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## Conclusion: Where Do We Go from Here?

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### **Achievements and Areas Worrisome**

The situation in the Great Lakes region is still worrisome. By early 2000, hopes were still running high. This was six years after the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi, and six years after the genocide against the Tutsi (1994). This was followed by Mobutu's forced departure, the installation of a new regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Arusha Agreement that allowed a political transition in Burundi. Indeed, by early 2000, peace had been restored everywhere, and the whole region was calm, except in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo where armed groups and *les Forces de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) continued to commit war crimes and human rights violations.

Several reconciliation and reconstruction initiatives had been made: in Rwanda, the Gacaca courts had allowed a peaceful coexistence between the perpetrators of genocide and their victims, while in Burundi, the Burundian Armed Forces had successfully merged with the former rebel movements. Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni had managed, since he took power in 1986, to assert himself, inside his country<sup>1</sup> and in the region. Kenya and Tanzania had no particular problems regarding security. In short, there was relative progress as far as governance was concerned.

Meanwhile, there has been very significant economic progress, due, in part, to the East African Community (EAC), a regional<sup>2</sup> organisation which is currently considered by the African Union (AU) as one of the best on the continent, insofar as it had an average growth of 4 per cent per annum and that Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania were, between 2005 and 2009, ranked among the best in the world (IMF, 2011:57). This outstanding performance was a result of deep reforms undertaken since the early 1990s, including the restructuring and privatisation

of banks and the launch of programmes to improve the investment climate. This performance had allowed individual states to invest heavily in health and education (Gahama 2015:72).

These hard-won achievements seem to be seriously jeopardised by a return to authoritarian rule that the international community is watching, powerless, throughout the region. In this regard, Burundi is a good example of regression. When in 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza, one of the former rebel leaders of the National Council for the Defense<sup>3</sup> of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) – came to power after long negotiations and under strong international pressure that led to the Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement signed in 2000 in Arusha, no one ever could believe that he would lead the country into an impasse. Already in 2008, there were reports of extrajudicial executions in the National Liberation Forces (FNL), a rival movement that, unlike CNDD-FDD, had refused to lay down their arms. Corruption became rampant in all institutions, from top to bottom. The 2010 municipal elections were rigged massively, and this led the opposition to boycott the legislative and presidential elections.

A serious crisis – which is still ongoing – then erupted when Pierre Nkurunziza decided to violate the Constitution and the Arusha Agreement which forbade him to run for another term, despite the advice and warnings of the powerful Catholic Church, the civil society, one faction from his own party and the international community, including the United States and the European Union.

We will return to this shortly. A failed coup in May 2015 gave the authorities the opportunity to indulge in occasional bloody repressions<sup>4</sup> against the opponents and to silence independent media. To restore peace, there must be an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders in the conflict. But the regime that relies on a handful of ‘generals’ drags its feet and prefers to give the conflict<sup>5</sup> an ethnic connotation (Larcher, 2016:2) and to accuse Rwanda and Belgium of being behind the mayhem in Burundi.

Insecurity is rampant everywhere in Burundi as much as calm prevails throughout Rwanda. The latter is nowadays well-known for being one of the most secure countries in the world, and yet, in 1994, it experienced a genocide which threw everything upside down. The organisation of a constitutional referendum on 19 December 2015 paved the way for Paul Kagame to seek another term in office in 2017. The revision of Article 101 of the Constitution by the Parliament enables him to stay in power until 2034. If the move reflects the will of the Rwandan people who had previously sent petitions to the National Assembly, it has not, however, gone down well with some international partners among which is the United States. Moreover, unlike in Burundi, Uganda, Kenya and the DRC, the Rwandan opposition grouped within the United Democratic Forces (UDF) and the Rwandan National Congress (RNC) are almost non-entities in the Rwandan political arena.

As for Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, he has been in power for over thirty years and he was re-elected in February 2016 as President of Uganda. While he is credited with stabilising the country after many years of dictatorship, his authority is increasingly being challenged. His authoritarian excesses pushed him as far as putting in jail his main opponent, Kizza Besigye, on the election day; and the elections were allegedly far from being free and peaceful. Many observers point out that he owes the little credibility he has left to his involvement against the Shebab militia in Somalia and to the fact he is often called upon to mediate in regional conflicts.

In the DRC, the presidential and legislative elections which are due in November 2016 constitute a great challenge and is already raising concerns. They will cost a mere sum of \$ US 1,145,408,680 , a sum that is raising serious concerns among some politicians. The confusion is not yet over because it is not yet certain whether Kabila will not be tempted to seek another term although he has completed his two terms. The coming months are likely to be very hot in Kinshasa.

The ongoing crises in the Great Lakes region, especially in Burundi, demonstrate the limits and contradictions of this cloudy entity called international community. Once Pierre Nkurunziza decided to go it alone, several international human rights have raised the alarm, suggesting a risk of genocide and a regional conflagration. The UN Security Council<sup>6</sup> backed the solution proposed by the African Union (AU) and the EAC. The Heads of State of the sub-region have almost kept quiet over Nkurunziza's third term which violated the Arusha Agreement that they had themselves signed<sup>7</sup>. The AU Peace and Security Commission tried to send to Burundi a peacekeeping force to protect civilians. Surprisingly, the African Heads of States rejected the proposal in order to give a last chance to the Burundian Government to negotiate. However, all this was in vain. The delegation sent to Bujumbura returned empty-handed. The European Union alone has decided to take serious measures: it has suspended direct development assistance, and the impact is likely to be felt in the coming months. The mediation led by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and the former Tanzanian President Benjamin William Mkapa, is struggling to get off the ground: the Bujumbura regime swears he will never negotiate with 'the pusichists'. Whether it is out of cynicism or not, the recent French proposal to send to Burundi a few policemen on a peace mission in a country controlled by *Imbonerakure* militia is somewhat surreal, and the fact that it was approved by all members of the UN Security Council simply makes it a sick joke. In any case, the inaction of the international community is disconcerting. Is it going to shed crocodile tears when the irreparable damage has been committed as it happened in Rwanda in 1994?

## **Toward Constructing a Preventive Conflict Paradigm**

George Santayana's well-known adage – 'Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it (1924:284)' – provides a relevant historical perspective to contextualise the arguments, the analytical perspectives, and the recommendations to be made in this section of concluding chapter.

Furthermore, it should be added that people, nations, individuals, ethnic groups or social classes which do not have anything in common or do not imagine to have anything in common are not likely to go to war against one another. This is not a simplistic premise. People, states and ethnic groups in the Great Lakes region do have a lot in common as a matter of having similar histories, cultures, demographics, and sociology through extensive relationships and geopolitics. It is in their own being and their own interests to protect those of them and to imagine more new interests to be pursued and protected as part of globalism. The world of the states is the world of ideas, interests and powers. This is what this concluding remark is all about. Each contributor made specific recommendations in this book. They are not being repeated in this conclusion.

If the conditions and structures that have produced the conflicts are not systematically interrogated and eliminated, the region is likelihood to repeat similar outcomes in the future, despite the 'plastic' peace accords already secured.

A broader theoretical framework is examined in this chapter about the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of peace. Our working principles are obvious: There will be no peace without development; and there will be no development without peace. Furthermore, there will be no democracy with poverty. Poverty is the number one enemy of peace, democracy, and progress.

Conflict prevention is conceived here either as a policy strategy or a policy instrument, and a policy framework that can be used by the states, societies, and international institutions to think about how to produce a peaceful and sustainable development model.

Some of the important questions are: What kinds of states and the economies can produce the new paradigms that support a policy of conflict prevention? Moreover, what kind of roles should the African and international institutions play in supporting and sustaining policies that can lead to conflict prevention in the Great Lakes region? How can we move forward to reconstruct viable and reliable functioning institutions and build infrastructure through which the states, people and their cultures in the Great Lakes region can coexist in dignity and in mutual respect of laws and political rules and through social harmony that would help them progress individually and collectively? How can we imagine political regimes, democratic institutions, ethnic groups, economic and social actors and agencies of changes that can think differently based on a win-win theory of preventing the recurrence of conflicts? The intent is not to respond to

all these questions here but to take them as an analytical and policy framework in our efforts to make concrete recommendations.

For almost four decades, the commercial, economic, cultural and political activities, as well as the formal policies of states, the informal actions of various groups and people, including the activities of foreign powers and partners and those of multinationals in the Great Lakes region of Africa have directly or indirectly produced, by complicity, naivety, imposition or by choice, high levels of states and human political instability and social insecurity in this region. The region has produced violent politics: civil wars and wars of invasion, extreme ethnic politics that led to genocide and militia groups, which have almost permanently used child labour and child soldiers, extreme violence against women and girls, unprecedented environmental destruction, as well as incredible levels of poverty and economic stagnation. Furthermore, the dynamics of the region have produced intolerable degrees of internal refugees, and internal peoples' displacement, and fluid movements of small and mid-sized arms and drugs cartels. This region has also produced totalitarian, authoritarian, kleptocratic, extremely nationalistic and military regimes, which violated constitutional rights, human and social rights, and the basic of fundamental people's and individual rights.

It should also be noted, however, that the conditions and symptoms described here have not been produced in all the countries located in the region. In fact, African socialism and African humanism, as some of the major ideologies in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, were produced in Tanzania and Zambia, respectively. Even the first experience of Afro-Marxist-Leninist political regime was produced earlier in the region (in then called People's Republic of Congo/Congo-Brazzaville). Recently, democratic governance practices and values also are being consolidated in some countries based on the principles of free and fair elections and citizen's fundamental freedoms in Tanzania and Zambia.

In our research projects, we have recognised what has been functioning well or better and what has not. We have also examined the causes of conflicts, their manifestations and consequences, as well as their policies and socio-economic implications based on the case studies. We avoided generalisations as we empirically focused on why and how intra- and inter-states conflicts occurred and how conflicts have emerged out of the political and economic dysfunctionality of the different polities.

In the research projects upon which each contributor has drawn his/her conclusions as well as our conclusions as co-editors, we all have engaged in the specific and empirical research projects dealing with the issues that have led to constantly violent conflicts.

All these issues raised above can be summarised under two sets of items or headings: (1) political governance systems, their forms, their organisation and their policies; and (2) extreme poverty.

To promote peace, maintain collective security and advance progress in the Great Lakes region of Africa, the main concern is about the mechanisms of formulating and implementing reforms with the intent of making political governance socially relevant, politically progressive and philosophically unifying for the people in the Great region and Africa.

Rethinking the reconstruction of the Great Lakes region of Africa is an analytical and political process through which one examines the historical facts and socio-political and economic projects as they support the system of political governance beyond the imperatives of its particularism. It requires a critical understanding of the meanings of facts based on the objective conditions as they are, as well as an attempt to comprehend the quality of relationships between facts and actors, as their dynamics should project the ultimate end of changing social phenomena.

We argue that politics and policy of reconstruction in the post-conflict Great Lakes region is extremely complex, a process that should be multilayered, gradual, yet daring, inclusive, thoughtful, pragmatic, and engaging. The reconstruction implies the following points:

1. The consolidation of real peace, physical and social security of people and groups (collective security),
2. The establishment of strong social, political and legal institutions, which can sustain peace and economic growth and development;
3. The promotion and protection of gender equality, civil and human right using the existing conventions;
4. The development of integrated and coherent regional programmes and priorities;
5. The distribution of national resources equitably; and
6. The protection of the environment.

Regionalism and regional consciousness will not work, unless national policies and politics effectively work and produce the outcomes that can alleviate extreme poverty as earlier indicated. Nothing meaningful can happen in this region unless people participate in the political process at the national level and unless national institutions are effective and efficient at that level first. All the above elements are part of the system of political governance. Thus, preventing conflicts implies setting up political governance systems in which people and states should reconcile with themselves on the principle, the values and importance political regionalism.

To prevent more conflicts, in addition to developing multilateral international cooperation schemes of relations, the African capacities concerning peacebuilding should be re-enforced and used. Furthermore, the usage of the African traditional systems of negotiation and peacebuilding should be projected into the preventive

mechanisms. Most of the traditional systems advocated a collective ethos of the nature of the African societies, the collective ownership of the land and natural resources. Most of these societies put emphasis on peaceful ways of solving problems and the maintenance of social harmony as an ultimate aim in itself. It is necessary to investigate the traditional African approaches in the face of failures of many mechanisms of peace prevention. African metaphysics and laws and African cosmology can also provide the principles and values to be pursued for conflict prevention. The palaver *à l'Africaine* may not lead to the punishment of criminals, as compared to the European and American court judiciary systems, as it puts more emphasis on reconciliation. However, it can break down the infernal circle of violence that has characterised most parts of the Great Lakes region. The African traditional systems of either delivering or supporting peace should be encouraged.

To prevent further violent conflicts, states in the region must reorganise with collective integrative purposes, their economies, the water from their rivers and lakes, their potential and real hydro-power, their timbers, their minerals, their arable lands and their human resources to avoid creating a situation that constitutes *un casus belli* in the future. If the countries in the Great Lakes region can sell their electricity among themselves first, this process would lessen their dependency on external sources of petroleum and thus projecting a different geopolitical role in the world.

Furthermore, to avoid the conflicts, it would be necessary to establish a strong level of interdependence in key areas such as education, security, commerce and economy, law, environment, banking, science and technology, socio-economic infrastructure and health. The areas of dependence on each other should be conceived as regional development priorities as well as peacebuilding strategies.

In regional and international areas, preventing conflicts means the establishment of a multilateral international cooperation through which real dialogues and regulated exchanges are established. Multilateralism implies that a collective agenda in development schemes, peacebuilding, and security is designed and implemented. This agenda has to be made regionally.

The region has to promote and protect the principles and the values of good governance. It means a governance system that has accepted norms that are politically participative, economically productive and reliable, and ideologically unifying.

The establishment of some forms of welfarist political regimes with an elaborate national development agenda based on social and democratic values and institutions is a very important step toward preventing conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

The introduction of peace education as a requirement in the school curriculum from the elementary school up to higher education systems will provide knowledge about peace and its values in the global system. When people think peace, they are likely to act in a peaceful manner.

## Notes

1. Except in the northern part of the country which is controlled by a rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Koné.
2. EAC is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognised by the African Union as associations representing States under the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. This includes: the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).
3. Most people from the opposition are in exile: many of them live in Rwanda and in Belgium.
4. The repression is organised by elements of the police and the secret service which are under Pierre Nkurunziza's direct authority. They are supported by CNDD-FDD youth militia. Persistent rumours also mention the presence of FDLR.
5. Whereas protesters against Pierre Nkurunziza's third term were young people from Bujumbura urban neighbourhoods and from all ethnic groups, the Tutsis are generally the most targeted. The highest authorities of the country, such as the president of the Senate and the National Assembly have increasingly been whipping up ethnic hatred. The vocabulary used is similar, in many ways, to the one used during the Rwandan genocide in 1994.
6. According to a UN confidential report, the organisation did not have the means to prevent genocide in Burundi.
7. All the EAC presidents endorsed the Arusha Agreement, but only Paul Kagame dared to denounce it, in an interview, a regime which kills its own people.

## References

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