

## **NePAD and Human Security -- Notes for a Presentation,**

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The last three months or so may be some of the most important in Africa's last twenty years. There is a clear sense of a path-making, crucial juncture for Africa. In particular, the system of activities that have come to be associated with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD) promise a return to "willed development" in Africa and would seem to have profound implications for Africa's future. I intend to interrogate this situation with particular reference to the challenge of Human Security, as a general, orienting policy stance. I propose to focus on the uses that Africa already makes of Human Security and associated norms of the broadening of security with particular regard for its implications for sovereignty. Implicitly, we shall assess the range for engineering a more firm, explicit embrace. For our purposes, at a general level, Human Security relates to the set of issues encapsulated in Kofi Annan's disarmingly simple archaeology of "individual sovereignty" and the its surprisingly promising operationalisation in the ICISS "Responsibility to Protect" argument.

In specific terms, I ask what can Human Security do for Africa? How is Human Security invoked in Africa? How may we enlarge and embolden the space for Human Security in Africa? Can the new Africa promised by NePAD deliver a truly new view of sovereignty in Africa? These issues would be approached within a direct reckoning of the increasingly obvious struggle on articulating the African object and/or subject in discourses and action on global development. I shall seek to draw on the outplay of this somewhat surprising renewal of Pan Africanism in Ghana specifically to point up the potentially disarming interplay of diplomacy and

domestic politics in New Africa's new condition. Positively, the room for intentionally creating opportunities for overcoming this threat of inertia through field, local coalitions of the willing, including field level representatives of the international development establishment and local state agents, would be highlighted. The role of information and technology empowered, realistic citizen building strategies would be emphasized.

There are many important ways in which Human Security arguments are already discernible in Africa but the momentum urgently needs to be intentionally pump-primed. The engines working for Human Security in Africa include an intellectual heritage which has strongly stressed the joint reckoning of politics and economics, peace or war and the challenges of development; the impact of current, international efforts to promote broad security orientations; Africa's own security complexes; and the impact of the events of September 11 on policy and thinking.

From the early 1970s a radical Political Economy approach dominated African social analyses. Since, for good as well as bad, African intellectuals have been very powerful in real politics, this intellectual trend has directly affected official policy. The Political Economy approaches adopted in Africa were often suspicious of the autonomy of the political. When open, violent conflicts begun to dominate Africa's global image, the dominant intellectual response was to situate this condition in a wider development dialectic. This intellectual orientation shaped the nature and form on intra-continental security intervention. It was significant in mustering crucial political support for the legally shaky beginning of ECOMOG in West Africa and, in Ghana, significantly explains previous President John Rawlings's hesitation on the efficacy of a military solution in Sierra Leone and the associated suspicion that he supported the rebels in Sierra Leone

including the RUF.

The current international and other influence for Human Security has generated explicit use of its arguments in Africa. The UNDP, in its landmark Human Development Report 1994, and the system of associated National Human Development Reports, has perhaps had the most significant impact. The current National Human Development Report of Burkina Faso, for instance, is prominently centred on an explicit invocation of Human Security, conveyed in terms of its conception in the 1994 HDR. The UNDP engendered efforts at relatively longer term planning, often under the rubric "Vision 20/20", provided opportunities for many African countries to undertake wide-angled assessments of their development challenges including broad security threats. This has often fed into the UNDP co-ordinated system of National Governance Strategies and its associated African Governance Forum. The Human Security Network does not appear to have had a significant impact on Africa. South Africa, which is a member, has not actively pushed an explicit Human Security agenda in its African policy.

Dramatic security complexes in Africa have often led to a broader view of security. After apartheid in South Africa there was a wide debate on new paths for security which resulted in the argument for "Total Security" which, beyond the specificities of South Africa, entailed a concern with the significance of security concerns in everyday life.

The impact of the events of September 11 on the challenge of Human Security in Africa is immense. It has made hard security within Africa an even more international affair. At the multilateral level the recommendations of the UN Security Council on minimum legal standards on security, for example, has been taken very seriously in Africa. Many other multilateral agencies are mainstreaming security. Although the

Commonwealth's model law effort on terrorism has not yet been popular in Africa, as in other areas of the Commonwealth, it is likely to become influential soon. It has become more easy to invoke security concerns as a justification of international development assistance as seen in the "politics is global" nub of Tony Blair's African message during his recent visit and the remarkable transformation of Washington's perspective on the possibility of structural causes of terrorism as seen, as a significant example, in Secretary of State Powell's crusade on poverty as a cause of terrorism.

NePAD is, in significant respects, internally contradictory. The marriage of the Millennium Action Plan and the Omega Plan in Lusaka last July did not fully address the fundamental differences in logic underlying the two plans, as was pointed out at the last World Economic Summit in Davos before Lusaka. The Millennium Action Plan was dressed as a Business Plan. The Omega Plan, in spite of President Wade's opposition to reparations at the Durban racism conference, is, at heart, a reparations-minded right to development claim centred on Project Finance. It can be argued that NePAD, as an incompletely consummated marriage, is weaker than its two sources. Today the rhetoric of NePAD as a new, principled coalition of the willing, as opposed to old political organisation simply based on geography, is distinctly hollow. It is not at all clear what its distinct, comparative advantages are and what kind of activity, defined geographically or thematically, it is most suited to.

In spite of its limitations NePAD presents significant vistas for deepening the use of Human Security in Africa. A continuing strength of NePAD is the fairly sustained insertion of peace and security questions into general development analyses in Africa. Here NePAD promises some more bone to, for example, the Global Coalition for Africa's extreme carefulness. It may overcome the continuing imperialism of Economics in

the powerful analyses of the UNECA, including the fundamental thinking of the recent African Development Forum. The commendable centring of political order questions may cushion off potentially distracting post September 11 related pressures to overly privilege security. It can become the basis for crafting general security norms for Africa including the challenge of Human Security. Already President Obasanjo's invocation of Common Security arguments in his explanation of NePAD projects a more secure handle than the African Leadership Forum's security and development calabashes he promoted in the past.

The antimonies of the exciting last three months are refracted through the prism of national politics. In Ghana, for example, NePAD and the renewal of Africa as a positive discourse on global development has coincided with the arrival of a government which has a complex heritage on Pan African sensibility and with the most systematic set of violent challenges to the state building project in Ghana. The former dynamic has made the political ownership of New Africa arguments in Ghana relatively low key. The latter seem to strongly point up Human Security concerns.

Intentional engineering of a wider space for Human Security in Africa would have to pay careful attention to national and sub regional specificities. The arguments over "collective punishment" in the context of the recent Zimbabwe debate highlights the tensions over voice in the New Africa chorus. Four important levels in the struggle over voice may be identified:

- (i) The multi-layered challenge of accountability in the non government sector.
- (ii) The shadow politics of African ownership and the struggles within and between African and Western governments to sound right on Africa.

(iii) The elitist scripting of Africa's future, especially in NePAD and the associated, incipient national and somewhat continental claims for citizen empowerment.

(iv) The lack of clarity on the new division of labour in New Africa's international organisations especially the OAU/AU and the emerging bureaucratic infrastructure of NePAD.

Two significant weaknesses run through the arguments over true voice mentioned above. One may talk of the workings of a knowledge deficit in combination with a democracy deficit. Given the knowledge-intensive nature of the Human Security agenda and its obvious propensity to a populist anti-statism, these contemporary African difficulties deeply challenge the advance of Human Security and sustainable peace. We need great as well as intentional action to roll back these constraints. A small example of the latter is [www.AfricaTalks.org](http://www.AfricaTalks.org) which marks the beginning of a Learning Exchange using the advantages of new technologies for group as well as individual public action.