IGAD II led Sudan Peace Process and sustained peace in the Sudan

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Abstract

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification, (IGADD) was established in 1986 with a narrow mandate around drought and desertification, which caused periodic widespread famine, ecological degradation and economic hardship in the region. In 1994 IGADD started to undertake conflict management tasks when the Authority hosted and facilitated negotiating sessions between the Sudanese government in Khartoum and the rebel forces from Southern Sudan in an attempt to end the civil war. This led to the change in the name in April 1995 to IGAD and the creation of a department for conflict management. Talks on the Sudan conflict continued sporadically amidst intensifying international pressure until, the signing of a framework agreement in June 2004, which outlined provisions for power sharing, wealth sharing and transitional security arrangements. The negotiations were finalized in 2004 resulting in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005.

Key words: *IGAD, Sudan, Peace*

Background to the Research Problem

IGAD recognized the need to establish a women's desk as one of its institutional gender mainstreaming efforts, to oversee gender mainstreaming and related issues in its priority projects and programmes. The IGAD women's desk undertakes the responsibility of engendering policy and planning processes within IGAD[1]. But despite this vital institutional strengthening, IGAD is yet to fully incorporate women participation in its peace processes in the Sudan. In fact, women's groups and Muslim and Christian church leaders have been urging IGAD to include women in the dialogue but this has not borne much fruit. This in essence has had an impact on rebuilding peace in Southern Sudan despite the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese People's Liberation Front (SPLM)

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[1] IGAD, Report of Training in Advanced Negotiation and Mediation for Women in Peace Making Leadership and Dvelopment,pp9

and the Khartoum Government in 2005[2]. Indeed it is the contention of this study that lack of inclusiveness could be the culprit for lack of sustainable peace.

Statement of the Research Problem

The situation of women in armed conflict has been systematically neglected. In post conflict situations where law enforcement is weak and judicial systems are ineffective, women continue to suffer violence from combatants, family members, neighbours or others, increasing their susceptibility to starvation and vulnerability to HIV/Aids[3]. However, finding a lasting solution to sustainable peace could be the only hope for those affected many of who are dependent on emergency assistance. Yet women who suffer most are nearly always left out in conflict resolution, management and search for sustainable peace.

Indeed, many studies[4] attest to the fact that women are typically left out in most of these conflict management processes, either deliberately or otherwise, and this has had a negative impact on the attainment and management of sustainable peace. Most gender studies have made important contributions to the broader field of peace and conflict studies, including insights into the costs to societies due to exclusion of women, understanding the value of non-hierarchical relationships for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, new knowledge on integrative agreements based on processes of consensual decision making, and the need to include marginalized groups and voices for building durable peace. The proposed research study will look in to the contribution of gender perspective in the conflict resolution and peace management ands demonstrate that lack of gender perspective in the case of Sudan contributes to lack of a sustainable peace.

It is the contention of this study that new strategies for peace need be explored, incorporate the views and experiences of women and that women also participate more in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

Women and men civilians and combatants have suffered immensely in the conflict in Sudan, experiencing internal displacement, the breakdown of every institution, traditional support structures, inability to tender their farms, heightened levels of gender based violence, and massive loss of lives.[5] And yet, justice for cases of sexual violence for instance is a key element in successful conflict management process and eventual sustainable peace.[6] And while this is happening, women may require opportunities to make informed choices during reconstruction. But it would appear that this is however relegated to the background in reality while designing the conflict management strategies and this could be the culprit for lack of sustainable peace.

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[2] Ibid

[3] See UNIFEM/IGAD, *Placing Gender in the Mainstream: IGAD policy Seminar on Peace and Conflict Resolution*, Khartoum, October, 2000, pp 9

[4] United Nations, *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*, United Nations Institute for Social Development, 2005 pp233-237

[5] ICRC Report.(2005) *Women and war*: pg 23

[6] Ibid

Objectives of the Research

To determine whether IGAD II led Sudan Peace Process was an all-inclusive process and how this has impacted on sustained peace in the Sudan.

Literature review on Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

A review of literature is centered on the role of gender in conflict management. Specifically, the literature discussed emphasizes the need to include women in the peace process so as to ensure sustainable peace. The literature also discusses the mandate of IGAD II and its role in bringing peace to Southern Sudan. The literature review also uses the feminist approach in its discussion of the term gender as compared to women which has a double advantage in that it put women into a context, focusing on the socially constructed relation between women and men and by so doing making visible the aspect of power in gender relations.

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification, (IGADD) was established in 1986 with a narrow mandate around drought and desertification, which caused periodic widespread famine, ecological degradation and economic hardship in the region.[7] In 1994 IGADD started to undertake conflict management tasks when the Authority hosted and facilitated negotiating sessions between the Sudanese government in Khartoum and the rebel forces from Southern Sudan in an attempt to end the civil war. This led to the change in the name in April 1995 to IGAD and the creation of a department for conflict management.[8]Talks on the Sudan conflict continued sporadically amidst intensifying international pressure until, the signing of a framework agreement in June 2004, which outlined provisions for power sharing, wealth sharing and transitional security arrangements. The negotiations were finalized in 2004 resulting in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005.[9]

In 1998, the need for gender representation and participation in the operations of the revitalized IGAD was mooted during a trade Policy Harmonization for Women in Business workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya. IGAD has a Gender Affairs Programme, with specific mandate, vision and objectives. But despite these structures and the fact that the Women's Desk had been approved by as early as 1999, there is little success to show on the ground as concerns its contribution to sustainable peace in Sudan, numerous calls for the inclusion of women in peace monitoring processes and for making resources available that would be directed to ensuring that post conflict reconstructive processes are gender responsive, not withstanding.[10]

In the long run, it should be appreciated that women, as human agents, play indispensable roles in preventing wars, ending strife, managing conflict, and building peace. The empowerment of women is now widely viewed as essential for economic growth, improved health status, decline of poverty, sustainable management of the environment, and

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[7] Ibid

[8] ibid

[9] ibid

[10] In Women, Peace and Security, United Nations, 2002, Study submitted by the Secretary General pursuant to Security resolution 1325 (2000), pg4.

consolidation of democracy, while progress for women may as well mean progress for all'.[11] This study will further demonstrate that though gender has been recognized as an important ingredient to by IGAD and other players, this may only be so on paper.

IGAD has been involved in negotiating for the Sudan peace process which culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9th January 2005 between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). This marked a historical watershed for Sudan and it brought to an end 22 years of protracted and costly civil war that had caused tremendous loss of life, devastated the country's infrastructure (especially in the South) and destroyed livelihoods, trust and hope. But despite this, war continues to ravage Darfur area with some analysts calling it genocide.

A new perspective to conflict management that is currently gaining recognition asserts that the involvement of women is a major step towards achieving lasting peace. At the core of such thinking—which represents an 'instrumental' view rather than an 'institutional' perspective— rests the concept that building sustainable peace requires the significant involvement of women and women's groups. This viewpoint incorporates findings that improvements in the education and status of women stabilize and uplift the whole of society, that is, the situation of men, children, and women. The enlistment of women and their increased participation in public policy is now widely viewed as fundamental to expanding economic growth, improving health status, reducing poverty, sustaining the environment, and consolidating democracy in societies long bowed to authoritarianism and tyranny. In Africa, there is more than a suspicion that the exclusion of women is connected to acute violent conflicts.[12] Meanwhile, around the globe, a consensus is forming that calls for changes in age-old practices that have denied rights and entitlements to women.

Indeed, women and women's groups may be among the most potent forces available for the prevention of acute conflicts, warfare, and violence.[13] This study will shed light on the importance of an inclusive peace process that recognizes both women and men as key stakeholders with reference to the Sudan peace process. It will underscore and posit that incorporating a gender perspective in Peace Processes affects the successful peace management and sustainability.

This study will try to fill this gap by looking at the IGAD II led Sudan peace process and analyzing the gender mainstreaming or lack of it in the process and how this has impacted on sustainable peace in the Sudan and Africa generally. An attempt will be made to understand any institutional arrangements put in place by IGAD to mainstream gender issues in conflict management and peace building in Africa and why such arrangements have failed partially to bring sustainable peace. This insight will be necessary to make suggestions on how to mitigate against any deliberate or otherwise, exclusion of women's experiences and knowledge in

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[11] Skjelsbaek, Inger.1997.*Gendered battlefields.A gender Analysis of peace and conflict*. International peace research Instittute(Prio): Oslo

[12] *Violence Against Girls and Women: A Public Health Priority.* UNFPA. 1999.

[13] Joan Kelly Gadol.1986. " The social Relation of the sexes: Methodological Implications of women's History" In women , History and Theory, University of Chicago Press: Chicago

conflict management in future peace processes in order to ensure acceptance and ownership of peace outcomes. Finally the study is expected to open up new areas of research in the gendered dimension of conflict management.

The study will further demonstrate the utility and relevance of women's analysis, information and insight on peace and security issues in general and particularly conflict management as they are now underestimated. And because their presence, opinions and experiences are routinely overlooked, vital opportunities to develop more accurate gender and age disaggregated pictures of conflict, conflict management and sustainable peace strategies are often lost.

Hypotheses

Failure to mainstream gender issues in the IGAD led Sudan Peace Process has negatively impacted on the sustainability of peace in Sudan.

Methodology of the Research

The study will take the form of a desk study though a few interviews will be conducted in an effort to capture the respondent's view of the role of gender participation in the IGAD II peace process and the role of gender in sustainable peace. A desk study was preferred due to the nature of the problem statement and the sensitivity of the physical area under study (Southern Sudan). Therefore, it is not feasible to carry out a field study and hence data collection exercise in Southern Sudan. Consequently, secondary sources of data will be accessed from relevant published and unpublished works. These will include books, periodicals, journals, articles, newspapers, bibliographies, print media and internet sources.

THE IGAD II PEACE PROCESS

The IGAD II Peace Process

Sudan has suffered war for most of its existence as an independent state and many hoped the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 9 January 2005 would not only end the long-running southern civil war, but would provide the momentum and serve as a model for resolving other conflicts in the country[14]. While speculation is still out on whether the CPA will survive until the 2011 referendum on Southern self-determination, it has not served as the stimulus to end the war and humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Nor to date has the CPA advanced any reconciliation between the people of North and South Sudan, provided hope that its commitment to 'make unity attractive' is being fulfilled, or is ushering in a democratic transformation of the country.

There is a widespread acceptance that the CPA and the broader peace process it fostered is at best stalling, or at worst is collapsing. Indeed, on 13 April 2007 at a meeting in Nairobi the IGAD Council of Ministers concluded that the implementation of the CPA was 'lagging

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[14] Young, John. 'Sudan IGAD Peace Process and Sign Posts for the Way Forward' African Studies Programme. Institute of Security Studies. Occasional Paper 86. Institute of Security Studies. Pretoria. March 2004.

behind schedule' and urged an extraordinary meeting of the IGAD Heads of States was to be held to consider the problem [15]

IGAD's engagement in the Sudan peace process began on 7 September 1993 when it established a Standing Committee on Peace to assist negotiations and end Sudan's civil war. A Declaration of Principles (DoP) was proposed and quickly accepted by the SPLM/A as a basis for negotiations, but was not endorsed by GoS until 1998. By this time the peace process was floundering and in an effort to re-activate it the mandate was renewed by the IGAD Sub-Ministerial Committee on the Conflict in Sudan[16]. This Committee established a 'Secretariat for the IGAD Peace Process on the Sudan' based in Nairobi with the mandate 'to carry out continuous and sustained mediation efforts with a view to arriving at a peaceful resolution of the conflict'. This phase of the peace process led by Special Envoy Ambassador Daniel Mboya also floundered and the next and final phase – which is the subject of this evaluation - began under Special Envoy Lt. General Lazaro Sumbeiywo in May 2002[17].

On 20 July 2002 the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A signed the Machakos Protocol as a framework for the conduct of the negotiations and after two and one half years of negotiations endorsed the CPA.[18] The Sudan mediation under Special Envoy Sumbeiywo was widely appreciated for its effective management of the process and financial accountability, particularly when measured against earlier weaknesses of the IGAD mediation. The mediation was also applauded for its impartiality, success in maintaining the integrity of the process, the generally positive role of the advisors, resource people and ambassador envoys from the region, achieving good relations with the donors, and the steady production of protocols that culminated in the CPA, and these will be duly noted and commented on as lessons to be learned.

The mediation also linked together the parties to the conflict, IGAD as the regional organisation, and elements in the international community in an innovative structure[19]. However, the Sudan peace process is in a state of crisis which is not simply due to failures in the implementation of the agreement, but is a result of its narrow approach and short-sighted vision[20]. By assuming a limited definition of peace, focusing solely on the north-south dimension of the conflict, refusing to involve other political parties and civil society, treating the media as a threat to the process, and leaving the fate of the process to SPLM/A leader Dr. John Garang and First Vice President Ali Osman Taha, it was successful in reaching an agreement based on an acceptance of the lowest common denominators of the parties.

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[15] Ibid

[16] Young, John. 'Sudan: A Flawed Peace Process Leading to a Flawed Peace,' *Review of African Political Economy*. No. 103. Vol. 32. 2005.

[17] Ibid

[18] Ibid

[19] W. Waihenya. *The Mediator: Gen. Lazaro Sumbeiywo and the Southern Sudan Peace Process*. Nairobi. Kenway Publications. 2006.

[20] Young, John. 'Sudan's Peace Process: Laying the Basis for Future Conflict. ' Conference on Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa. Inter-Africa Group and the Center for Policy Research & Dialogue. Addis Ababa. 12-13 March 2007.

But this approach largely precluded the realisation of its own stated objectives, which included a sustainable peace, Sudan's democratic transformation, and making unity attractive.[21] The weaknesses of the IGAD mediation include: 1) Lack of inclusivity of interested parties in southern Sudan, notably civil society and other political parties, and at the national level for a peace process that claimed to be comprehensive. The result is an agreement that is effectively a bilateral arrangement between the SPLM and the NCP for which most people in Sudan feel no sense of ownership. 2) The peace process never developed trust and understanding between the parties, and in its absence and the failure to commit to wide-ranging reconciliation, the mediation followed Western practice and emphasised legal requirements and time-tables. But the great number of bodies and commissions formed to regulate, monitor, and adjudicate disputes have not managed to overcome the lack of trust between the SPLM and the GoS, and as a result the implementation of the agreement is far behind schedule. 3) The elitist approach of the mediation was also manifest in its distain for the media. Instead of viewing the media as a partner in the peace process, a valued critic, and a crucial instrument with which to engage the Sudanese public and provide a measure of accountability, it was treated as an enemy and a threat. 4)The lack of inclusivity of the peace process means that the Sudanese people can only pass judgement on the CPA through national elections, but the elections have been delayed and the difficulties in demarcating the north-south border and ending the conflict in Darfur may result in a further postponement. In addition, the development of a democratic culture conducive for the holding of fair elections has not been permitted to emerge in either north or south Sudan where security regimes dominate. Lastly, the National Assembly has passed legislation that prohibits parties participating in the national election unless they endorse the CPA, thus precluding a negative assessment of the agreement. 5) The narrow focus of the mediation and the emphasis on reaching an agreement meant its implications were not fully appreciated. Thus the agreement to dissolve OAGs threatened to unleash a war between the SPLA and the South Sudan Defence Force, while the power sharing arrangement which gave the SPLM and the NCP the lion's share of state power undermined efforts to reach a settlement in Darfur and have encouraged secessionist sentiments in the country. 6) While international engagement in the peace process is necessary, the mediation failed to appreciate that this engagement posed a threat to the sovereignty of Sudan and the IGAD region. The conclusion of the US and its allies that their security and the 'war on terror' necessitates heightened military and diplomatic involvement in the Horn raises fears that the region could again – as it was during the Cold War – become a focus of competition and conflict for external interests. 7) Although never stated, the mediation was carried out on the basis of a narrow model which focused on ending the violence (many respondents referred to it as an extended cease-fire), instead of laying the basis for a sustainable and comprehensive peace in the south and the country at large. [22]

The lessons to be learned from the weaknesses of the Naivasha process include the need for a strong commitment to democratic change as the cement upon which any peace agreement

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[21] ibid

[22] Ibid

should be built, and that in turn necessitates a comprehensive conception of peace[23]. It requires a much wider involvement in the process, robust reconciliation, and respect for the media. This approach also recognises that endemic conflict, such as that suffered in Sudan, is the result of deep seated problems which necessitate structural change. The lessons to be learned also include the need for the mediation to weigh the effect of its endeavours on other conflicts. Although the Sudan peace process needed the financing, expertise, and legitimacy provided by the international community, the injection of external foreign policy concerns into the process posed a threat to national and regional sovereignty which IGAD needs to be aware of and respond appropriately. Lastly, the experience of the Naivasha peace process makes clear that peace processes do not end with the signing of a peace agreement, but must continue into the post-conflict period.[24] These lessons form the basis of an alternative approach which will be longer, more complex, stress process and principles over legalised agreements, and offer no promises of success.

At the close of the sixth round of peace talks, the AU had called for stronger actions and commitments by partners and parties to the talks to include more women directly in the negotiations, and better reflect gender issues in its content. The AU has now appointed a Senior Gender Advisor to the Peace Talks, Dr Mary Maboreke, and the number of women in delegations has increased in the current round to reach a total of eight women (two from government and six from the Movement, a bloc representing the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement).

The inclusion of women in the peace negotiations acknowledges that the women of Darfur are not only victims and survivors of violence, but also fundamental contributors to peace efforts. The "technical" status accorded to the team in the negotiations means that they are officially recognized by all parties, partners and the mediation team as a main resource to draw from on gender issues.

The successful facilitation of the team's participation has led to the Sudanese government requesting for four more women from Sudan to join the team, especially women from government ministries with specific mandates for gender issues.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In this study, it was hypothetically argued that failure to incorporate gender mainstreaming in the IGAD led Sudan Peace Process has negatively impacted on peace management and sustainability in Sudan. In addition, it was also stated in form of a hypothesis that mainstreaming gender in conflict management and peace building processes enhances sustainable peace. For women, girls and women leaders involved in armed opposition groups and women leaders within civil society, their meaningful participation in peace negotiations marks a pivotal step in setting post conflict governance and reconstruction agendas that takes

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[23] Young, John. 'Naivasha and the Search for a Comprehensive Peace in Sudan.' Conference to launch an IGAD Strategy for Peace and Security in the Sub-region.' Khartoum. 1-3 October 2005a.
[24] Ibid

women's and girls' needs and priorities into account. This was clearly illustrated in the case of South Africa. Token inclusion of women at the peace negotiations, where it was demonstrated that towing the agenda set by the male leaders, does not produce positive results for women and girls in the frameworks and agendas that emerge. Another good example is the peace negotiations of Sudan conducted in Kenya. Failure to include women in the peace stalks meant that the issues affecting the socio economic and political aspects of women were not addressed afterwards. Furthermore, the study has demonstrated that failure to include women in the IGAD II Process has contributed greatly to the lack of everlasting peace after the signing of the peace accord. Were the women involved, they would have brought a different dimension to the peace table in terms of putting agendas forward that would have safeguarded peace and reduced the effects of war on the civilians in general and women in particular.

When women negotiators and women representatives are not present at the peace talks, women's issues, concerns and priorities are usually also absent at the peace table. In fact despite international laws such as CEDAW and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and important initiatives like SC Res 1325 that stipulate the need for gender inclusivity and non discrimination and although women had participated in the armed struggle, most were excluded from decision-making positions in the new governments and security forces that were established. Most of the male combatants on the other hand were well incorporated into the new government and contributing to the rebuilding of their country. On the other hand, most of the women, especially former combatants are still languishing in poverty, some unable to return home for fear of being shunned by their communities.

The study has established a number of reasons why women in Sudan continue to be under-represented in decision-making positions even after the signing of the peace accord. Patriarchal traditions, practices and national and customary laws are central factors contributing to women's inability to enter these positions. Further, high levels of illiteracy and poverty, unequal work burdens within their homes and communities are often the result of these patriarch customs, practices and laws and are among the main factors why for instance women and especially leaders formerly associated with fighting forces as well as women civilians have a difficult time accessing the formal political sphere and, thus, why they have correspondingly low representation in decision-making positions, including in peace negotiations and reconstruction activities. Often times and even in other instances outside of the Sudan Peace Process, cultural reasons are given to justify women's continued exclusion. However, it is important to recognize that culture is dynamic and that taboos about women being decision makers could fade in time if women entered the public, civil and political arena.

Although it is unclear whether or not women formerly associated with fighting forces are among those who could or should play a public role in advocating for more inclusive and just social, political and economic change, it is clear is that they face a daunting task in accessing both public decision-making forums and civil society spaces. Notably, civil society organizations whose agendas are women's rights, peace, equality and reconstruction often have similar goals to those of women leaders coming from fighting forces. However, networks and alliances with such organizations are particularly difficult for women formerly associated with fighting forces to build, often because there is little agreement or trust among

the former women fighters, civil groups and the general public. Indeed, civil society, women focused groups, and women rights groups in particular, are wary of building alliances with those formerly associated with the fighting. Consequently, women formerly associated with fighting forces would have to engage in much negotiation, truth-telling and reconciliation with other members of civil groups, and in particular women's groups, for the forming of such alliances to occur. Importantly, it is likely that only through such alliances that women formerly associated with fighting forces would likely be able to achieve the kinds of change they are seeking within their societies. Though this group of women has not been solely the focus of this study, they form a critical mass whose role and experiences can inform peace processes in a more encompassing way so as to incorporate all views. This is an area that may require further examination.

In conclusion therefore, this study has found the IGAD II led Sudan peace process was did not mainstream gender in its processes and that this lack of inclusion of women in the IGAD II peace process contributed in and hence was responsible for the part failure of the objectives of the process. Hence, the hypotheses are true.

Recommendations

This study notes that the CPA did create a new democratic political space and committed the government to good governance and the rule of law, justice, equity and respect for human rights. Sudanese women need to rise to the challenge of building a solid foundation for democracy by doing everything possible to increase their political participation and create an equal and level playing field for all citizens. The greatest hope now for women across Sudan is that they will be able to expand on the Bill of Rights in the Interim National Constitution as well as effect change through the mid-term elections and effective mobilization. The peace agreements and their shortcomings are important areas for their campaign, making women realize the need to increase their representation in legislative assemblies at state and national levels, to gain more influence