Southern African Seminar Series

Conflict, Peace and Regional Economic Integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the Knowledge Gaps and Addressing the Policy Challenges

7-8 October 2015

Livingstone, Zambia

The Livingstone Declaration

Preamble

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's (UNECA) Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) and the African Peacebuilding Network (APN) of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) organized a seminar on "*Conflict, Peace and Regional Economic Integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the Knowledge Gaps and Addressing the Policy Challenges.*" The seminar was held at AVANI Victoria Falls Resort, Livingstone, Zambia, from 7-8 October 2015.

Participants consisted of scholars, policy-makers and government officials, and representatives from civil society, regional institutions, UN agencies and regional economic commissions. Participants came from across Southern and Eastern Africa and also the United States of America.

Seminar Objectives

The purpose of the seminar was to create a forum for discussing emerging issues on the topic of *"Conflict, Peace and Regional Economic Integration in Southern Africa"*. In this regard, participants discussed the problem of conflicts that have recently surfaced in the sub-region with the aim of understanding their remote and immediate causes, the economic costs and the broader implications for regional economic integration in Southern Africa. Specific key issues addressed included:
- The sources, dimensions, costs and implications of conflicts and crises on regional economic integration in Southern Africa;
- The legal and institutional frameworks put in place to address the problem in the region;
- The issue of migration and xenophobia in the context of regional integration and its economic implications for the region;
- The role of regional frameworks, countries and peoples in stimulating economic growth, increasing economic opportunities, and ensuring collective prosperity for the region.

Summary of Proceedings

Welcome remarks and opening statements were made by three people: the Director of the ECA-Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa, the Director of the Africa Peacebuilding Network of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), New York and the Deputy Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia. The three speakers underscored the importance of promoting peace and stability in the region as a necessary condition for achieving regional economic integration in Southern Africa, and Africa in general.

Observations:

- There has been an increase in the level of conflicts in the world generally in recent times, in the face of growing inequality and lopsided growth;

- Africa remains a major spot of conflicts in the world, which are complex in their nature, context, dimensions and outcomes. Conflicts are of political, economic and social dimensions in Africa;

- Southern Africa has experienced relative peace and stability, but recent conflict incidents in countries like the DRC, Mozambique, South Africa, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe directs our attention and policy concern to the issue.

- Historical legacy and consequences in the nature of state-formation and social pluralism, including apartheid, continues to generate conflicts in the region;

- Governance deficits, growing inequality and poverty, and relative deprivation have consequences for conflicts in the region;

- Migration has been part of African history and our cultural experience of social survival, however, the recent xenophobic attacks question that experience and the drive towards a people-driven regional integration project;

- Xenophobia and regional economic integration are contradictory. Regional integration can only be achieved through the free flow of people, goods and services and building a community of regional citizens;

- Southern Africa suffers from the triple problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment, which continues to influence conflict outbreaks.

- Gender inequality exacerbated by gender-based violence remains part of our lived experience in Southern Africa in spite of the progress recorded on gender empowerment;

- Conflicts have serious economic costs and consequences for the region and the continent as a whole. They decelerate economic growth, divert resources for development into regional peace-building and have politically destabilizing effects on the region;

- The early warning system to detect conflicts at the national and regional levels remains weak, and requires strengthening;

- The institutional mechanism and capacity for conflict resolution and management at the regional level, particularly in SADC, remains inadequate and poorly-funded;

- A regional economic integration process that generates uneven and asymmetrical benefits for its member-states without adequate remedies may likely generate conflicts;

- Civil society's inclusion in peace making, peace building and regional economic integration remains very limited thus not tapping effectively into a powerful resource for regional integration;

- There is a convergence between national level democratic practices and culture and what happens at the regional level;

- The repository of knowledge, skills and capacity to promote regional integration is rather inadequate and needs to be strengthened;

Recommendations:

- There is need to scale up democratic processes, practices and culture in the region including specifying term limits for political office holders;

- Pan-African and visionary leadership is essential in promoting regional economic integration devoid of violent conflicts, based on organic solidarity and common commitment to regional integration;

- People-to-people-centred integration should be the foundational basis of regional integration in Southern Africa in which people move freely without any discrimination or negative profiling;

- Xenophobia is anathema to regional integration, hence governments, policy makers, civil society actors, private sector, and other stakeholders should engage in serious policy conversation on how to eschew xenophobia from our regional development process;

- The problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment have to be squarely addressed in Southern Africa; progressive social policy, skills and capacity development and promoting qualitative and inclusive economic growth are essential in addressing the problem;

- Cross-border identities constitute a powerful resource that should be tapped into in stemming conflicts and promoting peace and regional development;

- The need to leverage formal and informal African-centred education and thinking to bring about a change of mindset towards economic growth and regional integration;

- Equity should define the regional development project. Regional value chains that crowd in all countries in the region in the industrialisation process should undergird the new SADC Strategy and Roadmap on industrialisation;

- Leaders in the SADC region should invest in institution building and capacity development for SADC. Without a good institutional framework and capacity, SADC cannot perform its role as an effective conflict manager and promoter of democracy in the region;

- Community-based approaches to conflict resolution and management and also democracy promotion should be encouraged;

- Effective early warning systems should be developed at the local, national and regional levels for identifying sources of potential conflicts;

- Inclusion, participation, voice and local power should be taken seriously in national democratic and development processes; civil society, private sector, and other stakeholders should be given adequate space in democratic politics;

- There is need for more research, and knowledge production on the dynamics, and intricacies of regional integration at the national level;

- Improved interaction between academic and policy communities with a view to enhancing the quality of policymaking on regional integration in Southern Africa.

Closing Ceremony

On behalf of the organizing institutions, the directors thanked the participants for the lively and engaging presentations and discussions that transpired over the two days of the seminar. They assured the participants that the recommendations will reach as many policymaking organs as possible at both national and regional levels. The organizing partners also undertook to do all they can to pursue further research, particularly in the areas that the seminar identified as requiring deeper analysis.

Done in Livingstone, Zambia
8th October 2015