

eAfrica

The electronic journal of governance and innovation

Highlights:

Carreening from Self-Flagellation to Self-Adulation?	2-3
Namibia's Diamonds: More Jobs from Gems	4-5
Scrabbling for Africa	6
Africa's Standby Force: A Mission Impossible?	7-9
Peacekeeping Q&A	10-11
On the Streets of Bunia And Burundi	12-13
Does Presidential Mediation Work?	14-15
Pressure Mounts in Zimbabwe	16



This journal is part of the South African Institute of International Affairs Nepad and Governance project, funded by the Royal Netherlands embassy to South Africa.

Ross Herbert – Editor/Nepad Project Leader
Silla Grobbelaar – Managing Editor
Luleka Mangquku – Sub-Editor
Steven Gruzd – Research Manager
Ayesha Kajee – Researcher/Seminar Manager
Antoinette Minnaar – Administrator

To subscribe:
eafrica-subscribe@saiia.wits.ac.za
Send comments and suggestions to
editor@saiia.wits.ac.za
www.wits.ac.za/saiia

While copyright in the journal as a whole is vested in SAIIA, copyright in the articles rests with individual authors. Opinions expressed are the responsibility of the authors and not of the Institute.

ISSN: 1728-0621

Volume 1, July 2003

Diamonds, Debate and Defence

THIS issue of *eAfrica* looks at several topics that were prominently debated at the World Economic Forum in Durban, South Africa, in June. There was consensus that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) must accelerate implementation, which prompted one delegate to note that Africa seems to destructively swing from over-optimistic self-adulation to over-pessimistic self-flagellation. We have two views on the effects of optimism and pessimism and how both warp academic analysis and policy choices.

Wiseman Nkuhlu, chairman of the Nepad Secretariat, echoed sentiments by various business and trade specialists calling for African leaders to act in world trade negotiations in a more assertive manner in defence of local interests: 'I am afraid that that courage to act to protect ourselves is not there because we depend on aid.' One speaker noted that dumped dairy imports were killing the Kenyan

dairy industry, which prompted two African trade ministers to ask why Africa could not slap on US-style anti-dumping duties. In keeping with that desire for a more self-assertive economic policy, *eAfrica* looks at efforts to cut and polish gemstones locally rather than export them in their raw form.

Our special feature this month takes up the issue of African peacekeeping, which will be a prominent topic of debate at the African Union summit from 4 July to 11 July 2003. Dennis Jett, former US ambassador to Mozambique, takes a hard look at the extent of developed world commitment to funding African peacekeeping. Cedric de Coning examines the facts and figures of peacekeeping costs. Liesl Louw writes about the realities peacekeepers face in the Congo and Burundi. We present two views on how presidential conflict mediation succeeds or fails, and what Africa must do to improve its diplomacy.

Africa at Work



Ugandan fishermen on Lake Victoria complained that they needed to communicate with customers and families to get the best prices for fish. MTN Publicom in Uganda combined solar power and a cellular telephone booth, which was installed in the lake 80 metres offshore. But this innovative communications tool had to be removed when the authorities deemed it a hazard to boating.

Afro-Realism: Between Adulation And Flagellation

AT THE World Economic Forum Africa summit held in Durban early in June, there was the usual anguished debate about Afro-pessimism versus Afro-optimism.

What emerged was that many Africans seem to be oscillating between the two in a rather unhealthy way. Kwesi Botchwey, director of the Africa Programme at Columbia University, went further, saying: 'Most Africans swing wildly between self-flagellation and self-adulation.' Another said Africans veered between exaggerating the sorry lot of the continent in order to persuade the world to help them and exaggerating their achievements to compensate and reassure ourselves that they are okay.

These confessions are very revealing of Africa's current psyche. Perhaps a psychologist listening to this dialogue would have suggested: 'Let's do away both with Afro-pessimism and Afro-optimism and take a big, healthy dose of Afro-realism.' To confront and describe objectively your own condition is never easy, but it is at least something to strive for. Psychologically, it must surely be better than the roller-coaster of emotions that the delegates were describing at the forum.

Some observers detected symptoms of this condition in South African President Thabo Mbeki's closing remarks to the summit, when he put his head on the block and firmly predicted that peace would break out in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Zimbabwe, Liberia and Sudan within a year. He is, of course, privy to information that we do not have, and so his predictions carry a lot more weight than most people's. But many suspect that his predictions were based not so much

on information as on a desire to talk up the continent's position and, in so doing, give Afro-optimism a shot in the arm.

The danger is that if in a year's time these predictions are not borne out, this is going to cause the pendulum to swing wildly back towards Afro-pessimism, which will require another dose of Afro-optimism to correct. And so on.

Apart from the dangers to the health of the collective African psyche, there are also physical risks to life and limb in holding peace processes hostage to this form of what one could call political psychotherapy. It is fine to tackle the

'Many suspect that Mbeki's predictions were based on a desire to talk up the continent's position and, in so doing, give Afro-optimism a shot in the arm'

conflicts on the continent with a sense of urgency, but one must also respect the realities. For example, South Africa, which is driving the DRC peace process, has obliged the Ugandan and Rwandan troops occupying eastern DRC to leave in the last year, in accordance with their signed commitment, to demonstrate progress in the peace process. The Rwandan and Ugandan forces withdrew before any sort of stabilising force had been inserted to replace them. That created a power vacuum, which has been filled by undisciplined ethnic militia members, who have started an orgy of raping, pillaging and killing that is worse than we have seen before, especially in the province of Ituri. In its optimistic,

some might say manic phase, Africa too often chooses over-ambitious targets – setting itself up for failure – and then swings back into its depressive phase.

This was apparent at a conference in mid-June organised by the US embassy on globalisation and its effect on Africa. Three US economists gave thoughtful and useful presentations on what Africa should do to get the most out of globalisation. But the almost unanimous response from South African delegates was to whine about all the global forces conspiring to undermine Africa.

Dr Catherine Mann, of the Institute for International Economics, presented a useful paper on how developing countries could harness information technology for development. It was based on her experiences in 15 developed countries. Mann offered several examples of ingenious ways in which these countries are using IT. But one South African delegate, involved in a \$300 million (about R2.3 billion) Nepad project to bring computers to 570,000 primary schools across the continent, was deaf to such inspiration. He could only complain that global corporations were refusing to provide the fibre-optic cables for his project at a cheap enough price. 'The corporations must come to the party,' he insisted.

One does not compel global corporations to invest. And to keep bashing your head against a brick wall by demanding investment in a gigantic project – instead of seeking another route – is to set yourself up for failure and another heavy bout of Afro-pessimism. – **Peter Fabricius, foreign editor, Independent Newspapers. Reprinted with permission, The Star newspaper**

Afro-Realism: Constructive Critics Wanted

THERE is a deepening fissure between analysts in their understanding of, and approach to, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad). Researchers are being herded into two camps: the Afro-pessimists and the Afro-optimists.

Neither label is illuminative. Rather they are being used to crudely demarcate those with 'good intentions' (well disposed to the African Renaissance) and those with 'bad intentions', who revel every time Nepad appears to flounder.

The Economist in its 13 May 2000 article, entitled *Africa – The Hopeless Continent*, exemplifies the Afro-pessimist view. The article galvanised important elements of African opinion to prove it wrong.

Few African scholars took issue with *The Economist* on the basis of fact, which is symptomatic of a deepening paucity of critical analysis. They failed to question the data, accepting that the evidence marshalled was accurate and that the conclusions drawn were consistent. Yet *The Economist* article failed to consider data and evidence that might have led to a different and possibly more 'hopeful' conclusion.

Many have decried *The Economist* as being conservative, Western and racist on the basis of this article. Similarly, those who question the prudence of a highly ambitious continental restructuring programme (adopted in preference to the development of more modest and achievable national and regional programmes) are designated innate Afro-pessimists. When concerns about the absence of broad political and civic consultation in the drafting of Nepad are raised, this is construed as a challenge to the authority of the 'democratically-elected government'. However, serious consideration of the need for democratic

consultation and engagement is essential if development and poverty reduction programmes are to succeed.

'Afro-pessimists' have also questioned the disquieting equivocation surrounding Nepad's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

The 'crime' committed by those labelled Afro-pessimists was to take African leaders at their word, regarding their desire to promote good governance. They read too literally the Nepad declaration committing members of the African Union to political peer review, and believed unquestioningly that Africa had become serious about creating conditions that would attract international

'It is time to be African scholars who engage in honest analysis and robust debate. It is time to evaluate criticism tolerantly and constructively'

investors. Clearly, the pessimists were found to be too optimistic by far.

What then of the 'Afro-optimists'?

These are equally myopic analysts and Nepad praise-singers, who fall into two broad and often mutually supportive categories. The first is the indigenous 'progressive' scholar who, infused with a sincerity of purpose and a deep sense of identity with the objectives of the African Renaissance, all too often seeks out only the facts and data that support the inductive reasoning that Africa is heading towards its rightful destiny, that of a successful continent able to

compete on equal terms with the West. This overwhelming desire to see Africa succeed does not permit any form of critique because questioning is viewed as deflecting the continent and its leaders from their chosen developmental destiny.

The second group of Afro-optimists is more dangerous. They are typically 'progressive' Westerners whose central objective is to save Africa and her peoples from not only themselves, but from the venal clutches of multinational capitalism and globalisation. The mission of these foreign Afro-optimists is to offer support and praise rather than criticism and analysis.

Reflexively, this group wields the terms 'neo-liberal' and 'Washington consensus' as if they were swear words. They reject as selfish any call to examine why aid is not more effective, and any demand that increased aid be made contingent on better African governance. As a result, Africa and the world seem to be talking past one another on the critical issue of good governance. Without a full and fair discussion of such issues, Africa and donors will never reach the kind of agreement needed.

It is time to scrap the unhelpful Afro-pessimist/Afro-optimist nomenclature and reclaim our discipline as scholars and analysts. It is time to drop the destructive labelling that equates constructive critique with unpatriotic behaviour.

It is time to stop playing the race card every time Nepad is criticised. It is time to be African scholars who engage in honest analysis and robust debate. It is time to evaluate criticism tolerantly and constructively, with a view to achieving a revitalised Africa whose time has finally come. – **Tim Hughes, head, SAIIA SADC Parliamentary Research Programme**

More Jobs from Gems

Instead of raw materials unprocessed, more countries are attempting to create jobs by processing minerals before export. What lessons have been learned from Namibia's efforts to get more out of diamond wealth?

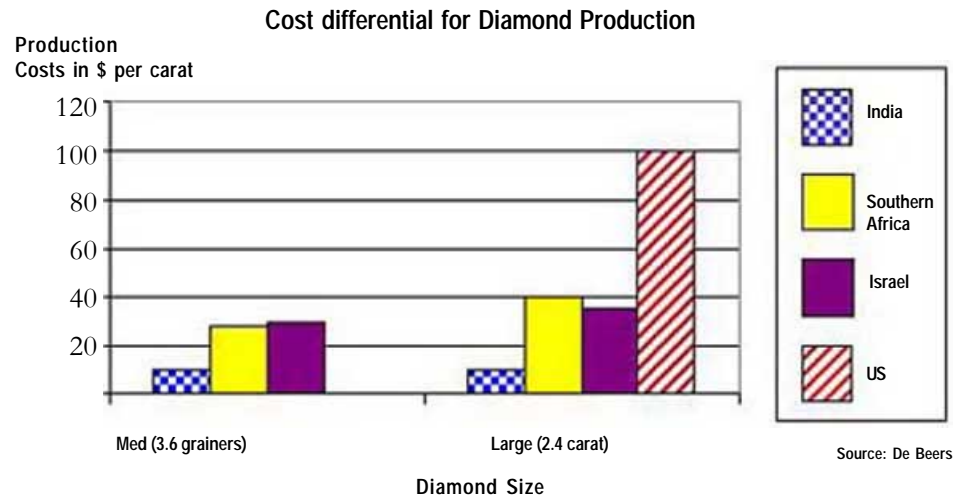
FOR centuries, Africa's raw materials have been shipped off to developed countries, where they are processed and sold at many times their original price. Namibia is attempting to use its lucrative diamond sector for the dual goals of creating jobs and adding value before the glittering stones head north.

For years, nearly all of Africa's diamonds were exported to other countries for cutting and polishing, activities that add significantly to the sales value of the stones. Instead of merely exporting, Namibia is attempting to follow South Africa and Botswana in building a local diamond processing capability. However, there are many challenges to local beneficiation.

Diamonds are Namibia's top export earner, but unemployment remains at 40%, which has created significant political pressure to get more out of the diamond industry. It may not quite be 'diamond fever', but there is considerable action in the cutting and polishing industry. Namdeb – the joint venture between the Namibian government and giant international diamond group De Beers – earns between US\$400-\$550 million per year at present exchange rates (N\$3-4 billion).

De Beers opened the US\$2.3 million (N\$17 million) Namgem diamond cutting and polishing factory in the tiny Namibian town of Okahandja in 1998 to add value to the millions of uncut diamonds leaving the country for De Beers' marketing division in London, the Diamond Trading Company (DTC). The Namgem site is an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) with concessions such as government training grants and waivers on income tax and export duties.

In Windhoek, 40 trainees are employed at the N\$1 million Hardstone Diamonds polishing factory, financed by Belgian and Namibian investors. It could double its capacity to 80 staff members, and the



investors praise their handiwork and Namibia's political stability. Across the road from Hardstone, an American investor is designing 'Namibien' brand jewellery for a 2003 launch in the US. Israeli diamond magnate Beni Steinmetz owns a polishing factory next door. As the government looks to maximise the benefits from its richest resource, it will probably issue more licences for diamond polishing.

Thus far, however, diamond polishing has had minimal impact on Namibian employment levels. The Namgem factory currently employs 100 people, instead of the 500 projected in the second phase of its feasibility study. De Beers has chosen not to expand quickly and then be forced to slash jobs later. Some in senior De Beers management circles see Namgem as 'a costly experiment' when the company is trying to reduce debts.

However, De Beers dismissed August 2002 news reports that Namgem faced closure due to repeated poor performance. Namgem General Manager Martin Pearson concedes that the operation is not currently very profitable (for a variety of reasons), but he emphasises that Namgem has

achieved 'a high level of technical skill and a sound reputation as a centre of excellence in the world's main diamond trading centres'. Also, the transfer of skills to Namibians is underscored by the fact that only 3% of the labour force is expatriate.

Other Namibian diamond polishing operations are even smaller than Namgem. The outfits are reluctant to expand unless government can step in to offset Namdeb's advantage in the De Beers-dominated market – a guaranteed supply of local stones to polish, and access to the wholesale market. In 2003, Namgem will polish some 40,000 stones with a predicted turnover of about N\$100 million.

Emmanuel Silva, a consultant to Hardstone, says: 'There is very high potential here. You could open 100 factories. But the government should oblige the local diamond producers – Namdeb, Namco and Mineral Fields – to sell to the factories.'

Such a strategy of forcing companies to beneficiate would create jobs, but if the diamond processing operations are not cost competitive those jobs would be subsidised with the costs coming directly out of the profits of mining companies.

In the case of Namdeb this would also directly cut the government's share of profits as co-owner. As a result, government must strike a balance between job creation and other productive uses for such funds.

The most critical factor is Southern Africa's high wage rates compared to India and China, where skill levels are fairly high and people work for a fraction of the wages demanded in Southern Africa. India has about 750,000 polishers (Namibia's entire population is just 1.8 million) who process an enormous number of cheaper stones. Andre Marais of De Beers asserts: 'Southern African countries are under pressure from low-cost centres like India and China, where employment legislation is less stringent. Conversely, Southern Africa is fortunate to have many mines and this has leveraged us up in terms of beneficiation.'

Diamond beneficiation currently costs about US\$10 per carat in India and China, compared with about US\$30 in Southern Africa, because wages in this region are three to four times higher than in the East, Pearson said. The Namibian dollar is pegged to the South African rand, and the latter's strong showing of late has offset weak-currency advantages for Namibia.

Pearson also points out that manufacturing generally is a relatively young sector in Namibia, and that the labour force is comparatively immature in terms of labour practices and work ethic. However, Namgem works closely with the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia (all employees are members), to balance the



Diamonds are Namibia's top export earner. Picture by John Woodroof

high expectations of this relatively young workforce with the low margins that prevail across the manufacturing aspects of the diamond industry.

By contrast, the polishing sector is mature in South Africa, where there are about 2,000 polishers. 'More than 60% by value of De Beers' production undergoes beneficiation in South Africa,' said De Beers spokesman Tom Tweedie. In volume terms, almost 90% is beneficiated in the country. South Africa has also benefited from excellent training facilities such as the Harry Oppenheimer Diamond Training School.

Tweedie argues that there remains a great deal of misinformation surrounding beneficiation and expectations that it can generate far more jobs than are actually viable. 'Diamond manufacturers are not charity organisations. If there is no money to be made (in a specific region), why should they go there?'

In the face of cheaper labour in the East, Southern African diamond processors are focusing on the larger, higher value stones. While it cannot yet compete with India on smaller stones, Namgem can compete in terms of quality with firms in better-known polishing locations like Antwerp, Tel Aviv and Johannesburg. 'The quality of workmanship is high and has exceeded expectations. The one thing people have [here is] the ability to do a good job. But productivity, market conditions and currency volatility work against us,' Pearson said. Consequently, job creation in diamond beneficiation will be constrained until the productivity problem is solved.

Marais believes the way forward for the industry must be a combination of a good technical skills base and adeptness at finding the right marketing niches and opportunities. Pearson concurs, emphasising the need to focus on downstream trading to high-end buyers which cuts out wholesale middlemen, a trend that De Beers seems to be following with all its diamond holdings. Studies commissioned by regional jewellery councils suggest that the diamond processing could be expanded to include other African gemstones such

Tanzanite: Forcing Local Beneficiation

TANZANIA, which is the only source in the world for the rare gemstone tanzanite, announced in June its intention to work toward a ban on the export of all uncut tanzanite. Such a legal requirement compelling local beneficiation could help create jobs, but it also has risks.

The market for cut and polished tanzanite is now worth \$150-300 million a year, but most of the profits go outside the country. Worldwide demand for tanzanite continues to exceed supply, particularly in the US, and it is said that tanzanite is 1,000 times rarer than diamonds. Originally managed by small scale traders who built up business ties with firms in Germany, India, Israel and the US, the tanzanite trade is now dominated by the Tanzanite Foundation, a subsidiary of South African company African Gem Resources (AFGEM), who were granted a licence by the Tanzanian government in 2000. While some tanzanite beneficiation has been done in South Africa, about 65% of the gems are sold in the rough state, mainly to the Indian market, where beneficiation is cheaper. To reduce the export of rough stones, AFGEM began training Tanzanian youths last year to cut and polish the gems in the country.

'An immediate ban would cause the industry to collapse. In principle, AFGEM agrees with the decision since the government must make attempts to close the value gap. There needs to be more regulation and control of the industry to ensure that appropriate royalties are paid,' said Joanne Smollan, AFGEM's corporate affairs director. Consultation between government and industry players is ongoing and there have been suggestions of government incentives such as the creation of an export processing zone to kickstart the industry. However, the most immediate issues are the shortage of skilled local cutters and the time it takes to train unskilled staff. – **Ayesha Kajee**

as tanzanite (see sidebar). Since diamond beneficiation skills are transferable to other gemstones, the technical capacity in the region could thus be better utilised. – **Ayesha Kajee and Steven Gruz**

Scrabbling for Africa

In the best selling Scrabble® crossword game, players amass points by using letter tiles to form valid interlocking words on a board. African players are excelling at the highest level in this international competitive pastime

THE 1994 African Scrabble champion, Ifeyani Onyeonwu, blew his shot at greatness because he knew too many words, not too few.

Iffy, a 40-year-old Nigerian ex-architect now living in Austin, Texas, US, is a master Scrabble player. At the August 2002 North American Nationals in San Diego, he won all his first 16 games in Division 2. But then he won just one game in the next 15. The Nigerian had used two dictionaries to determine valid words for Scrabble when playing in his country – the British-based Chambers Dictionary and the American Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (OSPD). But Americans only allow players to use words from the latter, and Iffy lost many turns for using non-OSPD words.

This board game has grown into a global sport. Semi-professional players compete for thousands of dollars. And Africans are quietly showing an increasing competitive flair. Their top players can battle across the boards with the world's best. Unofficial world rankings have a Nigerian in the fifth spot and a Ghanaian in the ninth. Ten of the top 30 players hail from Africa. Five Africans have achieved top 10 finishes in the biennial English-speaking World Scrabble Championships.

Scrabble is taken seriously in Africa. It's more than just a game hauled out when the television set is broken. There are national Scrabble associations with hundreds of players and clubs in The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, the Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Smaller groups play in English in Cameroon, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. This intriguing, but oft-frustrating game/sport is also played in French at varying levels in Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. Some Senegalese are world champions.

The strongest Scrabble-playing country in Africa is Nigeria, which produced all



Iffy Onyeonwu, right in the foreground, plays against Sal Dimare during the 2002 National Scrabble Championship in San Diego, California, in the US. Picture courtesy of Sherrie Saint-John

previous African champions before South African Dr Trevor Hovelmeier broke their stranglehold in Nairobi in October 2002. Scrabble was recognised as an official sport in Nigeria in 1994, and there are 34 clubs affiliated to the Nigerian Scrabble Federation (NSF). Another 120 clubs are unaffiliated, and over 1,200 players have played in tournaments. Each of Nigeria's 36 states receives government funding for its State Scrabble Association, and they vie for honours and medals in the biennial National Sports Festival.

The Pan-African Scrabble Association (Panasa) is the only continental body in world Scrabble. Formed in 1994, Panasa organises the biennial African Scrabble Championship, with the 2004 event in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It promotes the game across Africa and has dreams of staging a continental School Scrabble event soon.

Why do African players excel at this board game? Top players have studied hard, learning lists of words and combinations of letters, now freely available on the Internet. And they play often. The Nairobi club is packed almost every night, as the worn-down letter tiles show. There is a strong competitive drive by players to be the best. And as the game develops, prize

money and opportunities to play overseas become strong motivators.

Nigerian Chief Toke Aka, Panasa and NSF president, said: 'I have a very strong resolve that Scrabble could easily rank alongside football in popularity.' He attributed Nigerian Scrabble prowess to 'all the top players having an undying passion for the game'. He said they play tournaments for the prestige of being the winner, as prize money is not big, and also for the privilege of representing their country at African and world championships. Recently, increased prize money led some players to see the game as a way to make a living, with top prizes of about \$500 in Nigeria.

This year Iffy has soared again. In January he was unbeaten in Lampasas, Texas. In February he was third at the Texas State Championship and then he won Division 1 at the prestigious Phoenix tournament. His ranking rocketed to 20th in North America. When interviewed, he said: 'I play Scrabble because it gives me immense pleasure.' Ironically, after his drubbing in America last year, he is now in line to make the US team for the 2003 World Scrabble Champs in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. – **Steven Gruzd, South African Scrabble champion**

SPECIAL FEATURE

Business Briefs

Grounded: At least 44 transport firms lost their operating licences after the Zimbabwean government withdrew them as a penalty for supporting the mass action called by Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change early in June.

EAU?: East Africa might soon have a European Union-like economic community as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda reached a deal on harmonising maximum tariffs on imports, resolving the issue of establishing a customs union. The three met in mid-June and Burundi and Rwanda have voiced interest in the deal. The presidents of the three countries have instructed their ministers to prepare a customs union protocol to be signed by the end of November 2003.

Sewn up: South Africa's poorest province, the Eastern Cape, will benefit from a \$25 million cotton farming investment from Da Gama Textiles – a subsidiary of a listed German textile group.

Cottoning on: Following losses of up to \$30 million a year due to subsidised competition and depressed world prices, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali have submitted a proposal to World Trade Organisation (WTO) agriculture negotiators calling on Western countries to respect the free trade spirit of the WTO. In the proposal, submitted in June, the countries said the overall cost to their economies could amount to \$1 billion a year.

Slicing subsidies: The European Union has agreed to revise subsidies to its farmers by 'decoupling' the funding from the quantity of food produced. It still has to be seen if this will result in significant gains for African food exports to Europe.

Thumbs up: Tanzania received a positive endorsement from the International Monetary Fund for the country's economic performance in the 2002-3 financial year and for maintaining single-digit inflation.

Growing: Zambia's largest vegetable grower and exporter, Agriflora, plans to get more African vegetables on the European market. The firm aims to earn about \$37 million this year from increased exports, up from \$28 million in 2002.

Standby Force a Mission Impossible?

WHEN the African Union (AU) holds its summit in Mozambique in July, one of the main topics will be the establishment of an African Standby Force (ASF). The repeated failure of the international community to end conflicts in Africa, and the humanitarian disasters caused by them, has led many to insist an ASF must be created to make possible an African solution to an African problem.

The frustration of the supporters of the ASF is easy to understand. Even when the global community does act, the action is often too little, too late. After an estimated three million people had already died in the war in the Congo, and faced with the growing possibility of genocide, a French-led force was recently inserted into Bunia. Upon arrival the force commander announced he was not there to disarm the militias carrying out the ethnic slaughter, to venture outside the city or to get involved in the fighting. One international relief worker responded in disgust that the deployment of the 1,400 troops was nothing more than 'gesture politics'.

But is an ASF the answer to international inaction, and will it bring an end to Africa's wars? It won't be the solution many hope for if the potential pitfalls of peacekeeping are ignored. The ASF could easily create more problems than it solves, especially if it does not have the resources, capability and opportunity necessary to succeed.

Some think the required resources have been found.

When South African President Thabo Mbeki returned from the recent summit meeting of the Group of Eight nations in France, he had good news: the G8 leaders had made a commitment to support Africa's plans to establish a peacekeeping force of its own by 2010. Mbeki claimed all Africa had to do was come up with the specific costs of the

standby brigade, and the developed world would foot the bill.

The documents coming out of the summit, however, speak of support for the ASF in terms of the actions already taken by the G8 countries and the 'early building blocks' that are still necessary to create the force. Nowhere is the subject of its financing addressed. This omission is more than just a question of the devil being in the details. When it comes to Africa, the developed world is frequently long on promises by politicians, but short on actual funding, when budget decisions are made.

The gap between the rhetoric and reality could not have been more clearly illustrated than it was in an article printed in the *Washington Post* 22 June 2003: 'For months, President Bush has basked in praise from champions of the world's poor, such as the Irish rock star Bono, who have extolled the White House for ambitious proposals to boost foreign aid and provide treatment for African AIDS victims. But now, congressional appropriators appear poised to approve hundreds of millions of dollars less than the president requested for foreign assistance next year. And as Bush prepares to travel to Africa (in July), aid advocates are starting to question whether the president has gotten credit for programmes that aren't going to be funded at the levels the initial headlines suggested.'

Since the Republican majorities in both houses rubber-stamp any proposal Bush really favours, it is also clear that his administration is not interested in making the programme a priority. Why should they? They knew his announcement of the programme would be front-page news, but the report of its being underfunded would make hardly a ripple. The *Post* story ran on page A22.

Another reason any financial support

SPECIAL FEATURE

coming from the developed world will be insufficient is the exaggerated aims that have been described. The stated goal of the AU is to create its own capacity to undertake peace support operations in the broadest sense. Among the functions assigned by the AU to its Peace and Security Council (PSC) are post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian action and disaster management. The G8 says it supports all that, and has included in its list of building blocks 'the development of capacities to provide humanitarian, security and reconstruction support in the context of complex peace support operations'.

Whatever the implied commitments, the G8 is not going to pay the full cost of meeting African aspirations, especially when they go so far beyond merely setting up a force of peacekeepers. While the UN has not always provided effective and timely peacekeeping, it has proved itself capable of humanitarian and reconstruction efforts. The vast majority of AU members cannot provide such assistance to their own people even in peacetime. How then is the AU going to be able to provide such extensive help during or just after a war, and do it more effectively than the UN? Efforts to develop the capacity to undertake humanitarian and reconstruction efforts

within the AU will be duplicative at best and wasteful at worst. The G8 nations know that, and are not going to pay the price of developing an African ability to do peacekeeping writ large.

Even paying for the establishment of a much more limited peacekeeping capacity will be difficult for the G8. The developed world will offer military training, but not all the equipment needed by the ASF. Training is easier to provide since it is cheap, does not involve maintenance and spare parts, and gives a role to the G8's soldiers that they are used to playing.

Africa will not be able to create a robust peacekeeping force on its own. Countries with per capita GDPs in the hundreds of dollars are not going to be able to afford to spend the thousands of dollars per soldier that is required for a modern, well-supplied army. This is particularly true of the transportation assets needed to get a peacekeeping force into the field, and to supply it once it gets there. Because of these resource limitations, AU leaders will need to set priorities among the functions they have assigned the PSC, and be realistic about what they can accomplish and what the developed world is likely to support. If an army is badly led and rarely paid, it is

going to spend its time looking for ways to make money rather than ways to keep the peace.

Peacekeepers need more than resources like training and equipment to succeed, however. They also have to conduct themselves in a way that demonstrates they are professional and impartial.

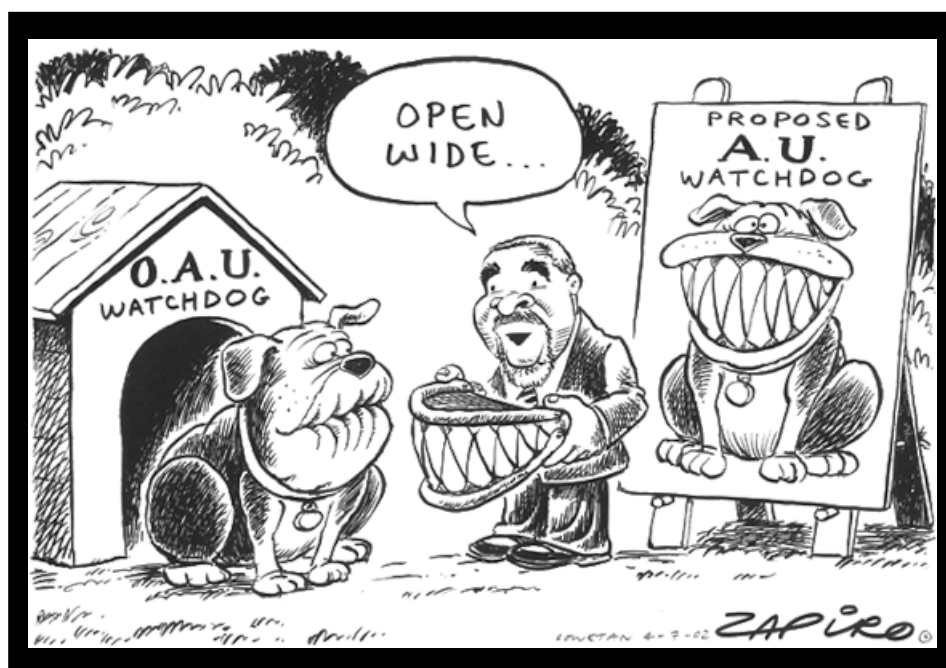
They need to have a clear mandate to avoid being drawn into the conflict. The problem with a regional or even continental force is that the impartiality of the peacekeepers will diminish as the distance closes between the country where the peacekeeping mission takes place and the country from which the peacekeepers come. Even if the peacekeepers do all they can to appear to be neutral, the chances that one faction or another will see them as taking sides will grow as the geographical distance between the two countries shrinks.

Losing the aura of impartiality will raise the risk that the peacekeepers might become combatants. That can also happen if the peacekeeping response is too fast. For years the UN has been criticised for reacting too slowly in a crisis. The ASF is supposed to comprise 'civilian and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice'.

There is often pressure to deploy quickly to prevent civilians from being killed. The faster the deployment, however, the more likely it is that the peacekeepers will arrive before there is a viable ceasefire or a political solution to the conflict. In such situations the peacekeepers often become either bystanders as the killing continues or active participants in the war.

Even before peacekeepers can begin to deploy, there has to be a political decision on whether to send them and on what their task is. The lack of a realistic mandate can create a mission impossible.

The UN Security Council will initiate a peacekeeping operation when it is supported by at least one of the five permanent members (P-5) and opposed by none. Missions were generally not launched when the P-5 felt they had no major interests at stake or when they saw little chance of success.



SPECIAL FEATURE

The AU will order an operation when 10 of the 15 members of the PSC agree that it is necessary. This will mean no AU member will have a veto, but it does not completely eliminate the Security Council's influence. Chapter 8, Article 53 of the UN Charter states 'no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorisation of the Security Council'.

Thus not only will two-thirds of the PSC members have to see it as in their interests to begin the peacekeeping operation, but the Security Council will have to do so as well. Even if the developed countries do not veto the operation via the Security Council, they will still have considerable control if they are called upon to pay for it.

Even capable forces with adequate resources will not succeed if there is no real opportunity for peace. The three most important factors that can kill any opportunity for peace-making are the intentions of the local actors, the country's resources and the actions of its neighbours. None of these is within the control of the peacekeepers. A peacekeeping operation may have to deal with warring factions who see a ceasefire as a chance to rearm rather than as an opportunity to negotiate a permanent peace.

Even those parties who negotiate in good faith can have second thoughts once it comes to implementing the agreement to which they have committed themselves. Africa's wars, with one exception, are civil wars over political power. That is far more difficult to divide than the territory along a disputed border, as Eritrea and Ethiopia must do. Putting pressure on the parties to a peace settlement to live up to their commitments will require a consistency and uniformity of political will on the part of AU members that won't be easy to achieve.

If the peace is to last, the resources of the country must not be used to fuel the fighting (as has so often occurred with Africa's diamonds). The country's

neighbours will have to be more interested in peace than in profit. As the US ambassador to the UN said recently: 'No number of peacekeeping forces is going to be able to help resolve this situation if there isn't the political will amongst the parties both in the Congo and in the neighbouring countries to achieve a satisfactory political outcome.'

The required consistency and uniformity are hard to achieve, because the political interests of the countries involved in the AU's decision will find their way into the mission's mandate. Because of these interests, some peacekeeping operations will not be launched when they should, and others will begin for reasons other than to prevent a humanitarian crisis. Peacekeeping forces could well wind up being used to protect those in power rather than to ensure peace and the delivery of humanitarian relief.

It is worth noting that one of the AU's first acts was to refuse to recognise the winner of the elections in Madagascar because he was an opposition candidate who had had the temerity to defeat an incumbent.

If the AU is not to become thought to stand for Autocrats United, it will have to do more to encourage democracy than pay it lip service. The AU's failure to do anything significant about the continuing destruction of Zimbabwe by President Robert Mugabe thus far gives little hope that it will act against him.

Given these potential difficulties, African leaders might ask themselves whether they want to take responsibility for an African solution that fails to remedy an African problem.

Frustrating as it may be, pressing the developed world to participate in a significant way may prove more effective than any attempt by Africa to act entirely on its own. African leaders might also seek to avoid future civil wars by working to ensure that political leaders can be changed through political and not just military means. – **Dennis Jett, former US ambassador to Mozambique and former deputy chief of mission to Liberia**

Conflict Watch

Keeping the peace: Plans to send an intervention force to war-torn Liberia, where fighting broke out six days after a ceasefire was signed early in June, are underway. The West African regional group Ecowas and UN Security Council ambassadors met at the end of June to discuss a peacekeeping force for Liberia. Ecowas promised to send 5,000 troops, while calls have been made for the US – which has historical ties with the West African country founded by former slaves – to be part of the peacekeepers.

Ultimatum: French peacekeepers have imposed a deadline for armed men to leave the town of Bunia in north-east Democratic Republic of Congo. From now on, they claim, those found carrying weapons will be forcibly disarmed. Some 500 civilians have died in the past two months in Bunia in violent clashes between Hema and Lendu fighters.

At odds: Uganda in June claimed to have intelligence that Sudan has begun resupplying arms to the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has abducted some 5,000 Ugandan children this year to work as soldiers and sex slaves. The Sudanese government has refuted the allegations.

Grabbed: The Malawi government was said to have violated its own laws when it handed over five suspected al-Qaeda members to US authorities, despite a court injunction. The five were detained by Malawi's National Intelligence Bureau in a joint operation with the US's Central Intelligence Agency. Meanwhile, analysts say al-Qaeda and other militant groups are mushrooming in Africa because of the continent's porous borders, widespread lawlessness and corruption. They say increased security in the developed world has made Africa the obvious choice for groups wanting to hide, plan and carry out attacks.

Enigmatic: What prompted the foiled Mauritanian coup in June is still a mystery. Theories include military resentment of the president's close ties with Israel and the US, Saddam Hussein's involvement, and French-instigated resentment of growing US influence in West Africa.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Peacekeeping Q&A

DEMONSTRATING Africa's willingness and ability to act decisively to help itself is crucial to recasting Africa's image in the world. But the drive to create an African system of peacekeeping forces, in tandem with the United Nations, is fraught with obstacles. To unravel the issues, *eAfrica* presents an interview with Cedric de Coning, a peace and security analyst at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), a civil-society organisation working across the continent on conflict-resolution issues.

Q: How many troops are deployed in peacekeeping missions in Africa?

A: The figure for July 2003 is approximately 30,000 of which between 10,000 and 12,000 are African troops.

Q: Overall, what does peacekeeping in Africa cost per year?

A: The total UN peacekeeping budget approved in June 2003 for the coming year is \$2.17 billion for 11 missions, four of which are in Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Sierra Leone and Western Sahara. About 80% of the funds and 70% of the 34,947 UN personnel are going to Africa. Another 8,500 troops in Côte d'Ivoire and Burundi are not on UN missions. On average UN forces cost around \$75,000 to deploy one soldier per year. Assuming the 4,000 French troops in Côte d'Ivoire cost as much as UN forces, the total peacekeeping tab for Africa is roughly \$2 billion. Africa itself has engaged in limited observer and monitoring missions, but its first African financed armed peacekeeping mission is the present AMIB (African Mission in Burundi), which includes three battalions, one each by Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa – about 2,500 personnel. South Africa will supply the bulk of the personnel and equipment and provide helicopters, communication equipment, medical support, transport and the logistical supply line for the whole force. This will cost South Africa approximately \$100 million per year. It is unclear how much of

this will be reimbursed to South Africa by the African Union.

It is important to consider the totality of costs of peace-making, which is not just the cost of soldiers. It also includes training exercises to keep peacekeeping forces ready. Africa also must consider post-conflict reconstruction, which is often far more expensive than the direct costs of peacekeeping. A 1997 Carnegie Commission estimated that the international community spent about \$200 billion on the seven major interventions of the 1990s. The study calculated the cost differentials between these conflict management activities and potential preventive action and concluded that a preventive approach would have saved the international community almost \$130 billion. In Rwanda, the UN Force Commander at the time, General Romeo Dallaire, estimated that a deployment of 5,000 troops to Rwanda in April 1994 would have been sufficient to halt the genocide. The Carnegie Commission estimated that the total cost of the augmented peace operation would have been \$500 million annually and that preventive action in Rwanda would probably have cost \$1.3 billion. The aid to Rwanda in the wake of the genocide cost \$4.5 billion.

Q: How have African peace operations been funded so far?

A: In the early 1990s the OAU tried to address the problem of financing costly peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives by establishing the OAU Peace Fund. The Fund is intended to be used exclusively for financing activities of an operational nature. The fund is supported by an annual 5% contribution from the OAU regular budget, by voluntary contributions from member states, and by donors. From its inception in 1993 to 1996 African countries have contributed approximately \$5 million. Over the same period approximately \$6.5 million was contributed by the international donor community. Over this same period the operational cost of maintaining 67

Democracy Watch

Leadership contest: Botswana, rated the best governed country in Africa by the World Economic Forum, faces a looming leadership battle within the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). Backed by President Festus Mogae, Vice-President Lt-General Seretse Ian Khama will challenge BDP national chairman Ponatshego Kedikilwe, for party chairmanship at the July bi-annual congress.

Succession: Angola's former rebel movement Unita took another step towards transformation at the end of June. At a congress in Luanda to elect a new president to succeed the movement's founder Jonas Savimbi, who was killed in battle in 2002, Paulo Lukamba, known as 'Gato' or 'the Cat', and Isias Samakuva contested the movement's top position. Samakuva won in a landslide victory.

Dismissed: A Congolese request to stop a French investigation into torture allegations against senior officials, including President Denis Sassou Nguesso, has been dismissed by the International Court of Justice.

1-2-3: Two candidates in the recent Togolese elections unilaterally declared themselves heads of state, after rejecting the re-election of Africa's longest serving President, Gnassingbe Eyadema. Togo's two extra self-proclaimed heads of state are Dahuku Pere and Bob Akitani.

Island independence: The power struggle between three semi-autonomous islands and the federal government of the Comores were discussed at a congress held in Pretoria, South Africa, in mid-June. Steps to enable the country to hold democratic elections as soon as possible and the finalisation of the constitution process were also on the table.

People-centred: Tanzania's 2003/04 budget has been hailed as 'putting the people first', unlike in previous years – 52 of 60 'nuisance taxes' on farmers have been eliminated in a country where 80% of the population is rural. The budget reduced the petrol price and duty on motor vehicle spare parts. It seeks to impose a 15% levy on exports of raw hides and skins to boost the local leather industry.

SPECIAL FEATURE

military observers in Burundi (OMIB) was approximately \$7.2 million. The OMIB mission alone thus absorbed more than two-thirds of the OAU Peace Fund despite the fact that it was a very small and limited operation. The Peace Fund has continued to attract the same level of funding and the AU would thus be hard pressed to finance missions that are larger than OMIB or to undertake more than one smaller mission at a time.

Q: What are the options on the table?

A: The AU itself does not have the financial resources in its regular budget, or in the Peace Fund, to finance even AMIB. There are some suggestions of a peace levy on international tourists, but it is unlikely that it will be seriously considered at the July AU Summit in Maputo, let alone become operational in time to have any impact on AMIB. The only serious proposal on the table at the AU Summit is to increase the contribution from the AU regular budget to the Peace Fund from 6% to 10%, which would bring in about an extra \$1.28 million for a total of \$3.2 million annually from the AU budget. This will strengthen the Peace Fund, but it is only a tiny fraction of the \$100 million needed just for AMIB.

Q: Is UN funding for AU peacekeeping an option?

A: The UN has an established system of funding its own missions through assessed contributions and each UN member state contributes to UN peacekeeping missions, over and above its regular contributions, in proportion to its GDP. However, the UN only uses this system to fund missions undertaken under UN mandate and command.

The UN declined to fund the Burundi force because it felt a ceasefire was not yet in place and so peacekeeping would not help. Even if the UN is not going to fund AMIB, some people hope that AMIB will be transformed into a fully-fledged UN mission as soon as a full ceasefire is in place. The same expectation existed during OMIB (1993-1996) but in reality Burundi was not a concern for

the UN as long as the OAU had a mission in place. It seems unlikely that any financial reprieve will come from the UN on Burundi. Even if developed nations funded AU peacekeeping outside the UN, they are unlikely to fund more than 40% to 50% of any given peacekeeping mission. I would not design a continental security architecture in the hope that we will get donor funding for it. The unfortunate reality is that the international donor community is not going to bankroll large-scale AU peacekeeping.

Q: What of the perception that Africa should go it alone?

A: One of the lessons Africa should learn from its peacemaking experiences in the DRC and Burundi is the importance of building meaningful international alliances. The African solutions to African problems approach can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand we get kudos for doing it ourselves, but on the other hand if the big powers are not directly involved in the process they have no direct interest in its outcome.

Donors will only give enough to keep these missions afloat, never enough to make them a success. This is why it is not a good idea to have an exclusive African force. If you have a multinational force that includes G8 countries their national interest will be at stake and they will use all their financial, political, diplomatic and development power to influence the outcome.

Q: So what should the AU's role be in peacekeeping in Africa?

A: This is an important reality check for those who advocate a greater role for regional and sub-regional peacekeeping in Africa. We cannot escape the financial realities of peacekeeping in Africa. The funding issue lies at the heart of the AU's capacity to only undertake certain types of peace operations. If the AU finds that it is not able to finance peacekeeping missions like AMIB, it will be wise to leave such missions to the UN and concentrate its efforts on conflict prevention, peacemaking and limited civilian and unarmed military observer missions. ■

Briefly

Nepad and WEF: The World Economic Forum met in June in South Africa. Business called for faster implementation and greater access to information at the Nepad Secretariat. Casting his usual caution aside, South African President Thabo Mbeki said 'the Nepad Secretariat is essentially financed by South Africa and the northern countries. This is a problem.' He went on to say that only seven heads of state attended the last Heads of State Implementation Committee meeting, a point he said must be raised at the July African Union summit. 'We must insist that our fellow heads of state attend the meetings. . . We are reaching the point when we must start to take implementation seriously,' he said.

In your face: At WEF there was much talk about resolving African conflicts. 'Quite clearly we have been unable to look our colleagues in the face and say exactly what is wrong. We have failed ourselves by not telling people to their face what should be said. It is time we started doing that.' said Kwamena Bartels, Ghana's Minister of Private Sector Development.

Wing and a prayer: State-owned Ghana Airways sought divine intervention last month as staff prayed for three hours seeking guidance to keep the airline from closing down. The airline owes more than \$160 million to various creditors and the government has said it can no longer afford to bail it out.

Prez coughs up: Democratic Republic of Congo President Joseph Kabila became the country's first president ever to pay his taxes. He delivered a \$9,000 cheque to cover his annual income tax to the Kinshasa internal revenue offices.

Salary sacrifice: Zambia's cabinet members have agreed to take a 30% pay cut at a time when the administration is under pressure to show sustained economic reform to get further debt relief.

Keeping them posted: Somalia has been readmitted to the Pan African Postal Union, which means snail mail can now return 12 years after civil war forced the country out of the Union.

On the Streets of Bunia and Burundi

UN Security Council ambassadors toured conflict zones in the Great Lakes in June. Liesl Louw accompanied them and offers a first-hand view of the complexities of peacekeeping.

THE soldiers of the multinational intervention force in war-torn Bunia, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are facing an almost absurd situation.

About 500 of the projected 1,400 troops and 700 Uruguayan peacekeepers patrol the main street from the airport to the centre of town, armed with heavy artillery, tanks and cannons. Yet, only a few blocks away, in the back alleys among abandoned and burnt-out houses, child soldiers with Kalishnikovs drive around in pick-up trucks. Every night they go out to loot and murder. Some are as young as 10 or 12.

'It's OK for us that the French are here. In any case, this is our town, they can keep it safe for us,' said 'major-general' Floribert Kisembo, one of the leaders of the Union des Patriotes Congolais, a Hema ethnic militia, led by Thomas Lubanga.

Kisembo doesn't look much older than 25 and he is accompanied by three bodyguards, one of them a young girl in military fatigues. The peacekeepers, in blue helmets and flak jackets, are only a few metres away. Kisembo and his group are clearly not afraid of them.

The Hema seized Bunia in May 2003 when they chased out the Lendus, backed by



Uganda. Since the fighting started in the capital of the mineral-rich Ituri region five years ago some 50,000 people have lost their lives. Over 500 are said to have died in the clashes in the past two months.

On arrival the French had no plans to disarm the militia. The UN peacekeepers (Monuc), deployed under Chapter 6 of the UN Charter, are not allowed to shoot. The deployment of the Ituri multinational force was authorised under Chapter 7 of the Charter, which, however, does allow soldiers to shoot. The day after the UN interview with Kisembo, French soldiers came under fire from militia on the outskirts of town and fired back, killing two.

Following this incident, French General Jean-Paul Thonier, commander of the multinational force, gave an ultimatum to the militia to disarm and leave town. Some of the militia leaders agreed, but there was still debate over whether the force should actively seek out and confront the militia, half of whom are children. Were they to do so they would face a difficult moral issue: do they shoot at children?

'There is no doubt the force will be tested. Some of the militia thinks that if they kill a peacekeeper the force might leave, but we must show them we're serious,' said Aldo Ajello, European Union special representative in the Great Lakes. 'I really hope it won't be necessary to fire at them,' he said.

In the small hospital near the UN headquarters in Bunia doctors say that the child soldiers are drugged by their superiors so that they can keep fighting. Even if the order is

given by the militia's leaders to disarm, there's no guarantee that everyone will comply. Petronella Vaweke, who is neither Hema nor Lendu, is head of the Ituri Pacification Commission, an *ad hoc* grouping of community and rebel leaders trying to end the hostilities.

'Don't be fooled by what you see in the main street,' she said, referring to the UN compound, surrounded by sandbags and barbed wire. Next to it is a huge refugee camp with about 10,000 people inside.

It looks peaceful enough during the day but everything changes at night. 'Everywhere on the outskirts, every night, they (the militia) kill people, rape women,' she said.

The multinational force has a mandate limited to Bunia and is supposed to leave on 1 September 2003. Monuc spokeswoman Patricia Tomé said she is extremely worried about the situation in the surrounding countryside. 'We might safeguard Bunia, but there is fighting in all of Ituri.'

The latest of many massacres was reported by a Ugandan military official on 15 June 2003. Up to 100 people are said to have been killed when Lendu militia attacked a town near Mahagi on the Uganda border.

The debate about whether Monuc should be granted a mandate to disarm the militia



UN tanks, right, patrol in Bunia where child soldiers, left, are part of the ethnic militia groups

SPECIAL FEATURE

and defend rural people has been going on for months, but many countries won't contribute to such a force. Most observers here say more troops won't make a difference because the Monuc forces are unprepared and nowhere near as many as are needed.

Further south, in the north Kivu province, 1,200 South African soldiers are part of a task force set up to help the UN with its Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme to get foreign troops, mainly former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and Interhamwe militia, back to Rwanda.

A reception centre has been set up in Lubero where civilian teams of four or five UN officials, protected by peacekeepers, have managed to send 1,800 people back to Rwanda since the end of last year. But in June, fighting broke out between the Rwandan-backed RCD-Goma and the RCD-ML faction which is backed by the Kinshasa government. The RCD-Goma took Lubero which was under RCD-ML control.

'If this goes on, there is no way we can continue working in the area,' said Peter Swarbrick, chief of the DDRR.

Yet even if there is relative peace, there are still huge obstacles to overcome before the DDRR can work. Within walking distance of Lubero there are 3,000 or 4,000 combatants and 7,000 or so of their dependants under the control of the Force Democratic de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR). Swarbrick described the group as a 'highly motivated, highly organised, highly politicised group' that is not co-operating with the DDRR or the peace process. There are so few UN forces that if the FDLR refuses to disarm, there is nothing the UN or South Africa can do about it.

Ironically, an almost identical situation faces the more than 900 South African troops across the border from the DRC, in Burundi, where they are meant to help demobilise and reintegrate rebel forces into a new national army. Since the beginning of June, South African engineers and special forces have been setting up several

planned containment areas for rebel forces north of Bujumbura.

Two small rebel groups under Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye and Alain Magababona have agreed to take part in the process and have supplied a list of their soldiers to the South Africans. The process was supposed to begin on 6 June but only one rebel turned up at the camp and he was turned away.

'We told him to go back and tell his leader the camp isn't ready,' said one of the officers at the camp. Apparently funding was still needed for toilets and sleeping facilities for the ex-rebels.

Even if camp construction can be completed, it's unlikely the African Union force will ever be at full strength. It was supposed to provide 3,000 troops, but the Mozambican and Ethiopian contingents of the force still haven't turned up. Also, it seems, because of a lack of funds.

The biggest problem, however, is that the main rebel group, the CNDD-FDD led by Pierre Nkurunziza, refuses to participate. He accused South Africa of siding with the government and vowed to fire on South African troops if they force him to disarm.

On 12 June, the town of Buramata was attacked by Nkurunziza's group. One person died and many houses and shops were looted but the South African troops stood by and didn't try to protect the locals.

'People are unhappy because they thought the South Africans were there to help them,' said a Burundian journalist in the area.

The UN and African forces believe if smaller groups can be disarmed, despite Nkurunziza's continued fight, the momentum will somehow move the peace process forward. Others say that until a global and lasting political agreement can be achieved, peacekeeping troops are wasting time and money. As in the DRC, if no clear decision is taken to actively stop rebels and disarm militia groups, peacekeepers will not achieve much more than to show a symbolic presence, which means little for those involved in war. – **Liesl Louw, Africa Editor, Media 24**

UN Options for DRC Force

IN JUNE the UN Security Council had to consider the renewal of Monuc, its peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It could authorise a larger force with a more robust mandate, maintain the status quo – at \$700 million annually, Monuc is the UN's most expensive peacekeeping operation. Or it could downgrade or even scrap it.

Option three is unlikely, according to Security Council ambassadors who visited South Africa, Angola, the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda earlier in June. 'When UN officials or NGO representatives told the Council about the suffering in Bunia, it was merely another African trouble spot,' ventured one ambassador. 'Now we have a personal relationship with the people, particularly the Interim Authority set up by the Ituri Pacification Committee. The next time we debate that issue, it will be different.'

The authoritative International Crisis Group (ICG) told the somewhat skeptical envoys that with a beefed-up presence and mandate, the UN could see real improvements in the DRC within eight to 12 months. The UN General Assembly in June approved \$2.17 billion for peacekeeping for the coming year.

To pass a mandate giving peacekeepers the power to use force under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, the Council would have to raise Monuc forces to the 10,500 requested by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The current force of 8,700 has the authority to fire in self-defence or defend civilians.

The French-led Multi-National Force (MNF) in Bunia showed how a shoot-to-kill mandate fails without the necessary muscle to back it. Advance elements waited at the airport while a fire-fight raged in the town nearby. Military experts doubt that the MNF will be able to quit on 1 September as planned. There is no certainty that the 3,500 Bangladeshi troops will arrive in time to reinforce the 700 Uruguayan Monuc members in Bunia. – Jean-Jacques Cornish, freelance writer

Limited Leverage for Elder Statesmen

SINCE the 1990s, African elder statesmen – primarily former heads of state – have emerged as key actors in conflict management. In the Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conflicts, the mediation of Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela and Ketumile Masire (former presidents of Tanzania, South Africa and Botswana, respectively) epitomised these emerging roles.

Before the current popularisation of African elder statesmen as mediators, an important instance of African intervention in a domestic civil war was former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi's mediation in Uganda in 1985. Although he brought stature and the power of office to the task, he produced a hasty agreement that collapsed when then rebel leader Yoweri Museveni snatched power in Kampala in January 1986. Moi's mediation showed that sitting heads of state are incapable of sustaining a credible mediation because it requires a patience and persistence that clash with the pressures of office.

Moi's experience suggested that *former* heads of state would be attractive as mediators. The assumption was that they could combine their previous leverage and institutional standing with limitless time, to improve on the performance of serving leaders. More importantly, their intervention credentials would be enhanced if they had retired or given up power peacefully.

Burundi's escalating civil war in the mid-1990s afforded another opportunity to test the intervention potential of African elder statesmen. Julius Nyerere's appointment as mediator in 1995 resulted from a convergence of regional and international dynamics to try to pre-empt Burundi's descent into genocide. Former US President Jimmy Carter provided impetus by bringing together East African leaders to find a mediated settlement. Animated by Carter's record, regional leaders saw Nyerere as a credible leader with moral

integrity and, over time, his role gained international legitimacy. With Nyerere's death in October 2000, the mantle fell on Nelson Mandela, with even better elder statesman credentials. Moreover, while Tanzania's proximity to Burundi partly compromised Nyerere's mediation, South Africa's distance insulated Mandela from charges of partiality. A similar context marked the rise of Ketumile Masire to the helm of mediation in the DRC.

How much autonomy do elder statesmen possess as superintendents in peacemaking bids? Proponents invoke their cultural armoury and power of personality as key organisational variables. However, their leverage should not be exaggerated since it rests on the mix of pressures and incentives that accrue from national, regional and international levels.

Nyerere's mediation in Burundi illustrated some of these issues. Initially reliant on the collective will of regional leaders, Nyerere faced formidable problems in reconciling the Burundian parties. When Pierre Buyoya launched a coup against the weak Hutu government in 1996, regional leaders imposed somewhat ineffective economic sanctions (due to porous borders and insufficient global support).

But sanctions still forced Buyoya back to the negotiating table in Arusha in 1998. Under pressure from the European Union and other external supporters of the expensive peace process, the modalities changed to include international mediators as heads of committees to assist Nyerere.

The conflict between the Nyerere team and external special envoys about how to conduct the negotiations exemplified the larger problem that elder statesmen face in taking charge of the mediation process. After Nyerere's death, Mandela inherited the Burundi mediation and drew from his stature and standing in South Africa's transition. Mandela's role was equally grounded in larger international resources

and pressures that enabled him to achieve the power-sharing agreement in Arusha in August 2001.

In subsequent protracted negotiations to obtain a ceasefire and implement the Arusha agreement, Mandela essentially ceded the mediation roles to South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma. This transition demonstrated that elder statesmen anchored in larger contexts of power, such as South Africa, might be instrumental in paving the way for the entry of more meaningful national mediators.

Masire's role in the DRC demonstrated a similar theme. Until the death of Laurent Kabila in January 2001, Masire made no headway on a national dialogue. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) began in October 2001 in Addis Ababa only after sustained international pressure on regional actors to implement some Lusaka Agreement provisions. But when the ICD moved to Sun City, South Africa, in March 2002, the elder statesmen could no longer claim control over the mediation.

More critically, when Masire supervised a partial agreement between Joseph Kabila's government and one rebel faction, powerful external actors debated his replacement with a more credible and forceful mediator. Rather than dumping Masire, however, international actors reached a compromise whereby new UN mediators were enlisted to 'lend muscle and organisation' to the process.

Despite mixed results, African mediators persist in their intervention roles because few outsiders have the commitment or political will to mount sustained mediation roles in distant locales. The task for local interveners is to build the organisational capacity to be meaningful mediators. – **Gilbert M. Khadiagala, Associate Professor of African Studies and Acting Director, African Studies Programme, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC**

Does Presidential Mediation Work?

IN CONTRAST with the rest of the world, where conflict mediation is largely conducted by professional diplomats and mediators, Africa increasingly relies on crisis mediation led by presidents or former presidents. Although presidential mediation invariably captures headlines and gives the impression that substantive action is being taken, more often than not it fails. As a result, the whole structure of how we seek to end African conflict needs to be reconsidered. We ought to ask whether African mediation ever worked or has it been a sideshow as conflicts run their natural course based on military strength.

When the first war erupted against Mobutu Sese Seko in then Zaire in 1996, South African President Nelson Mandela attempted to mediate, including a celebrated episode aboard the South African navy ship *Outeniqua*. Negotiations continued right until rebel troops, backed by Rwanda, marched into Kinshasa, at which point Mobutu finally fled. Yet at no time did either side make any meaningful concessions. The balance of military force, not presidential stature, ended the conflict. Similarly, mediation has had little, if any, effect on the conflicts in northern Uganda, southern Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea-Ethiopia or almost any other African conflict.

Mediation by presidents often becomes tied in knots by protocol. There is an emerging African rule that conflicts ought to be handled first by the regional body within which they occur. This is often a critical mistake as almost every country in a sub-region has a strong set of biases and institutional self-interests that prevent presidents from being impartial mediators. For example, the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire really began in 1993, when the country's president of three decades died. To cement power, each successive leader used divisive tactics to disenfranchise northern Muslims and prevent the popular northern opposition leader Alassane Ouattara from contesting elections. When the conflict finally erupted in a rebellion by northern troops, West Africa took the lead and asked the president

of Togo to lead the mediation. Hence a man who seized power in a 1967 coup – and who has grossly violated human rights for decades and excluded opponents from elections – had the job of convincing Côte d'Ivoire's leaders to be more democratic.

To mediate wars in Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo, Southern Africa put Zambia's then president Frederick Chiluba in charge of mediation. In both cases combatants charged that Chiluba was not neutral and should be replaced. Even after Chiluba was manifestly bungling the negotiations and failing to put any substantive ideas on the table, Africa was loath to break with diplomatic niceties and select a more effective mediator. Aside from allegations that members of his government were involved in smuggling supplies to rebels in both conflicts, Chiluba failed because he simply sought a ceasefire without any diplomatic strategy designed to deal with the underlying issues of

'Mediation by presidents often becomes tied in knots by protocols'

security and distrust that propelled the conflicts. Chiluba's approach to the second DRC war against Laurent Kabila illustrated a common problem of presidential mediation. He was inadequately prepared regarding the history of the conflict, was not backed by effective professional mediators, had little time to dedicate, did not effectively manage the logistical and diplomatic tasks needed to convene talks and, chronically, was left to beg for funds for mediation conferences.

Only later did South Africa inject a dose of realism by attempting to allay Rwandan and Ugandan security fears in exchange for their withdrawal. However, because the mediation was ostensibly led by Zambia, these new ideas had to be inserted under the guise that they really came from Zambia. If professional mediators, rather than presidents, had been used it would have

been far easier to change tactics or staff when problems arose.

However, professional mediators require very firm political support from powerful nations to be effective. Implicitly, African diplomacy assumes that conflicts can be resolved with talk without applying either carrots or sticks. But diplomacy divorced from real power almost never works unless both parties to a conflict have already decided it is best to stop fighting.

This weakness of African diplomacy is compounded by the growing attitude that Africa should solve its own problems and keep the developed world at bay. In the DRC, such African-only negotiations continued for years with little success until intensified African pressure was combined with threats by world powers to pull the aid plug on Uganda and Rwanda unless they withdrew armies from DRC. While Zimbabwe was widely derided for intervening in DRC, which it clearly could not afford, its military forces did more than all the diplomacy to convince rebel forces to agree to talks. Similarly, African-only mediation got nowhere in Côte d'Ivoire until France stepped in with a real coercive force that both sides respected. Without such a force and the willingness to use it, rebel forces are almost always convinced that they have greater chances of success through combat than conversation.

In rare circumstances, the esteem of incumbent or retired African elder statesmen can alter the personal chemistry between combatants and assist with mediation. Diplomatic success far more often depends on whether it is backed up with real power and realistic solutions to underlying problems. Chief among these is the fact that most rebellions occur when the central state is weakened, perceived as illegitimate and can no longer project its authority across the nation. As a result neither presidential mediation nor peacekeepers can fix the current problems in eastern DRC unless they can bring back a coherent, active, well-resourced state. – **Ross Herbert**

Pressure Mounts in Zimbabwe

THE Zimbabwean situation continued to deteriorate in June 2003. Leader of the main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change, Morgan Tsvangirai, was again imprisoned, and human rights organisations found new ways to highlight the violence.

And amid the country's difficulties President Robert Mugabe revived an oil supply deal with Libya. Mugabe led a high-powered government delegation to Libya where he held talks with Muammar Gaddafi. Zimbabwe's chronic fuel shortage is so dire that it has led to desperate motorists claiming to be undertakers to jump to the front of the long petrol queues. Now hearses need to actually have dead bodies in them when they pull up at petrol stations where they are checked before they can get petrol.

Tsvangirai was arrested on 6 June 2003 on charges of treason stemming from a five-day labour action. He was released on bail on June 20.

The Solidarity Peace Trust, a human rights organisation, released two videos in June of which extracts were aired on South Africa's e.tv. 'We don't feel that the public and government in South Africa are fully aware of what is happening in Zimbabwe. We want to show politicians that it is time they intervened,' said Selvan Chetty, deputy director of the Solidarity Peace Trust.

The videos show interviews with torture victims. Some of the footage was filmed



To order the videos call Venitia Govender on +27 11 837-6876 or +27 82-222-3074

during special 'testimonials' held in churches around the country.

'These testimonials are by people who are not afraid to tell of the terrible human rights abuses that have been inflicted against them,' said the Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube.

He said the churches have also formed an umbrella group, Christians Together for Justice and Peace. By working together the churches believe it will be more difficult for the Zimbabwean government to clamp down on them. The Zimbabwean police have accused prayer groups of holding covert political meetings convened without their permission. Reverend Sony Chimbuya, in Masvingo province, and former senior official of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches was warned by police that he would have to write down his prayers for them to scrutinise

According to Ncube a stayaway in early June in Bulawayo resulted in many arrests. 'Many were imprisoned for up to 16 days in overcrowded, filthy conditions. They were beaten and they appeared in court in leg irons and handcuffs,' said Ncube.

Tony Reeler, regional human rights defender for the Institute for Democratic Alternative in South Africa (Idasa), believes that while violence and torture continue in the country, levels have largely remained constant over the last couple of months. 'It (the torture) does, however, intensify when there are strikes and stayaways,' said Reeler.

A trend that continues to worry Idasa is the increase in politically motivated rape over the last year.

'It is not well documented because women are concerned about coming forward, but there have been instances where women are forced into youth militia bases to provide forced domestic and sexual services,' explained Reeler.

And as Zimbabwe's economy continues to disintegrate, a public study was released in June on the effect that country's crisis is having on South Africa. *The Cost of*



MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai after one his court appearances in June 2003

Zimbabwe to the SA Economy was commissioned by the Zimbabwean Research Initiative. It claims that the Zimbabwe crisis cut South Africa's gross domestic product growth by 1.3%. South Africa also lost more than R6 billion, because of a fall in trade, last year, connected to her neighbour's woes.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell on July 1 called for Robert Mugabe to leave power, saying Zimbabwe would be a top concern during US President George W Bush's African tour. At the end of June Powell urged South Africa and other African nations to take more urgent action to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis.—
Shaun Smillie, freelance writer