

A New Challenge: Building Peace and Democracy under Structural Adjustment

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By way of conclusion, an exploration follows of the challenges of post-conflict peace-building in Mozambique. So far, the end of the war has not brought lasting security and stability to the vast majority of Mozambicans. In fact, the socio-economic legacy of the war and the draconian measures of the economic structural adjustment programme have severely restricted the access of millions of Mozambicans to basic resources such as food, health, shelter, education and employment.

In this sense, the economic liberalisation programme imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank has exacerbated, rather than eased, Mozambique's current economic crisis. This threat to the security needs of the citizens is compounded by an alarming growth of urban criminality and rural banditry, and the quick spread of corruption in the state bureaucracy. Here, an important distinction needs to be drawn: on the one hand, the allegations of acts of corruption protagonised by some politicians and senior civil servants who misuse their positions of power and influence for self-enrichment. If they are true, such acts can only be explained by the connivance and/or lack of capacity to establish the necessary checks and balances at the highest levels of the state apparatus. On the other hand, there are the cases of traffic officers, school teachers and other junior bureaucrats; who take bribes, necessarily small for those who pay are normally poor, to 'make ends meet at home'. The need to survive explains to a large extent, although by no means justifies it, this dramatic fall in ethic standards.

At a different level, the instability that affects Mozambican society is aggravated by a relatively inefficient state, a weak civil society and a state fragile democratic political culture, especially within the institutions of the state. The international community could play a critical role in assisting Mozambique to address these concerns, given the country's dramatic: lack of financial means and skilled human resources.

Continued support: Why?

A question is normally raised in this connection: after all the efforts and resources it put into the peace process, why should the international community continue to support Mozambique? Or, to put it more generally, why should the rich nations of the North

continue to spend taxpayers' money in remote, peripheral, conflict-ridden societies where people, it appears, simply can not get their act together?

There is no simple answer to these critical questions, besides the idealistic argument around the moral obligation of the stronger states to help the weaker ones. However, three reasons of a general nature can be suggested to motivate the North's continued support.

First, it would help to obtain real returns on the considerable cost of peace-keeping operations and promote sustainable peace. Second, by being proactive and supporting development and stability, rich nations would avoid the future need to react to crisis in, and provide emergency assistance to, developing states. And third, because underdevelopment, conflict and crisis in the broad South ultimately affect the prosperity of rich nations and, in some cases, have the potential to undermine security and stability in the North.

Arguably, this perception of potential threat, combined with a sense of moral obligation, prompts the North to fund costly emergency aid when crises erupt in the South. For example in 1992 the United Nations spent 4.09 billion dollars in emergency and humanitarian assistance against 774.4 million dollars in development programmes.

It should be acknowledged that, in the last twenty years, the international community has contributed significantly to Mozambique's development efforts by participating in various economic and social development programmes. Moreover, foreign aid also helped the country to face the disruption caused by the war and natural disasters, mainly through the provision of emergency assistance. In 1994, it was estimated that the international community contributed more than 50% of the Mozambican state budget. This was done by financing 70% of the state's investment programme through projects, and 35% of the state's current expenditure, mainly through counterpart funds generated under import support programmes, including food aid for commercial sale.

Yet, aid and development: assistance are also sources of concern. On the one hand, foreign aid continues to aggravate the country's foreign debt position, which will reach US \$5,75 billion by the year 2000. The following figures illustrate the severity of Mozambique's debt crisis: in 1993, estimates indicated that the interest and the debt service represented respectively 50% and 130% of Mozambique's exports of goods and services.

On the other hand, the design of development projects is usually driven by the interests of the donors rather than the recipients. This situation has certainly prevailed in

Mozambique and contributed to the country's dependence on aid. As a result of complex designs and unrealistic time frames beyond local capacity, technical assistance has become a burden. This is evidenced by the growth of the technical assistance budget to about 300 million dollars a year. This money is spent on hiring foreign consultants and experts to actually implement the projects, instead of building a domestic capacity for self-sustained development.

Commenting on the role of the international community in supporting the democratisation and reconstruction of war-torn societies such as Mozambique, Willett argues that: "The test for the international community is whether they can transcend the limitations of the old political and economic paradigms which have been, imbued with short-termism and an orthodoxy which blinds the faithful to the realities of their policy prescriptions. Only if they have the willingness to support the "ripening" of the democratic process by helping to eradicate the underlying structural problem of human insecurity will peace and democracy flourish in Mozambique".

Development assistance: What for and How?

In view of the above discussion, it seems reasonable to suggest that the international community should develop a new approach towards promoting peace, democracy and development in war-torn societies.

In the case of Mozambique, development assistance can contribute more effectively to peace-building by being recipient-driven and pursuing the following broad objectives: to address fundamentally the poverty of the majority of the population; to reduce the economic dependence of the country and create an environment conducive to sustainable growth; to promote the consolidation of democracy; to enhance regional integration; and to improve the effectiveness of aid.

Unless widespread poverty and the attendant moral degradation are radically challenged, the situation may develop into social and political chaos and thereby undermine the current climate of peace. On the other hand, the process of democratisation will only succeed if the efficiency of the state is dramatically improved and the weaknesses of civil society are addressed.

The state needs to be enabled to train and maintain an effective public administration in order to successfully undertake its responsibilities for national reconstruction. In this regard, it is critical to develop a democratic institutional culture within the state apparatus. On the other hand, the state also needs support to improve its capacity to invest in infrastructure and deliver basic services. The emerging institutions of civil society, in turn,

need to develop the capacity to critically interact in a meaningful way with the state, thus promoting the particular interests of the specific sectors of the public they represent.

Thus, peace-building presents difficulties that Mozambique alone can not overcome. It is an endeavour which deserves the urgent attention of the international community. Of course no amount of foreign assistance, no matter how well intentioned, organised and generous, will excuse the Mozambicans from their responsibilities. No amount of foreign assistance will ever be sufficient or even worthwhile without the commitment of the Mozambicans to build their own future. The international community can, at best, be supportive and avoid taking action which may undermine the domestic effort.

In particular, it is the duty of the Mozambican political elites to grow above partisan interests and show the courage, the vision and the qualities of leadership required to build the nation; to rise to the challenge and sow, today, the seeds of peace, democracy and development.