

# A MORE SECURE CONTINENT

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE UN HIGH-LEVEL PANEL REPORT,  
A MORE SECURE WORLD: OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

SEMINAR REPORT

SOMERSET WEST, CAPE TOWN, 23-24 APRIL 2005

RAPPORTEURS: HELEN SCANLON AND ANGELA NDINGA-MUVUMBA



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# Table of Contents

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Executive Summary	8
I. Introduction	12
1.1 Objectives	14
1.2 Background	15
2. Seminar Themes and Debates	16
2.1 Crafting and Critiquing the UN High-Level Panel Report	17
2.2 The UN High-Level Panel Report: What's in it for Africa?	20
2.3 UN Security Council Reform: Who Represents Africa?	22
2.4 The UN and Africa's Regional Organisations	25
2.5 The UN Peacebuilding Commission: Implications for Conflict Interventions In Africa	26
2.6 Tackling Security Threats: Terrorism, HIV/AIDS and International Organised Crime	31
2.7 The Millennium Development Goals: Meeting Africa's Special Needs	35
2.8 Strategies for Disseminating African Perspectives on the UN High-Level Panel	37

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## Annexes

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I. Agenda	38
II. List of Participants	41

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## The Centre for Conflict Resolution

The Centre for Conflict Resolution is affiliated to the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. The organisation has wide-ranging experience in conflict intervention in the Western Cape and southern Africa, and is working increasingly on a pan-continental basis to strengthen the conflict management capacity of Africa's regional organisations, as well as on policy research on South Africa's role in Africa; the UN's role in Africa; AU/NEPAD relations and HIV/ AIDS and security.

# About the Rapporteurs

Dr Helen Scanlon is a Senior Researcher in CCR's Policy Development and Research Project.

Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba is the Programme Manager of CCR's new HIV/AIDS and Security Research Project.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in Cape Town, South Africa, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) co-hosted a policy advisory group meeting of about 40 policymakers, academics and civil society activists at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West, Cape Town, on 23 and 24 April 2005. The objective of the meeting was to consider African perspectives on the United Nations' (UN) High-Level Panel report on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, which was submitted to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in December 2004. This meeting sought critically to examine the report's recommendations, to devise strategies for disseminating African perspectives and recommendations to the UN community, and to consider how best to raise awareness of the report on the continent.

Prompted by the political divisions created as a result of the 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq which was launched without UN authorisation, the UN Secretary-General announced plans to establish a High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. This High-Level Panel was inaugurated in November 2003. At the time, the Secretary-General noted that "the events of the past year have exposed deep divisions among members of the UN on fundamental questions of policy and principle". It was stated that the 16-member High-Level Panel was created to ensure that the UN remains capable of fulfilling its primary purpose as enshrined in Article I of its Charter, "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace". Forty-three High-Level Panel meetings and regional consultations were held globally and the final report was submitted to the UN Secretary-General in December 2004. The main focus of the High-Level Panel was the assessment of present and future security threats with the intention of developing collective strategies to confront them.

The Panel specifically examined six key areas:

- Civil wars and large-scale violence;
- Inter-state threats and the use of force;
- Socio-economic issues, including poverty and HIV/AIDS;
- Weapons of mass destruction;
- International terrorism; and
- International crime.

The High-Level Panel report recommends establishing new rules for United Nations military intervention, enlarging the organisation's Security Council from 15 to 24 members, and creating a new Peacebuilding Commission to strengthen post-war reconstruction in war-torn societies. The report also argued that in order adequately to address global security threats, there was a need to recognise not only the "hard" threats posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, but also "soft" threats triggered by socio-economic problems such as poverty and disease. The report thus argued that collective security necessitated addressing the security concerns of the entire global community through countering terrorism, resolving wars between and within states and addressing developmental concerns.

The Cape Town policy seminar was attended by a number of leading African figures including Mary Chinery-Hesse, one of the three African members of the High-Level Panel; James Jonah and Francis Deng, former UN Under-secretaries-General; General Henry Anyidoho, former UN Deputy Force Commander in Rwanda; and

Cape Town's Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane. The policy advisory group's aim was to elicit African perspectives on the issues and recommendations raised by the UN High-Level Panel report in order to provide policy recommendations based clearly on the continent's priority areas. During discussion at the Cape Town meeting, a clear need was expressed for an articulation of African responses to the Panel report. While the acceptance of the relationship between non-traditional security issues such as poverty and health, and collective international peace and security was applauded, it was felt that African concerns must be raised further to impact on future UN policy and the reform of the world body.

It was agreed that if any of the High-Level Panel recommendations are to be implemented, consensus needs to be forged between the rich North and the global South on issues of common interest. To date, many African leaders had not been sufficiently involved in the High-Level Panel process. This made it difficult for African delegations at the UN in New York to adopt clear positions, and allowed the High-Level Panel debates to be dominated by western concerns. It was argued that as a result of this, the report's recommendations were geared towards acceptability by western countries and this often jeopardised the interests of smaller states, particularly in Africa. Control of decision-making within the UN has become increasingly skewed towards western powers and there was thus a clear need to promote and encourage a unified continental approach to African interests. This necessitated a clear identification and articulation of Africa's concerns, needs and priorities. Moreover, there is a need to articulate clear definitions for Africa of key terms such as security, peace and development.



Dr Josephine Odera, Africa Peace Forum, Nairobi, left; Ambassador Felix Moshia, Africa Dialogue Centre for Conflict Management and Development Issues, Arusha; General Henry Anyidoho, former UN Deputy Force Commander and UN Mission Chief of Staff, Rwanda

The High-Level Panel report itself was seen by some as appeasing western interests in several key areas, most notably over suggestions for reform of the UN's Security Council and the decision not to extend the veto to new Council members. The strategic issues that were raised in the report over reform of, and the UN's relationship with, regional organisations attracted considerable debate. Discussion emphasised that reform should not simply aim to achieve greater African representation on the Security Council but is critical considering the extent of UN peacekeeping initiatives on the continent. It was noted that the UN High-Level Panel's attention on Security Council reform was at the expense of focussing on the need to strengthen the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Debate considered developing a common African approach and it was noted that, while Africa should lobby for UN Security Council reform, it must also strengthen and utilise the continent's representation within the UN secretariat in New York.

Though the High-Level Panel report acknowledged the issue of relations between African regional organisations and the UN, the report failed to live up to the expectations of many Africans who had hoped that this issue would enjoy more prominence. The necessity to strengthen the role of the UN in keeping Africa's peace and promoting economic development on the continent was deemed critical and worthy of greater commitment.



Ms Mary Chinery-Hesse, UN High-Level Panel member



The report's drive to legitimise "humanitarian" interventions was also debated, particularly the adoption of the principles of the "responsibility to protect". This argued that, if governments are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens from serious harm, then the international community has a duty to protect them. The report proposed the creation of a stronger human rights mechanism, the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, and the creation of standby reserves of peacekeepers and civilian police in order to help prevent future human rights abuses. It was noted, however, that such interventions could potentially allow powerful members of the UN's Security Council to intervene in countries without a clear legal mandate. Participants at the Cape Town meeting recommended that international rules to govern the use of force should be balanced and equitable, echoing the African Union's view that military interventions should comply with the provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter which authorises the use of force only in cases of legitimate self-defence.

The Peacebuilding Commission has won the widest support among UN member states, and many feel that it may be one of the very few High-Level Panel recommendations that will be implemented in the end. Due to pressure from developing countries, the Commission will focus largely on post-conflict reconstruction and not on conflict prevention. The Commission's intention is to address the "gaping hole" in the UN system created by the lack of sufficient mechanisms to assist transitions from war to peace. The Commission would engage the UN Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the participation of international financial institutions. Many Africans are, however, sceptical about the feasibility of its mandate and question whether the resources required for post-conflict reconstruction in Africa will be forthcoming.

Discussion by the policy advisory group on definitions of security threats as outlined in the High-Level Panel report centred on what signified "threats" in Africa and what constituted issues of collective security. It was argued that while terrorism was seen as a direct threat in the West, in Africa, poverty, disease - in particular HIV/AIDS - and inter and intra-state conflicts were more pressing threats to the region. Participants noted that, while the High-Level Panel report recommends the creation of new institutions and reforms to address "hard" threats such as terrorism, it does not create any obligations for governments to fulfil their commitments to combating "soft" threats such as poverty and disease.

Within an inequitable international system, a more balanced approach to international security was thus considered necessary. In order to meet the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) aim of halving global poverty by 2015, donor governments must meet the target of contributing 0.7 percent of their gross national income towards development assistance; they must cancel external debts; and substantially reduce pernicious agricultural subsidies and other trade barriers. It was argued that the UN was incapable of solving all the problems faced by Africa and, therefore, it was important to identify what the UN can realistically do for the continent. Local solutions to peacekeeping and peacebuilding were preferable but there nevertheless remains a need to strengthen the role of the UN in keeping Africa's peace and promoting economic development in the region. The necessity to address global security challenges through global responses requires the recognition that African concerns are the world's concerns.

# 1. Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in Cape Town, South Africa, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) co-hosted a policy advisory group meeting of about 40 policymakers, academics and civil society activists at the Lord Charles Hotel, Cape Town, on 23 and 24 April 2005.<sup>1</sup> The intention of the meeting was to consider African perspectives on the United Nations' (UN) High-Level Panel report on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, which was submitted to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in December 2004.<sup>2</sup> This meeting sought critically to examine the report's recommendations, to devise strategies for disseminating African perspectives and recommendations to the UN community, and to consider how best to raise awareness of the report on the continent.

The meeting followed a successful seminar organised by both organisations and the United Nations Foundation (UNF) on *The UN, Regional Organisations, and Future Security Threats in Africa*, in Cape Town.<sup>3</sup> This May 2004 seminar sought to provide input to the UN High-Level Panel report and was attended by its Research Director, Dr. Stephen Stedman. This report is a summary of the discussions which took place at the Cape Town seminar of April 2005, as well as additional research based on papers presented at the meeting.

The High-Level Panel report recommends establishing new rules for United Nations military intervention, enlarging the organisation's Security Council from 15 to 24 members and creating a new Peacebuilding Commission to strengthen post-war reconstruction in war-torn societies. It further argued that, in order adequately to address global security threats, there was a need to recognise not only the "hard" threats posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction but also "soft" threats triggered by socio-economic problems such as poverty and disease. The report thus argued that collective security necessitated addressing the security concerns of the entire global community through countering terrorism, resolving wars between and within states, as well as addressing development concerns.

In March 2005, the UN Secretary-General submitted his own report on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the recommendations of the High-Level Panel report.<sup>4</sup> The report calls on donors to devise a ten-year capacity-building plan with the African Union and envisages UN financial support for Africa's regional organisations. The suggestions of this report were also considered during the April 2005 Cape Town policy meeting. The seminar's aim was thus to elicit African perspectives on the issues and recommendations raised by the UN High-Level Panel report in order to provide policy recommendations based on the continent's priority areas. The High-Level Panel outlined the following issues with which the seminar sought critically to engage:

1 See Annex II for a full list of participants.

2 *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information DPI/2367, December 2004.

3 *The New Partnership for Africa's Security: The United Nations, Regional Organisations, and Future Security Threats in Africa*, CCR Seminar Report, October 2004. (Available at [www.ccrweb.ccruct.ac.za](http://www.ccrweb.ccruct.ac.za)).

4 *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights For All*, Report of the UN Secretary-General; follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. 21 March 2005, A/59/2005.

- Development and security, including eradicating poverty and the upliftment of impoverished countries through “good governance”;
- “Biological security” and tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- Devising a common strategy by governments to enable a collective security system to tackle the legitimacy of the use of force;
- Building an effective and principled counter-terrorism strategy that embraces respect for the rule of law and universal human rights;
- Strengthening the UN as a whole as well as its principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the UN secretariat, including the management thereof;
- Establishing a Peacebuilding Commission as a new UN body; and
- Restoring the credibility and effectiveness of the UN’s Commission on Human Rights.



Ambassador Felix Moshia, Africa Dialogue Centre for Conflict Management and Development Issues, Arusha, right;  
Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

## 1.1 Objectives

The primary objective of the Cape Town meeting in April 2005 was to develop a coherent and realistic strategy for implementing key recommendations of the High-Level Panel report and to define Africa's core interests. The report contains broad recommendations for reform of the United Nations, and it is argued that these may prove essential in directing the future of the organisation. As such, African responses to these reforms are crucial. Several major aims were therefore identified for the meeting:

- To provide advice on how UN structures could best be reformed to offer more effective conflict management assistance to the African Union (AU) and African regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), some of whose representatives attended the Cape Town meeting;
- To advise the UN on how best it can restructure its relationship with regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa;
- To develop African perspectives on restructuring the continent's relationship with the UN;
- To formulate a vision of co-operative structures for African security involving the UN, African regional bodies, and its civil society actors; and
- To define Africa's security interests based around the findings of the High-Level Panel report.



Ambassador James Jonah, Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, New York

## 1.2 Background

Prompted by the political divisions created as a result of the 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq which was launched without UN authorisation, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, announced plans to establish a High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. This High-Level Panel was inaugurated in November 2003. At the time, the Secretary-General noted that “the events of the past year have exposed deep divisions among members of the UN on fundamental questions of policy and principle”.<sup>5</sup> It was stated that the 16-member High-Level Panel was created to ensure that the UN remains capable of fulfilling its primary purpose as enshrined in Article I of its Charter, “to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace”.<sup>6</sup> Forty-three High-Level Panel meetings and regional consultations were held globally and the final report was submitted to the UN Secretary-General in December 2004. The main focus of the High-Level Panel was the assessment of present and future security threats with the intention of developing collective strategies to confront them.

The High-Level Panel’s report recommends establishing new rules for UN military intervention, reform of the Security Council, and creating a new Peacebuilding Commission to strengthen post-war reconstruction. It also calls for a new international agreement on the definition of terrorism which would outlaw all attacks on civilians, and suggests a change in the balance between state sovereignty and the right of states to intervene in other countries for “humanitarian” causes. Further, the report identifies the security threats posed by terrorism and nuclear proliferation, as well as those posed by poverty and disease. It thus argues that collective security necessitates a more holistic approach to security which requires the co-operation of the entire global community in countering terrorism, resolving wars between and within states, and addressing development concerns.



Mr Tsepe Motumi, Department of Defence, Pretoria, left; Dr Tandeka Nkiwane, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; Mr Ulrich Golaszinski, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Maputo

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un-globalsecurity.org/panel.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Members of the High-Level Panel included: Anand Panyarachun, Chair (Thailand); Robert Badinter (France); João Baena Soares (Brazil); Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway); Mary Chinery-Hesse (Ghana); Gareth Evans (Australia); David Hannay (United Kingdom); Enrique Iglesias (Uruguay); Amre Moussa (Egypt); Satish Nambiar (India); Sadako Ogata (Japan); Yevgeny Primakov (Russian Federation); Qian Qichen (China); Nafis Sadik (Pakistan); Salim Ahmed Salim (United Republic of Tanzania); and Brent Scowcroft (United States).

## 2. Seminar Themes and Debates

In UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's address to the African Union Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, in February 2005 he stated that "on no continent would the implementation of the High-Level Panel's recommendations save more lives than in Africa".<sup>7</sup> Clearly, debate around UN security concerns in 2005 and beyond will be influenced by the findings of the UN High-Level Panel report. The inclusion of both so-called "hard" threats (including terrorism, nuclear and biological warfare) and "soft" threats (for example socio-economic problems and international organised crime) as international security issues is of obvious interest to the African continent.



Dr Musifiky Mwanasali, UN Department of Political Affairs, New York, left; Mr Charles N Mwaura, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Addis Ababa

The Cape Town policy advisory group meeting of April 2005 provided a forum for the articulation of African perspectives on the report. The advisory group comprised civil society representatives, academics and a number of members of militaries and governments. Among those who attended were Mary Chinery-Hesse, one of the three African members of the High-Level Panel; James Jonah and Francis Deng, former UN Under-secretaries-General; General Henry Anyidoho, former UN deputy force commander in Rwanda; and Cape Town's Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane.

<sup>7</sup> See USA/Africa Dialogue: No 339: African Union Summit 2005, p. 3.

The group debated the following eight themes:

- Crafting and Critiquing the UN High-Level Panel report;
- Defining Africa's Interests in the High-Level Panel report;
- African Representation on the UN Security Council;
- The UN and Africa's Regional Organisations;
- Humanitarian Intervention and the UN Peacebuilding Commission;
- Tackling Terrorism, HIV/AIDS and International Organised Crime;
- The Millennium Development Goals; and
- Strategies for Disseminating African Perspectives on the UN High-Level Panel.

The core debates that emerged from these panels and in wider discussion are detailed below.

## 2.1 Crafting and Critiquing the UN High-Level Panel Report

The crafting of the UN High-Level Panel report involved 43 global meetings and informal consultations with civil society actors. The final report was submitted to the UN Secretary-General in December 2004. The 16-member Panel, otherwise known as the Blue Ribbon Panel, comprised representation from the rich North and global South. Three African members served on this panel: Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU); Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the Arab League; and Mary Chinery-Hesse, Vice-Chairperson of the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana and former Deputy Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The main focus of the High-Level Panel was the assessment of present and future security threats with the intention of developing collective strategies to confront them.



Ms Mary Chinery-Hesse, UN High-Level Panel member, left; Dr Adekeye Adebajo, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, centre; Ms Margaret Legum, Independent Economist, Cape Town

To date, many African leaders had not been sufficiently involved in the High-Level Panel process. This made it difficult for African delegations at the UN in New York to adopt clear positions, thus allowing the High-Level Panel debates to be dominated by western concerns. It was argued that as a result of this, the report's recommendations were geared towards acceptability by western countries and this often jeopardised the interests of smaller states, particularly in Africa.



Dr Josephine Odera, Africa Peace Forum, Nairobi, right; General Henry Anyidoho, former UN Deputy Force Commander and UN Mission Chief of Staff, Rwanda

The Cape Town policy advisory group meeting set out to analyse the crafting of the High-Level Panel report and to critique its findings. Attention was paid to ensuring that African interests would be more clearly reflected in responses to the Panel report. It was noted that Africa stands to gain the most, compared to other continents, if the report's recommendations are implemented. The insistence by several High-Level Panel members that poverty and the lack of development are intrinsic concerns to security issues resulted in their eventual inclusion as key concerns in the Panel's report. Poverty was thus recognised as a key security concern for the international community. It was, however, noted that in the post-11 September 2001 global environment, polarisation has developed between those states implementing US-approved anti-terrorist legislation and those who have not. This situation continues to impact directly on the distribution of development funding and could adversely affect the implementation of the High-Level Panel report's recommendations.



One of the perceived successes of the High-Level Panel's report was the absence of a hierarchy of security threats and the consideration of threats to both the rich North and the poor South as equally important. However, participants at the Cape Town meeting argued that the report should have articulated a viable developmental and humanitarian strategy. For example, strong mechanisms to help the South to alleviate poverty and tackle disease should be clearly identified. While the report argued that it was only required to examine economic and social issues as they relate to peace and security, it was felt that further recommendations on these critical issues could nonetheless have been made.

Participants also argued that Africa's special needs were not specifically addressed in the High-Level Panel report. The report failed to deal with accountability for the rich North and how to ensure that their commitments to provide for development were honoured. It was noted that there was a need to set out in more detail both the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission and the intended sources of its funds for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Finally, the report failed to spell out policy towards Africa in terms of debt relief and debt cancellation, reducing trade barriers and increasing overseas development assistance.



Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Cape Town, left;  
Ambassador Gerard Corr, Embassy of Ireland, Pretoria; Ms Margaret Legum, Independent Economist, Cape Town

## 2.2 The UN High-Level Panel Report: What's in it for Africa?

The need to strengthen the role of the UN in African peacekeeping and promoting economic development on the continent is very apparent. Nearly half of the 50 UN peacekeeping missions since the end of the Cold War have been in Africa. Furthermore, the continent currently hosts the most numerous and largest UN peacekeeping missions in the world, and much of the UN's socio-economic and humanitarian efforts are located in Africa. The UN has established sub-regional offices in West Africa, the Great Lakes and Central Africa, as well as peacebuilding offices in Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic (CAR). Africa has also produced the last two UN Secretaries-General: Egypt's Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Ghana's Kofi Annan. In March 2005, the UN Security Council mandated a 10,000-strong peacekeeping mission to southern Sudan. However, despite the importance of the UN to the continent, there exists little knowledge in Africa about the organisation and how it can best serve the continent's needs.



Dr Martin Uhomoibhi, Nigerian Foreign Ministry, Abuja, right; Ambassador George Nene, South African Foreign Ministry, Pretoria

The Cape Town policy advisory group meeting of April 2005 debated Africa's interests in both the High-Level Panel report and Kofi Annan's March 2005 report to the UN General Assembly. It was argued that it was important to engage positively with the reports and to recognise the need for strengthening the role of the UN in keeping Africa's peace, as well as in promoting economic development on the continent.



The seminar in progress

The increased focus on the relationship between development and security within Kofi Annan's March 2005 report on the UN Millennium Development Goals and the recommendations of the High-Level Panel report were noted.<sup>8</sup> Kofi Annan's report calls on donors to devise a ten-year capacity-building plan with the African Union and envisages UN financial support for Africa's regional organisations in exceptional circumstances. The UN needs to carve out a niche for itself in the increasingly unipolar global environment of the post-Cold War era. Apprehension was voiced over the extent of the international community's real commitment to tackling poverty and development and the way that humanitarian intervention was treated in both reports.

It was further argued that the High-Level Panel's recommendations were geared towards acceptability by western countries at the expense of the interests of small and medium-sized states, many of them in Africa. Control of decision-making within the UN has become increasingly skewed towards western powers, and a result of this was the insufficient acknowledgement of the role and potential utility of civil society groups, many of which have contributed significantly to democratisation and conflict management efforts in Africa.

Concerns were also voiced over the report's findings on "humanitarian" intervention and, in particular, the statement that "the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs cannot be used to protect genocidal acts".<sup>9</sup> It prompted fear that this could potentially allow powerful members of the Security Council to intervene in countries without a clear legal mandate. It was emphasised that the AU's Constitutive Act supported principles of intervention in the face of genocide, but also advocates adherence to the provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter, which authorises the use of force only in cases of legitimate self-defence. A more balanced approach was deemed necessary within an already inequitable international community.

8 In *Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights For All*, Report of the UN Secretary-General, Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, 21 March 2005, A/59/2005.

9 *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information DPI/2367, December, 2004.

## 2.3 UN Security Council Reform: Who Represents Africa?

At a meeting in Swaziland in February 2005, African Union members drew up the Ezulwini (“heaven”) Consensus which called for a reformed UN Security Council with two additional permanent seats with veto power and two additional rotating seats. Debate among African role-players has centred on the need to influence the UN Security Council as the highest decision-making body in the organisation. Suggestions tabled at the Swaziland meeting included the creation of two permanent seats with veto power – in addition to the five already held by the US, Russia, China, France and Britain – and two additional rotating seats to add to the continent’s current three rotating seats. The UN High-Level Panel report has suggested an increase in overall Council membership from 15 to 24 members and the creation of six new permanent members without veto power.

Debate continues as to which countries should represent the African continent on the UN Security Council. The three strongest contenders are widely regarded to be Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa; each was represented at the April 2005 meeting by a senior diplomat. Kenya and Senegal have also expressed an interest in a Security Council seat and other countries such as Algeria and Libya may yet stake a claim. The AU has set up a ten-member committee to oversee the process of identifying Africa’s representatives and has emphasised that this issue must be resolved on the continent. It is unclear, however, whether this consensus can be reached in Africa or whether African representation will ultimately be determined by the 191-member UN General Assembly, two thirds of whose members must ratify UN Security Council reform. The five permanent members of the Council must also unanimously agree to any new members.



Questions for the panel

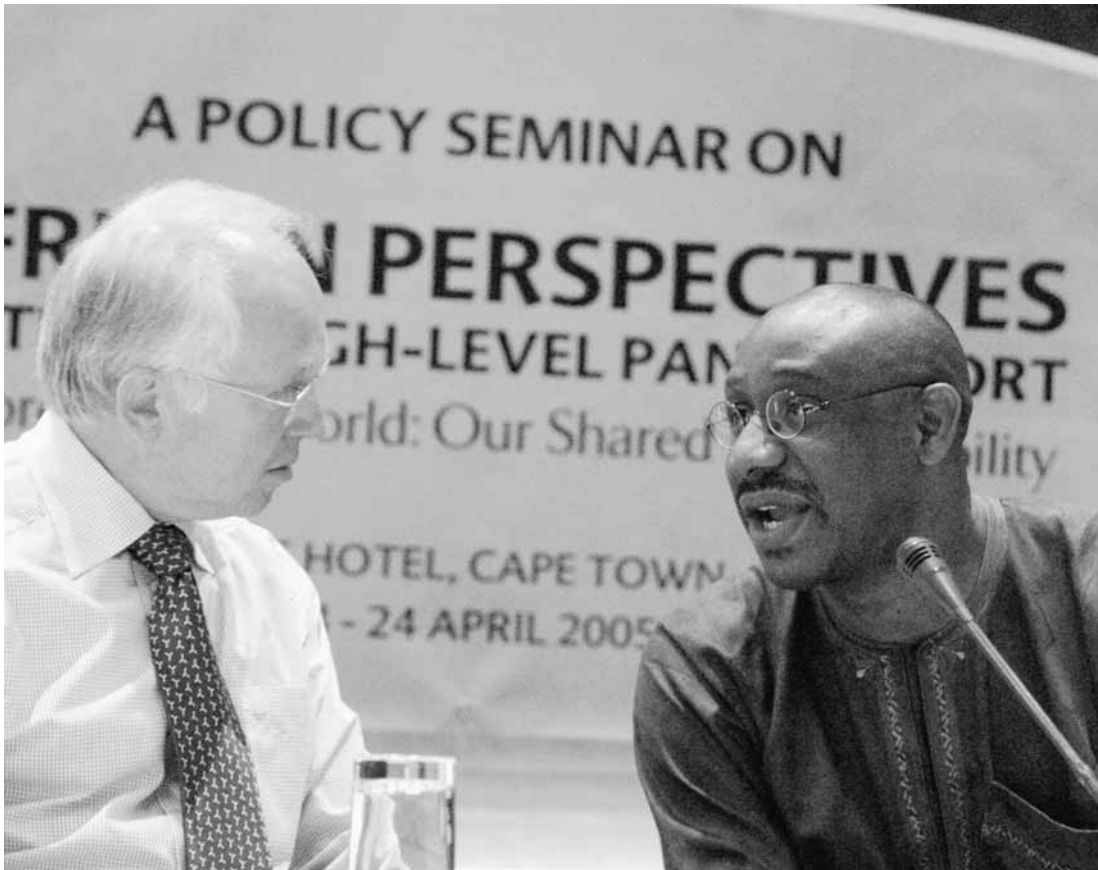
Discussion further centred on the question of UN Security Council reform, how this could best be constructed and who the real contenders were for Africa's two permanent seats. It was also emphasised that the importance of reform was not simply to achieve representation, but that it was vital to have consistently strong African representation on the Council, considering the extent of UN peacekeeping initiatives on the continent.



From right, Ambassador Felix Mosha, African Dialogue Centre for Conflict Management and Development Issues, Arusha; Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town; Dr Helen Scanlon, Centre for Conflict Resolution, University of Cape Town; Dr Josephine Odera, Africa Peace Forum, Nairobi

The recommendation to extend the right of permanent membership without the right of veto was queried by the policy advisory group and, in turn, prompted calls to consider how to avoid the abuse of the use of veto by those who continue to hold it. It was, however, noted that UN Security Council reform is highly unlikely to occur if opposition by two permanent members of the Council, China and the United States, continues. Discussion over the Security Council veto system questioned its continued validity in the current world order and whether reform of the Council should really be a priority area of debate. Instead, greater focus should be given to the need to strengthen the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Africa's influence within the General Assembly was said to have seriously declined since the end of the Cold War, and it was noted that, although the UN was headed by an African, no significant department in the UN secretariat in New York was African-led. It was also suggested that if steps were not taken to articulate these concerns, reform of the UN could dramatically impact negatively on Africa.

The policy advisory group meeting also considered who might most effectively represent African interests if the High-Level Panel report proposal was implemented. Among possible criteria identified were: a sound record of international peacekeeping; the ability to contribute financially and militarily to conflict management efforts abroad; and maintaining a commitment to democratic governance at home. The need to identify the implications of greater African representation on the Security Council and to question whether this would really make a difference or simply create more division was noted. There was a perceived need to qualify whether peace was simply the absence of war or whether it was understood to be the need to establish an environment conducive to a stable society.

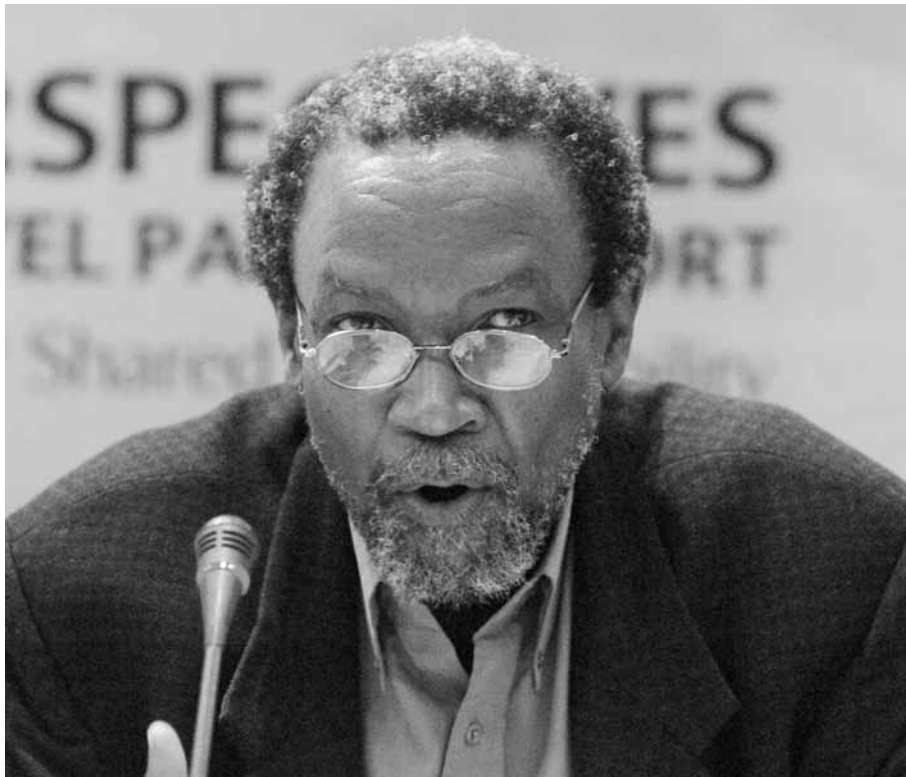


Ambassador Torben Brylle, Embassy of Denmark, Pretoria, left; Dr Adekeye Adebajo, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

## 2.4 The UN and Africa's Regional Organisations

As noted earlier, the March 2005 UN Secretary-General's report calls on donors to devise a ten-year capacity-building plan with the AU to assist with building an African stand-by force by 2010. This is to be comprised of five sub-regional brigades. Both this report and the UN High-Level Panel report of December 2004 envisage enhanced multilateral support for Africa's regional organisations. The High-Level Panel report called on governments to support a stronger relationship between the UN and regional organisations and to consider linking regional peacekeeping capacities to the UN peacekeeping system.

While the policy advisory group meeting recognised that the report's attention to the specific issue of the relationship between the UN and Africa's regional organisations was a marked improvement on the August 2000 Brahimi Report on peacekeeping, it was argued that Africa's interests were still not sufficiently addressed by the report.<sup>10</sup> Inadequate attention had been paid to the fact that half of the UN's current peacekeeping missions are in Africa and that consequently the continent has a vital interest in strengthening UN peacekeeping. The failure of the High-Level Panel report comprehensively to address the relationship between the UN and African regional organisations was noted, as was the lack of new, concrete initiatives to encourage co-operation between the UN and these institutions.



Professor Mwesiga Baregu, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam

<sup>10</sup> See the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

It was noted that, since the UN's shameful failure to stop the 1994 Rwanda genocide, Africa's sub-regional organisations have played an increasing role in managing regional conflicts. The lack of strong international efforts to secure peace in Africa has pushed the continent's regional economic communities (RECs) to expand their economic mandates and to address conflicts in places like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Somalia and Sudan with decidedly mixed results. SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD have each undertaken a number of peacemaking and/or peacekeeping initiatives in their respective sub-regions. In this regard, IGAD is making strides towards establishing a peace and security mechanism. In March 2005, its member states revised its charter in order to authorise the deployment of a peacekeeping mission to support the Somalia peace process.

The Cape Town policy advisory group called for the strengthening of the capacity of Africa's RECs to ensure their effectiveness. Some participants felt that over-reliance on the part of Africa's sub-regional organisations on individual western governments, as occurred with Britain in Sierra Leone and France in Côte d'Ivoire, could undermine their efficacy. There was also a proposal that UN reform should incorporate more reliable multilateral funding methods for Africa's regional organisations.

Discussions during the meeting included a review of the potential of the AU and its importance to managing conflict on the continent. Participants noted that the international community has been supportive of the AU's current peacekeeping mission in Darfur, both in terms of providing logistical and financial support, but that much more assistance is needed. Advisory group members also pointed to potential challenges posed by the AU's lack of institutional capability to undertake peace operations: decisions are often taken without immediate follow up, and core needs relating to logistics, planning and procurement represent continuing gaps in the AU's capacity. One important result of the High-Level Panel process is that it encouraged consultation and co-operation between the AU and sub-regional organisations.

## 2.5 The UN Peacebuilding Commission: Implications for Conflict Interventions in Africa

The recommendations emanating from the High-Level Panel and the UN Secretary-General's March 2005 report follow a decade of humanitarian interventions and peacebuilding initiatives in Africa. The first African UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, published *An Agenda For Peace* in 1992, which argued forcefully for humanitarian intervention and advocated the use of regional security arrangements to lighten the UN's heavy peacekeeping burden.<sup>11</sup> The current UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, enhanced his predecessor's efforts and promoted humanitarian intervention and the idea of "sovereignty as responsibility". This concept was developed by former UN Under-Secretary-General Francis Deng and his colleagues to address the changing nature of armed conflicts and instability in the post-Cold War era.<sup>12</sup>

11 See, for example, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: United Nations, 1992); Elizabeth M. Cousens and Chetan Kumar (eds.), *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2001); and Thomas Franck, "A Holistic Approach to Building Peace", in Olara Otunnu and Michael Doyle (eds.), *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, (Lanham, New York, Boulder and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1998).

12 See Francis M. Deng et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1996).





Mr Sebastian von Einsiedel, United Nations Secretariat, New York, left; Ambassador John Hirsch, International Peace Academy, New York; Ambassador Gerard Corr, Embassy of Ireland, Pretoria

The UN High-Level Panel report adopted the ideas of the Canadian-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) on the “responsibility to protect” which argued that, if governments are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens from serious harm, then the international community has a duty to protect them, ignoring the principle of non-intervention for a greater good.<sup>13</sup> The High-Level Panel report argued that while state sovereignty must be upheld, the definition of sovereignty must be extended to include the state’s responsibility to protect its population. The report therefore proposed the creation of stronger human rights mechanisms, the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, and the creation of stand-by reserves of peacekeepers and civilian police in order to prevent future human rights abuses, as occurred in Rwanda.

The Cape Town policy advisory group noted that this promotion of humanitarian intervention and the concept of “sovereignty as responsibility” have elicited opposition from some of the continent’s leaders. It was feared that such interventions could potentially allow powerful members of the UN’s Security Council to intervene in countries without a clear legal mandate, as the US did in Iraq. The African Union has reiterated the High-Level Panel and Secretary-General’s call for states to protect their citizens in its determination to move from “non-intervention” to “non-indifference”. However, the AU has also stated that the use of force should comply with the provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter which authorises the use of force only in cases of legitimate self-defence.

<sup>13</sup> See *The Responsibility to Protect*, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. (Ottawa: International Development Research Council, 2001)

The Cape Town meeting recognised that the UN, at times in conjunction with regional actors, had implemented a number of humanitarian initiatives in the last decade, and had been integral in peacemaking efforts. It was, however, argued that any new international “humanitarian” intervention dispensation would require greater African input and requires western policymakers to recognise Africa’s views, interests and realities. It was also noted that African governments, particularly following the inauguration of the African Union in Durban, South Africa, in 2002 and agreement to condemn unconstitutional transfers of power, have been more amenable to humanitarian intervention in Africa. However, many leaders still fear that such interventions, from non-African governments outside of a UN mandate, could be a threat to their sovereignty. Participants urged the UN to recognise the AU’s norms for humanitarian intervention: the Constitutive Act of the AU allows intervention in the event of genocide, war crimes and threats to regional stability. With the Rwandan example in mind, advisory group members further emphasised that the pre-eminent responsibility for halting genocide and other gross violations of human rights rests with the UN and that the organisation should honour this obligation within the framework of the UN Charter.



Mr Nicholas Coghlan, Canadian High Commission, Cape Town, left; Mr Leon Levy, Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCR Chairman), Cape Town

Often seen as related to humanitarian intervention, peacebuilding has been mooted as a potential method to avert such interventions. Examples of peacebuilding in the post-Cold War era include UN missions in Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Haiti, Mozambique, Namibia and Somalia, where efforts have been made to promote a more holistic approach to peace. Not only are the more usual diplomatic and military tools employed in building peace, but attention has also been given to the political, social and economic consequences of civil war in an effort to address both the causes and effects of conflicts. Peacebuilding is therefore intended to create not only political peace, but also social peace and the redress of potential causes of further conflict.

Both the UN High-Level Panel and the UN Secretary-General's March 2005 report have supported the establishment of an inter-governmental Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office within the UN secretariat in New York. The Commission's task would be to improve UN post-conflict planning and to ensure financing as well as to improve the co-ordination of UN bodies with other key regional actors. The Commission's intention is to address the "gaping hole" in the UN system created by the lack of sufficient mechanisms to assist transitions from war to peace. The Commission would relate both to the UN Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and would engage the participation of international financial institutions. The Peacebuilding Commission has won the widest support among UN member states, and many feel that it may be one of the very few High-Level Panel recommendations that will be implemented in the end.

The UN currently has five peacebuilding support offices, two of which are in Africa. The first UN peacebuilding office was established in Liberia after its 1997 election. The responsibilities of the UN's current peacebuilding offices in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic are to establish law and order (through demobilisation, disarmament, reintegration and security sector reform) and to establish viable economic and governance institutions.

At the Cape Town meeting, it was noted that, while the High-Level Panel report claimed to want to address the security concerns of all states, its definition of "humanitarian intervention" under the rubric of the "responsibility to protect" could fuel further divisions in the international system. One of the key recommendations of the Cape Town meeting was that international rules to govern the use of force should be balanced and equitable. The policy advisory group emphasised the need for UN reform to be implemented only after full consultation with all stakeholders.

While it was argued that preventative action and peacemaking are of central importance to Africa, the recommendations of the High-Level Panel seemed to centre more on post-conflict peacebuilding. This, to some extent, reflects political reality as a majority of developing countries at the UN have subsequently forced the Peacebuilding Commission to avoid conflict prevention for fear their own governments may be targeted. The Cape Town advisory group considered methods to implement the recommendations of the High-Level Panel in this area. It was further noted that the successes and failures of past UN reforms should be taken into account when formulating new initiatives.

The Cape Town meeting also posited that the record of UN peacebuilding has been mixed. The UN has had to face a number of competing interests driven by complex political dynamics in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic. One of the greatest problems of peacebuilding in Africa is the reluctance of the international community to provide substantial resources to African countries emerging from conflict. For example, while \$1.8 billion was

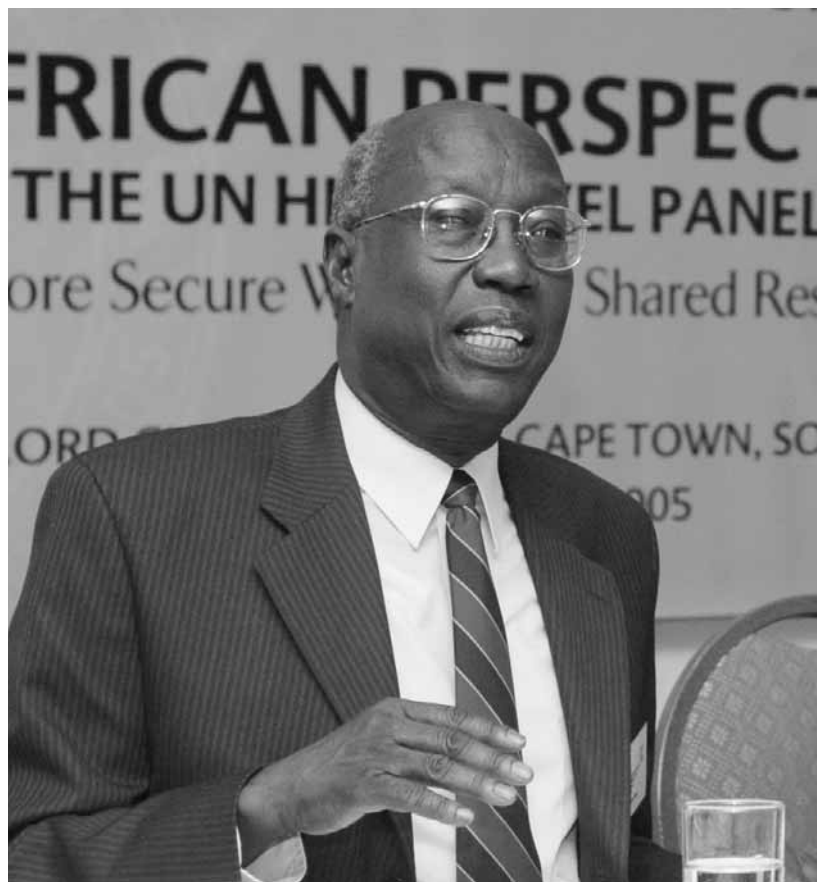
pledged to the reconstruction of the Balkans in 2000, only \$150 million was promised to post-war Sierra Leone. Further, the majority of the estimated \$5 billion spent by the UN in Sierra Leone has gone towards UN peacekeeping rather than investment in Sierra Leone's recovery. Widespread scepticism was, therefore, expressed regarding the prospects for the Peacebuilding Commission to mobilise sufficient resources for African cases.



Ambassador Hagar Islambouly, Embassy of Egypt, Pretoria, left; Ambassador James Jonah, Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, New York

## 2.6 Tackling Security Threats: Terrorism, HIV/AIDS and International Organised Crime

Three key security threats identified in the UN High-Level Panel report of December 2004 and the UN Secretary-General's report of March 2005 were: terrorism, HIV/AIDS and international organised crime. Since the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., "terrorism" has become the major pre-occupation of the US and some western states, shaping their security agenda. The UN High-Level Panel has attempted to adopt a consensus on the definition of "terrorism" and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has urged member states to conclude a comprehensive convention to combat terrorism before December 2005, as well as an international convention to suppress acts of nuclear terrorism.



Professor Francis Deng, School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC

The policy advisory group recognised that terrorism remains a contested concept and that it is fuelled by a number of factors including inequality, discrimination and repression. While the concern of some western states over terrorism was acknowledged, it was noted that in Africa, human insecurity remains the key pre-occupation. Poverty and its consequences in terms of health, life expectancy and instability are more obvious concerns for both governments and citizens. It was, however, noted that in the post-11 September 2001 global environment, polarisation has developed between those states adopting measures to promote an anti-terrorist stance and those that champion the goals of the Group of 77 (G-77) developing countries at the UN urging that the root causes of terrorism be addressed. The establishment of a US military base in Djibouti in 2002 and the swift passing of anti-terrorism legislation by some African governments without much public debate has been criticised for giving certain governments too much power. Terrorism, rather than the communist threat of the Cold War era, is impacting directly on the distribution of development funding and this, in turn, could adversely affect the implementation of the High-Level Panel report's recommendations.



Ms Cecilia Lwiindi Nedziwe, Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa, Harare; General Henry Anyidoho, former UN Deputy Force Commander and UN Mission Chief of Staff, Rwanda

It was argued that international terrorism can only be effectively tackled through a multilateral and holistic approach and not through military unilateralism which seeks to impose democracy through the barrel of a gun. Thus the root causes of terrorism must be tackled and not just its symptoms. Some participants argued that there was a potential for Africa to use the current Northern approach to terrorist threats as leverage for raising attention over developmental concerns. Although poverty is not a direct cause of terrorism, factors such as limited economic opportunities and the absence of strong governing institutions may result in exploitable conditions for those seeking to recruit members to terrorist causes. This situation could be used by governments to demand direct economic assistance from the rich North in order to prevent the conditions that could potentially promote terrorism. Other participants questioned the efficacy of such an approach, and noted that Africa must remain committed to democratic governance and establish a stable economic environment conducive to promoting economic growth and attracting foreign investment.

Large segments of Africa's population and national armies are currently afflicted by HIV/AIDS and, thus, the disease has major implications for national and human security on the continent. The disease is the leading killer of the adult population in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 25 million adults and children infected. AIDS has been responsible for the death of nearly 20 million Africans over the last two decades. The High-Level Panel report articulates the emerging consensus that security, development and human rights, including the health of people, are inextricably linked. The report notes the "shockingly late and shamefully ill-resourced" global response to HIV/AIDS, and calls on the international community to recognise the imperative to act. The High-Level Panel report further identifies the state as critical to ensuring collective security and thus articulates concern that HIV/AIDS may undermine state capacity. The report also calls for initiatives to rebuild global public health capacities. Participants at the Cape Town meeting argued that it was crucial that Africans become part of debates on HIV/AIDS, which have tended to be dominated by western scholars and policymakers, in order to construct local solutions to the pandemic.

The policy advisory group also noted that while the High-Level Panel report recommends the creation of new institutions and reforms to address "hard" threats such as terrorism, it does not create any obligations for governments to fulfil their commitments to combating "soft" threats such as poverty and infectious diseases. The report urges governments to reduce trade barriers, increase aid and provide debt relief, but without any new innovative ideas for ensuring compliance by the rich North. Some participants also noted that while the report calls for building the capacity of Africa's health infrastructure, it fails to suggest any initiatives for financing the social and development sectors of poor countries. Calls were made for African governments to be assisted in strengthening domestic health infrastructure and in promoting anti-AIDS campaigns.

Transnational crime was also identified by the High-Level Panel report as a factor in the erosion of human security and in undermining the ability of some states to maintain law and order. Organised criminal networks impede development, undermine governance and criminal justice systems, and fuel and extend civil conflicts on the continent. Criminal organisations earn an estimated \$300-500 billion annually from drug trafficking, but currently there is little co-operation among states in tackling international criminal syndicates. International agencies have failed to act in unison, and many states have not complied with international treaties.

Currently, in many African countries, transnational organised crime poses a more immediate and serious threat to human security than does terrorism. The UN High-Level Panel report has suggested a number of methods to combat organised crime, including greater support for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; an international convention on money-laundering; and the signing and ratification by states of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. The report also suggested strengthening the international sanctions regime, as well as the legal, administrative, policing and border-control capacity of member states to implement sanctions.

The policy advisory group noted that transnational organised crime is an area that can be addressed, provided that the necessary political will and international support are forthcoming. It was noted that the High-Level Panel report's recommendation for the establishment of "a robust capacity-building mechanism for rule-of-law assistance" could only adequately address these issues if it is directly linked to a concerted effort for greater co-ordination of international initiatives. Emphasis should be placed on increased co-ordination in providing technical and development assistance to strengthen criminal justice systems in Africa, and not only on the establishment of yet another fund. Suggestions on how to tackle the problem included the proper adoption and implementation of the concept of "collective security", implementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, and encouraging international support to strengthen the rule of law in Africa.



Rapporteurs Dr Helen Scanlon, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, left;  
Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town



## 2.7 The Millennium Development Goals: Meeting Africa's Special Needs

The UN's Millennium Development Goals of September 2000 sought to generate international co-operation on security, the eradication of poverty, as well as to promote development. The goals set out to meet Africa's special needs in five key areas: the support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); strengthening democratic governance; building peacekeeping capacity in conjunction with Africa's regional organisations; promoting sustainable development; and developing partnerships to combat HIV/AIDS.<sup>14</sup> These goals are framed with specific targets, including halving poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education and gender equality; and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS – all to be achieved by 2015.

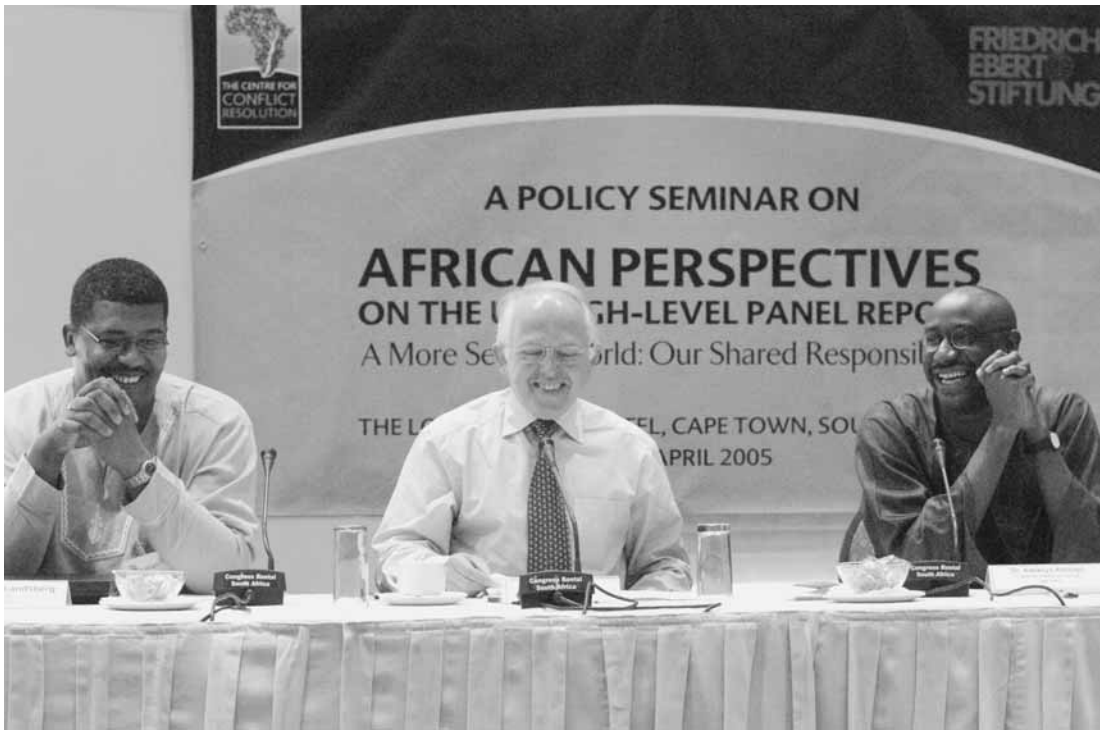
The Cape Town advisory group meeting emphasised the importance of development to security. It welcomed the High-Level Panel's articulation of human security concerns in relation to the need to eradicate poverty in Africa. The High-Level Panel reported that in most of sub-Saharan Africa, poverty affects security in a number of ways, including escalating ethnic and regional inequalities, the spread of disease, and increasing food insecurity.<sup>15</sup> Several members of the advisory group noted that the High-Level Panel addressed the fact that international institutions and UN member states have not sufficiently co-ordinated efforts to address problems of development, and that existing strategies are fragmented, under-resourced and inadequate. Commitment is urgently needed from all states to provide adequate resources and to implement sound development policies.

The UN Secretary-General's March 2005 report calls for the implementation of development initiatives based on mutual responsibility and accountability. The developmental consensus reached at the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, both in 2002, was significant. Members of the Cape Town advisory group noted that this commitment, along with subsequent bilateral and multilateral agreements reached between rich and poor countries to implement NEPAD, reduce the debt burden for highly-indebted poor countries (the HIPC initiative), and finance the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, have failed to produce concrete results. The UN Secretary-General's call on the rich world to undertake efforts to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA) and to move toward 100 percent debt cancellation are of utmost importance in this regard. Several participants also agreed that completion of the Doha round of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations, aimed at reducing agricultural and other subsidies, no later than 2006 would indicate that rich countries are genuinely committed to increasing the ability of African states to develop economically.

During discussions on poverty and economic development, possible explanations for Africa's slow progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals were examined. It was suggested that the challenges of reaching the MDGs should be observed within the context of African economies. During the post-independence era, between 1960 and 1975, many African countries were able to invest in human capital and livelihoods. These investments in social welfare coincided with activist government policies which protected local industries. Following the 1973 oil crisis, African governments accepted massive loans which ultimately resulted in a debt crisis that is currently crippling Africa's capacity to invest in the educational, social and health infrastructure necessary for achieving the MDGs. The orthodoxy of the Washington Consensus represented by the World Bank and the

<sup>14</sup> UN General Assembly, A56/326, 6 September 2001, p.5.

<sup>15</sup> *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, p.25.



Dr Chris Landsberg, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, left; Ambassador Torben Brylle, Embassy of Denmark, Pretoria; Dr Adekeye Adebajo, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment policies has also undermined investment in social capital in many African countries. It was noted that over 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live on less than one US dollar a day. These important narratives have been largely omitted from both the High-Level Panel report and Kofi Annan's March 2005 report.

During the Cape Town policy meeting, attention was drawn to Africa's external debt, the principal of which, it was argued, had already been paid, though the continent continues to finance the never-ending interest on this debt. It was noted that the UN Secretary-General report's calls for debt cancellation must be urgently implemented. Some participants called for African governments to renege on these debts and to do so in unison. The recent calls by the Nigerian parliament for the government to stop paying its external debt was noted. Between 2002 and 2004, Nigeria paid 3.5 billion pounds in debt service, but its debt burden increased by a further 3.9 billion pounds.<sup>16</sup> Others urged African leaders to play a role in pushing for debt relief, the conclusion of the WTO's Doha round of negotiations, the removal of trade barriers, and increased overseas development assistance.

16 *The Guardian*, "Nigeria at Risk of 17 billion Pound Default", 26 April 2005.

## 2.8 Strategies for Disseminating African Perspectives on the UN High-Level Panel

Strategies to disseminate some of the ideas that emerged during the Cape Town policy advisory group meeting both locally and internationally were regarded as critical. It was also seen as necessary to raise awareness and knowledge within the continent about the UN and its relationship with Africa. In this respect, the UN Secretary-General's March 2005 report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals presents a further opportunity to determine and disseminate African priorities for development. The forthcoming Group of Eight industrialised countries (G-8) meeting to be held in the United Kingdom in July 2005, as well as the General Assembly summit in September 2005 to review implementation of the MDGs, will demonstrate whether or not rich and powerful countries have taken on the spirit of the High-Level Panel report and are willing to fulfill their obligations to create an international political and economic environment that will enable African governments to move more rapidly towards achieving security and fulfilling the MDGs by 2015.

Throughout the policy advisory meeting in Cape Town, a number of core debates centred on the articulation of voices from Africa. These opinions, emanating from civil society, governments, sub-regional organisations and the African Union, should be incorporated into the process of UN reform, particularly if the UN is to play an effective role in Africa's development, democratisation and conflict management efforts. Members of the advisory group emphasised the importance of articulating a common African position and noted that the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus, agreed to by member states in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 2005, could represent the start of forging such a position. The advisory group also agreed that the report of its Cape Town meeting should be presented in African capitals, as well as in New York and other western policy centres, as a matter of urgency. To this end, a policy forum was held in New York in May 2005, during which the UN community was presented the main debates and recommendations from the Cape Town meeting. Further meetings are planned in Africa and Europe.

A tension between the pressure for Africa to scrutinise itself, and to ensure that African interests are reflected at a global level, was noted. It was suggested that African academics, civil society activists and regional organisations must regain their voice in the international community. Wider continental publicity must be given to the High-Level Panel report and Kofi Annan's March 2005 report in order to promote deeper understanding and greater activism about the region's relationship with the UN and the broader international community. African NGOs, intellectuals and policymakers were urged to increase public awareness and support for the findings of the report. This is necessary to ensure that all governments commit to an improved international system that will better protect the entire international community, particularly the world's most vulnerable populations in Africa.