

Ukumbi Round Table

Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, 25th August 2004

1. Introduction

Following their meeting earlier on the day, the SaferAfrica board members participated in discussions at the Ukumbi Round Table organized by the AU-NEPAD Programme of SaferAfrica, held at the Sheraton Hotel on Wednesday 25 August 2004. Attending the workshop were over forty delegates from diplomatic missions and partners based in and around Pretoria.

The session was officially opened by Brig-Gen. Pal Martins, the director of SaferAfrica. The Round Table was chaired by Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos, advisor to the President of Mocambique.

The opening remarks underscored the importance of multilateralism in Africa, and sought to re-emphasise the determination of the current African leaders to utilise multilateral organisations as an effective tool to positively transform and develop the continent.

2. Keynote Address by Ambassador Professor Ibrahim Gambari (see Annex A)

Ambassador Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, also member of the international advisory board of SaferAfrica, presented a paper on "The Role of the United States Office of the Special Adviser in Furthering the African Peace and Security Agenda" (See Annex A). Ambassador Gambari is also the Advisor to UN Secretary General, Koffi Annan, on Africa. Prof. Gambari began his presentation by placing the theme of his paper in the context of the growing insecurity in the world offer. Complementing Prof. Gambari's presentation was the chairman of the SaferAfrica board, Amb. Donowaki, who spoke on Japan's policy on Africa.

3. Ambassador Donowaki

Ambassador Donowaki expressed his appreciation for the honour to speak at this session. He congratulated SaferAfrica for successful organisation of the session and indicated his respect for South Africa for its political stability since the democratic elections in 1994. Ambassador Donowaki started working with South Africa during his reign as the Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria. They used to have expert workshops where he worked directly with SaferAfrica.

In 1993 Japan initiated TICAD. Dealing with small arms was central in the first session of TICAD in 1993. In 1998 the second summit of TICAD was held and in 2003 the third one followed. Japan's African policy is first to enhance consultation of peace in Africa; secondly, to provide economic support for eradicating poverty and maintaining sustainable development, and thirdly, Human security. These

are three important pillars of the Japan policy to Africa. With regard to the second pillar, a more robust interchange between Africa and Asia was recommended. Last year more intensive dialogue with Africa was started.

4. Discussion

Relationship between the AU and UN structures

The interrelation between the AU and the UN some structures is still work in progress. The PSC came in the last two years and nobody thought it was possible that we will have an AU treaty ratified by so many countries in such a short space of time. The problems of vetoes do not exist in the PSC as they exist in the Security Council of the UN. The UN Charter states that the Security Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security.

Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Reconstruction (DDRR)

They inquired if the failure of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Reconstruction (DDRR) processes in zones afflicted by conflict like Liberia could be attributed to institutional coordination. The international community has not done a good job in post conflict peace building. Mocambique is one of very few African states to tell a success story on its DDRR processes. Mocambique's success was largely due to cooperative and considerable leadership. The government in that country was willing to accommodate all the scars carried from the times of conflict, including the rebel group that transformed into a political party. The UN does not have to leave after the end of the war, there is a dire need for post conflict peace building. The issue of DDDR has been discussed extensively, even at the UN. There was an attempt to put ECOSOCC to work together to ensure that the organisation takes over and focus on development.

DDR is certainly not an easy task to carry because it involves a lot of resources and requires a lot of serious coordination. One of the urgent steps is to get the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and IMF more involved in the DDDR processes. We also need to take a regional dimension of conflicts.

Terrorism

Participants began to ask questions that relate to terrorism as many countries are under immense pressure to make laws on terrorism. There needs to be a multilateral or conclusive approach to terrorism, noting the recent decision by the Great Lakes leaders to label the NLF as a terrorist group? Is there a danger in trying to achieve consensus and table the common denominator? Is this an issue that is being dealt with in the AU? There are many conflicts currently going on (either described as internal, etc.), that can be mediated without going to extremes.

Pressure needs to be put on these countries and also it depends on the affected regions how they handle these situations. The tendency is to respect sovereign rights instead of dealing with the problem. The role of the office of the UN

Secretary General does not cover the UN response on terrorism. The Security Council Committee is charged with the responsibility to respond to issues of terrorism. The committee looks at how to strengthen networks and capacity building where these mechanisms are weak.

Multilateralism

Every country is responsible for the well being of its people. We are looking forward to the report of the panel which will probably be released at the end of the year. Most of the conflicts in the continent are internal ones, with the exception of Ethiopia and Eritrea. The responsibility of the International Community is to protect and Africa cannot wait for. Genocide and general impunity cannot be tolerated by the international community. Let us develop the responsibility to protect and take actions to prevent impunity.

African Standby Force (ASF)

The participants questioned the perspective of the UN on the African Standby Force. The way forward is for Africa to solve Africa's problems. The UN is well equipped to help Africa in its DDR efforts. SaferAfrica deserves a lot more support because they are doing a valuable work that is not done by any NGO. They have earned respect of countries that continue to ask them for assistance in various issues.

The UN has standby arrangements and agreements with the member states which can be provided when there is a need. It is possible that the AU can do better than the UN in terms of the ASF. All the UN can do is to help and share their experiences with Africa in setting up the ASF. Logistic support and finance are two areas that the UN can actually support.

Africa Partners Forum (APF)

The APF meeting scheduled for October this year is an important forum where multilateralism is yet again held as priority. The AU-NEPAD programme is engaging on development aspects, peace & security, and Food Security. This discussion today is also taking place in an ongoing evolving context. Before the APF in October there will be an AU preparatory meeting with the development partners in a consultative manner.