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A black and white photograph of a man wearing sunglasses and a light-colored shirt, reading a newspaper. He is standing in what appears to be a newsstand or a public area with other newspapers visible in the background. The newspaper he is holding has several headlines, including 'Le Cameroun sur écoute téléphonique à Washington' and 'Guinness Valérie'.

Media for Peace Notebooks

Newspaper Articles from
Central Africa, a Selection

Media for Peace

Panos Paris Institute

Media for Peace Notebooks

April 2003

Panos Paris Institute

The Panos Institute is an international non-government organisation whose objectives are :

- Reinforce the media southern countries as well as their capacity to produce, in relationship with all members of the civil society, a diverse and responsible information, which warrants a culture of peace and democracy;
- Support the production of information in the North and South on certain important themes, favour the dissemination for public debates. These themes include: diversity of information, the role of the media in the prevention and management of conflicts, the relationship between migration and development, Aids, globalisation, etc.

Created in 1988 and run by the 1901 law, the Panos Paris Institute is in charge of three main programs:

- **Media for Peace in Africa**, an inter-regional support program for the media whose role is to prevent and resolve conflicts. Panos Paris, in coordination with the different Panos Institutes in London, West Africa and East Africa, ensures the setting up in Central Africa of activities proper to this program, as well as the inter-regional coordination. Also, this program is currently developing a series of activities outlining the continuous effects of the September 11th 2001 attacks;
- **Rights and institutional reinforcement of media in Africa**, a support program for the diversity of information whose global objective is to contribute to the development of a diverse media while reinforcing on information aimed at democratisation and the respect of Human Rights. This program, which will last several years, is deployed in two geographic zones: since 2001, in Central Africa, and since 2002, in the North Africa;

- **Migration, development and cultural integration**, a thematic program of production, distribution, and information whose central objective is to give rise to debates, where several opinions are expressed on the relationships between migration and development in host and native societies.

The Panos Paris Institute is a member of the Panos Council, a flexible organisation which shares internal regulations, dialogue, and coordination between the four Panos Institute in Dakar, London, Paris, and Washington.

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by Anne-Marie Gosse *

The Panos Paris Institute intends to promote and sustain plurality by supporting the development of the media across the world and particularly in countries of the South. In this direction, one of the modules of this programme focuses on support for the production of information by African journalists on their own problems and conflicts.

It is extremely difficult and even impossible to come by reliable and pluralistic information in matters of conflict in Africa. Home journalists, the civil society, and international newspapers, often fall prey of rumour or "hear says" which do not enable them to make pertinent analysis of events.

The different parties involved in conflicts relentlessly fight to influence information and print media journalists, trapped within an array of political and economic constraints find it difficult to objectively treat news.

The Panos Institute has realized that certain topics are almost absent from newspaper columns; that the coverage of current events in Central Africa centres around political happenings at the detriment of other important topics whose treatment could facilitate the understanding of conflicts in Africa.

This Institute is convinced about the important role the media can play in conflict resolution, in the instauration of peace, and in creating awareness on citizenship among the population. By addressing certain unusual aspects of society, (inter community and religious conflicts) and by allowing opposed parties to air their views, journalists can dissipate misunderstandings, limit the dangers of stereotypes and shape public opinion. The society will therefore be capable of making enlightened choices hence fostering true democracy.

The partnership with the media also intends to highlight women's contribution in conflict resolution. Since women are usually the first victims of conflicts in

their different countries, it is important to portray them as artisans of peace and as well as the target of conflicts.

To the absence of certain information in newspapers of the South, should be added the inaccessibility of those present to the readership of the North. This, for the simple reason that this information is not relayed by the regional and international press.

This review therefore seeks to sensitize the Central African and European publics on the Central role of journalists in creating awareness about, and facilitating an in-depth analysis of conflicts in their area.

This edition is the first in a series. The Panos Institute however intends to make it a half-yearly publication of pertinent articles by African media professionals, on conflicts and their origins in Africa.

* Anne-Marie Gosse is the Programme Director of
" Media for Peace " in Central Africa
of the Panos Paris Institute

By Fabien Nkot *

Written within the framework of the "Media for Peace in Central Africa" programme, the articles contained in this (Notebook) could have known a different fate. They could have remained buried in the columns of "Aurore plus" and "The post" in Cameroon, "Cénacle" and "Renouveau" in Burundi, "Tam Tam d'Afrique" in Congo, "La Référence Plus", "L'Avenir", and "Le Potentiel" in the DRC or "Ndjamen bi-hebdo in Chad, all African newspapers from which they are drawn.

In this case, they would have been of interest only to the restricted readership of these different newspapers usually limited to a town or country.

The Notebooks aim, at providing a complete and clearer view of these texts relating to the sources of conflict and the chances of peace in Central Africa.

It is a meeting point for journalists from diverse horizons and subtly nourishes the wishes to create a long lasting professional link among the authors of these write ups.

The conventions signed between Panos Paris and some Central African based newspapers have led to the publication of about 50 articles. These notebooks carry only about 20 of them. The choice of these articles was dictated by 5 major criteria namely: The main theme , the optimistic and prospective vision of the article, the clarity of the editorial types chosen, the quality and size of the text.

The main theme depended on how close the article came to the themes proposed by Panos Paris. So the texts that stood a better chance of being selected are those that could easily be classified under the category of: community conflicts as

an obstacle to peaceful co-existence, governance, the role of feminine associations in conflict resolution and the connection between conflicts and development.

The optimistic and prospective vision of the article ties in with one of the objectives assigned to this newsletter by Panos Paris that is, counterbalancing the afro pessimism that is widespread in the media of the north. A special attention was paid to articles that clearly brought out the real sources of conflict and outlined the various actions taken to give peace a chance.

The clarity of the editorial type on its part crowns the efforts of the author to stick to a particular genre. A commentary is not to be taken for a report, in the same way as a report cannot stand for an analysis. Consideration was thus given to those authors who showed a mastery of these editorial genres, and who produced articles that could easily fit in, in any of the editorial types.

The quality of the text was judged from the author's style, the language standard, as well as the clarity and precise nature of the author's vocabulary. Articles written in a simple style with precise words found favour in the eyes of the evaluators.

Lastly, the length directly touched the author's capacity to be concise. Short and precise texts were preferred, to meet the requirements of a 40 page news letter, expected to reflect the diversity of conflict situations in Africa

Considering the forerunning factors, each of the articles was rated over 20, The relevance of the main theme was rated over 6 points, the clarity of the editorial type over 4 points, the optimistic and prospective vision of the text over 3 points, the quality of the text over 4 points, and its size over 3 points.

The articles selected obviously carry on all conflicts. They however portray the varying levels of curiosity of their authors, which makes them classifiable under 4 distinct groups:

- Peace and governance
- Peace and development
- Conflict and peaceful co-existence
- Women and peace

This classification in the whole, blends with the themes proposed by the "Media for Peace in Central Africa" programme of Panos Paris. The classification is a testimony of the similar trends in the development of the conflicts tearing these countries apart, and the problems encountered in restoring sustainable peace. It is striking to note that at the time when Conflicts between farmers and graziers are reducing the chances of peace in Chad, the same peace is being threatened in the DRC by the spluttering of the actors of Inter-Congolese dialogue and hampered in Burundi by repeated or recurrent violence.

In the same way, and in the same domain of governance, we notice that while the complicity of certain officials in Chad hampers the smooth management of inter-community tensions, some Brazzaville-based trade Unions blame their government for its autism, while the preference of the capital to the hinterland by the central administration seems to be the main source of conflict in the DRC.

We can conclude by confessing these note book were was not absolutely necessary, but like Vedel says, we will limit ourselves to hope that it is or does not become useless.

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PEACE AND GOVERNANCE

African countries of the Sub Sahara region are faced with problems of governance. Doubts about the goodwill and legitimacy of public authorities and the integrity of magistrates have reached a point where trade unions now fear a resulting social explosion. It is believed that this problem could be solved by the empowerment of traditional rule which is reliable and legitimate, as well as a good blend of modern socio-political structures.

The CSC and CSTC fear social explosion with the impoverishment of workers.

By Laudes Martial Mbon

Article published in Tam Tam d'Afrique on the 12/11/02
Congo

"There should be negotiations with the government, to look into the situation of workers. There should be a trigger, to alleviate their sufferings. Everything should be done to avoid a social explosion"

Daniel Mongo, Secretary General of the Confederation of Congolese trade Unions (CSC) is worried about the speed at which the Congolese population in general is getting poorer, and the Congolese worker in particular. His colleague, chairman of the Trade Union Confederation of Congolese Workers (CSTC) Louis Gondou, on his part warns against any situation that may sweep away trade Union officials and the government.

The two largest trade Unions in Congo signed a social pact with the government in July 2001, in which both parties pledged to mark a social truce for two years. During this period, trade Unions will not be allowed to take any action that may jeopardize the hard earned social peace, after an armed conflict that tore the country apart.

This social pact came after days of negotiations on twenty points including the restoration of civil servant's salaries slashed in 1995, the payment of salary arrears owed to government workers, the regular payment of pension allowances to retired workers, the representation of trade unions within the privatisation committees, the payment of the dues to workers of liquidated enterprises, the re-opening of the negotiation of collective agreements, the extension of the retirement age to 60 years, the retrocession of the property of Trade Unions, the negotiation of particular statutes, the payment of an end of career allowance to civil servants - going on retirement, the increase of the value of minimum wages etc...

A survey carried out by the CSC shows that 70% of these points have not been taken into account. The government did not accept all salary related claims made

during negotiations, including the restoring of civil servants salaries slashed in 1995, arguing that this would increase public service wages. Public service wages amounted to 120 billion CFA frs in 2001 and was brought down to 104 billions one year later.

The salary reduction endorsed by the dethroned regime of Pascal Lissouba under pressure from international financial institutions provoked three changes: a 15% reduction of wages, a 12.5% decrease in the volume of scheduled work in the public service making up for a 27.5% overall decrease in all.

At the same time, other advantages and allowances were also reduced by 30%. During last year's negotiations, the government accepted to progressively pay salary arrears to civil servants. This action was to be preceded by an auditing of the social debt, to provide a precise idea of its value. This auditing, never took place.

According to Trade Unions the social debt package is 220 billions CFA frs, worth of accumulated salary arrears since the 90s "No auditing was carried out and workers are suffering. The misery has outstepped the acceptable mark. The social situation should be improved in order to improve on their output at work. Political speeches should tie in with social reality. That's why we are insisting on negotiating with the government. All must be done to avoid a social explosion" says M. Mongo "We think that government should do something about the situation of workers before this end of year feast. Otherwise, we will be carried away by workers who are living a very difficult social situation" M. Gondou warns.

The precarious social situation of workers has led to increased poverty in Congo. Official figures say 70% of Congolese (more than 3 million in habitants) live below the poverty line.

The temporary poverty reduction document drafted by government experts shows that women, youths, and rural populations are the most affected by poverty. In the domain of education for example, this document reveals that the literacy rate has dropped from 126% in 1990, to 107% in 1996 before falling to 49,3% in July 1999 following the armed conflict. Health wise, life expectancy has moved from 52.1 years in 1990 to 48.6 years presently. Another indicator of poverty is the

fact that 30% of Congolese do not have enough to eat.

The document outlines a series of measures aimed at raising people's living standards. They include the increase of the internal growth rate or the gross national product to 2.9% in 2002, the budgetary income to 29,7% of the GNP as contrary to the 28,9 % for budgetary expenditures, and to maintain the rate of inflation below 3%.

These measures are aimed at reducing poverty by 5% annually, to have it at 57% in 2005, 44% in 2010, and 34% in 2015; the deadline given to states by the United Nation Organisation to scale down poverty worldwide. To attain this goal, the experts proposed that the part of expenditure earmarked for poverty reduction, represent an average of 17% of the total expenditure between 2001-2006 contrary to the 8% between 1996 and 1998.

This document must first of all be approved by international financial institutions. Their approval will enable Congo to benefit from the heavily indebted poor countries initiative, which Congo has not yet accessed.

Its public external debt, evaluated at 4000 billion CFA frs compromises its national development plan.

Faced with social indicators that threaten political stability, trade unions deem it necessary to relaunch negotiations with the government. Representatives of the CSC and CSTC met with a government delegation headed by the Minister of State, minister of transport, civil aviation in charge of the merchant navy and the coordination of government action, Isidore Mvouba.

They exchanged on the relaunch of negotiations that had been frozen since the signing of the social pact in July 2001. Both parties agreed to set up an ad hoc commission to draw up an agenda for the said negotiations.

Socio political structures should be adapted Peace is possible between the Hemas and Lendus

By J. Diana Gikupa

Article published in *L'Avenir*, n° 1597 on 02/09/02.
Democratic Republic of Congo

One discovers belatedly, the other side of the crisis in Ituri, which funnily enough, has always been there. Not long ago, the Hema-Lendu conflict was seen as a non event. Without clearly expressing this, government was lowly that a disappointment can be a blessing in disguise. The conflict as it were, was portrayed as a direct consequence of the occupation of this part of Congolese territory by Uganda. So the government limited itself to the incrimination of the aggressor, hence eluding an important aspect of this conflict which stemmed from remote causes.

It is obvious that the preference of the capital city and some big urban centers over the hinterland amongst other things, killed distributive justice and justice in short. Might having always been right, a mountain of frustration was built. In this way, the injured party, when subjected to the law of the strongest, also looked for a stronger external support to revenge.

There are a countless numbers of customary conflicts in the DRC today. Some people think that these conflicts are a hindrance to the development of the hinterland. Traditional leaders spend most of time heaping accusations on each other. Bloody conflicts have been reported in some parts of the country, especially in the Kasai region. It will be recalled that a customary conflict led to the take over of Demba in Western Kasai. A traditional ruler, after feeling wronged, in a case considered highly iniquitous, went by night to look for RCD/Goma rebels who were in Lusambo. The latter took the Fac by surprise and occupied the headquarters of Demba.

The existence of customary conflicts in most parts of the DRC result from the abdication of the state and the consequential absence of justice. Ugandans couldn't have orchestrated the conflict in Ituri, if it did not exist already. And if justice was rendered the Hema-Lendu animosity couldn't have followed the path of the

Hutu-Tutsi example and the Ugandan support, to become one of the bloodiest conflicts in the history of our country. Today, all efforts are being made to put an end to the conflict. But nobody can be sure that this objective will be attained if its fertilizing element is not destroyed.

It is therefore thought that one of the ways to end this conflict is by bringing back the State to this part of the Congolese territory. A State, that will be closer to the people. This explains the suicidal nature of the government's mission, in this part of the country. For, the Hemas and Lendus have little need for a State that will show sympathy from a distance, while it has always been absent. People wonder if the inhabitants of Ituri are not closer to Ugandan authorities than those in to Congo. Note that this situation prevailed even before the Ugandan occupation.

It is a result of a misunderstood and badly applied decentralization. In the DRC decentralization has become an empty political slogan a limited to the disengagement of public authorities and the multiplication of provincial officials. The decentralization spirit, stops at the level of provinces which transform themselves into small centralized powers. Instead of a decentralized authority, we have 11 provinces headed by little Heads of State, who decide about everything. Kinshasa continues to be the country in miniature. Provinces serve as relays to the capital. Kinshasa, benefits from all importations and exportations while the hinterland is left to either live on short term measures or turn to neighbouring countries.

If the populations of Ituri already felt estranged and even ignored by the authorities of Kinshasa in the days of a united Congo, it is only but logical for the Kinshasa authorities to lose control over this part of the national territory now. The hostage taking of the minister of human rights Mr. Tumba Luaba is an illustration of the existence of a deep malaise. For, in the past years, it was unthinkable for a minister to be taken hostage during Hema - Lendu clashes. The men in power were traditionally considered as sacred human beings in the DRC.

What can be done ?

There is no need to go on about the conflict, or establish responsibilities. Ituri is living a situation which is far from a dream. Women and children are dying because they are Hemas or Lendus, whereas nobody chose to be one or the other, or to have the one or the other as neighbours. Nobody has the right to chase the Hemas or the Lendus from Congo. So they must co-exist or live side by side. Looking at things this way, the present clashes become useless. To bring peace in Ituri, the Lendus and Hemas should be encouraged to mutually accept each other and to live together. This arrangement should not come from outside, not even from the government of Kinshasa. It must come from within, the wisdom of the Hemas and Lendus. Because this wisdom exists and could make a difference if politics did not take part in the conflict. Even though the outcome of such an approach will take time in coming. However, we should not always find outward solutions, just to dress uncleaned wounds.

The Hema-Lendu conflict, even though the link is difficult to make, will not end if customary structures are not adapted to the national political organization. The overlapping of the powers of customary structures or institutions and those of the public administration, leaves a lot of vacuums and openings for anarchy. An end must be put to a double standard administration. For nobody will understand that the Hemas and Lendus will need Kinshasa to solve their problem. Customary circles usually condemn the interference of political powers in customary affairs. But when things go wrong each party lays the blame on the other.

Traditional rule and the challenges of peace and national reconciliation

By Willy Kabwe

Article published in *Le Potentiel*, n° 2403 on 18/12/01.
Democratic Republic of Congo

In the controversy surrounding the legitimacy of power, traditional rulers are often considered as being legitimate, making them a force to reckon with in the field. To reflect this force, traditional rulers of the DRC have formed a national alliance known as the ANATC. It is through this alliance that they've decided to channel their own contribution towards the enhancement of the peace process in the DRC. They met recently for the first time to determine their stand concerning the peace process in general and the agenda of the Inter-Congolese dialogue in particular. Within the framework of research on the dynamics of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, we talked to the Secretary General of ANATC, Mr. Jules Cesar Ibula.

The National Alliance of Traditional Rulers of the DRC has just held its first meeting, what are the objectives of this first meeting?

As you rightly said, this is the first meeting of the ANATC. Moreover, this is unprecedented in the history of our country . Traditional rulers from all over the country, had never met in a general assembly like this one. And this is happening at a very significant time. Our country is in danger; it is about to be partitioned. We could no longer remain silent to the quarrels of our children, when we have a natural legitimacy, root of all legitimacies, be it electoral requires us to take our responsibility and get fully involved in bringing about peace in the country.

We held this meeting under the theme " Peace and reconciliation in the DRC" It was high time the Alliance came back to life and was restructured to better face present stakes and challenges. The meeting was an opportunity for ANATC to take a stand as to the participation of traditional rulers in the dialogue, and clearly define their vision of the new political and institutional order, and its place in the DRC of tomorrow. We were able to sample the opinions and considerations of

traditional rulers on the Alliance's stand about the points on the agenda of the inter Congolese dialogue, and to define a new partnership between the government and traditional authorities in the DRC of tomorrow.

There are many traditional rulers in Congo, at the village, group, and chiefdom levels. There exists about 10 000 traditional rulers in no hierarchical order. How is the ANATC organised?

It is true that there are more than 10 000 traditional rulers in the country, with no particular hierarchical order. This notwithstanding, the weight of a traditional ruler depends on the size of the territory under his rule, the number of people under his rule, and the number of chiefs that he enthrones. It is obvious that a traditional ruler who enthrones about 30 chiefs can no longer be considered a village chief. The ANATC which is actually a trade union of traditional rulers, is organised along the principles of collegiality with a corresponding presidium made up of a national chairman, chairpersons for 5 permanent commissions, a vice national chairperson for every province, a Secretary General of the General Secretariat which is the centre of the alliance who is assisted by 4 assistants and 11 national secretaries representing each province. At the level of each province, there is an executive bureau, made up of a provincial chairperson, assisted by provincial vice-presidents and provincial secretary. This sketch gives an idea of the organisation of the alliance at the national level and at the level of chiefdoms right down to groups.

The main aim of restructuring the Alliance was to make it more efficient. That's why we went deep into our family set ups and traditions to dig out the skills we needed. Needless to add that the King of Bakuba, the Nyimi chief, who had efficiently managed the partnership up to the holding of this meeting was re-elected National Chairman for another 5 year term.

What are the most important resolutions of this meeting?

I'll first of all like to tell you that during the meeting, traditional rulers unanimously expressed their determination to fully exercise their natural and legitimate power henceforth on the land of their forefathers and over the population living

on the land. Their first demand is to be allowed to serve as internal mediators in the Congolese crisis, during the inter Congolese dialogue. It is not intended to supplant the external facilitator designated by the UNO and the AU. We instead intend to reconcile the different protagonists before, during, and after the inter Congolese dialogue in the pure African consensual tradition. After all, all those who are fighting for power in this country, are our children. Since they are all Congolese, they feel as rightful rulers of their villages, groups, or chiefdoms. Our getting involved at this level of responsibility, given our special status in society, must be reflected by our participation in the inter Congolese dialogue. As far as the new political and institutional order (which is raising a wave of protest) goes, traditional rulers have opted for a brief and consensual transition that will take into account all political leanings in the government as well as in parliament with Joseph Kabila presiding the transition to a state of law. The traditional rulers also expressed their solidarity and brought their support for the suffering population of occupied territories . They equally denounced all behaviour contradictory to the spirit of the Lusaka agreement, and likely to hamper the smooth running of the inter Congolese dialogue. They've decided to make a priority of grassroots level development and to revamp the management of the ANTAC for it to stand up to present stakes and challenges. They also expressed their wish for a fruitful partnership with the state based on continuous dialogue on major national issues

Is it not a bit over ambitious to think that you can play the role of mediators?

It is a natural and legitimate ambition. When there is a misunderstanding amongst grown up children in a family, the father normally comes in with his moral authority to calm down tempers. We have to inculcate in our children, who have now become politicians, the virtues of ancestral heritage, the culture of peace, dialogue, tolerance, wisdom, solidarity, and stability.

Why do you place so much hope in Joseph Kabila?

The traditional authority that we represent can not take sides. Authority is exercised within an exchange forum at the centre of the village. We are not out to

encourage splits. Right now, the whole nation is worried about peace, national reconciliation, and a hitch free transition for sustainable peace in the DRC. We can not lose sight of our objectives as long as there is a head of state, who is recognised internationally, and who has given a lot of guarantees for the return of peace, national unity and territorial integrity. You will agree with me that the stranglehold of war has loosened its grip on our country. Our diplomacy is gaining grounds, and the Lusaka peace process is once more underway. So even if there are several government services, there is just one state. Why can't we take this into account?

Under the second republic traditional rulers were often considered as "reactionists" and today, you are still giving the impression to be very close to the government

You very well know that traditional rulers staged a fierce opposition against colonial masters. In some cases, they organised a fierce resistance, forcing them to negotiate. The colonial rulers then realised that they could not control our territory and the people living in it, while ignoring traditional rulers. That's how from the colonial time, of the government, political and administrative structures have always been transplanted on traditional structures. In British colonies, this was known as "indirect rule". This explains the institutional collaboration that exists between grassroots entities, where traditional authority sits, and established administrative authority. But this cannot be considered as political support, especially in a democratic context, where our children do not share the same opinions. The traditional ruler cannot be identified with "Mobutism" or "Kabilaism". Political regimes pass, while traditional authority prevails. It is the unavoidable partner of all governments that work for social progress and the economic well-being of the population.

In one of the resolutions of this meeting, traditional rulers asked for the legal recognition of their special status. They also talked about partnership with the Congolese government. What is this all about?

The new political landscape, be it within the transitional period or the third

republic, requires that the government and traditional authorities cooperate to better face the challenges of peace, reconciliation, and national development. The partnership with the Congolese government we are advocating must give birth to a nation at the service of the people and their interests. For this, we have proposed a wide range of measures that can better ensure the legitimacy of the government and to increase the value of the primary sovereign by consolidating traditional authority. These measures include the reinforcement and stabilisation of traditional authority as a moral tool; an organic and functional structure, which will be relatively autonomous, the liberation of traditional power from all unforeseen bulwarks and bottlenecks, the promotion of the alliance amongst representative corporations and organisations where the fate of this country is being decided, the introduction of traditional education in primary and secondary school curricular, the raising of traditional entities into a social and moral framework to facilitate contact with the populations where global and partial government policies such as farm road maintenance, agricultural production and primary health care can be materialized. The traditional ruler should also be given a specific status, distinct from that of the Territorial army. People often forget that traditional rulers are involved in development activities at grassroots level. This should lead to their being motivated through particular rewards as well as financial and logistic support, to enable them to play a more active role in the development of the rural areas. Within the framework of the partnership with the Congolese government, the Alliance is soliciting the creation of a ministry in charge of customary affairs and community development. This will spur traditional rulers to bring more assistance to populations, with an obligation to ensure their moral and material well being, their social and economic development and the safeguarding of authentic cultural values in view of transmitting to our descendants. This will guarantee our contribution to universal civilization, security, peace and public tranquillity in the communities that we are setting up. This is the substance of the pact we are proposing to the state: We would want to contribute to the restoration of the prestige, the myth, and dignity of ancestral rule, in view of building a development oriented administration, that is closer to the people and capable of ensuring the legitimacy of the government and public institutions, and at the same time valorising traditional authority.

Traditional rulers insist on being informed about the decisions concerning the management of the Alliance. Others go as far as saying that there is no transparency on this right now. What do you have to say?

The ANATC is a non-profit association, and a formal one for that matter. Therefore, it is founded on certain principles and a specific management style, proper to associations. The ill plaguing public or private organisations and even the government today, is the absence of training on the running of non-profit organisations. The conflicts that exist within Non Governmental Organisations, political parties, our administrations and even the church, principally stem from this deficiency. A training on the running of non-profit organisations asserts the pre-eminence of general interest over individual interest, it checks the confusion that people easily make between their property and that of the non-profit organisation, it is founded on mutual trust and the delegation of power to opinion leaders, it fights against informal proceedings and improvisation, and points out the individual and collective responsibilities of members in the running of the structure. The contribution of members constitute the bulk of the association's funds. Its management is impersonal and based on rules and procedures accepted by all and applicable to all. To belong to a non-profit organisation means to accept to submit oneself without any discriminations, to the same rules and procedures. Here, we can freely exercise our rights only when we are in conformity with the rules of the non-profit organisation and when we contribute to its smooth functioning, following internal regulations approved by all. Our meeting was aimed at abolishing the informal management of the non-profit organisation's public as well as community affairs. The modernisation of traditional authority entails the modernisation of its management. This is the challenge that the national chairman, his majesty Nyimi Lukengo, together with the entire executive committee are about to take up. It is a problem of education and training. That's why we are bent on educating our members.

Let me come back on the make-up of the national committee. Some participants at the meeting protested against the presence of non-invested princes in the national committee, at the detriment of invested chiefs. What do you have to say about this?

You have to know that the leaders of any formal organisation are designated following the provisions of the organisation's founding texts. Moreover, traditional authority is a family affair. It is shared between the enthroned chief and those who can likely succeed him. The importance of a chief is not measured by his being invested or not. It is linked to the prestige he enjoys in his community and the society as a whole. A number of factors account for this prestige. You have the spread of his authority, the number of people under his rule, his personal history, etc. Power being a family affair and exercised within the framework of the family, all the chief's next of kin and potential successors to the throne, share the same prestige and the same authority. A village chief like "Kuba" does not have the same prestige as chief "Nyimi" or even his non invested successor. In most of our traditions, including mine, we instead look at it in terms of a "well established" chief (enthroned), or a "less well established" chief (next of kin, successor or prince). In any case, I am called "chief Mukatshung" from the name of my chiefdom, ruled by my paternal and maternal grand parents, as well as my father. It is a question of education and cultural diversity.

Do magistrates apply secret laws?

By Frank Ka-Ngahyguim

Article published in *N'Djamena Bi-Hebdo* n° 547 on 17/12/01.

Chad

The denial of law and justice not only heaps a curse on the judiciary, but pushes one to think that those who are generally referred to as " the men of law" actively contribute to the deterioration of society.

The irresponsible and disloyal behaviour of magistrates, has discredited the judiciary in the eyes of those subject to the law, and exposed the whole system to corruption, root cause of all social injustices, and violence that disrupt social peace.

Mr. KJ won a real estate case against his sister, who was summoned by the court of first instance of Moundou to leave the disputed piece of land because she had no right to sell it in the first place. Jacques, who inherited the land from his father, simply authorised his half sister to temporarily occupy it, but not to let it out. But the same court came back on its decision, and asked KJ to pay a handsome package to the sister. The presiding judge, told him during the second hearing that "the first decision was not valid". K.J. made an appeal for the second judgement to be reviewed, within the required time limit. But the court clerk made things difficult for him by refusing to transfer the file to the N'djamena court of appeal. The Court sold the disputed land without the proprietor knowing. His lawyer did not protest even though he had been earlier informed about the behaviour of the Moundou Court clerk and of the sale of the land under dispute. He instead gave him the fees he had collected. And that's how the poor citizen lost his rights to a fair trial. To him, "justice is corrupt".

A senior law officer turned up one evening at his in-law's house, in the company of a gendarme. The in law was severely beaten by his visitors, who later on left with his wife. "If the men of law are fighting us physically, what other force can we rely on to defend ourselves?" One of the parents of the victim, wondered allowed.

These happenings, with many others are part of the daily behaviour of those who are called upon to regulate inter-personal relationships in society. It shows how lightly judges go about accomplishing the missions assigned to them. That of enforcing the law. If they themselves can disobey the law, will other citizens not be tempted to institute anarchy in the country? If they act on impulses that invalidate their will power in daily life as well as in the execution of their duties, will injustice not triumph? If they happen to take justice in their hands, how will they resolve a conflict of violence in which their fellow citizens are involved?

The existence of a State of law requires that all those who are honoured with the responsibility of enforcing the law, submit themselves to justice. If they are not considered as last resorts by the people they are called upon to judge; if they pretend to be their protectors and instead turn out to be inefficient officers, they will, at this point be encouraging social injustice, commonly called impunity or corruption. The interference of political and military authorities in the legal machinery, encourages impunity. At the opening of the Supreme Court session on November 14th 2001, Adviser Dolotan Noudjalbaye, hammered on this aspect «It can happen that the minister himself be forced to intervene, because of the nature of a crime, the possible social repercussions, or the political colouring of its author, by making it a no submission case or most likely, by opening an inquiry which may contribute to shelve the case indefinitely.» Beyond certain interferences that secure public order, this declaration brings to the limelight the inequality of all citizens before the law. It is not unusual to see victims sentenced in the place of crime perpetrators, and other trouble-makers simply set free.

In some provinces, the abdication of the Judicial machinery is even more glaring as the stronger often dominate the weaker. When this does not happen, it is the men of law themselves who decide to "help" only family members or other friends who embark in activities likely to disrupt peace within communities. Justice should emanate from a coherent group made of qualified people, having at their disposal the required resources to accomplish their duty and a clear definition of their rights and duties as well as the rights and duties of those they are to serve. Otherwise, the lack of resources, incompetence and the non application of texts will remain stumbling blocks to people's equal access to justice, the independence of the magistracy, and the right to a fair trial. This is why the "International seminar on justice administration and international justice" that held from

October 30th to November 3rd 2001 at Cefod, recommended "the training and updating of the skills of police officers and magistrates, the adoption and the application of magistrate special State, and the appointment of enforcement judges. To enable them to accomplish their noble mission, magistrates have a right to ask an increase in salary to stay clear of any temptation to take bribes from the seekers of justice, thus pushing them to impartiality. The presiding judge of the supreme court also underscored this fact last November 14th 2001. "Our jurisdictions lack almost all what is required for a better accomplishment of their duty".

It can however happen that a bad or arbitrary court decision be solely taken by a magistrate, who allows himself through certain practices contradictory with his public service mission. "If he cannot resist the appeal of easy gain, a judge will ignore legal consideration. Despite the evidence of guilt, he will not impose the corresponding sanction. by resorting to a release or acquittal, and this under the cover of the doubt, or by pronouncing an absurd suspended sentence,» remarked the advisor Dolotan Noudjalbaye. There is a far-reaching attitude that can save the country from perpetual social disorders, that are a permanent threat to security and national unity: it is the courage that magistrates should show proof of. They should resist all political and social temptations or pressures, spread in the form of quarrels all over the country. In this vain, they must sanction authors of crimes and other misdeeds, according to the law. Social peace must emanate from the total application of legal rules, and the revalorisation of their status. As Dolotan Noudjalbaye said, "this is the price to pay to have a state of law which must be the protector of all citizens" and free them from the obsession of living in an arbitrary State.

Public authorities are accomplices

By ka-Ngahyguim Frank

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Chad

The Western Logone division is presently shaken by a series of inter community tensions. The perpetrators of this unrest are yet to be disturbed, contrary to what the authorities of this division say.

The end of the year 2001 was dramatic in Moundou and its surroundings. On December 17th two communities clashed, leaving several people dead. According to the divisional officer of Moundou, Madji Simeon, these communities should have never clashed. Have been approaching the rulers of ferricks and farmers' representatives since September to draw their attention on the high chances of having these clashes as graziers have prematurely come back to their farm lands while farmers have not finished harvesting their crops".

The senior divisional officer blames the December 17th clashes on the "tactlessness of all those involved", before adding that the conflict sparked off, when a drover allowed its herd to destroy farms around, thus annoying farmers". If the divisional officer considers that "all those involved in this clash have been caught and brought to justice," and that on the civilian side "the victims are waiting for compensation to make up for the damages caused", the mayor of the town on his part, points out that the main perpetrator of these acts, a Nigerian citizen, is still free: "Issa Bande ordered the killing of a pregnant woman before her two little kids; he rallied graziers to burn down houses in the Dokapti neighbourhood of the Moundou and sparked the December 17th clash. But I am telling you that this man is still free".

The fact that Bande is getting away with what he has done, has pushed farmers to think that the administration is on the side of graziers. This is equally what makes Laoukein Kourayo Medard to say "that the farmer/grazier conflict will only end, when brigade commanders district heads, senior divisional officers, and officials of the administration will stop rearing livestock. This perception is shared by Senior Divisional Officer Abdallah "Brigade commanders are generally natives of the North, support graziers or are themselves graziers, together with

some divisional officers. They usually take fines and other compensations from graziers, without necessarily passing them on to farmers, leaving the problem unsolved".

The senior divisional officer Abdallah blames the deterioration of the situation on politicians. "We shouldn't forget the negative contribution of politicians: from the South, who create and sustain animosity between farmers and graziers, making conflict inevitable". Commenting on their stand on conflicts in the rural area, the Senior Divisional Officer says " We have adopted a neutral stand. We are neither supporting the graziers, nor the farmers. If anybody says we are taking sides, then it is absolutely false. Why should the administrators that we are discriminate? Are farmers, and graziers not all Chadians?". To prevent similar happenings in the future "we held several meetings with Doyon, Dokapti and Ngara quarter heads, who are directly involved in the conflict. We reminded them of the friendly ties that should exist among their communities, because they are complementary at the social as well as economic levels. They are condemned to live together, so there should mutually respect each other and know their bounds" said rural divisional officer of Moundou. In addition to this, local conflict resolution commissions that had stopped functioning, have been revived.

To limit the farmer/grazier conflict to the western logone area, will mean ignoring the global nature of these clashes. And to hold politicians responsible for them, will miss the real causes of misery in the rural area.

The rural areas have become cruel because "cattle have abandoned their original grass meal to eat from the same dishes as men" an observer said. According to a farmer, the local administration has not been able to find a solution to the problem. Because according to him, "The cattle belongs to brigade commanders, divisional officers, and PA Chiefs". "From where do graziers get their arms and why are they so arrogant?" he asked.

With regards to the involvement of politicians, another farmer said "we don't need a politician in the heart of the bush to chase the cattle that destroy our crops. Our field are our lives whereas politicians live on lies... We will only have peace when graziers start heading their cattle well. We don't care about the rest. It is worth while noting that after the Dokapti, Ngara and Doyon neighbourhoods, the locality of Mbainamar also witnessed the same scene of violence. A village chief and his wife were shot with arrows by graziers after the 1st of January 2002. The wounded couple was fortunately urgently evacuated to the Moundou hospital by the help of a farmer. Earlier on, another grazier allowed his cattle to trample

on cement blocks that had just been moulded in the Moundou neighbourhood. The owner of the blocks also knew the fate of his cement blocks.

In the Mont de lam division, the village of bedogo was attacked by graziers who took away a herd of cattle after shooting people and putting fire on houses. The graziers were armed to the teeth : "This is the work of politicians from the South"

On December 18th 2001, in the village of Gounou Tamboursou in the Gounou district, Kabbia division, graziers introduced cows in a cotton farm in the presence of the owner of the farm-owner. Five young village men, alerted of the situation, tried in vain to track down the graziers who had disappeared into thin air. But a grazier by the name of Ouwa came back and complained to the chief of the village that he had lost two of his cows. The next day, the assistant police commander, together with nine policemen came looking for the young men who had chased the graziers, and their parents. Many village youths were arrested. A man of 60 to 70 years of age, father of 19 children, was severely tortured. He died on the spot in the compound of the village chief.

The native population, including militants of the ruling party, had intended to organise a demonstration following the intervention of security forces. But the senior divisional officer of Kabbia, Fitangue Vatbonga, a native of the region, successfully brought them to change their mind.

WOMEN AND PEACE

It is common knowledge that women are the main victims of the wars that men cause. And the role they can play in preventing and resolving conflict is often underestimated. It should however be noted that women make up more than 50% of the population. They are the mothers and educators of future soldiers as well as decision makers. Women in the DRC are now aware of their potentials and are committed to the restoration of peace in their war devastated region, through the organisation of symposia and conferences.

Through a network of regional NGOs: African women get involved in promoting peace

By Gratién Kitambala

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Democratic Republic of Congo

If women are not usually those who start wars, they are at least those who suffer more from war situations, as much as children, given their vulnerability. It is to seek solutions to these drifts that the United Nations Permanent Consultative Council on security matters in Central Africa, organised in Kinshasa from November 14th to 16th 2002, a conference on the protection of women and children during armed conflicts in Central Africa. The participants, who in the most part were women, came from the DRC, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, and Chad. Invited delegates from Rwanda did not attend the meeting.

The meeting gave birth to several resolutions and also enabled women from countries of this troubled area of Central Africa, to meet. It is worthwhile mentioning that war is currently going on in three out of the ten countries represented at the meeting; one of them (the Central African Republic) is at the brink of a civil war, while another (Congo Brazzaville) is still healing the wounds left by its civil war. The remaining countries may be doing fine today but this is no guarantee that they will be forever spared the setbacks of war like the DRC and Burundi.

Participants at this symposium spontaneously brought up the idea of creating a network of women's associations for the promotion of peace in Central Africa, in order to face such eventualities or prevent them. Each delegation was therefore assigned to work for the quick set up of this organisation. "We women are now aware of the valuable contribution we can make towards the promotion of peace" said one participant, Mrs. Dominique Munongo of the Centre for the Development of Women in the DRC.

These women want to act for two reasons. The first is that women and children are the main victims of the wars started by men, and secondly, that women constitute a force to reckon with in terms of numbers and their influence. They can change the turn of history, if only they are fully involved in the quest for peace.

This is why many recommendations were made in favour of women during this forum. The recommendations include the setting up of programmes on education for peace and the respect of human rights. These programmes are expected to create awareness among women, about the specific hardships they go through. This is intended to increase the role of women in decision making, within countries of the sub region, in the specific areas of conflict resolution and the negotiation of peace agreements.

It will definitely take much time for these recommendations to be implemented. Mrs. Dominique Munongo thinks that "Whatever the case, we have no choice. And the little progress we've made so far to improve our status in our different societies clearly shows that we are on the right track."

The women's associations gave themselves three months before they could meet again to put together their different draft proposals on the setting up of this organisation. "We want maximum contact among women associations of the different counties. After this, we will try to link up the women and also men who are found in decision making circles, for our proposals and suggestions to be heard" Dominique Munongo explains.

There are great plans for the future. For example, participants at the symposium recommended the launching of children's programmes on the promotion of a culture of peace. Children, they thought, could even be trained at national level, to fight against tribalism and intolerance. It goes without saying that women will have to play a central role in programmes like these.

Many more projects are being envisioned, and all will need the active participation of women. "The disastrous situation of most of our countries at times

makes the hope for a possible restoration of peace, a farfetched dream. But we know that our faith and will to overcome the forces of evil, can move the mountains of conflicts and divisions. This will be the main drive of all our activities. If Europe has succeeded to cast out the demon of war for almost 50 years now, we too can do it". Mrs. Dominique Munongo concludes, with a lot of optimism.

Women more involved in the peace process in the Great Lakes region

By Willy Kabwe

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Democratic Republic of Congo

According to the Lusaka cease-fire agreement, the conflict in the RDC can be divided into two parts: the internal and the external conflict. Many observers remark that since Sun City significant progress has been made concerning both parts of the conflict, as illustrated by the signing of the Pretoria and Luanda agreements. The first reinforces the ties between RDC and Rwanda while the second marks a reconciliation between Uganda and Congo. Both underlined by a common denominator, the withdrawal of foreign troops from the RDC. The External part of the conflict does not end here. Beyond the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, the organisation of an international conference on peace and development is being envisaged in the Great Lakes region, in view of consolidating the benefits of these agreements and preserving good neighbourly relations, which expectantly, will lead to a renewed circulation of goods and persons amongst countries of the region.

Meanwhile, women set the ball rolling by organising a conference dubbed "know now" in Kampala from the 22nd to the 27th of July, bringing together representatives of NGOs, donor organisations and information specialists from all parts of the world. Two Kinshasa based NGOs, "B'umoja" and "Femmes Rapides" represented the RDC at the Conference.

The Kampala meeting was aimed at exchanging ideas, views and experiences, as well as address the challenges facing information producers, managers, and users at different political levels, to make sure that information concerning women is put at the disposal of policy makers. The representative of "B'umoga" Mrs Jeanne Mujangi says Congolese women learnt a lot from their contact with other women especially those from Kampala, during the group sessions that went on for 7 days. The themes examined during the conference were women advancement, Information and communication Technology (ICT), the reinforcement of peace and reconstruction, ICT and the media; ICT and the deve-

lopment of the rural woman. Participants discovered on this occasion, the important role of information in the fight against poverty, violence perpetrated against women during war, and the empowerment of the rural woman. All the negative and positive practices in these domains were identified, as well the challenges to be faced.

Contacts with the Kampala population

Congolese women had informal contacts with their Ugandan counterparts out of the Conference hall. The Ugandan women demonstrated their outstanding involvement in the development of their country. Be it those involved in farming the intellectuals or those carrying out handicraft activities, the women from Uganda showed their capacity and will to put information and communication at the service of progress. Ugandan women of the diaspora lobby for the funding of women initiated income generating activities. The other point of interest was the good use of public transport, characterised by the respect for clients, common assets or infrastructure such as buildings and public toilets, the obligatory wearing of aprons by females restaurant staff etc.

B'umoja's contribution at the Kampala Conference

Article 25 of section 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "Nursing mothers and children are entitled to special assistance". The B'umoja representative at the conference based her presentation on this provision of the declaration to stigmatise women's poverty as well as the violence endured by Congolese women and girls. She pointed out the fact that many 6 year old girls help their mothers to, or independently, run small businesses to provide for their families, when normally they should be at school. In this situation, children gradually develop a liking for street life and immorality. Many practices harmful to women's health have been developed of late. These include illegal abortion, the use of medicinal pharmaceutical products to develop women's busts and waistlines, the disposition of widows, the domination of the husband's family on the wife, the economic exploitation of women by men who have made it a habit to run parallel homes. The existence of these practices can be attributed to the abdication of parents from their roles as educator and the helplessness of the state which is

more preoccupied with ending the war. The NGO B'umojo, supported by the Belgian Embassy and the "Marna cash" organisation, assists young girls and women through specific programmes such as the re-education and re-classification of young girls through professional training, education on social and reproductive health, literacy, economic and social empowerment, and legal action to defend young girls and women against whom any acts of violence are perpetrated.

The positive practices identified include the FAO information and communication project code named "Dimitra", which gathers and spreads information at a larger scale to sensitise rural populations on gender issues through others specific programmes. There is also the case of Panos/Southern Africa that uses radio listeners' clubs in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as a means to open a dialogue forum between rural women and power circles. The denunciation of the exploitation of women through new information and communication technology, 50 years after the second world war, has pushed the United Nation's Security Council to take resolution 1325 aimed at raising the awareness of military men about gender related problems, and the promotion of international peace and security.

Challenges ahead

Participants at this conference must, among other challenges, change their way of creating alliances with other movements in such a way as to eradicate social inequalities all over the world, put theory into practice, go beyond simple investigation to actually meet the needs of women facing violence, transform the media, develop gender networks, build theories that can foster dialogue, reinforce peace and give justice its rightful place.

CONFLICTS AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

The friction between different cultures and religions within the same society is usually a source of conflict. An illustration of this in Nigeria is the Islamic law which is incongruous with "modern legal precepts". In Chad farmers and graziers do not spare each other. In other countries like Burundi and the DRC, people live with resentment from the civil war. And yet, they must co-exist. It is in their interest to make this co-existence peaceful, rather than conflicting.

Why repeated violence ?

by Grégonie NDORICIMPA

Article published in *Le Renouveau* n° 5873 on 07/10/02.
Burundi.

Since its accession to independence, Burundi has known a cycle of violence that reached its peak with the 1993 war. The people of Burundi now have two objectives to attain : a ceasefire and national reconciliation.

For nine years now, Burundi has been living at the rhythm of "*Kalashnikov*". Many actions and solutions have been initiated, but none of these have succeeded in restoring peace and security in the country. Misery and illness have become part and parcel of people's daily existence, and many survive thanks to humanitarian assistance.

As it is the habit with all armed conflicts a negotiated political solution is always the best way out. Burundi adopted this solution and signed the Arusha agreement after two years of tough negotiations.

The Arusha accords raised much hopes amongst the population, who thought it to sound the end bell to all their troubles. Fighting instead intensified in most parts of the country, after the signing of this agreement.

With regards to the present deteriorating security situation, the hopes raised by the Arusha accords are gradually wearing out. Many have come to realise that there can be no peace if political agreements are not backed by military ones.

This is not to play down the importance of the Arusha accords in the peace and reconciliation process in Burundi. It was highly debated and all thorny issues dividing the people of Burundi, were examined.

It was obvious that the peace process in this country will stagnate at one point. The people of Burundi went into negotiations because there was war in the country. Paradoxically, a ceasefire was never on the agenda of the Arusha negotiations even though it was primordial. The Arusha peace agreement was therefore

negotiated and signed within a context of war.

The transitional institutions put in place a year ago realised the urgent need to bring back peace and made the signing of a permanent and global ceasefire, a top priority in the negotiation programme. This, because without a ceasefire, the government cannot dream of attaining objectives such as the rehabilitation of all disaster victims, the stabilization of macro-economics and finance, and the revamping of the economy. It was also realised that certain resolutions of the Arusha accord could not be implemented without a ceasefire.

Presently, there is mediation going on to push the protagonists of the conflict to real ceasefire negotiations even though the last rounds of talks in Dar-es-Salam are a clear pointer to the furtherness of peace in Burundi.

the Government has always shone its interest and will to negotiate a ceasefire, but the rebellion always comes up with pretexts to delay or reject any negotiation proposals. Today more than ever, the need to end hostilities is felt more in the interior of the country. War has brought abject poverty. The economy is going down the drain and if nothing is done to reverse this trend, Burundi will touch the bottom line.

The International community subjects assistance in Burundi to the signing of a ceasefire, which is not coming fast enough and while waiting people are dying. The last devaluation of our currency put the last straw on our economy, which was already weakened by 9 years of fighting. The financial situation of Burundi families clearly shows that those who will not die by the sword will die of hunger, if donor countries and organisations do not react.

Many people even wonder why this same international community cannot accelerate the ongoing ceasefire negotiation process. Why can't it bring pressure to bear on those who are refusing to negotiate?

Peace is therefore a necessity for the people of Burundi who've spent a very long time in fighting. The protagonists of the conflict in Burundi should pull themselves together and free the population from distress. They must all agree to sign the ceasefire agreement to put an end to a conflict that none of them will ever win. In a context, where many innocent people have been killed where the country has moved backwards by ten years in all aspects, the loser is everybody.

If people's minds are not prepared, resentment will extend the war in the East after the peace agreement

By Gratién Kitambala

Article published in *L'Avenir* n° 1360 on 12/11/01.

"We will make them pay for this sooner or later". This is the sentence or phrase that comes again and again, when Congolese talk about the current war against their country and when they say this, they refer to the Rwandan - citizens of a small country, they say- which has humiliated them by invading their country and provoking a war that claimed millions of lives, and billions of dollars worth of ecological and material damages.

Within this backdrop, it is difficult to force a genuine reconciliation amongst the communities and countries at war today in the Great Lakes regions. War, undoubtedly will have to end one day with the current peace process gone silent for months now. Armies are no longer taking on each other despite some deplorable acts of war. There is political commitment through the Inter-Congolese dialogue which seeks to identify and resolve the internal causes of war. This internal dialogue will be followed by an international meeting grouping all the countries of the region involved in the war, this time to address the external causes.

Peace in the people s minds

The present state of relations between France and Germany, the United States and Japan hardly reminds us of the bloody 6 year war which opposed their citizens 50 years ago, and was extended to the rest of the world, killing some 21 million people while destroying the whole of Europe and Japan. Today, reason has prevailed over emotions. The French, the Germans, the Japanese and Americans have grown out of their wartime resentment to face reality. They had no choice anyway. They could not fight that war eternally. of course, it's end worked out well as the forces of "good" represented by allies war over the "evil" forces of the Axis. The situation in Congo is different. People feel that the just cause are defending is not receiving the support it deserves. Their bitterness and resentment rules

out all prospects of a happy end.

This is why international institutions in charge of preserving world peace, must make sure that their established principles ensuring a world balance of peace are scrupulously respected, in the case of the war in Congo. If this is not done, then war will continue in peoples minds long after the ceasure of arms. For, as the UNESCO Charter rightly says, the seeds of conflict are born in peoples minds and that's where conflicts should be resolved.

It can however be easier to bring two countries to sign a ceasefire, than two people to reconcile and forget about the reasons of their conflict. This can be made possible if the reconciliation becomes an imposable requirement, for political commitment to move the mountains of misunderstanding.

Once the responsibilities of the different parties involved are established, then political and opinions leaders, the clergy, the civil society can now take up the task to make people see that they must live together. Besides, there can be no other way out for Congolese and Rwandans, who are neighbours. If they had deemed it necessary some years back to come together in a regional organisation, they must renew this experience in order to survive in the new global order which today requires the creation of large political and economic entities. The volume of exchange going on across borders is there to justify the need or the normalisation of their relations.

How to get there

Judging from people's state of mind and the happenings in this region, in the recent year, peace is a difficult challenge to meet. And yet, must be met, provided it receives the necessary attention.

United Nations specialized institutions, especially Monuc, are beeing called upon to set up specialized programmes for the consolidation of peace in people's minds. OKAPI Radio which will be launched by MONUC in the weeks ahead falls in line with this strategy, which should be relayed at all levels.

Particular efforts will have to be made in the direction of the thousand displaced persons and refugees living in camps, and experiencing the pangs of war. These efforts can only succeed if relayed by the civil society as well as all social classes of people in the countries in conflict within the region.

Peace process in the DRC : The importance of preliminary meetings

By Franck Baku

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Democratic Republic of Congo

The meeting between the fighting factions in the RDC, signatories of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement of December 7 and 8, greatly advanced the peace process in general and a political breakthrough, marked by the Inter Congolese dialogue. Government experts of RDC/Goma and MLC parties who negotiated the deal brokered by M. Ibrahima Fall, UN deputy Security and the delegates of Ketumile Masire solved the problem of the representation of the different factions at this national forum.

The decisions taken after fierce negotiations added an inclusive dimension to the national dialogue as desired by the government. The mai-mai resistant movement, religious leaders, the Diaspora, the outside opposition and the political parties who were not present in Gaborone henceforth have their quota. The belligerents made interesting concessions by reducing from 74 to 55 their respective number of representatives. This created room for the admission of other social and political actors who so far were not represented. This equally brought down from 330 to 300, the total number of participants at the Inter-Congolese dialogue. There will therefore be lesser people but a wider representation during the working session that will take place in South Africa at the beginning of February 2002, everything being equal. (see the minutes of the Abuja meeting in the box)

Advancing at snail pace

The experts agreed to meet again in Abuja next January, under the auspices of the United Nations to sort out other pending matters relating to the management of the transition, the new political order, the configuration of the army etc. Some people however think that these issues if handled during informal preliminary meetings, will leave the national forum itself with nothing to discuss. We however believe that it can be necessary for the belligerents to pave the way and come prepared with concrete proposals to present to other political and social actors during the national forum.

This can be relevant because the 45 days set aside for the holding of the forum might be insufficient given the propensity of some people to drag on issues. If all goes well, Congolese political party leaders, signatories of the Lusaka accords will be meeting within the second half of January 2002 to examine some emotional issues. A Kabila-Bemba-Onusumba meeting will not only help break the ice amongst the heads of belligerent groups, but could also positively influence the outcome of the Inter-Congolese dialogue.

The belligerent will be preparing the grounds for political negotiations during preliminary meetings, while the political opposition and the civil society are meeting in Brussels in January for almost the same reasons. Even if they are not involved in the fighting, the civil society and political parties can constitute a stumbling block to national dialogue. It is true that the fighting factions can impose themselves by the force of arms, but they cannot single handily solve a problem that has a bearing on the future of the entire Congolese nation.

If they could, then the other parties involved would not have been included in the Lusaka peace agreement.

The opposition parties and the civil society must therefore take this opportunity to polish up their strategies in Brussels, next January. This move is an urgent one to make, given the fact that these opposition parties and the civil society, are not monolithic groups, meaning that they don't always carry a uniform opinion. The civil society tried to solve this problem by elaborating a hand guide for the delegates who will be taking part in the forum. It is however certain that despite this some particular points will come up during discussions. Although it will be difficult to impose a common standpoint on such a heterogeneous group to which will be added delegates of the mai-mai resistance movement, the Diaspora religious movement. But they could agree on the main issues and adopt a blueprint that will influence the attitude of each group in relation to crucial matters.

Political parties, are also not monolithic groups. They often differ in opinion and might not pull much weight during the discussions at the forum. They might be forced to play a minor role as compared to the government or other rebellious movements.

Although it is less than likely to avoid this scenario, the political parties should at least close ranks and smooth out their differences of divergence so as to appear as a serious negotiating partner.

An advantageous approach

This is why a lot of importance should be given to the preliminary meetings that have already been held or those to come in January, before the enlarged inter-Congolese dialogue. To avoid a breakdown like the one in Addis-Abeba, it is necessary to hold as many preliminary meetings as possible. They will help prepare the ground, and foster a friendly atmosphere, away from many war planing. Why continue to kill each other, to expand our territories, when solutions could be found through dialogue? If these meetings go well they might even shorten the time allocated for the talks. After all the people of Afghanistan who have been fighting for the past 20 years, took less than two weeks to reach an understanding over crucial issues, and even designate leaders to rule during the transitional period, following the demise of taliban forces. Even if the Congolese take delight in African quarrels, we believe that 45 days are enough if not too much. It can be shameful for people to meet out of their borders to indefinitely discuss the future of their country, while the country itself is slowly fading out and asking for rapid solutions.

An increase in the number of meetings between fighting factions in and out of Congo will reinforce peace. There should be mutual trust amongst countries of the Great Lakes region, to reduce suspicion. Preliminary meetings between heads of State of the Sub-region, will thus help prepare the enlarged conference on peace in the Great Lakes region, a long time proposal of France, that was recently taken into account by Kofi Annan, in his 9th report on Monuc.

Minutes of the meetings between the signature of the Lusaka agreement

Abuja 7-8 December 2001

Theme: Representation of participants at the Inter-Congolese political negotiations

The Congolese signatories of the Lusaka peace agreement invited by his excellency, Ibrahima Fall, deputy Secretary General of the United Nations in charge of political affairs in the presence of a facilitator examined how representative the participants at the negotiation were. On the basis of point 5.4b of chapter 5 on the implementation modalities, they decided as follows :

1. The parties allowed to the Inter-Congolese political negotiations are those stipulated in the Lusaka agreement. They are :
 - The government of the DRC
 - The Congolese democratic movement MLC
 - The political opposition
 - The social actors

2. The different parties involved admitted the need to give an inclusive dimension to the negotiations by accepting the participation of delegates from the mai-mai movement, from the Diaspora, from outside political opposition religious and traditional leaders.

3. In application of the above principle mentioned in point 2, the parties agree that
 - 3.1 The mai-mai movement will be represented by 6 of its leaders
 - The three signatories will work with the facilitator, to designate the 6 mai-mai representatives
 - The mai-mai delegates will exceptionally form part of the "active forces"

 - 3.2 The 7 heads of religious orders, will equally be part of the active forces

 - 3.3 At least 2 traditional leaders will be part of each signatory delegation

3.4 The signatories of the Lusaka peace accord suggest that the representation of opposition political parties be done by themselves given the fact that the delegation will be made of :

- 5 representatives of the external opposition (USA, Europe and Africa)
- 30 representatives of the 15 political organisations present in Gaborone and Addis Ababa
- 20 other representatives to be chosen from the political opposition (not invited in Gaborone) by the facilitors after concertation with the signatories of the Lusaka accords.

3.5 Every signatory party to this Inter Congolese political negotiation is free to include any Congolese of the Diaspora in this delegation

4. The number of participants per delegation will be scrupulously respected. Nevertheless, to solve the problems raised in points 3.1 and 3.2 above, the quota allocated to active forces will exceptionally be increased as compared to those of the other delegations.

5. From the forerunning, signatories of the Lusaka agreement fixed the number of representatives at the intergongolese political negotiations as follow:

- Government : 55 delegates
- MLC : 55 delegates
- RCD : 55 delegates
- Political opposition : 55 delegates
- Active forces: 71 delegates
- RCD/ML : 9 delegates
- Total : 300 delegates

Done in Abuja, December 8, 2001

For the MLC : Oliver Kamitatu, SG

For the RCD : Azarias Ruberwa, SG

For the Government : Augustin Katumba, Minister

Unity threatened by intercommunity conflicts.

By Frank Ka-Ngahyguim

Article published in *N'Djamena Bi-Hebdo* n° 53 on 3/12/01.

Chad

The peaceful coexistence threatened by recurrent inter-community conflict brings to the limelight the question of national unity and the role of public authorities. The ongoing conflict may likely plunge Chad into a big storm of violence.

Bongor, September 2001, a dispute between a Massa and a Kreda youth in a drinking establishment, led to deadly clashes between the Kreda and Massa communities. 5 people were killed and many others wounded. Before the Bongor incident another conflict opposed the Kredas to the Toupouri in Pala, causing 3 deaths and several injured. The Marbas recently clashed with ouddanians in N'djamena, after a simple exchange of words. Two peoples were killed and several others injured. Deadly clashes are the daily cup of tea of Chadian populations, since the country's accession to independence on the 11th of August, 1960.

No doubt that conflicts tearing communities a part are not of the same nature. Some oppose neighbouring communities, as was the case in the Kim villages, or the natives with indigeneous people, others opposing different ethnic groups, and sometimes in its backdrop, religious differences. Besides the conflicts arising from a difficult co-existence there are others stemming from the weakness of the administration which is at odds with the principle of equality before the law. (The Dar Sila conflict that opposed natives to the forces of law and orders.)

All these conflicts call to question national unity in a situation where all these communities are condemned to live together and mutually depend on each other. In this regard, why should they confront themselves? Do Chadian ignore the regulatory role assigned to the judiciary and why have public authorities not succeeded in curbing this situation since 1960?

Several years of armed conflicts have jeopardized the co-existence of communities by fostering a cruel and uncivic spirit in people and a drive towards death. This globalization of a culture of violence has deeply affected the judiciary

in particular and the administration in general. The different regimes who almost all came to power by "Coup d'Etat" have failed to establish the authority of the State and national unity. They've been more concerned about preserving their own interest rather than the general interest of Chadians.

The consensus around republican institutions is marred by the backward behaviour of the populations and the multiplicity of laws governing the country. Any community that thinks itself militarily and politically strong tries to bypass the laws of the country to impose its rule on the rest, the Judiciary becomes totally helpless in a situation like this, while the state continues in its decadence. Reprehensible acts go unpunished, hence sustaining violence because as the French philosopher Baron de Montesquieu rightly said "all loose situations arise from impunity or from unpunished crime". Public authorities have also been encouraging injustices as observed in the management of public affairs and the maintenance of order. This has reduced trust in them.

In the absence of equitable justice and a neutral administration, people have decided to take justice in their hands. The authority of the State is very often defied by individuals who know they will be protected by their status. But if people refuse to respect public institutions, this should normally pick the curiosity of the rulers of the nation. And solutions can be found since nowhere in the world, there are problems without solutions.

For national unity to be safeguarded, public authorities and the population should subject themselves to State laws: the constitution, the penal code, the law regulating transhumance activities. If public authorities could respect the laws they themselves institute then the number of acts that lead to question the very existence of the state will be reduced. To achieve this, they will have to respect constitutional principles that constitute the foundation of a modern and democratic society, namely: the equality of citizens before the law and the independence of the Judiciary.

If the law should apply to all, then the judiciary must take on its responsibility: sanction trouble-makers, including civil servants or soldiers involved in inter-community conflicts no matter their religion, ethnic origin or social status. Only an impartial independent judiciary will close the cracks in the social fabric deeply affected by social conflicts. The law governing human relationships, should be applied in the same way on all components of society for "none is above the law".

The respect of human rights is also a problem when it comes to the management of conflicts by those in charge of restoring order. Security forces should know their role and manage inter-community conflicts in an impartial manner. Auxillaries of justice should also be empowered after being disciplined. This will rekindle the population's confidence in the forces of law and order, an enabling factor for the peaceful co-existence of the population and this will greatly help the judiciary in its quest for truth.

The state should also work towards the prevention of violence. This should normally be enhanced by administrative decentralisation. But this decentralisation hastily done did not take into account certain sociological realities which are the bedrock of intercommunity conflicts. This prevention should be made to rest on traditional rulers who will be in charge with developing the role of the state in the eyes of these communities.

From Pala to N'Djamena through Bongor, in short, throughout the national territory these conflicts have caused deaths and displaced people along side important material damages such as destroyed houses, goods and harvests. These conflict in addition to these damages, nurse feelings of hatred and vengeance in the population. It is time to stop them by a responsible management of public affairs. For a badly managed conflict today, leads to another one tomorrow. The country should not be allowed to be devastated.

Towards an end to farmer/grazier conflict

By Frank Ka-Ngahyguim

Article published in *N'Djamena Bi-Hebdo* n° 549 on 24/12/01.

Chad

A "Seminar to elaborate rules and regulations governing transhumance and nomadism in Chad" held from December 11 to 17th 2001, in Darda, some 65 km south of N'djamena. A "draft bill on the regulation of nomadism transhumance and the keeping of livestock" is awaiting validation before being finally adopted.

On the 17th of December, closing day of the Seminar, farmers and graziers clashed in the outskirts of Moundou, headquarters of the Logone west division, in the South of Chad. According to hospital sources, three people lost their lives. It must be underlined that in total violations of the law regulating the rural world, farmers and graziers have transformed the entire national territory into a battle field, causing substantial loss of human life and property. These conflicts, as the national mediator for Djimasta Koïbla said, constitute a real threat to social cohesion in rural areas.

Many reasons explain these clashes which regularly call for the attention of public authorities. This call is contained in the recommendations of the national seminar on farmer/grazier conflicts, that were held from the 11th to the 14th of May 1999, in N'Djamena. The body charged with the implementation of these recommendations, the high interministry council, which equally organised the Darda seminar, is chaired by the Prime Minister, assisted by the national mediator.

The first identified cause of conflict in the rural area according to public authorities is environmental degradation. "Our country has known a climatic degradation for the past 30 years... Our soils have lost their vegetation and fertility", the Prime Minister said. He added that, at the same time "the human and animal population is rapidly increasing, putting unbearable pressure on what is left of our exploitable natural resources."

In short, due to drought, farmers and graziers are forced to clash on the same limited fertile lands. The October 31st 1959 law on nomadism which should nor-

mally help in the resolution of these conflicts has simply been abandoned.

The conflict resolution methods used by the administration and military authorities, largely contributes in worsening the situation. The authorities do not only take advantage of the hardships of rural inhabitants, but some of them are at times involved in the conflict, since they are amongst the most important graziers in the country. In the above mentioned example, it is therefore difficult to talk of the impartiality of the administration. It is at this level, that the old farmer/ grazier conflict has taken serious proportions. We should not lose sight of the fact that since 1990, our politicians have become the protectors of their peers, allowing themselves to be carried away in divine inspired speeches for campaign purposes without measuring the impact of all these.

The aggravation of these conflicts especially by public officers, has brought graziers to consider farmers as an obstacle to the free movement of their livestock, while farmers believe that graziers want to take them off their land. So by the interest and negligence of some and the ignorance and ill faith of others, the rural world has successfully been transformed into a cruel and unbearable place, a perpetual clash zone, thus jeopardising of its bread basket role.

Since the national conference, human rights and religious organisations have been calling the attention of public authorities on these clashes in the rural area. But its only 10 years ago that the government woke up from slumber. "It is high time to start thinking about the development of the rural world, in spite of what ever economic perspectives are opening up to our country" said the Prime Minister during the seminar on the rules expected to govern the relationship between farmers and graziers in Darda.

Considering the action taken by human right and religious organisations, farmer and grazier associations and local committees, one can rightly assert that it is not that difficult to bring back peace in the rural area as some people would want to make believe. Mediation carried out by the Chadian league for human rights in the Barh-kôh, lac-Iro and Mandoul divisions, and the local committees set up by the Catholic church in Guidari and Goré, are enough proofs of this fact.

On the government side the Prime Minister's push led to think that an end will be put to these conflicts by the adoption of regulations specific to the rural world. A new draft bill on nomadism, transhumance and the keeping of livestock "adopted" by the participants at the Darda seminar will henceforth replace the 1959 law. As compared to the 1959 law, they discovered that the point concerning the movement of cattle presented a lot of constraints for graziers and was not

adapted to the present situation. The law was discredited because, according to seminar participants, it privileged the legal option in conflict resolution.

Several other regulations were examined, notably the land observation system under application in Chad, the water code and the draft bill on forest and fishing systems. This was examined to gain a real grasp of the problem so as to avoid "integrating contradictory provisions in the new law". Participants at the seminar drew inspiration from the laws and regulations of other countries, as well as sub-regional organisations in matters of transhumance, livestock and conflict resolution. It is after all this study, that the "seminar adopted a new draft bill instead of simply revising law n° 4, of October 31st 1959". The new draft bill is made up of five parts.

Part one defines the objective of the law and proposes to regulate nomadism, transhumance and the keeping of livestock all over the national territory.

The second part dwells on the identification of graziers, in view of making them easily recognisable by competent authorities. This is not going to be an easy task, since those carrying out the identification are equally among the most important graziers.

The third part addresses the organisation of nomadism, transhumance, and transhumance corridors. It precises the modalities of livestock movement as well as the rights and duties of farmers and graziers.

It gives wide-range powers to local authorities to map out transhumance corridors. Will the simultaneous observation of rights by farmers and graziers not constitute a source of conflict? This part also mentioned of a system to regulate the activities of foreign graziers.

The fourth part carries on the keeping of livestock and the conditions necessary for a better guarding and directing of livestock to curb conflict arising from the trampling of farms by livestock. It should be underlined that all conflicts stem from damages caused by animal herds and most of these damages are caused intentionally.

The last part which should have normally regulated conflict resolution between farmer and graziers seems to caution against the eternal weakness of public authorities. Part five of the new draft bill therefore highlights the amicable arrangement of conflicts while recognising the competence of courts in the resolution of conflicts in the rural area.

But the government does not seem to like this role, no matter small it is, given to the judiciary. It prefers to keep the judiciary out of the conflicts "where there is

a problem, dialogue and tolerance should be privileged above all other solutions" declared the Interior minister representing the Prime Minister at the closing of the seminar.

From this declaration one can easily understand why the judiciary is incapable of implementing sanctions to check the disruption of public order, when there is inter-community conflict.

Finally by preferring certain customary solutions to legal proceedings the public authorities are encouraging social injustices. Hence the imposition of the "dia" law or "the price of blood" to certain communities, who nevertheless ignore it.

If this draft bill passes through, there are fears of it being misinterpreted. Some people will go to court for the resolution of their conflict while others will be faced with the "tolerance" option.

In this way, the powerless will continue to be pressured by the powerful. Is it possible to end a conflict by implementing principle of a text which are contradictory in themselves?

PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Peace is not necessarily a political or military issue. The scope of peace and its implementation depend on the rational management of some social phenomena like hunger that affects millions of people around the world, violence that is intensified by social marginalization, and the indiscriminate consumption of all television contents.

"The state must mend the social fissure"

By Aissatou Yadouko

Article published on *Aurore Plus* n° 493 on 31/05/02
Cameroon

Dr. Camille Ekoume is a sociologist and assistant lecturer in the department of sociology, University of Douala. In the interview that follows he makes a psycho-analysis of the phenomenon of violence

Aurore plus: A day does not pass now without registering acts of violence in our cities ranging from night aggressions, rapes, fighting, stabbing and killing. How do you explain the fresh outbreak of this phenomenon ?

Dr. Camille Ekoume: Is it really a fresh outbreak? It is difficult to chronologically situate the phenomenon of violence. It is not recent. It changes from one place to another, from time to time following the echo given to this phenomenon at all social levels by the media. Certain aspects of violence can be considered as taboo in the society, people don't talk about it for one reason or the other, until when it is unveiled. That's when they start referring to it as an aspect of violence.. Before talking about the causes, it is important to precise that violence also depends on how society represents it. For example the word "rape" does not exist in any Cameroonian language. This simply means that it is not socially represented even though rape is a reality. Moving from this example, we can rightly ponder over the conditions under which this act today called "rape" and considered a form of violence, emerged and became commonplace. Is it through the eyes of modernism that we see violence in it? It all depends on how society represents it, which type of conduct society wants to adopt and how it intends to promote education. This said, the acts you cited can be assimilated to urban dynamism. Urbanisation in all societies always comes along with violence. However, the recess or decline of economic activities, automatically increases the risk of violence. Idleness, fear, unemployment or poverty can bring about violence within or out of the family. When people work, they don't think about certain things, they don't behave the same way as when they are idle.

Aurore Plus: And yet, in a context of general unemployment, economic crisis,

we find people who do not resort to violence, whereas they are also ordinary citizens. How do explain this?

Dr. C.E: Unemployment and poverty can not engender violence everywhere or else, there would be no society. All social components don't have the same structure. There are neighbourhoods which are predisposed to register a high rate of violence. And then, there is the absence or fragility of education.

Aurore Plus: And when violence spreads in school circles?

Dr C.E : - Violence in schools stems from past acts that take roots elsewhere. Some people move around with arms, others have learnt to manipulate daggers and others knives.

Aurore Plus: In certain traditions, it is culturally accepted to carry weapons. What can be the origin of these traditions? How does somebody who constantly carries a dagger feel? And if it is for personal security, how do you assess this security measure?

Dr. C.E: - Once again, we must take into account the context, and social representation of the phenomenon. A weapon can be carried for protection, just like clothes are worn. It should not be seen exclusively from a strategic stand point. There are always variations related to traditions. Weapons are not used exclusively to perpetrate acts of violence. A phenomenon becomes one of violence when we become conscious of it, and violence becomes a problem when it disrupts the smooth functioning of society. I must say that no society can live without violence. Any disfunctioning in society entails violence. There are some people who traditionally wear knives or daggers, but the transposition of a purely traditional setting to the public arena becomes a problem. We fear that some people may tend to traditionally manage their environment through self justice but individuals must respect the law.

Aurore Plus: Has self justice got a place within an organised system?

Dr. C.E : - Self justice can crop up from a system of impunity. If individuals realise that they are faced with very strong people, out of the reach of justice, they can resort to any other means of self defence. Moreover, drugs and a violent education can predispose some people to be aggressors or to take justice in their hands. To impunity can be added drugs, education, the absence of administrative

and legal norms or landmarks, which is really disturbing. If somebody knows for example that he or she can go untraced by the police if they commit any of these acts, and even when caught, they could present an identity card which has nothing to do with their identity. This encourages them to commit more atrocities and simply disappear into thin air. Violence equally stems from the fact that people are sure not to be harassed. According to an opinion poll carried out in the USA, 90% of Americans said they could commit rape, theft and killings, if they were certain, to get away with it.

Aurore Plus: Should one therefore lose all hopes for social peace?

Dr. C.E: This opinion poll or survey shows the fragile nature of basic education. We don't need an external force to be upright. A good education at the base prepares a human being internally, and brings him to tell himself : The education I receive teaches me not to harm another person. In the absence of a reliable control mechanism, in the case of a fragile, an education which is not maintained(in a dynamic system under other influences) has the tendency to see violence occur. We can receive a good education but adopt improper attitudes through the company we keep. So the fear to be harassed or sorted out, forces people to be wise. Violence is perpetrated by those who minimise risks. This is seen in the case of networks which tend to out-class justice. When violence is not punished, it beomes it happen banal. Public authorities understand, tolerate and let it happen

Aurore Plus: How can the absence of landmarks constitute a source of violence?

Dr. C.E: When some individuals are legitimised through theft, cheating, mediocrity, and the media talks much about them, imposes their images without condemning their acts, they appear as role models to the youths. In our families and society in general, a *feyman* is preferred to a student who bleeds himself to acquire knowledge, or a teacher who cannot provide material solutions to problems. With these new social models the youths can only move away from the path of effort toward the winding paths leading to violence. We can earn a lot of money and be frustrated. All those illicit riches that invade our eyes can only create frustrations. Within families the eldest child is the richest, no matter how he acquired these riches. It is revolting! Frustration sustains violence. We are witnessing here an overturn of values.

Aurore Plus: Can we, like other third world countries give credit to the assertion that violence is a characteristic of emerging states?

Dr. C.E : - We only see violence here when a thief kills somebody or when a student stabs his teacher. These are isolated cases of a more widespread phenomenon. The real problem of violence is how we perceive it, how we intend to handle it and the social solutions that can be provided to curb it.

Aurore Plus: What are some of these solutions?

Dr. C.E: Violence can be counteracted by sanctions and education. The two put together, can provide an efficient solution.

Aurore Plus: Can you be more explicit?

Dr. C.E: The authority of the State should be restored and the system of impunity banished. If I realise that I am doing my best at a lower level and that up there people refuse to work, things can not be alright! When we ask for the authority of the state to be restored, we mean that the Ministry of Social Affairs should be reemphasized. The problems faced by Cameroonians today are 70% social. This means that the system, society and people should adapt to social changes. Today everybody is everywhere, by the most doubtful means. Meritocracy has lost its meaning. So the state must mend the social fracture, by limiting or checking deviant tendencies in society.

Aurore Plus: And how?

Dr. C.E: By creating new jobs and stabilising a sector of growth, that is, the informal sector. In the absence of any organisation, actors of this sector cannot be statistically identified and benefit from no social advantages. The organisation of this sector will encourage the social insertion of a good number of marginalized people.

Aurore Plus: What do you think will happen in Cameroon if nothing is done?

Dr.C.E : If nothing is done against violence, then Cameroon will become the *Far West*. That's where we are heading to.

Television against Society

By Aïssatou Yadouko

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Cameroon

With the technological advancement witnessed in the world these past years, there is no doubt about the fact that television networks now cover the whole planet. Many had hoped that as an information tool, its capacity and qualities will enhance the development of knowledge and by so doing the fulfilment of man. Well its effects on minds and the behaviour of children is a constant cause for concern in our society. It is accused of being a first rate source of violence and an instigator of moral depravity. It nevertheless goes without saying that in a changing world that has become too small and too complex, television is seen as a vital tool for the serenity of all civilizations. In the case of the Cameroonian society, the problem lies in maximizing benefits of the tool, while minimizing its negative influence on social norms. In other words, the real problem posed by television today, is the capacity of learning how to better understand and assess its impact, than use it to safeguard our ways of thinking and acting, while ensuring our efficient integration into the global village. How can this be achieved in our present situation and with what resources? Here are some facts and reflections.

Television's crime

Television is a communication tool that combines pictures and speech. It initially aimed at presenting live pictures and information to its consumers. Its functions were extended later on, to incorporate education and/or training. It greatly influences the socialization process of the child. Through an array of programmes, including news, magazines, games, sports, and films, it opens up minds to culture. Culture here means the set of acquired knowledge that enables the mind to develop its own sense of judgment. Television informs the viewer on current events at national and international levels. We can actually watch the handshake between a visiting prime minister in France, and his host during live or recorded broadcasts.

Magazines and documentaries are the ideal occasion for children as well as adults to broaden the scope of their knowledge. Television provides a wide range of information in history, geography, archaeology, zoology, architecture, cooking, etc. There are many children who today know elephants, giraffes, different varieties of snakes, fishes, and plants only from television pictures. They've never seen all these in their natural setting. It's willingly that we allow television to carry us to other worlds, and other lives.

Today's television

Beyond the emotions that television can arouse, sports and leisure programmes offer the peak of entertainment. It is therefore impossible to negate the key role television society plays in. It entertains, and educates. Very little attention is paid to the qualities of what can be called the "electric drug". Its negative effects, overshadow these qualities. We often highlight its violation of social norms, and moral values, its promotion of vulgar and perverted behaviour through scenes of sex and violence that flood our screens. Its programs are more and more being stigmatised.

Acts of violence and depravation perpetrated in youth circles where television is being consumed abusively and irrationally, are often blamed on the influence of television. Seen from this perspective, television is a negative force. Children spend more time in front of television screens as compared to time spent in their classrooms, or exchanging with their parents. Naturally, an instrument as captivating as television, can leave very few people indifferent. Television eats up our time more than any other activity. In the case of adults, it is a welcome and deserved break after a hard day's labour, whereas for children, it robs them of precious time which they could use to make their own impression of things, and live their personal experiences.

Beyond the time factor, the harm caused by this instrument is illustrated by the contents of programme dished out to Cameroonians. Films portray cruelty, unbridled lunacy, perversion, which are not worth any praise and are incompatible with our being.

The ostentatious consumption of advertisements

The ever growing quest for bigger profit margins has pushed producers in the western world to exceed bounds, in order to attract the public. They must show the queerest picture to interest people. That's how pornography, incest, homosexuality and perversion make big business nowadays. This is clearly illustrated by the television programme, "ça va se savoir" ("hidden truths")

Advertisement that obviously has far reaching effects over children, highlights the ostentatious consumption of goods or items that do not satisfy our deep local needs, but serves the purpose of other economies which are already richer. When we know that the products or goods exhibited on television are most often out of the reach of television viewers, it is not superfluous to think that this can generate conflict. Because it shows, television develops pipedreams, and new attitudes. It creates artificial needs thus becoming a source of frustration and aggression.

As much as television can shape society, facilitate its involvement in globalisation, so too can it destroy it. Good use should therefore be made of this instrument to avoid its negative effects. It is however difficult to make good use of television in an environment porous to external influence, except if the society as a whole is mobilized towards this goal. The guarantor of social norms, that is the State, traditional rulers, religious head, educationists and parents, must work relentlessly together, to make this happen.

No Struggle for peace without a struggle against hunger

By J. Diana Gikupa

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Democratic Republic of Congo

There cannot be peace where there is hunger. This confirms what is already obvious; that peace is not the absence of war. That's why efforts deployed by the international community to maintain peace in the world in general and in the Great Lakes region in particular will be fruitless if not matched with a relentless battle against hunger. Within the framework of these efforts, the international community each year celebrates world food day. Some see in this a ritual that doesn't improve on the catastrophic situation of food supply around the world.

Almost three quarter of the world population doesn't have enough to eat, while one-quarter of this population has three-quarters of world foods reserves. Therefore, peace can only be established through an equitable distribution of food. This should be the major concern of the world food organisation of the United Nations System.

This organisation in its annual report published on October 16th 2002 asserted that the campaign it launched in view of attaining the goals set during the 1996 world food summit; consisting in reducing by half the number of hungry people in the world by the year 2015, is far from yielding positive results.

The world food organisation indicated that in 1998, the world had 840 million under-nourished people. This number has reduced only by 2.5 million per annum. This trend is highly insignificant because to achieve the goals of the world food Summit, the world's undernourished population must reduce at least by 840 million every year..

It is the opinion of some people that the situation can be brought under control if the international community could raise an additional 24 million US\$ each year. The money they think, will be invested to fight hunger. This could help make progress in this direction as well as help save some 12 billion US dollars. But

these efforts will lead nowhere if at the same time, avoidable conflicts keep destroying useful infrastructure, indispensable for any relevant fight against hunger. There will never be enough food for all, if every day fighting stops people from producing food for their own self sufficiency. For a dependent population, even in abundance, cannot know peace. This is why the international community should fully commit itself to bringing about peace in the Great Lakes region. The DRC is under the threat of generalised famine, because kivu, the bread basket of the country has been transformed into a permanent conflict area.

The October 25th meeting in Pretoria is therefore very significant, and should be fully backed by all those who want peace in the world. For, winning the battle against hunger, is a prerequisite for establishing longlasting peace in the world. Because, we will never insist enough, no struggle for peace without a struggle against hunger.

The Economic struggle surrounding oil: Kome the burial ground for dreams

By Renaud Dinguenaial

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Chad.

It is generally believed that to get a job in the oil industry is like gaining access to easy and big cash. The story of the workers who toil on the Kome working sites is however different. They don't leave the impression of particularly spoilt workers.

It is 5 am, and Doba is still asleep. But some thickset men, like ghosts, dressed in blue uniforms and security helmets, line up along the main road in front of the trade fare ground. They come here to wait for the lorry that takes them to work every morning, from Monday through Friday. These workers subcontracted by companies of the petroleum sector, are required to be at Kome before 6 am. At 6 am, begins their signing-in for the day, under the watchful eyes of their team supervisors who for the most part are foreigners with doubtful professional or academic backgrounds, according to the workers.

On the Kome working sites and their surroundings, scrap merchants, operators, drivers, timekeepers and many others, really sweat to earn their daily bread. And they sweat profusely from 6 am to 6 pm! At the end of the day, completely worn out, the same lorry takes them back through dusty roads to the dark city of Doba, at around 8pm, when they find their relatives fast asleep, after waiting for endless hours. That's how life goes for these people who are wrongly envied in town.

Contrarily to what people think, workers in the oil industry, apart from their working conditions, do not live on gold. The earnings of some, although they are not comparable to those of prest, are none the less laughable. Even though most of them work 60 hours a week, they are only paid fro 39 hours of work a week. The extra time at work is simply ignored by the subcontracting companies who by so doing increase their own profits. For example the salaries of nationals of the Subsahara company, more known under the name TTC, range from 332 FCA/hour for less qualified staff, to 2002 FCA/hour for senior staff. There is a

wide gap between these salaries and those paid to foreign workers.

This gap in salary makes many nationals feel exploited. They are so frustrated that they have transformed the abbreviation TTC, to mean "All mess put together" (in French, Tout Cafouillage Confondu) . These workers finally decided to go on strike on February 18th. They were clamouring for better working conditions to include health insurance and school fees for their kids, as well as a 100% salary increase. They also denounced the obscure recruitment procedures and dismissal threats to workers who want to organise trade union activities. Another problem in Kome, is that of mutual suspicion.

The Workers think that the Socio-economic department should not be under the responsibility of a native of Tandjile, who is at the same time the ears of the MPS and the eyes of the project coordination. His main duty, according to them is to identify "troublemakers", and hamper their progress. So thanks to this "secret agent" all activities carried out by workers between June and December were known in advance and thwarted. Many are beginning to bury the dream they had of becoming rich, at the time when they were signing their work contracts.