moving , We hope that you will be able to participate by sending papers on any of the subjects mentioned below. It will also help if you would kindly circulate this journal among your colleagues and (or) draw our attention to any acholars whom you feel will be able to help in realizing this project.

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Très nombreux sont les chercheurs musulmans en Afrique qui éprouvent le besoin pressant d'un journal qui puisse jeter un pont sur le fossé académique séparant l'Afrique du reste du monde musulman et qui serve de forum où les chercheurs peuvent échanger les opinions et développer des liens de recherche. Le projet est maintenant pris par le Centre Islamique Africain de Khartoum. C'est l'institution académique spécialement fondée dans le but de renforcer la culture Islamique en "Afrique au Sud du Sahara". Parmi les défis auxquels nous devons faire face est le manque d'information exactes sur cette région ainsi que les multiples malentendus concernant son histoire et sa société. Ces domaines d'études étaient, dans le passé, le monopole de quelques chercheurs occidentaux qui n'étaient pas toujours neutres vis-à-vis de l'Islam et des musulmans Africains.

Il est temps que les chercheurs musulmans dans ce domaine se montrent et établissent un certain équilibre dans le domaine de la recherche.

Nous vous écrivons maintenant pour vous inviter, en tant que chercheur accompli, à nous donner la main pour relancer ce projet.

Nous espérons que vous pouvez y participer en envoyant des études consacrées aux sujets mentionnés ci-dessous.:-

Il serait très utile si vous pouviez faire circuler cette lettre parmi vos collègues et/ou nous signaler les chercheurs qui vous paraissent capables d'aider à la réalisation de ce projet.

Les domaines de spécialisation du journal sont les suivants:

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Dans l'attente de vous lire bientôt, nous vous remercions d'avance et nous vous prions d'agréer l'expression de nos sentiments distingués.

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PEACE-BUILDING IN HETEROGENEOUS COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH SUDAN: THE ROLE OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Dr. Samson Samuel Wassara *

INTRODUCTION:

Revitalizing local government system in the post-conflict context is a delicate task. This situation is particularly complex in many parts of Southern States of the Sudan. It must be acknowledged that the civil war that started in 1983 has introduced communal conflicts at different levels of society. The role of local councils in laying foundations of peace requires that a mixture of traditional methods of reconciliation and modern methods of peace-building should be given a special consideration.

Noting that some parts of Southern States are either emerging from anarchy or continue to experience armed violence. The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of local councils in peace-building exercise for rehabilitating local government machinery. Thus, we shall emphasize issues in policy formulation and activities that may be conducive to peace building in such a heterogeneous society as South Sudan. The point of departure should be the general overview of the concept of peace with special reference to Southern States.

1. CONCEPTS OF PEACE :

Peace is an abstract human behaviour that can be felt through so-

* Director Centre for Peace and Development Studies (CPDS) University of Juba

cial stability and relative happiness between members of society, and between society and authority. The social, political and economic context of peace leads to philosophical controversies. Peace researchers and peace activists are interested in providing explanations that may be useful to specific social environment. In our case, the treatment of peace-related concepts must be relevant to the situation of local councils in Southern States.

1.1 EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING

An all-encompassing definition of peace conceals certain aspects of human relationships such as the state of justice, human rights and conflict. Social scientists dispute the narrow meaning of peace that equates this concept with the absence of direct physical violence. They refer to this situation as negative peace. The broad definition of the concept encompassing justice is referred to as positive peace. (Ohlson, 1996 :3) Negative peace suggests notions of violence such as structural violence and institutionalized corruptive attitude or behaviour.

The absence of physical violence in communal relations conceals a form of conflict that may erupt in a situation of surprise. In many cases, stability may be the function of domination, coercion or subordination. However, peace researchers (Ohlson 1996) understand positive peace as absence of organized armed violence. The most relevant definition of peace as regards our topic is provided by Mandanza (1996), citing Horace Campbell, who asserts that " Peace involves non-violent forms of mediation at all levels of society, in family, in the community and in all spheres of social interaction". Local councils are expected to translate this meaning of peace into their plans of action .

1.2.RELEVANCE TO SOUTHERN STATES

Social stability, as an attribute of peace, exists in Southern States under normal circumstances. Many communities have been living in relative harmony under local level administrative units. But councils with relative homogeneous communities experience some form of conflict. The current civil strife injected more hostility into communities of people in Southern states. Disregarding politically motivated conflicts, communities in Southern States tend to clash over ownership or use of natural resources.

It is possible to map out some localities where communal conflicts have occurred, thus calling for the intervention of local council authorities and perhaps higher state authorities. Such communal conflicts have taken place at different times in some parts of Bahr el-Ghazal, Lakes, Jonglei, Bahr el-Jebel and Eastern Equatoria. The nature of the conflict to which we are alluding may not involve communities within the territorial boundaries of a local council.

For example, peace was at stake on three occasions in Eastern Equatoria in 1980s. Conflict arose between Toposa and Latuho over water resources in Kidepo valley. Local authorities contained the violence through the Chakari conference in 1980. Also another conflict opposed Toposa to Dinka Bor when the former raided cattle camps and drove away many heads of cattle, The regional government dispatched paramilitary police force in 1982 to recover the stolen cattle. The operation resulted in heavy police casualties. Similar developments took place between Mundari and their Dinka neighbours to the north. Other conflicts are seasonal between cattle owning communities in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Upper Nile and Eastern Lakes over grazing rights. But politically motivated violence had erupted between communities in urban centres such as Juba and Wau. So local councils take the responsibility upon themselves to restore peace among the communities concerned. But government law and

security enforcement agencies such as the police or the army intervene to put an end to such hostilities.

The most difficult challenge to peace among local communities happens when cross border conflicts develop. The case of conflict between Baggara and Dinka in the valley of Bahr el-Arab, between Toposa and Turkana or Kormojoing, and between Didinga and Dodos tend to disarm local councils in the field of peace-buildig processes. This type of conflict requires a high level coordination in establishing the basis of sustainable peace in the affected local councils.

In short, this exploration of communal relationships is intended to draw attention of policy-makers to the complexities of empowering local councils to lay foundations of peace in heterogeneous communities. This approach to the study of peace- building capacity at the grassroots level of authority requires that public policy must be flexible to suit different situations. It is against this background that our paper must treat policy formulation in local governments of Southern States.

2. ISSUES IN POLICY FORMULATION

Building foundations of peace should be incorporated into post-conflict strategies for rehabilitation and resettlement of local councils in Southern States. Such foundations must be based on sound policies. Thus, we have to address the role of local councils in the context of policy formulation. We are emphasizing here, the policies that are impregnated with action oriented possibilities.

2.1 CREATION OF PEACE POLICY ORGANS

Both administrative and policy structures of local councils have dual accountabilities. They must respond to national policy prescriptions and to indigenous cultures and traditions. Specialists in public administration (Macrae & Pitt, 1985: 116-118) emphasize the role

councillors and committees in harmonizing national policies and community demands within the territorial jurisdiction of local councils. Thus, state governments should legislate local government Acts embodying the role of elected councillors and specialized committees for peace.

We are proposing that due importance should be attached to the establishment of Peace Policy Committee (PPC). This organ should be the key committee vested with powers to formulate peace policies at the council level. It must be noted that peace intervenes in several sectors of society. Local economic activities, resource utilization and distribution, system of justice, education and many other things involve conflict. This state of human interactions imply that PPCs would intervene in the multiple functions of local councils. Their intervention cannot be effective unless local government Acts contain the powers to build foundations of peace in conflict-ridden communities of Southern States.

2-2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The lack of an equitable participatory system in local affairs is always at the heart of communal conflicts. The fundamental requirement for consolidation of peace is that the model of a participatory system should not be imposed on communities, but must respond to the aspirations and the cultural values of the people. In the treatment of community approach, C. Cockburn recommends 'management by extension' in local governments. He (Cockburn 1985:95) argues that "Whereas the firm tries to reduce market uncertainty by controlling demand, by intelligent advertising and judicious product-design, the state uses participatory democracy and 'the community approach'. The applications may be different but the causes are similar and so the means: both are phases of corporate decision-making".

Consequently, community participation in peace-building calls for inclusion of traditional leaders, people of wisdom and intellectuals in PPCs. This particular group of policy-makers could coordinate their knowledge and aspirations with technical or professional people into action-oriented activities. Each local council needs the necessary freedom to pursue or sustain peace within the communities in its territorial boundaries.

Aslo, community participation should be linked with the requirement of harmony between bureaucratic decentralization and political decentralization. The former is a way of sharing administrative responsibilities between local government and councils. But political decentralization implies that political decisions about communities should be shared by local policy-makers and state authorities. (Macrae and Pitt, 1985: 73-75) what we suggest in this paper is those policy-makers in PPCs should be made to understand that the responsibility of peace-building is not solely their monopoly. There may be cases that require the involvement of other participants, depending on their relevance, in processes of peace-building in a given local council.

2.3. FEEDBACK AND EARLY WARNING MECHANISM

The problem of sustaining peace within the framework of policy formulation and implementation takes its explicit form when the system of information flow is established at the level of local government. Local councils should be given the freedom to open communication channels between different communities and relevant organs of peace policy and peace administration. Such organs need to be a part of the permanent structures of a local council. Organs of peace management should play the role scanning communal relationships with the aim of sensing harmony or conflict and reporting back to council authorities for appropriate action.

Feedback is a vital function of organizations because it ensures

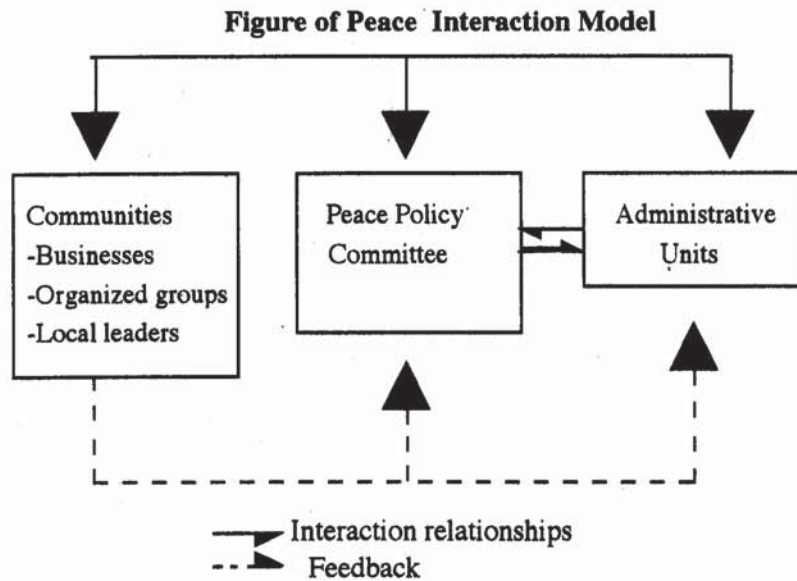
compliance and adjustment in the process of policy implementation. In the situation of management of heterogeneous communities, councils need to devise multiple channels of feedback. Herbert Kaufman argues that intelligence about administrative behaviour of implementing agencies should be monitored through the mass media, non-governmental groups of all kinds and political parties. (Kaufman, 1985: 191- 192) This argument can be adapted to suit the needs of peace management at the level of local councils in Southern States.

Consequently, local councils should be encouraged to intergrate organized groups into the local government system in South Sudan. Non-governmental groups such as community associations and local units of political parties can be instrumental in transmitting grievances to council authorities. They can also provide a clue to demands of communities as far as economic development and other social services are concerned. Community associations represent different sectors of society at the grassroots level. They have an effect on policies if local councils exploit well the objectives, relationships and responses of such associations for the purpose of feedback and early warning mechanisms. Associations and other pressure groups are useful in the dissemination of information about the state of conflict or peace. It is also important that a number of administrative organs are vested with the power to coordinate information inputs emanating from communal interactions. These organs must transmit community problems to the Peace Policy Committee and the administrative authorities of local councils.

2.4 PEACE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The most important thing to consider in the section concerning peace policy formulation and implementation is to show explicitly the relationships between main actors in peace policy process. The complex relationship between peace policy and its implementation needs to be elucidated through a simple model. In the figure below, linkages

are shown between the three groups that are involved in peace management at the council level.



This simplified model shows the complex relationships within components of a hypothetical local council with regards to peace-building processes. The council manages community affairs through policy formulation and policy implementing organs. In this figure the Peace Policy Committee is one of the permanent policy-making committees with powers to legislate. The box of administrative units comprises the technical departments that transform policies into practical activities. The box of communities consists of the whole population of the council. It is assumed that relationships between masses and the council are weak. But influential groups such as local leaders, associations and businessmen interact frequently with policy-makers and administrators.

In the course of interactions, a channel of communication develops between the main components of the council. This link will enable a local council to identify the needs of communities or issues that are likely to pose threat to peace. Thus, the council would be in the position to act swiftly in order to harmonize relationships of conflict. The broken lines in our figure represent feedback. It is worth underlining the importance of feedback in peace management especially in the councils where communities are highly heterogeneous,

2.4 COORDINATING FUNCTIONS

Coordination of peace policies and peace-building activities between local councils or between them and higher forms of local government is a cardinal function in conflict management. We have treated the role of councils in laying foundations of peace as if local councils were islands in an ocean. The fact is that the management of peace should take into consideration the impact of other communities on those within a given local council.

It has mentioned in sub-section 1.2 above that some councils are prone to raids by communities of other councils or by communities of foreign countries. Threats to peace that emanate from other councils or from foreign countries could be contained with the participation of the councils or the federal government. Experience shows that inter-council conflicts are better managed by higher bodies of local government or through inter-communal conventions. In either case, government agencies act as intermediaries in conflict resolution. Also, non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in reconciliation. Religious organizations tend to be regarded as partners in peace research activities. Hence, mechanisms for peace-building must include coordination in functions of peace in local councils.

3. PEACE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Most problems related to conflict or peace are entrenched in the allocation and distribution of resources. These resources may be material or immaterial. Competition between communities over resources and the degree of satisfaction determine whether or not peace can prevail in a given society. The situation may be much more complex when efforts are being exerted to restore or reinforce peace in a post-conflict community. The logical thing to do is to balance between the process of peace and security, and the process of peace and development at different levels.

Restoring peace in regions affected by protracted conflicts is a difficult task for governments. Policy-makers, researchers and interested individuals attempt to gather knowledge based on different experiences. There is the desire to share such knowledge with others especially in those countries that are trying to settle the mess created by conflict situation. In this respect, the international community (UN, 1996) has compiled a long list of activities and methods of peace-building. The list is the result of practical experience in war-torn countries such as Nicaragua, San Salvador and Cambodia. Other war-ridden communities can adapt relevant activities to their local conditions, and this can be the case of Southern States.

Hence, post-conflict activities should constitute the integral part of development strategy of local government in Southern states. Under normal circumstances, peace-building activities should go hand in hand with development strategy. Peace-related programmes may not be optimal forms in an economic point of view. But they are very significant in the search for political stability. Local councils need to incorporate peace-building activities into their socio-economic programmes. Our proposal takes into consideration the fact that the implementation of peace programmes should reflect local needs within the framework of national policies.

3.1 POLITICAL DIMENSION

Rebuilding local government administrative apparatus is the logical beginning of peace management processes especially in local councils that are operating outside their real territorial boundaries. The immediate priority in enhancing peace-building activities is the process of re-establishing political legitimacy and confidence between communities. Attempts to consolidate peace require that an effective participatory form of local government system be established. Such a government is necessary to facilitate the participation of communities, without discrimination in political, economic, social and cultural activities. The achievement of these ideals depends on undertaking substantive activities. Some of them are as follows:

- 1- guaranteeing the right to participate in policy-making bodies of local council through community representatives. This condition implies that mechanisms of participation at community level should be facilitated through registration of grassroots associations;
- 2- identifying units and organizations at local level that can promote capacity-building initiatives and development.
- 3- rehabilitation of civil society in councils profoundly affected by conflict. Measures to realize this need should include the promotion of solidarity and cohesion within communities with potential for renewed conflict, and;
- 4- elaborating inter-communal awareness programmes for human rights and culture of peace among opinion leaders and the council population. These programmes would serve as the foundation for developing methods of peaceful settlement of disputes based on cultural and traditional heritage.

3.2 SOCIO- ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Development is one of the primary causes of conflict at all levels of society. It is also a factor in sustaining peace. The socio-economic

element of peace-building at all council level should be given special attention in post-conflict situations. It is necessary to consider preferential treatment of the communities involved or affected by conflict when a council is preparing its economic plans. Thus, a well-thought social and economic programme can mitigate grievances that lead communities to resort to arms.

However, the success of socio-economic development programmes depends on financial resources. The pressing problem that must be addressed by the councils is to secure financial contribution for development programmes. Attempts to levy excessive taxes on communities impoverished by war could undermine ethics of peace-building. The peace-building activities necessary for development should include reintegration of communities into the mainstream economy of Southern States and the Sudan in general *inter alia*:

- 1- special emphasis should be laid on community rehabilitation in the process of development planning. This measure should rely on identifying the needs of target groups within communities in the locality;
- 2- facilitating allocation of land for agricultural development within the framework of small-holding. This activity could be consolidated through credit schemes that could be affordable in rural areas;
- 3- promoting sustainable employment through an integrated approach. This approach must be linked with activities in areas of rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure;
- 4- reactivating formal commercial networks, public and private investment programmes, and making provisions for capacity-building in communities. The fundamental prerequisite in this process is setting up mechanisms for the system of operational, administrative and financial management of projects, and
- 5- establishing marketing services to enhance income generating activities. It is often observed that some local councils produce cer-

tain commodities above their average consumption while others lack those commodities. Marketing opportunities can boost inter-council cooperation and joint ventures.

3.3. LAW ENFORCEMENT DIMENSION

Prolonged conflicts tend to nurture the culture of violence or disorder within and between communities. Greater part of Southern States has been affected by the current civil war. The obvious effect of the war is break down of law and order. This situation is accompanied by isolated or organized crime. One is tempted to imagine that human security is at stake because of the proliferation of small arms in communities. Hence, reestablishing the rule of law and rebuilding a system of justice are the necessary ingredients of peace. The following activities would contribute to strengthening the entire administration of justice.

- 1-undertaking a needs assessment exercise for each element of criminal justice system such as the police, the judiciary, prosecutorial services, and the legal profession;
- 2- identifying the need for new or revised legislation to embody modern legal principles and traditional or customary law at local level;
- 3- establishing mechanisms for crime prevention by deployment of police force and the supply of equipment and facilities; and
- 4- availing the financial resources required for strengthening local councils to maintain law and order.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This policy paper contains principles that constitute the foundation of peace at the level of local council in Southern States. The issues raised in this paper need to be streamlined in the form of recommendations. The conferees should consider the following points in

the final recommendations for rehabilitating and resettlement of local government in Southern States.

- a) formulation of a comprehensive peace policy for local government:
- b) creation of Peace Policy Committees (PPCs) within the legislative bodies in local councils;
- c) incorporation of practical peace-building activities into programmes of the administrative organs/units of local councils, and
- d) promoting community participation in peace-related activities through traditional leaders and organized groups such as associations: and
- e) establishment of inter-council ventures to handle conflicts that transcend the jurisdiction of a local council.

CONCLUSION

The place of peace is unique in policy formulation for local councils in Southern States. Peace-building processes cannot be ignored in a situation of uncertainty such as the one prevailing in South Sudan. So one feels impelled to explore the concept of peace and to investigate the matter at the levels of policy formulation and policy implementation. In this paper, we have revealed the ingredients of peace that legitimate policy-makers should consider when preparing rehabilitation and resettlement programmes at the local council level. Laying foundations of peace is pervasive because it must intervene in nearly all administrative structures of a given local council. It is inevitable that local governments face the challenge of promoting peace at the grassroots level. Therefore, this paper contributes to the knowledge of peace-building activities. It remains to be seen if the Coordinating Council for Southern States will cope with the culture of violence in communities it has inherited from the federal government.

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