

# The Imperatives of Peace and Conflict Management in Nigeria: Proposing Community-Based Peace Initiatives (CBPI5)

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## Abstract

*This paper looked at the impact of conflict on any country economy and political governance in other understand how devastating and encompassing the effects can be. The effect may intangible and visible, including killed and injured civilians, destroyed or derelict bridges and wells. They can also be intangible, such as the collapse of state institutions, mistrust in government, the destruction of social relationships, psychological trauma and pervasive fear. Thus, the need for conflict resolution in our society is crucial. It is imperative because no two people perceive a particular thing exactly in the same way. Efforts to curb conflict and crisis-situations have often times been unsuccessful; occasioned not only by the complex nature of humanity, but also by the methods and means employed by the stakeholders. It is the position of this paper that a factor that has not received sufficient attention in this regard is the community based peace building initiatives and other alternatives that are more inclusive and grassroots oriented. This paper attempts to determine the relationship between economy and political development, and conflict using content analysis. This paper highlights and explores these basic tools and frameworks on peace management and conflict resolution and recommends them as the alternative procedures for building sustainable peace in Nigeria.*

## Introduction

Peace, they say, is like a seed, thus what you sow, is what you definitely reap, With no fear of contradiction, the genetically engineered seed of ethnic jingoism, regional chauvinism, socio-economic patrimonialism, political prebendalism, religious fanaticism and sectarian acrimony sowed in the Nigerian soil since colonial era, which had been steadily watered, fertilized and nurtured by our decadent and unproductive bourgeois elites of the post-colonial Nigerian state, have now grown to mature crops for harvest. It is crystal clear that, the decades of fragile bottle of national unity replete with anger, hatred, ethnocentrism, intolerance, xenophobia and unpatriotism brazenly portrayed under successive regimes of military junta and civilian rule has suddenly exploded and found expression in hitherto spasmodic, now incessant violent ethno-religious conflicts, communal clashes, political conflagrations, wanton insurgencies as well as general insecurity, in the context of so-called democratic space, which has persistently engendered relative absence of peace and tranquility in the country (Gusau, 2006).

In this scenario, where conflicts have not occurred or is abated, associated tensions have heightened, with all the attendant consequences or the socio-economic and political development of the country as many lives and properties worth billions of naira are being lost to such volatile incidences on daily

basis. Deeply infuriated with the situation Jega (2009) quoted in Best, (2013) boldly explains the paradox thus:

Instead of democracy yielding peace, stability and security to lives and property, it seems to have yielded a return, full circle, to the spate of ethno-religious conflicts and violent eruptions, which characterized military rule, especially the tail-ends of Generals Babangida's and Abacha's acclaimed inglorious reins. Those who have profited from exploiting negative passions and igniting the embers of ethno-religious conflagration in the past are at it again, evidently in full swing mobilizing negative ethnicity, religious bigotry and intolerance, whipping up sentiments and pitching one ethno-religious group against another (p.117).

Given this horrific picture, there is no doubt that economic progress, political stability and overall national development in Nigeria are being terribly threatened, and indeed peaceful co-existence remains elusive, despite the fact that peace is a sine qua non for democratic consolidation and social well-being as well as the greatest desire of all human communities at all times (Jeong, 2010). Thus, it will require a concerted effort by all stakeholders and even well-meaning citizens to sustainably maintain peace, professionally

resolve conflicts and prevent or at least, speedily de-escalate violent eruptions that currently bedevil the national development and progress of the country. Ordinarily, in addition to the underlying structural factors of bad governance, corruption, poverty, unemployment and political disenfranchisement, the evidence presented by the narratives about the types of large scale conflict encountered in different parts of the country tallies broadly with existing local characterizations of the affected communities. For instance, most conflicts in Northern communities are dominated by ethno-religious identities while in the southern communities are dominated by resource-based conflicts. However, at the same time, the evidence demonstrates the danger of oversimplification except with interpersonal disputes (land disputes, matrimonial conflict, chieftaincy tussles etc) which are deeply-rooted in, and influenced by the socio-cultural setting of a particular community. Thus, community level approaches would be very apt in resolving both interpersonal and intergroup conflict in Nigeria (Best, 2013).

Against this backdrop, this paper attempts to discuss the imperatives of peace and conflict management as well as proposes an alternative of community-based peace initiatives (CPBIs) with a view to attaining sustainable peace and harmonious co-existence in Nigeria. However, the discussion is devoid of quantitative measurement as emphasis is on qualitative analysis. These analyses may, further, provoke subsequent researches on the topic, especially now that there is dire need for lasting peace in Nigeria. The salient issues meant for discussion here include: concepts, theories, imperatives of peace and conflict management as well as some CPBIs alternatives with contextual reference to Nigerian situations and Africa in general.

### Conceptualizing Peace and Conflict Management and Their Derivatives

In a wider sense, the concept of peace connotes more than a mere absence of war or hostilities, but the presence of "a political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices and norms" (Maill and Woodhouse, 2014:17). Etymologically derived from the Latin *pax*, "peace" is a value loaded and multifaceted term; its meaning can be seen at different level of human interaction and at the level of state actors in international system. It also entails a

sustainable process of calmness without friction; stability without bickering; and tranquility without heart wobbling (Gusau, 2006). Thus, as Rummel (1981, quoted in Umar, 2006:9) noted peace is then "conceptually opposed to non-violent, antagonistic conflict such as that manifesting threats and accusations, hostile quarrels, angry boycotts and riotous demonstrations".

On the other side of the coin, the word "conflict" is derived from the Latin word *confligere*, meaning to "strike together." Thus, conflict means a fight, struggle or battle, clash, contention, confrontation, a controversy or quarrel, active opposition, strife or incompatibility, to meet in opposition or hostility, to contend, to be contrary or to be at variance. Erickson (2016) defines conflict as opposition among social entities directed against one another, it distinguished competition and defined it as opposition among social entities independently striving for something of which the resources are inadequate to satisfy all. Conflict and competition are two points of a continuum on which conflict represents aggravated competition. In other words conflict arises when disagreement emerging from competition cannot be resolved.

According to Burton (2015), conflict management connotes containment of conflict through steps introduced to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control the behaviour of conflicting parties, in other words, conflict prevention. To Best (2013) conflict management is a process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. It is sometimes used synonymously with conflict regulation and covers the entire area of handling conflicts positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflict by being proactive. It also involves negotiation, mediation, arbitration and reconciliation. For instance, the boundary dispute between Nigeria and Cameroun, especially over the Bakassi Peninsula went through various stages of conflict management, including the judicial pronouncement by the international court of justice in 2002 and the process still ongoing. Nigeria as a country is represented by a diversity of cultural and religious practices as is also applicable to other countries of the world. The diversity affects the approaches to disputes and conflict management. Conflict management as earlier stated is the process of planning to avoid conflict where possible and organizing to resolve conflicts where it does happen as rapidly and smoothly as

possible. In Nigeria, the management of interpersonal and intergroup conflicts has often taken one or a combination of the following strategies though, not exhaustive, they include: negotiation mediation arbitration conciliation and litigation.

In this context therefore, as conceptualized by Lederach (1997) peace and conflict management is an all-encompassing process that perpetually facilitates the sustainable establishment of durable peace and continuously tries to prevent the recurrence of conflict and violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through a set of physical, social and structural initiatives that are often and integral part of its derivatives which include among others:

#### a. Peace Keeping

In its classical sense, peace keeping according to Mitchel and Banks (2009) is the application of internationally assembled military, police and relevant civilian personnel in the separation of belligerents in a theatre of war or conflict-ridden territory. It is a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers. Over the years, peacekeeping has evolved from a primarily military model of observing cease-fires and the separation of forces after inter-state wars, to incorporate a complex model of many elements – military, police and civilian – working together to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace.

#### b. Peace Making

Peacemaking is the term used to refer to the process of negotiating the resolution of conflict between people, groups or nations. It goes beyond peacekeeping –which involves “an operation involving military personnel, but without enforcement powers, undertaken by United Nation to help maintain or resolve peace in areas of conflicts” (Nwolise, 2004 cited in Mitchel and Bank 2009:199) to actually deal with the issues that caused a conflict. Peacemaking however falls short of peace building, which aims towards reconciliation and normalization of relations which is written on paper.

#### c. Peace Building

Peace building involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peace building is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. It works by

addressing the deep-rooted, structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner. Peace building measures address core issues that affect the functioning of society and the State, and seek to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions.

#### d. Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention involves the application of structural or diplomatic measures to keep intra-state or inter-state tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflict. Ideally, it should build on structured early warning, information gathering and a careful analysis of the factors driving the conflict. Conflict prevention activities may include the use of the Secretary-General's “good offices,” preventive deployment or confidence-building measures (Jeong, 2010).

#### e. Conflict Resolution

Technically, conflict resolution means a process of resolving a dispute or conflict permanently. It is carried out by providing each side with appropriate terms of bargaining. It is predicated on the belief that a good conflict resolution is both an analytical and problem-solving approach to conflict and its resolution. In the words of Burton (2015), conflict resolution can be seen as end product of the conflict management process. Unlike dispute settlement, he emphasizes that conflict resolution requires identifying the causal factors behind the conflict and finding ways to deal with them. On the other hand, settlement is simply aimed at ending a dispute as quickly as possible. This means that it is possible to settle a dispute that exists within the context of a larger conflict, without resolving the overall conflict. This occurs when a dispute is settled, but the underlying causes of the conflict are not addressed.

#### f. Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation is most preferred to conflict resolution, though often used interchangeably but the striking difference is that the former reflects a better understanding of the nature of conflict itself while the later implies that conflict is bad and is therefore something that should be ended. According to Lederach (1999) conflict transformation is a term that describes the natural process of conflict. In other words, it does not suggest that simply eliminate or control conflict but rather that we recognize and work with its dialectic nature. The protagonists of conflict transformation are of the view that social conflict is a natural occurrence between humans who are involved

in relationships. Once conflict occurs, it changes or transforms those events, people and relationships that created the initial conflict. Thus, as prescriptive concept, it suggests that destructive consequences of a conflict can be modified or transformed that self-images, relationships and social structures improve in a constructive way, as a result of conflict instead of being harmed by it (Jeong, 2010).

### **Adopting a Theoretical Model for Community-Based Peace Building Initiatives**

To explain conventional peace and conflict management imperatives, it is quite apt to articulate them from what Erickson (2016) called the three analytical postulations of peace.

The first is called power politics paradigm, according to them, "if you want peace, prepare for war". Violence arises inevitably from human competitiveness and covetousness; peace is secured through the forceful imposition of order. Power politics equates power with the ability to hurt and therefore regard it as the exclusive possession of governments and armed militant groups.

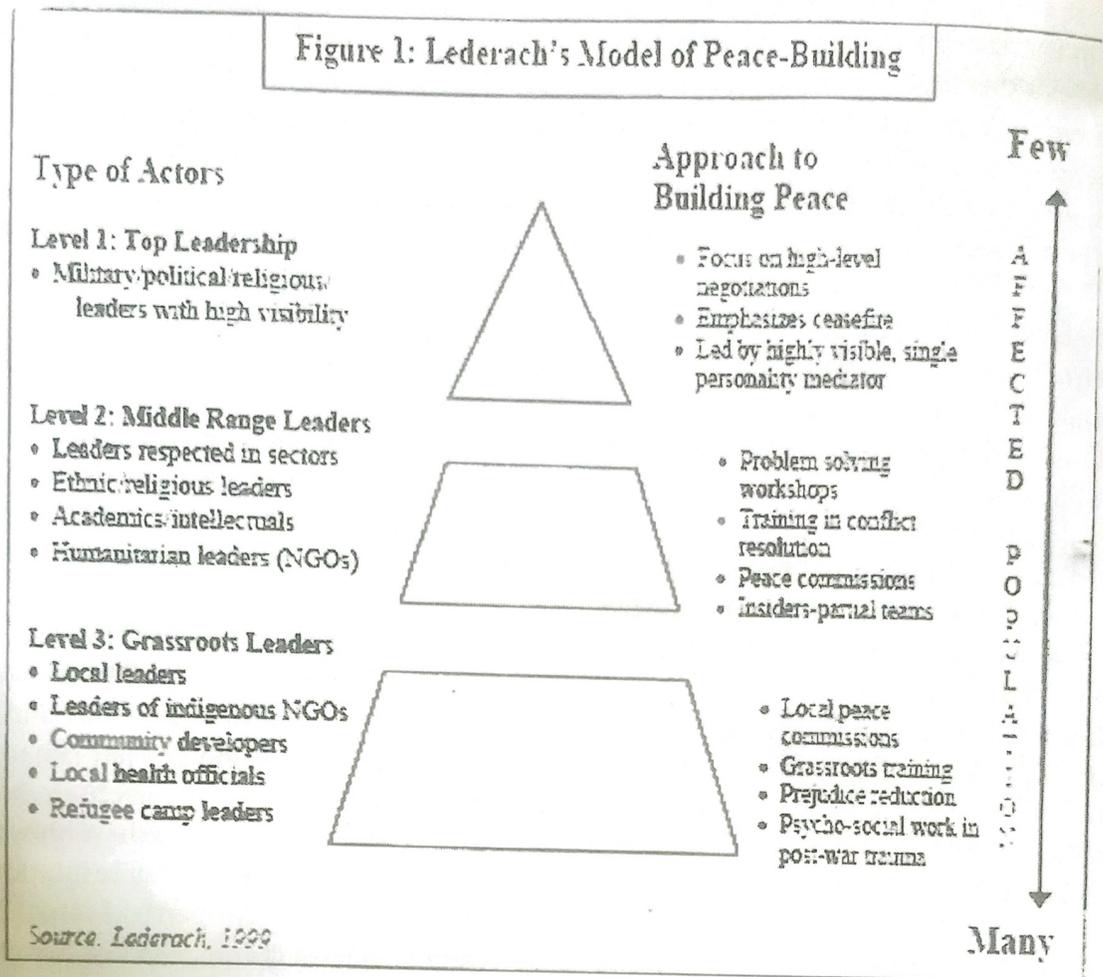
The second is the world order paradigm which views the "order" created by practices of power politics as a form of disorder, proposes that sustained cooperation among states and other significant actors such as non governmental (activist) organizations and inter governmental organizations, is both possible and necessary. It is precisely because of the failure of competitive, state-centred models of international relations to secure human interests that advocates of the world order paradigm argue that broader and more intense efforts to achieve international cooperation are necessary. According to the world order paradigm, "if you want peace, prepare for peace". Peace can be actively sought through policies and efforts that build consensus, reduce injustice, create opportunity, and provide multilateral frameworks for responding to common challenges.

The third is the conflict resolution paradigm which offers a pragmatic approach to peace through the development and refinement of skills for analyzing conflicts and responding to them with effective strategies of communication and negotiation. To the proponents of this paradigm, "if you want peace, train for the processes of peace. Develop skills for communication and coexistence". Thus, the following peace and conflict management imperatives are the brain child of the preceding paradigms.

For community actors to be involved, the dynamic of peace practice in Nigeria may suit the adoption of Lederach's model of peace building due to the typology of actors and practitioners of peace and conflict resolution activities. This model according to Lederach (1999), assigns different task to three levels of actors in the peace building process. The actors are vertically arranged from top to bottom with a pyramidal shape which indicates that the higher the levels the lower the memberships while the higher the visibility. As illustrated in fig.1 below, the first level consists of wide range of leadership comprising of law enforcement agents, traditional, religious, political and economic leaders who are held in high esteem by the communities. The engagement of this echelon during conflict is usually a series of negotiations, mediation and other reconciliatory efforts such as initiating ceasefire talks and dialogues. The second level includes the middle range leaders, such as ethnic and religious leaders, leaders of humanitarian organizations, NGOs, academics and intellectuals and other respected leaders. They provide problem-solving workshops, training in conflict resolution, peace commissions and insider-partial teams. Then the third and final level is comprised of the grassroots leaders such as local leaders, leaders of local indigenous NGOs, community developers and local health officials. These leaders focus on local peace commissions, grassroots training, prejudice reduction and psycho-social work in post-conflict trauma.

It is apparent that, those grassroots leaders at the bottom of the pyramid affect many people. However, those at the apex of the pyramid affect fewer people despite the fact that their actions become increasingly more visible. As such, Lederach's model is very helpful in distinguishing which activities need to take place at different levels of action. Even though, he does not thoroughly discuss which types of organizations and leaders are better suited to activities within each of the levels (Umar, 2006).

Figure 1: Lederach's Model of Peace-building



However, the hierarchical intervention levels make sense of the various levels at which peace building efforts occur. Because peace building measures involves all level of society and target all aspects of the state structure, they require a wide variety of agents for their implementation. These agents advance peace building efforts by addressing functional and emotional dimensions in specified target area, including civil society and legal institutions. While external agents can facilitate and support peace building, ultimately it must be driven by internal forces. It cannot be imposed from outside. At the top level, the actors have a responsibility to proactively build peace by establishing a democratic structure that is transparent, representational, and most importantly, interactive that could entrench certain behavioral patterns that are amenable to peaceful coexistence within the society. This quickens negotiations and reconciliations among hitherto conflicting parties and broadens the prospects of lasting peace.

The middle actors sustain the tempo of advocacy campaign, training workshop and

community mobilization to the local people to improve ethnic, religious and political relationships between various groups in the society. At the same time, they try to encourage factional leaders to start discussing and trying to work out cessation of hostilities and even possible cease fire in case of armed and violent conflict. They work towards empowering individuals and groups so that they can change their attitudes and transform their institutions and reduce tension, thus strengthening a peaceful atmosphere in the society. For grassroots leaders who are at the bottom of the pyramid, they are preoccupied with grassroots peace initiatives that reduce prejudice and ensure communal bond. They seem to be first responders to family disputes and communal clashes to forestall possible escalation of conflicts that involve larger societies.

It is clear from the above description of all the three levels that grassroots leaders are by far the most widespread and most trusted mechanisms for resolving disputes between individuals and families on an everyday basis, and that they have on occasion played significant roles in mediating in inter-

communal violence and in promoting peace. This could be ascribed to their popular acceptance and closeness to the people and the trust people have in their integrity. However, approaches to dispute resolution used by traditional and religious institutions at intermediary level tend to be restorative (aiming at dialogue and compromise) rather than retributive (i.e. seeking to allocate blame to one side or the other). This is because traditional and religious methods of dispute resolution get to the bottom of problems, while formal processes merely pass judgment, allowing the cause of the problem to resurface at a later date. On the whole, no peace manager could dispense with the presence of security forces and high level political leadership in conflict management process for their legitimate rights to intervene and keep peace by constitutional means whether palatable or not. Therefore, Lederach's model of peace-building is a two-way traffic in peace approaches to use both top-bottom approach and vice versa.

### **Outlining the Nigerian Contexts of Conflict Causatives**

An effective response to Nigerian conflict requires agreement on and understanding of its causes. Past responses to conflict have often failed to understand the context within which conflict has operated or to address causes. It is possible to distinguish between the root causes of conflict, the secondary causes that enable and sustain conflict and the tertiary causes or the drivers that hinder resolution as outlined by Best (2013) as follows:

#### **Root Causes:**

##### **a. Social Inequality**

Inequality among citizens is probably the foremost cause of conflict in Nigeria. It is inequality between groups – rather than individuals – that increases the prospects of violent conflict. It exists on three mutually reinforcing levels: economic, social and political. In Nigeria, political power and its benefits were monopolised by one class of elites. Unequal access to power perpetuated a similar lack of access to resources and revenue. Where group inequality occurs, there is also differential access to education (as has notably been the case in the North). This plays a key role in sustaining inequalities. Where a society is divided into two diametrically opposing groups of elites and masses, growing inequality between them often leads to conflict.

##### **b. State Collapse**

The collapse of state institutions has caused internal

conflict. Collapse is rarely sudden, but arises out of a long degenerative process that is characterised by predatory government operating through coercion, corruption and personality politics to secure political power and control of resources. The state finds itself unable any longer to provide basic services or security to its people and loses its legitimacy. The collapse of infrastructure completes the break-up of the state. The combination of breakdown of institutions and physical infrastructure coupled with the use of ethnic violence creates the conditions in which violence becomes self-sustaining and civil unrest develops, as has happened in Liberia and Sierra Leone. One faction may predominate over time, but this does not necessarily result in resolution of conflict. Rather it leads to the creation of "shell states", where the leadership wishes to maintain the fiction of statehood. When this happens, state building will be a complex task and the process of democratisation can easily become a vehicle for consolidating personal rule.

##### **c. Economic Decline and Economic Shock**

Continuous economic decline plays a major part in state collapse and conflict. Economic shock is a more direct and potent cause. This can take various forms ranging from natural catastrophe to sudden large shifts in terms of trade. The current economic recession seems to be a factor in the secessionists' agitations and intense calls for restructuring as well as violence that ensued. Famine can cause mass displacement increasing pressure on scarce resources. Other economic shocks have similar effects. The sudden shift in the terms of trade in Nigeria in 1992/3 halved Nigeria's income, introduced hyperinflation and led to violence and the overthrow of the government.

##### **d. Historical Antecedents:**

Many conflicts occur where there is a tradition of resolving problems by violent means. Political violence is entrenched and the instruments of the state such as the army, the police and the judiciary sustain the process. Other historical processes may provoke violence. History in places such as the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi created a state model based on the artificial creation and abuse of ethnicity to maintain power. Also, the strategy applied to suppress Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria during its incubation period was misapplied. A past pattern of conflict is one of the best predictors of future conflict. Deeply entrenched historical patterns of violence are amongst the most difficult to resolve as they require major societal and political change.

### e. Natural Resource Wealth

Nigeria accommodates two types of resource based conflict: wars of resource scarcity and wars of abundance. The most common conflicts of scarcity relate to the control of grazing and water rights for nomadic people and resource control crisis is a war of abundance. Nigeria, like many African countries whose economies are dependent on natural resources such as oil and minerals face a very high risk of conflict. In these wars of abundance, groups compete for control of these resources, which become the "prize" for controlling the state and can lead to civil conflicts, as in Sierra Leone, the DRC and Niger-Delta of Nigeria. Unfair exploitation of resource rich regions can lead to secession. Abundant resources can also attract external intervention. The role of the private sector is critical in wars of abundance, as belligerents rely on its capacity to exploit and commercialise the resources. For example, the militants in Niger-Delta have become involved in developing their own commercial companies. Such wars become self-financing, self-sustaining, and therefore less open to mediation.

### Secondary Causes:

#### a. Unemployment, Lack of Education and Population Pressure

Nigeria is a country with high levels of unemployment among young people and citizens educational levels are very low. This is why we face a far higher risk of conflict. Throughout Africa, factional conflict has drawn on a pool of marginalised or socially excluded young men. Increasing insecurity of land tenure in the country and the high levels of urban unemployment provided a ready group of participants in the several ethno-religious conflicts and political violence. The insurgency in the North east of Nigeria was fought by socially marginalised and economically disadvantaged young men.

#### b. The Abuse of Ethnicity

Political leaders and belligerents in Nigeria have made increasing use of ethnic hatred. Such abuse prolongs conflict, creates long term divisions that reduce the effectiveness of peace building efforts. The civil war of the 1976-70 provides a ready example of the abuse of ethnicity. Similarly, the elements of the DRC government have openly provoked ethnic tensions in the Kivus with the intention of destabilising areas under Rwandan influence. Equally elements of the Ugandan armed forces have exploited ethnic differences in order to benefit commercially from the

conflict. In both instances community divisions have been deepened and there have been a greater number of fatalities and injury than are experienced in more conventional fighting.

### c. Availability of Arms

The ready availability of small arms in Nigeria and some African countries is a major factor in sustaining and fuelling conflict. Considerable supplies of small arms are in circulation from previous wars. For example, between 1972 and 1990, Ethiopia and Somalia imported \$8 billion worth of small arms and light weapons. In 1992, the Angolan government distributed an estimated 700,000 rifles to the population for their defence against UNITA. Caches of arms exist throughout the continent and Africa has active trading networks that move arms between countries. However, imports of arms, primarily from former Soviet Bloc countries, continue to grow and to sustain conflict. The increasing capacity of Boko Haram insurgents and Niger-Delta Militants to manufacture ammunition, especially Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) has removed yet another constraint on the use of small arms. The ready availability and relatively low cost of small arms has been coupled with the emergence of a network of both local and international dealers who trade arms for minerals or other resources. This has been a major factor in prolonging African conflicts, which have become self-sustaining conflicts and consequently less amenable to external mediation or intervention.

### Tertiary Causes:

#### a. Regional and Interlocking Conflicts

A large swathe of Africa from Sudan to Angola, passing through the Great Lakes and the DRC, is or are caught up in a series of multiple and interlocking conflicts. The duration of conflict therefore increases with the complexity of regional intervention, and the interrelationship of one conflict with another. Again, Chadian and Malian rebels have infiltrated and re-enforced the intractable insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria.

#### b. The Conflict Cycle

Some ethnic groups in Nigeria have settled into a conflict cycle in which communities or factions move from low-level crisis or open violence into long-term and protracted conflict and then back to low level crisis. Often the greatest risks occur when a fragile peace is not properly consolidated. This was demonstrated in Ife-Modakeke and Tiv-Jukun conflicts. In some cases, groups or factions have

entered into a framework that provides for "consensual" conflict, where belligerents have more to gain from sustaining low-level conflict than from its resolution.

### c. Lack of Guarantors

Internal conflicts are mostly resolved when the parties involved have arrived at a stalemate, frequently a political and military balance. When either party to a conflict feels that it has a perceived advantage or disadvantage, it continues to fight, spurred on by the prospect of victory or a desire to negotiate from a more advantageous position. A "hurting stalemate" where all belligerents have lost, provides opportunity for resolution of conflict. In many cases, the opportunities for resolution are lost because of the lack of credible external guarantors to the peace process. This is particularly important when dealing with demobilisation and disarmament, where the stakes are high for the belligerent groups in terms of the potential loss of power and personal security.

### d. Inadequate and Inappropriate Mediation

External mediation is frequently offered in times of conflict, yet the past decade has seen few obvious successes. While the option for peaceful resolution of conflict must always be available, poor mediation processes can make the situation worse and prolong conflict by giving combatants time to rearm and reorganise as has happened in the Niger-Delta. Peace processes that are based on inadequate analysis and rushed time scales can push the parties in conflict into untenable positions and threaten their power base or chances of survival. Greater emphasis on securing and maintaining a cessation of hostilities as the first priority is critical. Peace processes need to be able to draw on a wider spectrum of arrangements to provide the conditions in which a stable peace, which addresses the fundamental causes of conflict, can be established.

### e. Misplaced Humanitarian Assistance

There are increasing dangers that much needed humanitarian assistance can cause wars to be intensified or prolonged. Where wars are fought through factional or proxy forces there is little recognition or respect for international humanitarian standards. Such forces seek to control humanitarian assistance as a means of conferring greater political legitimacy on themselves and control over the population. Relief supplies may also provide the focus for increasing tension and fighting between groups that receive supplies and their neighbours, as in the case in internally displaced persons in the North-east

demonstrated the problems that occur when humanitarian assistance becomes the key element in a resource-starved environment and therefore subject to predatory behaviour and official corruption.

## Identifying Peace and Conflict Management Imperatives

Under this sub-heading, the paper intends to identify those things considered fundamental and indispensable to the peaceful co-existence of citizens as well as establishment of ecumenical, egalitarian and democratic society which accommodates without hitches all ethno-religious and lingo-cultural differences in the context of justice, equality and fairness. We cannot claim to know all the pre-requisites of conflict management which help in peace building. However, we shall briefly mention a few of these for the purposes of analysis.

### a. Non-Partisan Security Agencies

Of all the function of the state, security is the most important in the establishment of peace architecture and infrastructure. That is why, one of the indispensable instrument of peace is the ability of the state to have monopoly over instrument of violence and conflict. In this context, the soft side of the security refers to those socio-political and economic factors that are central to the harmonious interactions and working relations of the citizens. On the other hand, the hard elements of security refer to the most obvious material elements of the state designed to maintain law and order, and the security of lives and property, such as the police, army and other law enforcement agents. This is because, in potential conflict situations security agencies are the handiest instrument to create a sense of safety and security among groups. The partisanship of security agencies usually tips the balance, resulting in the lack of confidence in the security agencies. Thus, instead of preventing conflicts or effectively controlling conflicts, they exacerbate conflicts. The perception of security agencies as neutral arbiters is useful in conflict management. There should be robust conflict management units in all security organisations which have data on conflicts, and capability to analyse and provide an early warning signal to government as well as to help provide proper information, identification, interpretation of conflicts and provide policy options, from which appropriate responses can be undertaken.

### b. Good Governance and Responsible Leadership

In recent times, it is being increasingly accepted that

good governance is an important fundamental for efficient peace management and conflict resolution and that it should, as such, be incorporated into our political system. Accordingly, the citizen expects the Government to use State resources to manage the affairs of the country judiciously. Also, government must be sensitive, fair, and just in all decisions and policies. It is wrong for government official to be conflict generators. Nor should they overheat the polity through hurriedly rehashed and unthought-of-out policy because it suits the interests of few people who have influence over government. Good governance entails catering for the interests of the majority while protecting the interests of minority. If leadership assumes its responsibility of an obligation to demonstrate commitment, integrity, honesty and decency in handling affairs of heterogeneous groups there would be peace and understanding among the followership. Mature leaders treat their followers with respect and do not talk down to them. They must encourage mutual respect even in context of vehement disagreement amongst groups. To wrap it up, the twin brothers – good governance and responsible leadership – are sine quonon to peaceful co-existence of any nation.

### c. Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Variant Views

Many conflicts emerge from the lack of mutual respect for one another. We cannot all be the same. We must realize that even within single religious and ethnic group, there are differences in perspectives and opinions. Disdain and arrogance often breeds intolerance and superiority complex against one another. Similarly, non-recognition of minorities' claims generates major conflicts which often mobilizes ethnic and religious loyalties. Recognition of views, while disputing the nature of claims and demands creates a room for mutual discussion and dialogues. Here the quarrel is over shares, how much and not the legitimacy of claims. Government can play helpful roles in mediating in some of these conflicting claims. It should not wait until the competitive process turns into violent interactions among claimants. So also, can civil societies, NGOs and even private sector contribute to the prevention of conflicts. It is imperative to accept the reality that while it is necessary to create to create 'unity in diversity', we must identify and respect our differences- 'diversity in unity'.

### a. Improving the Economy and Reducing Poverty

The alarming rate of poverty and youth unemployment in the country has some linkages with

recorded cases of ethnic clashes, civil unrest, armed robbery, kidnapping, thuggery, extortion, advance fee fraud, oil bunkering, rape, murder and others crimes in the country. Frankly speaking, unless those in government are in a country different from ours, they should realize that conditions of life are currently very hard for the average Nigerian. Feeding an individual household poses a real problem, not to mention taking members of your family to hospitals. Many families can no longer pay school fees. There are no jobs for even those who have graduated from secondary schools, polytechnics and universities. There is a large army of unemployed, ready to be used for odious jobs which bring in some income. Armed robbery, political thuggery, banditry and other forms of crimes have virtually been "legitimized" by logic of imperatives of survival. The current downslide of crude oil price has hit many oil rich economies very hard. For an economy that largely relies on petronaire, it cannot be any harder. We face budget deficits as our foreign reserve dwindles. We can however turn around the current situation to fortune. We can make it blessing in disguise. With our abundant human and natural resources, we strongly believe that our poverty is related to the ineptitude and inefficiency and inefficiency in the governance of the country. Government at all levels must summon the courage and will to fight this menace, which from all available indicators is on the increase.

### Proposing Community-Based Peace Initiatives (CBPIs)

The 'community' has often proven to be resilient in such contexts, providing survival and coping mechanisms for insecurity and fragility. Experience has shown that even in areas of sheer desolation, social life and organisational systems can readily re-emerge within community networks. (Pouligny, 2005 cited in Burton, 2015) Growing attention has thus been paid in recent years to the adoption of community-based approaches to help address the extensive needs in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Fragile contexts are situations in which 'state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population. Conflict-affected contexts encompass situations prior to, during and after armed conflict.

At the core of community-based approaches is a representative community institution that can serve as a forum for discussion, decision-making and implementation of decisions. These institutions act as intermediaries between communities, local and

national authorities; and between communities and external development agencies and implementing organisations (e.g. national or international non-governmental organisations). The following are prominent examples of community institutions:

- **Association:** a group of people, frequently from differing kin groups, who work together for a common purpose and have a visible identity mainly through sectors (e.g. farmers', youth, widows, parent-teachers associations). Associations facilitate self-help, mutual help, solidarity, and cooperation. They usually have clearly delineated structures, roles, and rules within which group members operate. (Maill and Woodhouse, 2014)
- **Cooperative:** an autonomous voluntary association of people that work together for mutual economic, social, or cultural benefits through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.
- **Civic Association:** a type of political organisation whose official goal is to improve neighbourhoods through volunteer work by its members.
- **Community-Based Organisation (CBO):** an organisation that should ideally be representative of the community i.e. membership-based but consequently tending to vary dramatically in size and focus. CBOs may focus on a specific sector (e.g. Village Water Supply and Sanitation Committees) or multiple sectors (e.g. Community Development Councils). (Maill and Woodhouse, 2014). CBOs can also comprise the local arm of non-governmental organisations.
- **Village Leadership:** an official, traditional, and informal leader at the local level. Official leaders include the communal chief and the local government administration. Traditional leaders are usually people who are revered for their religious or spiritual attributes. Informal leaders carry influence due to wealth, special skills, or charisma. Official and traditional leaders play key roles in local political, social, religious, and welfare activities. (Maill and Woodhouse, 2014)

The application of CBPIs in mediation and peace-building has been a major element of international support to conflict prevention and

resolution. It is particularly important when responding to conflict arising from disputes over the sharing of scarce resources. Because it has a broader role to play in African conflict. For example, community-based groups in Kenya have helped to resolve conflict between pastoralist groups. Peace and security depends on major changes in attitude within society. This is particular the case where society has become polarised. For example, the church leadership in Rwanda have come to recognise their own engagement in the genocide. The church remains a potent political force in Burundi, where other elements of civil society can also perpetuate the divisions within society. Far too often peace processes are seen as the prerogative of combatant forces. In many of Africa's wars, lasting peace will depend on "demilitarising the mind" and developing a social climate that seeks to sustain peace. Demobilisation and the reintegration of combatants are critically dependent on societies' ability to accept combatants back into the community. DFID funded activities in Northern Uganda demonstrated the importance that support to community reintegration and mediation processes could play in providing the basis for reintegrating violent factional forces into the community.

The CBPIs have been adopted in fragile and conflict-affected societies. It can be an effective approach to peace building, defined as the range of measures necessary to transform conflict towards sustainable, peaceful relations and outcomes. (Lederach, 1997) Since public institutions are often weak in conflict and fragile settings, community-based approaches can be used to re-connect the state with its citizens and to strengthen local governance. Community-based processes and their participatory community forums can also be used to build social capital in divided societies by providing safe spaces for interaction, communication and joint decision-making. Such processes can help to overcome mistrust and set a precedent for peaceful and constructive management of local disputes.

Community-based approaches can be adopted in various stages of conflict and fragility. They can be used as a means of prevention, for example, or to prepare communities for peace processes. Modifications to community-based interventions would have to be made depending on the stage of conflict and fragility. Community acceptance of government involvement and the relative strength of local and national governance structures are of particular importance in determining to what extent to link community processes to the state. The following are some examples of the possible types of CBPIs for peacebuilding.

#### a. Grassroot Security

Community-based policing is an approach that brings together the police, civil society and local communities to jointly take responsibility for and develop solutions to local safety and security. Community-based approaches have also been adopted for de-mining and weapons collection. De-mobilised combatants have been involved in de-mining as a way to facilitate local reintegration.

#### b. Socio-economic Recovery

Community-based approaches have been adopted to provide for services (health and education, in particular), infrastructure, natural resource and environmental management, livelihoods and employment generation – for example through the formation of cooperatives. Many of these initiatives have been designed and implemented with particular attention to fostering social capital, cooperation across divides, and the foundation for reintegration and reconciliatory processes.

#### c. Media, Communication and Civic education

Community-based radio stations and other forms of media, broadcast in multiple languages, seek to promote dialogue and debate on key issues in society. Many also seek to promote reconciliatory processes and civic education. Community video units is another form of participatory communication, whereby people present their own ideas on key issues. Local videographers seek to promote social change by documenting the views and concerns of different groups in society such that they can learn about each other. Theatre productions and puppet shows, designed and conducted by communities, have also been used for outreach education – to teach peaceful dispute resolution and human rights norms and values.

#### d. Traditional Justice and Reconciliation

Traditional approaches to justice and reconciliation often focus on the psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of violent conflicts. Traditional approaches are also often inclusive, with the aim of reintegrating parties on both sides of the conflict into the community. An important component is public cleansing ceremonies, undertaken is an integral step in healing community relationships.

#### e. Heritage and Cultural preservation

Initiatives designed to preserve culture in disaster and conflict-affected contexts have included community forums in order to allow the articulation of local needs,

quick responses on the ground, and increased social capital. Communities have also been involved in inventorying their culture, which has contributed to preservation and a sense of national identity.

### Recommending Some Alternatives to Peace making in The Society

1. **Prejudice Reduction:** Activities that focus on identifying and changing negative attitudes towards ethnic, religious, political or other groups who are likely to be described in derogatory terms. Prejudice reduction is a form of conflict prevention activity because it is focused on reducing a major cause of tension in societies and because it encourages people to be more receptive to differences between them and others who have ethnic, cultural, religious and physical differences.
2. **Conflict Resolution Training:** This is a form of training that is intended to help improve communication patterns and empower people to deal with conflicts constructively, by building their capacity to address their differences with others without resorting to violence. The ranges of skills that can be provided through conflict resolution training include those in mediation, negotiation, problem solving and arbitration. Those who are involved in this form of peace building can support local and national capacities to deal with conflicts by encouraging them to revive cultural models of peace such as institution of elders, restitution, etc.
3. **Non-Violent Advocacy or Advocacy Training:** In a number of situations, hidden conflict issues such as repeated abuse of human rights and large scale of structural violence prevent people from seeing beyond violence. For a just and durable peace to be achieved, these structural issues need to be addressed. This is the role advocacy plays by drawing attention to issues of injustice that may not even be well understood. It also seeks to mobilise groups to agitate for the redress of political and economic power imbalances without resorting to the use of violence. Advocacy and advocacy training usually focus on educating grassroots and middle-level leaders about alternative approaches to the pursuit of social justice.
4. **Human Rights Education and Training:** These are peace building activities that are also linked to advocacy. The focus at this level is on creating

awareness about what a just society looks like by identifying which rights and responsibilities people actually have under the law as well as those that they should strive to have.

**Economic and Rural Development Projects:** These are classified as peace building activities especially in cases where they help to transform structural imbalances, social inequities and contribute to building relationships in communities and societies where tension is noticed. Rural and development projects can lead to collaboration between opposing communities and build bridges between them, transform their previously negative and adversarial relationships, prevent future violent conflict from erupting and lay the foundations for peace on a more permanent basis.

**6. Providing Alternative Media and Communications Sources:** This level of peace building may involve providing financial support for newspapers or newsletters to encourage them to spread messages that promote peaceful coexistence among individuals and groups, including breaking the myths that lead to the creation of "enemy" images, telling powerful stories of people who successfully reach out to others across conflict divides, discussions of the key ingredients of justice and mercy, or serving as a forum for healthy debates. Radio and television stations can also be used to spread messages of peace as opposed to war, or to create more understanding of viewpoints that appear opposed.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing, CBPIs are common practices in pre-colonial Nigeria. However, the protracted nature of Nigerian conflict in the Post-independence era with its attendant grave consequences on the civilian populations as casualties, especially women and children, spur the stakeholders in peace building under the aegis of their organizations to adopt several intervention strategies that were targeted not just at containing the conflicts but to seek appropriate ways of resolving them within the best possible time. The conventional strategies as earlier mentioned were to support peace and ensure the resolution of conflicts, but sometimes in a brute-force-like fashion. However, the relapses of some of those conflicts are pointers to the ineffectiveness of some of the instruments used in the first instance. These limitations have left us with an option to look elsewhere for the resolution to our conflicts. However,

since most Nigerian conflicts take place in a particular context and milieu, it is therefore logical and imperative for the conflict resolution actors to tune inward, discover and embrace CBPIs like the ones enunciated above in tackling incessant conflicts that are ravaging the country in recent times. Various state of the federation should also adopt and deploy these methods into her conflict theatre, especially when most of these earlier methods employed by the government and other actors have yielded little or no result. Focus should therefore be on the community models owing to its uniqueness and effectiveness, which are susceptible to generating tremendous results not only in contemporary Nigerian, but in African conflict setting.

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