CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Africa Peace Forum

Regional Conflict Formation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Structure, Dynamics and Challenges for Policy

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Executive Summary

In November 2001, the Center on International Cooperation and the Africa Peace Forum gathered representatives from civil society, human rights organizations, states, academia, and inter-governmental organizations to discuss the structures, dynamics, and policy implications of the regional conflict formation (RCF) in the Great Lakes region of Africa. At the end of the meeting, participants agreed that a refined RCF model has potential for conflict management in the Great Lakes region, provided it sufficiently integrates the local, national, and global dimensions of conflict.

Regional Conflict Formation

A regional conflict formation (RCF) is a set of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other across state borders. The RCF model consists of four key points:

1. Contemporary armed conflicts tend to be regional.

2. Regional conflict formations are characterized by regional and global political, military, economic, and social networks.

3. A regional conflict management strategy addresses the geographic and functional elements of an RCF.

4. A regional approach engages regional and/ or sub-regional states, inter-governmental organizations, and civil society networks.

Regional conflict strategies must be flexible enough to accommodate the multi-level character of conflict, proliferating actors, and rapidly shifting boundaries. The RCF framework should not replace or invalidate strategies based on local, national, or global levels of analysis, but complement them with an additional level of action.

Regional Linkages

Participants identified and discussed several historical, structural, and operational linkages that transform local conflict (as in the Kivu provinces) or national conflict (as in Rwanda) into region-wide conflicts. They noted how the weakness of state institutions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, including citizenship and border control, facilitated transnational trade networks, war economies, and the spread of regional rumors. Furthermore, Ugandan and Rwandan militaries received training from the U.S., France, and Belgium, increasing their capacity to destabilize the region. Regional leaders, global corporations, and armed groups in Burundi and the DRC then manipulated these dynamics in order to influence their neighbors, increase profits, and consolidate or gain power.

Armed groups and states in an RCF are less likely to agree to a negotiated settlement because of the availability of resources and military support across the border. Furthermore, the potential success of the Lusaka Ceasefire Accord and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue may have spurred armed groups based in the DRC to renew their campaigns in their countries of origin. Participants remarked on the apparent cooperation, or at least information sharing, between Burundian and Rwandan Hutu armed groups, both of whom are said to be staging coordinated attacks on their respective countries of origin.

Regional Strategies

Participants discussed several ways to prioritize conflict management efforts within the region, given the unpredictability of sustained financial support and the need to make the RCF model accessible to policy practitioners:

- Targeting specific areas where conflict linkages are concentrated, usually border areas with high trading traffic, such as the Kivu provinces in the Great Lakes. Concerted action in the critical areas may relieve the strain on the surrounding region and encourage progress in peace settlements.

- Focusing efforts on the weakest links within the regional chain; the links which, if broken, could have severe repercussions for the region as a whole. For example, the failure of the Burundi peace process could destabilize the entire Great Lakes region by destroying the tenuous peace within Rwanda and leading to increased migration into the DRC.

Participants also agreed on a number of policy guidelines to assist in the formation of a regional conflict management strategy:

- Conflict management in the Great Lakes region should be regionally-aware, while taking into account the local or national peculiarities of each conflict. In order to be successful, regional conflict management policies must also address the global linkages that promote the conflict.

- The participation of regional actors should not be construed as support for burden-shifting from global to regional actors. Rather, this should be complementary to, not a substitute for, commitment by global actors.

- Participants strongly argued for increased training and use of local and regional actors to provide a grass-roots perspective on regional issues.

- Transnational parallel economic networks have the potential to be, transformed into legitimate trade networks. Policymakers should focus on designing policies to affect the incentives of economic actors to re-orient them toward legitimate activity that will support licit regional economic cooperation and integration.

The conference engendered a spirited and high-level debate that enriched the concept of regional conflict formations and further developed understanding of regional conflict linkages in the Great Lakes. Participants expressed the desire to continue with the debate and, more importantly, the need to undertake more research on the Great Lakes regional conflict formation.

Conference Report

Background

Regional conflict formations (RCFs) are sets of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts. The Center on International Cooperation project, *Regional Conflict Formations: Processes of Development and Challenges for Conflict Management,* focuses on both the processes through which such RCFs develop and the challenges they pose for conflict management.

The project aims to test and develop the RCF concept in regional meetings in collaboration with scholars, practitioners, and institutions focused on the African Great Lakes region and Southern Central Asia. Following the regional meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, and Istanbul, Turkey, CIC and its partners will produce a policy paper that will provide a framework for understanding and managing regional conflicts.

Introduction

In November 2001, the Center on International Cooperation and the Africa Peace Forum gathered representatives from civil society, human rights organizations, states, academia, and inter-governmental organizations to discuss the structures, dynamics, and policy implications of the regional conflict formation (RCF) in the Great Lakes region of Africa. During a three-day meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, participants considered three discussion papers[1] and five written commentaries[2], as they debated the relevance of the RCF model for their work in the Great Lakes. At the end of the

meeting, participants agreed that a refined RCF model has potential for conflict management in the Great Lakes region, provided it sufficiently integrates the local, national, and global dimensions of conflict.

This report summarizes the four broad themes discussed at the conference: a conceptual overview of the RCF framework; the structures and linkages of conflicts in the Great Lakes; regional strategies of conflict management; and guidelines for policymakers.

I. Conceptual Overview

A regional conflict formation (RCF) is a set of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other across state borders. The RCF model consists of four key points:

- *Contemporary armed conflicts tend to be regional.* Conflicts are neither 'local,' 'civil,' nor 'intra-state' as is widely held, and can transgress national boundaries. A pre-September 11 analysis indicated that 10 of the current 14 major armed conflicts in the world had "spilled over" into neighboring states.[3] Linkages among local, regional, and global actors further facilitate these "transnational" or "network wars."

- *Regional conflict formations are characterized by regional and global political, military, economic, and social networks.* Global factors, like the policies of external states, corporations, and development and financial institutions, can aggravate regional conflict processes, such as the cross-border migration of refugees, civilians, and armed groups. Covert alliances and illegal trade networks linked to global markets can exacerbate the interaction of global and regional forces, especially when states are weak or illegitimate and citizenship is contested.

- *A regional conflict management strategy addresses the geographic and functional*

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[1] Barnett R. Rubin, "Conceptual Overview of the Origin, Structure, and Dynamics of Regional Conflict Formations"; Gloria R. Ntegeye, "Origin, Structure, and Dynamics of the Regional Conflict Formation in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa"; and Andrea Armstrong, "Regional Approaches to Conflict Management in the Great Lakes Region."
[2] Rukudzo Murapa, Stephen Jackson, Musifiky Mwanasali, Ibrahim Wani, and Katumanga Musambayi wrote commentaries. Several participants also presented oral commentaries for each session.

[3] Taylor B. Seybolt, "Major Armed Conflicts," Press Release, SIPRI Yearbook 2001, http://www.sipri.se and Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg, "Armed Conflict and Regional Conflict Complexes," *Journal of Peace Research* 35 (1998), no. 5, pp. 621-34.

elements of an RCF. Such a strategy should be integrative and regionally-aware, taking into account the linkages and networks of conflict within sub-regions. Functionally, conflict management policies address military, political, economic, and humanitarian factors in conflict. Policies can include micro-credit development programs, providing safety to refugees in key border regions, or high-level negotiations. Policymakers must be aware of the potential regional impact of any strategy focused primarily on a single country. Rumors of high-level negotiations can destabilize border regions, as dissatisfied armed groups attempt to cross borders and sabotage the negotiation process. Therefore, conflict management strategies must always include monitoring of regional impacts.

- *A regional approach engages regional and/ or sub-regional states, inter-governmental organizations, and civil society networks.* Participants emphasized that regional actors must be included in peace efforts, not only because of their shared history and knowledge, but also because they may be involved in perpetuating the conflict. Participants were adamant that this not be construed as support for burden-shifting from global to regional actors. Rather, the participation of regional actors should be complementary to, not a substitute for, commitment by global actors.

Mapping the Boundaries of an RCF
Participants debated which African conflicts are parts of the Great Lakes regional conflict formation, having observed that conflict in the region does not correspond to state or juridical boundaries. Regional experts described the geographical fluidity of the conflict in the Great Lakes, which, at its peak, drew in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, the Central African Republic, Tanzania, and Sudan, not to mention the "core" states of Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). To illustrate the dynamism of the conflict boundaries, one participant noted that although Rwanda and Kenya do not share a common border, in 1995 Nairobi became a base for Rwandan genocidaires to raise money - thus making Kenya part of the Great Lakes conflict. One of the greatest challenges for conflict

management, one participant theorized, is that "conflict boundaries are changing faster than conceptual boundaries." Therefore, maybe a model based on networks and linkages is more apt than a model based on territory and geography.

Conceptual Suggestions
Point of Entry: Several participants argued that the RCF model privileges regional analysis over local, national or global approaches. Experts who preferred a global level of analysis described how sometimes "invisible" international actors can impact peace processes. Others advocated more research into whether regional conflicts originate at the local, state or regional level, or whether RCFs are the result of a complex interaction of all levels. Those proposing the local level as an entry-point for analysis and action cited the Hema/Lendu conflict in Ituri, DRC in 2000. Some participants argued that while it began as a local conflict, it later became linked to the continuing war in the DRC and the Great Lakes region through actors with regional agendas. Conversely, those advocating a regional point of entry pointed out that Ugandan involvement in Ituri ignited the Hema/Lendu conflict. Last, those favoring the state as the most useful point of entry cited international law, which holds the state responsible for guaranteeing critical rights.

Actor-based Analysis: One scholar suggested that the RCF framework should also identify categories of actors and their interests. These include both 'visible' actors such as leaders, rebel movements, and mediators, and sometimes 'invisible' actors such as transnational corporations and external governments. Activists argued that identifying processes and linkages does not necessarily provide for accountability and responsibility. By identifying and categorizing actors, policy makers can observe how global, regional and local actors make use of, and in some cases, manipulate linkages in an RCF. For instance, participants confirmed the presence of multinational corporations at the start of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - a fact virtually overlooked by the media. Some questioned whether the subsequent move of the

ICD to South Africa was, in part, motivated by "invisible" corporate concerns.

Regional Peace Formations: Rather than focusing solely on how the interaction of various linkages has caused conflict, some participants argued that it might be more instructive to examine countries not experiencing conflict on their territory, despite their links to the region. Participants noted that Tanzania poses a challenge to the RCF concept, because although Tanzania is linked to the Great Lakes RCF through economic, social, and political networks, it has yet to experience persistent violent conflict linked to the region. More research is necessary to determine whether Tanzania is "exporting violence" or has developed mechanisms to insulate itself from direct conflict. Furthermore, peacemaking and peace building may spread through regional linkages, just as conflict can. Creating such positive linkages in a "regional peace formation" is the key goal of a regional approach to conflict management.

Historical Context: Participants disagreed on the analytical importance of history when examining regional linkages. Some claimed that the history of regional linkages is crucial for designing appropriate peacebuilding strategies, although participants could not agree on which historical period (pre-colonial, colonial, Cold War) is the most relevant for policy makers. Others pointed out that most of the regional linkages predate the regionalization of conflicts in the 1990s, and therefore, the history of the linkages may not be as crucial for policymakers.

Eventually, participants agreed that these frameworks are not mutually exclusive, and in fact, may be complementary. Regional conflict strategies must be flexible enough to accommodate the multi-level character of conflict, proliferating actors, and rapidly shifting boundaries. The RCF framework should not replace or invalidate strategies based on local, national, or global levels of analysis, but rather address the lack of regional analysis in current conflict management strategies. Each of the suggestions has the potential to improve and refine the RCF concept as whole, while also increasing its relevance for policy.

II. Regional Linkages of Conflicts in the Great Lakes

Participants identified and discussed the following historical, structural and operational linkages that transform local conflict (as in the Kivu provinces) or national conflict (as in Rwanda) into region-wide conflicts:

Weak/Illegitimate States
State institutions, often with repressive colonial origins, may be weakened or become illegitimate as a result of intervention, or the end of intervention, by external states. The weakness of state institutions, including citizenship and border control, facilitates transnational trade networks, war economies, and the spread of regional rumors, all of which can further undermine the state. Because of the social, economic and political linkages in the Great Lakes region, one state's crisis weakens neighboring states and increases the risk of conflict. In this volatile environment, groups and individuals manipulate fear and ethnic hatred to create and control militias, parallel economies, populations, and territories. The collapse of institutions is linked to the endemic underdevelopment and poverty in the region, as some states exist only to extract and control resources valued in the international market.

Absence and/or Weakness of Regional Organizations
Some participants argued that the weakness (or absence) of regional organizations has crippled conflict management efforts in the region.   In the words of one participant, "once a conflict starts in the Great Lakes, no organization has a standing mandate to intervene."   While stressing the importance of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), or the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) in regional conflict management, participants observed that the original mandate of many regional and sub-regional institutions in Africa was to address economic cooperation. Many of these organizations are fragile, lack resource capacity, and largely exclude

women, youth, and civil society in their operations. Participants noted that these organizations also suffer from diminished moral authority and legitimacy, since many of the leaders who are promoting conflict in the region are heads of state, thus organizational members. Many of these organizations have only recently developed security mechanisms, which are often weak and constrained by the security and political interests of member states. One practitioner contended that the lack of strong conflict management "mechanisms," not organizations, had hampered past peace efforts in Africa.

Leadership

Distinguishing among "peacemakers," "peace-spoilers" and "opportunists," participants found that repressive leaders, often with support from external states, can improve their international image by appearing to act as peacemakers and peacekeepers, while simultaneously terrorizing their own citizens and destabilizing their neighbors. Such leaders or "rulers" have promoted peace efforts to influence their neighbors; have derailed regional peace processes that threatened their interests; or have launched foreign wars as a political strategy to divert attention from problems at home. Some participants pointed to the political shrewdness of such leaders as Zaire's Mobutu, who, in spite of his repressive rule, managed in large part to prevent the country from disintegrating or imploding.

Covert Alliances

Armed groups receive support, usually covertly, from states and non-state actors in the region, as well as from external states and actors (such as corporations) for strategic, economic, ethnic, or ideological considerations. These covert alliances are nourished by what participants characterized as "political networks" of leaders or converging interests, actions, and ideologies of regional leaders, which shape the shift in regional power and peace initiatives. Some participants argued that some of the rebel groups are "fictitious creations as a cover for foreign intervention" and that the covert alliance between the external state and the armed group was the "worst form of colonialism."

Political Networks

The opposite of covert alliances are the overt political networks of regional leaders and actors, involving economic and political/ideological aspects of conflict. Tenuous and dynamic, the formation of one network can provoke the formation of parallel networks by leaders with opposing strategic, economic, or ideological interests, sometimes with the support of external powers. Potential regional peace forums are transformed into arenas of conflict between networks of regional leaders. For example, because of their common interest in the repatriation of Rwandan refugees, presidents Yoweri Museveni (Uganda), Pierre Buyoya (Burundi), and Mobutu Sese Seko (Zaire) played a significant role in the Arusha Accord for Rwanda (1991-93), which profoundly influenced the course of the Rwandan civil war, the genocide, and the transformation of Rwanda under the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Participants also highlighted Tanzania's axial role in providing the political and intellectual environment in which leaders, as students in Dar-Es-Salaam University or compatriots in guerrilla movements, met and established the seeds of political networks. Tanzania was referred to as the "hub of African liberation movements." Many participants referred to the relationships among Kagame, Museveni, Kabila, and Nyerere as evidence of the importance that the political networks can play in the formation of regional conflicts.

Democratization and Regime Transformation

A democracy requires citizens, who are empowered, to participate in governmental decision-making through procedures such as voting. Citizenship thus in part determines who can access state resources. Especially when the criteria for citizenship are unclear, democratization can set off destabilizing conflict over access to those resources. For instance, in the Kivu provinces, successive governments have manipulated citizenship in the context of a large Banyarwanda diaspora and limited resources such as land and water, which has led to the exclusion of those residents determined to be non-indigenous. In such ethnically divided and charged political environments, democratic transitions based solely

or primarily on notions of 'majority rule,' are potentially dangerous and have been unable to bring about sustainable and secure regime transformation. This is especially true when democratization is driven by external, rather than internal, priorities. Experts argued that externally imposed aid conditionalities, coupled with international pressure for multi-party democratic elections in 1993 without the necessary social and institutional preparation, was one of the main factors underlying the subsequent eight years of civil war in Burundi.

Citizenship and Transborder Identity Groups

The presence of transnational identities in a region with porous borders and contested citizenship has heightened the spread of conflict in the Great Lakes. The political grievances of the Banyamulenge (Tutsi origin) in South Kivu and Banyarwanda (Hutu and Tutsi origin) in North Kivu, involve access to citizen rights and claims to resources such as land, based on those rights. These grievances developed from the introduction of narrow criteria for citizenship within Congo-Zaire, the effects of which were exacerbated by the influx of refugees and armed militias from Rwanda and, to a lesser extent, from Burundi. In some instances, refugees support rebel militias as a means to advance their claims for citizenship, and others for economic necessity. Regional experts highlighted the fact that regional diasporas vary in the degree to which they are mobilized, noting that some Kinyarwanda diasporas are generally more politically active than, for instance, the Congolese diasporas. In order to increase the policy-relevance of the RCF model, some practitioners suggested further investigation into the issue as to why some diasporas respond to exclusion by mobilizing politically or militarily, while others do not.

Transnational Parallel Economic Networks

Utilizing past commercial and social relationships, armed groups and global corporations have profited from controlling transborder trade networks that are beyond state control. Further, weak borders and administrative structures have facilitated the growth of war economies, which are based on looting, smuggling, or trafficking in drugs, arms, gold,

coltan, rubber, diamonds, other gems, and even human beings. This, in turn, has perpetuated weak states, disrupted legitimate family livelihoods, and given rise to anarchic conditions that favor predatory cash-based activities. Participants stressed that although people involved in this trade come from the local, national, regional, and global levels, this does not imply that each profits equally from the trade network. Another participant highlighted how some local populations, especially women, participate in order to survive or support their families, not to advance political agendas. Participants suggested focusing on the role of women in transborder trade networks, since in the past women were instrumental in establishing the social relations and capital that sustained transborder trade.

Cross-border Migrations

Cross-border flows of displaced people in the Great Lakes have strengthened transnational identity networks and transborder economic trade, which has roots in historical social relationships. Refugees or migrants from one country may become political and military actors in the receiving country, especially when refugees are unwanted in the host country and unwelcome back home. Participants related how Rwandan refugees and migrants in Uganda supported and trained with Museveni's National Resistance Movement, which eventually overthrew President Milton Obote. Similarly, armed groups, fleeing defeat, cross borders and become military actors in another country or form alliances with other groups or states. In a widely publicized example, Hutu Interahamwe militias and ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) having fled to the Kivu provinces in the DRC, took advantage of the cover of refugees of the 1994 genocide and used relief resources provided by the international community to re-group and train militarily.

War Economies

Armed groups, including foreign armies[4] and unofficial militias, use existing transborder trade

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[4] S/2001/357. United Nations. *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

networks to finance military-political activity and for personal enrichment. This has a dual impact of financing further violence, as well as displacing legal trade in basic goods and commodities. At the state level, Zimbabwe finances its military presence in the DRC, in part, through joint mining ventures between Congolese and Zimbabwean Defense Force-owned companies.[5] On an individual level, unpaid government soldiers have sold their weapons for food or money, even to opposition militias. Access and links to global markets increase the profits of war economies. Local war economies (Kivu provinces) are linked to regional markets (Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, the Indian Ocean ports of Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa) and ultimately to global markets via the smuggling/trading center of Dubai or through direct transport to Europe. Participants repeatedly referred to coltan, an ore mined in DRC, which is in high demand for computer and mobile phone parts and therefore extremely profitable. Coltan was shipped directly from Kigali to Brussels on Sabena Airlines, and later twice weekly from Kigali to Amsterdam on Maritinair.[6]

Strategies of Global Actors

The geopolitical strategies of world powers such as the United States, France, Belgium, and, during the Cold War, the U.S.S.R have had profound implications for the region, especially in affecting political and military alliances of regional leaders. These strategies, which reflect the prevailing interest (or lack thereof) of the major powers and donors in the region have been realized through military and financial support to both incumbent regimes and rebel movements, and are affected by the West's on-going reassessment of the region's geopolitical significance, especially following certain major historic events, such as decolonization, the Cold War, and the September 11 attacks on the

April 12, 2001. Implicated Ugandan and Rwandan military forces in the DRC of involvement in exploiting DR-Congo's mineral resources. Many experts also argue that certain "local militias" are proxy forces for these two governments.
[5] S/2001/1072. United Nations. *Addendum to the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.* Nov. 13, 2001. para 38-40.
[6] Ibid. para 20.

US. World powers, as influential members of international development agencies and financial institutions, can also support policies such as harsh lending practices and excessive restructuring at the expense of social programs that significantly undermine the ability of states to insulate themselves from conflict in the region.

Particularly in reference to the severity of civilian causalities and displacement in the region, participants stressed that while a regional focus is valuable, it should not impede holding accountable those Western governments that provide military training and support to regional actors militarily involved in the DRC. For example, the U.S., through the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), has provided considerable military support to Rwanda and Uganda. Participants described both the Rwandan and Ugandan governments as *de facto* rulers of several Congolese provinces. In Hema/Lendu conflict in the Ituri province (which arguably has been exacerbated by Uganda's presence), eight of the 13 Ugandan commanders were products of American, French or Belgian training programs conducted prior to 1998.

Globalization and international markets

The links between an RCF and globalization re-emerged in many guises over the course of the conference. Participants particularly focused on the relationship between international commodity markets and local economies, pointing out that even a small coffee producer in Tanzania like the mother of one of the participants is affected by the world price of coffee. The value of coltan on the global commodity market can influence armed group and state decisions on whether or not to contest control of certain provinces of the DRC. Similarly, Western demand for diamonds, sold by Uganda and Rwanda, provides an incentive for these countries to exploit the resources of the DRC.

Linkages between international corporations and the region have exacerbated conflict on a number of levels: not only do they provide financial incentives for contenders for power, but they have also employed mercenaries to provide security for commercial extractive ventures, resulting in an

influx of conflict professionals into the region. In addition, international regulation regimes and other legal restrictions often make the black market more profitable. These restrictions provide financial incentives for corporations to engage in business ventures with whoever controls and delivers state resources, regardless of the impact on the local population or the political repercussions for the state. In order to successfully engage international corporations in peace processes in the region, peace must be more profitable than conflict. NGOs involved in monitoring and providing a degree of "transparency" are one route towards increasing the visibility of actors and the repercussions of their actions.

Information Flows

An objective media source, especially the radio, can play a stabilizing role in neutralizing the negative effects of rumor and transforming images of violence. In the absence of verifiable information on conflict and weak and often state-controlled media, participants noted that rumor has acquired a regional character and importance. The regional nature of information flows is heightened by the existence of transborder identity groups, which shape both how information is distributed and which information is deemed personally relevant. Events in Burundi, drawing on Tutsi transborder relationships, can affect the expectations of populations in Rwanda and the DRC. Rumor has contributed to the widening ethnic divide in the Kivu provinces, with correlations between perceptions of economic domination and anti-Rwandan rhetoric becoming more and more apparent. As one participant succinctly stated, "where there is no explanatory information, people will often create it." Rumor can also act as an early warning indicator, as evidenced by local knowledge about which regions of Kivu provinces were most likely to erupt in conflict.

III. Regional Approaches to Conflict Management

To date, with the exception of the Arusha Agreement on Burundi (August 2001), peace efforts in the Great Lakes region have not comprehensively addressed the economic, political, security, and social linkages of conflict. The Lusaka Ceasefire Accord (and Sirte Initiative) for the DRC, the Arusha Accords and Protocols for Rwanda, and the Bicesse Accord and Lusaka Protocol for Angola have to varying degrees been ineffectual, perhaps because they did not fully take into account the regional dimensions of conflict, or were not geographically or functionally comprehensive. Several participants questioned if a functionally comprehensive approach is feasible, or even desirable, in conflict management approaches. However, participants agreed that conflict management strategies in the Great Lakes need to be "regionally-aware" in order to anticipate and evaluate potential second-order effects. Participants focused on several key policy challenges for effectively managing regionalized conflict in the Great Lakes.

Limiting Exit Options

Conflict management approaches that have focused on individual states have unintentionally intensified cross-border economic linkages, increasing the resources available to armed groups and states in the regional conflict. Once peace negotiations begin, participants will naturally seek to protect their leverage in negotiations, as well as create secondary options in case the peace process fails. This often involves seeking increased, and covert, economic and military support across borders from other groups or states or increased reliance on relief aid, and regional and/or global war economies. There is some evidence that the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) has attempted this strategy by increasing its transborder links to groups in the DRC to finance military supplies through trade in diamonds. This has not only rendered negotiations less effective but also made exiting the peace process more attractive and less costly.

Furthermore, when progress in the peace process is imminent, sub-groups who are dissatisfied with the negotiated peace are able to continue the conflict across state borders, sometimes with the covert agreement of their party leadership. Political

parties in Burundi continue to splinter, while armed sub-groups continue the conflict from abroad. In addition to the detrimental effect this may have on the peace process in the country, the relocation of conflict beyond the borders may destabilize adjoining states. An example that was cited by participants is that the Forces de Défense de la Democratie (FDD) continues to destabilize the Burundian peace process from DRC territory and may be contributing to the militarization of certain areas within the DRC. Last, the potential success of the Lusaka Ceasefire Accord and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, may have spurred armed groups based in the DRC to renew their campaigns against their countries of origin. In this regard, participants remarked on the apparent cooperation, or at least information sharing, between the FDD and Rwandan Hutu armed groups - both of whom are said to be staging coordinated attacks on their respective countries of origin.

Identifying Conflict Management Actors and Interests

Experts noted that a variety of actors can play a role in facilitating conflict management. Elders and chiefs in the Karamojong cluster, which stretches from Southern Ethiopia through Northern Kenya, and from Southern Sudan to Northern Uganda, have played important leadership roles and have relied on indigenous/local capacity and knowledge. The involvement of leaders with moral stature and respect, such as former South African president Nelson Mandela or the former president of Botswana, Dr. Ketumile Masire, from outside the Great Lakes region can also reduce polarization among regional actors and infuse the peace process with legitimacy. Yet, the involvement of extra-regional leaders may also undermine regional initiatives. For instance, the Sant' Edigio community's efforts to facilitate Burundian negotiations may have distracted attention and slowed momentum from existing African-led efforts. Participants, discussing the crucial role of the MONUC UN operation in implementing the Lusaka Ceasefire Accord, noted the pivotal importance of global-regional partnerships in creating the capacity to implement ceasefire accords and peace agreements. While regional actors negotiated the

Lusaka Ceasefire Accord, the commitment by global actors, who witnessed the document, will be necessary for its success.

Deeper Analysis of Armed Groups

Participants stressed that the international community must develop both a clearer understanding of the armed groups and also better mechanisms for their participation in regional peace processes. First, not all armed groups are the same. The Mayi-Mayi, a relatively poorly understood phenomenon in Eastern DRC, are not necessarily a cohesive armed group - and may in fact represent different interests and exhibit different levels of legitimacy and accountability. Second, although several armed groups in the region are state-sponsored to some degree, some armed groups in the region are clearly proxy forces, while others may represent dissatisfied sections of the population. Armed groups also change over time. The Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (AliR) forces in the Kivu provinces, often described as former Rwandan genocidaires, may consist of up to 85 percent new recruits unaffiliated with the 1994 genocide - how should this affect their interaction with Rwanda, the region and the international community? Last, within the region, the same armed group may be treated differently, depending on the conflict management process. For example, the FDD in Burundi is considered a "negative force" in the Lusaka Ceasefire Accord for the DRC, but is regarded as a legitimate participant in the Arusha process for Burundi.

Strengthening Regional Capacity for Conflict Management

Since independence, African states have established over two hundred regional and sub-regional organizations, most of which were formed on the basis of customs or economic unions. In the Great Lakes specifically, there is need to determine the areas of jurisdiction/authority of organizations such as the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to avoid duplication of initiatives and overlap. In order to strengthen their social and political dimensions, it is necessary to continue the process of designing and operationalizing regional security

mechanisms. In addition, experts argued that regional strategies should be based on a locally produced analysis of the conflict, rather than an imported policy analysis. Towards that end, they advocated increased training of local and regional inhabitants to increase the capacity of regional and international actors to negotiate and support peace through providing a grass-roots perspective on regional issues. But, as one scholar emphasized, regional actors must also acknowledge existing underutilized capacity, and make greater efforts to incorporate local actors in the activities of states and regional organizations.

Prioritizing within a Regional Approach

Participants discussed several ways to prioritize conflict management efforts within the region, given the unpredictability of sustained financial support and the need to make the RCF model accessible to policy practitioners. Several scholars supported targeting specific areas where conflict linkages are concentrated, usually border areas with high trading traffic, such as the Kivu provinces in the Great Lakes, the Karamojong cluster belt in the Horn, the Parrot's Beak in West Africa, or the Ferghana Valley in Central Asia. Concerted action in the critical areas may relieve the strain on the surrounding region and encourage progress in peace settlements. Another approach would look for the "weakest" links within the regional chain; the links which, if broken, could have severe repercussions for the region as a whole. For example, participants suggested that the failure of the Burundi peace process could destabilize the entire Great Lakes region, by destroying the tenuous peace within Rwanda, and leading to increased cross-border migration into the DRC.

Strengthening Protection of Human Rights

Regional experts declared that conflict management approaches in the Great Lakes region have regularly failed to integrate human rights principles. Often democratization serves as a tool of conflict management and is planned as an institutional guarantee of human rights. Yet the establishment of crude majority rule can often threaten human rights instead of securing them - especially within the context of citizenship crises,

donor conditionality, and weak states. Considering the formalistic nature of regional ventures with democracy, participants concluded that holding elections is not necessarily a guarantee of adherence to human rights standards. Civil society participants, in particular, forcefully argued that a substantive guarantee of human rights is essential to peace processes in the Great Lakes region, and that democratization is not an adequate substitute.

IV. Policy Guidelines

Recognizing that peace processes in the Great Lakes region are hardly informed by an RCF framework, participants focused attention on policy guidelines to introduce and improve on a regional perspective to conflict management.

Conceptualizing Conflict Management Regionally: On the utility of the RCF model in conflict management and peace building, consensus emerged on a number of issues:

- Conflict management in the Great Lakes region should be regionally-aware, while taking into account the local or national peculiarities of each conflict.[7] In order to be successful, regional conflict management policies must also address the global linkages that facilitate the conflict.

- Because of the interlocking nature of conflicts in a regional conflict formation, prevention of conflict in one country may require resolution of an on-going armed conflict in one part of the larger region and successful peace building in another part.

- Such an approach should be flexible enough to incorporate the highly dynamic and rapidly changing conceptual and actual boundaries of conflict and the increasing number of actors.

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[7] This view echoes that in the UN Secretary General's ninth report of October 2001 where he made the suggestion that "parties to the Lusaka process…[should] explor[e] means of associating Burundi more closely with the peace process in the DRC."

- Regional conflict analysis should include a detailed understanding of the different types of non-state actors and armed groups - including their local legitimacy and accountability, their motivations, and their sources of support.

Regional Linkages: A regional conflict management approach in the GL region should take into account the multiple regional linkages of conflict. To maximize the peace-building potential of regional linkages, it was suggested that:

- Transnational parallel economic networks have the potential to be, transformed into legitimate trade networks. Policymakers should focus on designing policies to affect the incentives of economic actors to re-orient them toward legitimate activity that will support licit regional economic cooperation and integration.

- Regional strategies should incorporate economic components and tools, including regional economic integration, regional economic blocs, infrastructure construction, customs unions, regional planning institutions and trading associations.

- The Inter-Congolese Dialogue has the potential to affect positively social relationships throughout the region, through its discussions on nationality and ethnic coexistence as outlined in the Draft Agenda.

Democratization: On the crises of democratization and citizenship, it was recommended that:

- Societies in the Great Lakes region should move from a form of democracy that privileges elections to an all-inclusive social contract that guarantees human rights, representation, and power-sharing between ethnic minorities and majorities.

Regional Actors: Observing that peace processes have tended to be less inclusive and have limited the participation of civil society, participants recommended that:

- Conflict prevention, management and peace-building strategies should involve all actors in the region, such as states, regional and sub-

regional organizations, informal groupings, networks or alliances of the civil society, and independent media.

- Regional peace approaches should carefully identify regional actors, their capacity and limitations, and their involvement should be complementary to that of global actors.

- Regional and sub-regional organizations should expand their current capacity to promote peace efforts through increased use of existing underutilized talent and increased training of local and regional personnel.

- These strategies should institute a proper division of responsibility among all actors based on internal assessments of capacity and include appropriate methods of coordination and information sharing.

Norms and Principles: Regional peace processes should be carefully planned. This entails:

- Defining the objectives of conflict management and defining short-term, medium-range, and long-term objectives to avoid fire-fighting and ad hoc interventions.

- Setting criteria for mediator selection to ensure they are neutral, honest brokers and acceptable to the parties in the conflict. These can be drawn from the region or could be international figures with moral stature and experience in mediation work.

- Integrating substantive human rights principles and guarantees in regional conflict management efforts.

Institutions: In regard to institutions in the GL region, it was recommended that:

- Regional peace organizations in the Great Lakes such as the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation in Tanzania could be revamped and utilized to provide institutional frameworks for regional peace processes.

- Resources/aid should be invested in supporting policies to stabilize, legitimize and bolster the

capacity of regional organizations, state institutions, civil society, and the media.

- In addition, continental structures such as the OAU's Conflict Prevention Resolution and Mediation Mechanism (CPRM) should be revitalized, made inclusive and accountable to the people rather than solely to heads of state.

- The work of regional organizations involved in conflict management, including COMESA, EAC, SADC and IGAD, should be coordinated to avoid overlap, duplication and conflict.

Conclusion

The conference engendered a spirited and high-level debate that enriched the concept of regional conflict formations and further developed understanding of regional conflict linkages in the Great Lakes. Regional experts stressed that the international community, including donors and the UN, has a responsibility to support regional peace processes in ways that resolve the problem of citizenship, minimize tensions, and promote regional reconstruction through a well-thought-out and participatory framework. They expressed the desire to continue with the debate and, more importantly, the need to undertake more research on the Great Lakes regional conflict formation. This, it was noted, can form the basis for comparative analysis of the RCF model both within Africa and across continents.

ANNEX I:
Agenda

16:00 - 16:30   **Opening Session - Welcoming Remarks**
Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, Executive Director,
      Africa Peace Forum, Nairobi, Kenya
Dr. Barnett R. Rubin, Director of Studies
      Center on International Cooperation, New York, NY
Mr. Ram Manikkalingam
      Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY

16:30 – 18:30   **Keynote Address**
Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, Executive Director,
      Africa Peace Forum, Nairobi, Kenya
"Conflict Interlinkages in the Great Lakes Region and Beyond"

      Moderator: Ms. Josephine Odera

Monday, November 12th

8:30 – 12:30   **The Conceptual Framework of a Regional Conflict Formation**

♦   Presenter: Dr. Barnett R. Rubin

♦   Commentators: Prof. Rukudzo Murapa
                                     Prof. Peter Anyang'-Nyong'o

♦   Moderator: Dr. Francois Grignon

14:30 –18:30   **Regional Conflict Formation in the Great Lakes: Structures, Processes and Dynamics**

♦   Presenter: Ms. Gloria Ntegeye

♦   Commentators: Mr. Stephen Jackson
                                     Dr. Musifiky Mwanasali

♦   Discussant: Dr. Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga

♦   Moderator: Prof. Sam Tulya Muhika

<u>Tuesday, November 13th</u>

8:30 – 12:30   **Regional Conflict Formation in the Great Lakes: Challenges for Policy and Conflict Management**

- ♦   Presenter: Ms. Andrea Armstrong

- ♦   Commentators: Dr. Ibrahim Wani
  Dr. Musambayi Katumanga

- ♦   Discussant: Ms. Josephine Odera

- ♦   Moderator: Dr. Joseph Makokha

14:30 – 15:45   **Panel Discussion, Plenary Discussion and Comments**

- ♦   Panelists: Prof. Mwesiga Baregu
  Mr. Suliman Baldo

- ♦   Moderator: Dr. Tandeka Nkiwane

15:45- 16:00   **Closing Remarks**
Ms. Josephine Odera, Associate Director of Programs
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Dr. Barnett Rubin, Director of Studies
      Center on International Cooperation, New York, NY

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