BAPA+40 in the African context: Is there a role for peace and security?

The importance of south-south cooperation (SSC) to the global development agenda is undisputed. At the same time the concept has evolved to adapt to new global realities and changes in developing countries. Increasingly southern, and African development partners in particular, have shared personnel, best practices and technologies in the realm of peace and security but the SSC discourse has not reflected these efforts. What role is there for peace and security in new SSC discussions?

In 1978 developing countries came together to develop a roadmap and set of recommendations to promote cooperation amongst themselves. The outcomes of this conference became known as the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA).[1] The original 1978 BAPA document emphasised a new international economic order that impacts on global governance and stressed the need for developing countries to develop strategies for national and collective self-reliance. In this regard it emphasises the importance of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference.

In 2019 Argentina will host the Second United Nations (UN) Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019, otherwise known as BAPA +40, which presents an opportunity for reflection and review of the evolving south-south cooperation landscape. In the lead-up to BAPA+40 the UN Office for SSC (UNOSSC) has emphasised re-examining the comparative advantages of SSC, institutionalising SSC, sharing best practices and scaling up SSC in support of the global development agenda.[2]

Yet thematically, SSC is often focussed on economic, environmental and social activities[3] while the African reality is that peace and security continue to be a major threat to the continent's development. BAPA did not make any mention of peace and security and stuck to a broader developmental focus, but 40 years later there is a need for greater reflection on how BAPA+40 should be conceived of in light of contemporary experiences.

Globally, the world has seen less inter-state conflict, but there has been an increase in intra-state conflict.[4] Trends suggest the African continent is slowly becoming more peaceful on the whole[5] but a handful of countries suffer from high levels of political violence including

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[1] UN, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, 1978, http://ssc.undp.org/content/dam/ssc/documents/Key Policy Documents/BAPA.pdf

[2] UN, Preparatory process of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation: Note by the Secretary-General, 29/01/18, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/72/711&referer=/english/&Lang=E

[3] For example, the Global South-South Development Expo in 2017 was themed "South-South Cooperation in the Era of Economic, Social and Environmental Transformation: Road to the 40th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40)." Discussions by African countries on Africa's first ever regional report on SSC, facilitated by UNDP, have also led to agreement on these sub-themes.

[4] Peace Research Institute of Oslo, Trends in Armed Conflict 1946 – 2014, 2016, https://www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=8&type=publicationfile

[5] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/conflict-trends-in-africa-a-turn-for-the-better-in-2015

Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, South Sudan, Nigeria and Libya.[6] In addition, despite the overall positive trend towards peace, some select countries have witnessed a resurgence of conflict, suggesting that root causes of conflict have not been addressed. Some new conflicts in parts of Africa also suggest that conflict dynamics are changing. As such peace must be a priority for any new agendas, including that of SSC. The importance of peace in Africa is reflected by the African Union's Agenda 2063 that has aspirations for a 'peaceful and secure Africa' as well as an 'Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.[7]

In a global context, the links between peace and development are increasingly recognized. For example, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a blueprint for inclusive and sustainable development but also presents a defence against violent conflict.[8] Despite some hesitation by member states, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on 'Peaceful, Just and Inclusive societies' was ultimately included in this agenda – reflecting an acceptance of the importance of peace for development.[9]

In 2016 the UN adopted twin resolutions by the General Assembly and Security Council on sustaining peace.[10] These resolutions emphasised development as a central goal in itself and stressed the importance of economic development and poverty eradication. A recent report by the UN Secretary General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace further links these resolutions to the 2030 Agenda.[11]

There are many overlaps between the sustaining peace resolutions and principles of SSC. For example, sustaining peace stresses the importance of national ownership and a holistic approach to addressing the root causes of violence.[12] BAPA called for self-reliance which is what emphasising national ownership in sustaining peace activities aims to achieve.

This changing focus from peace and development as siloed activities to a broader and more integrated approach has not only been observed at a global level, but also amongst southern leaders themselves. For example, the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping was initially developed as an economic platform to challenge international governance structures but has increasingly focussed on peace and security. The Xiamen declaration states that

[6] http://www.acleddata.com/trend-4-trends-in-violence-by-country-in-2016/

[7] African Union, Agenda 2063, https://au.int/agenda2063/about

[8] United Nations General Assembly Security Council, Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: Report of the Secretary General, January 2018, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_72_707_s_2018_43.pdf

[9] World Bank, Justice proposed for sustainable development goals, 02/09/2015, http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/justice-proposed-sustainable-development-goals,

[10] Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2282 (2016) on Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, 27 April 2016, https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm

[11] United Nations General Assembly Security Council, Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: Report of the Secretary General, January 2018, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_72_707_s_2018_43.pdf

[12] Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2282 (2016) on Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, 27 April 2016, https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm

We recall that development and security are closely interlinked, mutually reinforcing and key to attaining sustainable peace. We reiterate our view that the establishment of sustainable peace requires a comprehensive, concerted and determined approach, based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equity and cooperation, that addresses the causes of conflicts, including their political, economic and social dimensions.[13]

This is also observed more specifically in Africa. As previously mentioned, Agenda 2063's seven aspirations focus on peace and development as mutually reinforcing.[14] In May 2018 the UNOSSC and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) held a workshop which stressed the importance of the APRM, a voluntary review by member states on governance issues, as an innovation in SSC that also allowed for monitoring and reporting.[15] It is worth noting that the APRM also lends itself as a monitoring tool for the SDG agenda and Agenda 2063 but at the moment certain hindrances prevent it from operating in practice, such as the need for a consistent set of indicators that allow for comparison over time.[16]

In addition, bilateral African actors have engaged in SSC activities focussed on peace and security. In South Africa, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation has placed a premium on conflict resolution, prevention and mediation[17] and has trained a number of women mediators.[18] South Africa played an active role in mediation and peace operations in Burundi and Lesotho, and has provided election support to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. It has also supported capacity development through, for example, the training of government officials in South Sudan and the DRC and through various information sharing exchanges.[19] South Africa also continues to send a number of peacekeepers to African countries, including to the Force Intervention Brigade in the DRC.

Elsewhere on the continent, Ghana has shared experiences of the establishment of its Peace Council, Sierra Leone and Liberia compared experiences of their Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and Kenya enabled study tours of its constitutional reform committee to name

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[13] Times of India, BRICS leaders Xiamen declaration, 4 September 2017, paragraph 38

[14] African Union, Agenda 2063, https://au.int/agenda2063/about

[15] UNOSSC, South-South Cooperation in the Context of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda: an African Dialogue on the APRM Experience, 15/05/2018, https://www.unsouthsouth.org/2018/05/15/south-south-cooperation-in-the-context-of-agenda-2063-and-the-2030-agenda-an-african-dialogue-on-the-aprm-experience/

[16] South African Institute of International Affairs, Can The APRM be an Effective Tool to Monitor Agenda 2063 and The SDGs? 2017, http://www.saiia.org.za/occasional-papers/can-the-aprm-be-an-effective-tool-to-monitor-agenda-2063-and-the-sdgs

[17] Clayson Monyela, Op-Ed: Renewed interest in SA's foreign policy welcomed, 28/02/2018, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-02-26-op-ed-renewed-interest-in-sas-foreign-policy-welcomed/#.WxZ_Zi-B3Uo

[18] The Southern African Liaison Office, The Role of Women in Peacebuilding and Lessons Learned from South Sudan, 30/06/2018, http://www.salo.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/PD-NO-57-30-JUNE-2016.pdf

[19] See Hendricks and Lucey (2013) 'South Africa and South Sudan', op cit.; Cheryl Hendricks and Amanda Lucey (2013) 'Burundi: missed opportunities for South African post-conflict development and peacebuilding?', ISS Policy Brief 48 (ISS: Pretoria); Hendricks and Lucey (2013) 'SA's post-conflict development and peacebuilding experiences in the DRC', op cit.

just a few examples of SSC activities in the field of peace and security.[20] In 2017, consultations with stakeholders from the government of Botswana and civil society organisations stated the need for Botswana to include peace and security in its SSC strategy.[21]

As such, the relevance of peace to the BAPA+40 agenda cannot be ignored, especially from an African standpoint. In this regard, there are opportunities to scale up some best practices in the field of peace and security from the African continent, but it is worth deliberating if there are some areas more appropriate to SSC than others. Transitional justice for example is extremely context-specific and experiences from countries with similar backgrounds may be more appropriate. Sustaining peace involves a wide variety of activities from peacekeeping to statebuilding. However, there are some conceptual and implementation issues to consider.

Firstly, the sustaining peace agenda calls for more effective conflict prevention. This idea has also been further unpacked by a joint UN and World Bank Study *Pathways to Peace*.[22] Other global policy circles have also emphasised the importance of the principle of the responsibility to protect which aims to 'narrow the gap between Member States' pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.'[23] Member states signed up to this resolution in 2005, which makes provision for the international community to encourage Member States to exercise this responsibility and stresses the responsibility of the international community to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means to avert conflict. It allows for collective action to be taken should peaceful means be inadequate.[24]

 Yet at the same time, the SSC emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference suggests that engagement on peace and security matters by member states should only be upon the direct request of member states (i.e. a reactive and not a proactive engagement). As such, some developing countries have expressed reservations about the conflict prevention agenda. South Africa has directly grappled with these issues[25] such as through its support to the FIB. In this instance, peacekeepers were expected to use "robust peacekeeping" - in other words using the principles of peace enforcement and limited war-fighting tactics which in turn raise questions over impartiality.[26]

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[20] Mapping conducted for UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa between 2015 and 2016.

[21] Workshop held with the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation and UNDP to develop Botswana's SSC strategy on 11-12 December 2017

[22] World Bank, Pathway's for peace: inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflicts, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337

[23] UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html

[24] Ibid

[25] Anita Mathur, Role of South–South Cooperation and Emerging Powers in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding, 2013, https://emergingpowerspeacebuilding.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/mathur-role-of-south-south-cooperation-and-emerging-powers.pdf

[26] Amanda Lucey, Is South Africa equipped to deal with the challenges of peacekeeping? 27 September 2013, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-south-africa-equipped-to-deal-with-the-new-challenges-of-peacekeeping

There has also been a shift towards promoting regional responses to sustaining peace.[27] BRICS leaders have stressed the importance of African regional and sub-regional organisations in conflict resolution, and committed to contribute peacekeeping troops, as have a number of African countries, such as South Africa[28] and Nigeria.[29] Yet there is a lack of clarity over when regional and sub-regional organisations should intervene, especially if they are to prevent conflict and how the principles of subsidiarity operate in practice.[30] In the past, regional economic communities have had mixed success as first responders - the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for example has been unsuccessful in enforcing a peace agreement in South Sudan, while Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) role in Liberia has been widely acclaimed. It has even been questioned whether RECs should be involved in mediation at all, due to partiality.[31]

Finally, while sustaining peace is increasingly recognised as employing a multi stakeholder approach, southern narratives on peace and security have increasingly focussed on government to government initiatives. Moreover, southern and indeed African governments been accused of employing a state-centric approach which takes a narrow view on security and is used an excuse for limiting freedoms such as that of speech and assembly.[32] This has been the case in Africa where governments such as Ethiopia, South Africa and Tanzania have increasingly restricted internet freedoms. Such efforts are also directly at odds with multi-stakeholder approaches as they limit the amount of information and responsibility that civil society and other stakeholders are given.

In summary, peace and security is an issue that must be addressed at BAPA+40 despite its many political controversies. Peace and development are interlinked, and unless these issues are considered holistically, there will be no real progress in achieving the 2030 agenda. This is particularly relevant in the African context. As such, the following recommendations are made for BAPA+40:

- Consider the linkages between peace and development and their relevance for SSC
- Establish similarities between sustaining peace and SSC that can promote synergies in engagement, such as a focus on national ownership

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[27] Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2282 (2016) on Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, 27 April 2016, https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm

[28] Amanda Lucey, South Africa's Development Cooperation: Opportunities in the Global Arena, November 2015, United Nations University, https://www.saiia.org.za/speeches-presentations-other-events-materials/920-2015-11-24-nest-ssc-event-paper-amanda-lucey-iss/file

[29] Amanda Lucey, 28 February 2018, Sustaining peace in practice: Liberia and Sierra Leone, https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/policybrief114-2.pdf

[30] See for example Amanda Lucey, More than a chip off the block: Strengthening IGAD-AU peacebuilding linkages, September 2016, ISS

[31] Laurie Nathan, Will the lowest be first? Subsidiarity in peacemaking in Africa, 16/03/2016, http://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/237/PDFs/Publications/competition-and-subsidiarity-in-peacemaking-in-africa.zp84164.pdf

[32] BRICS leaders have been accused of this – see BRICS from below, 22-27 March 2013, http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/brics-from-below%20call%20version%2017%20March.pdf.

- Unpack conceptual and implementation challenges between sustaining peace and SSC principles, such as developing a better understanding of what sovereignty means for conflict prevention. When is the right time to intervene?
- Develop an understanding of what an emphasis on regionalisation means in the context of conflict prevention. To what extent should RECs be first responders, even if they lack capacity or are considered partial?
- Establish areas in which south-south technical exchanges on peace and security should be focussed
- Promote a multi-stakeholder approach that goes beyond government-to-government initiatives and take a broad view of security that ensures fundamental freedoms for everyone