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

By Amanda Lucey

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

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

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

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

Globally, the world has seen less inter-state conflict, but there has been an increase in intra-state conflict. Trends suggest the African continent is slowly becoming more peaceful a handful of countries suffer from high levels of political violence including Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, South Sudan, Nigeria and Libya. The resurgence of conflict in addition to new conflicts in many parts of Africa suggests that that peace must be a priority for any new agendas, including that of SSC. The importance of peace in Africa is reflected by the African Union's Agenda 2063 that has aspirations for a 'peaceful and secure Africa' as well as an 'Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.

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

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

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

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

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

This is also observed more specifically in Africa. As previously mentioned, Agenda 2063's seven aspirations focus on peace and development as mutually reinforcing. In May 2018 the UNOSSC and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) held a workshop which stressed the importance of the APRM, a voluntary review by member states on governance issues, as an innovation in SSC that also allowed for monitoring and reporting.

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

Elsewhere on the continent, Ghana has shared experiences of the establishment of its Peace Council, Sierra Leone and Liberia compared experiences of their Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and Kenya enabled study tours of its constitutional reform committee to name just a few examples of SSC activities in the field of peace and security. In 2017, consultations with stakeholders from the government of Botswana and civil society organisations stated the need for Botswana to include peace and security in its SSC strategy.

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

Firstly, the sustaining peace agenda calls for more effective conflict prevention. This idea has also been further unpacked by a joint UN and World Bank Study Pathways to Peace. Other global policy circles have also emphasised the importance of the principle of the responsibility to protect which aims to 'narrow the gap between Member States' pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.' Member states

signed up to this resolution in 2005, which makes provision for the international community to encourage Member States to exercise this responsibility and stresses the responsibility of the international community to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means to avert conflict. It allows for collective action to be taken should peaceful means be inadequate.

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

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

Finally, while sustaining peace in increasingly recognised as employing a multi stakeholder approach, southern narratives on peace and security have increasingly been accused of placing a large emphasis on the securitisation of societies. This has been the case in Africa where governments such as Ethiopia, South Africa and Tanzania have increasingly restricted internet freedoms. Such efforts are directly at odds with multi-stakeholder approaches as they limit the amount of information and responsibility that civil society and other stakeholders are given.

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

- Consider the linkages between peace and development and their relevance for SSC
- Establish similarities between sustaining peace and SSC that can promote synergies between different frameworks
- Unpack conceptual and implementation challenges between sustaining peace and SSC principles
- Develop an understanding of what an emphasis on regionalisation means in the context of conflict prevention
- Establish areas in which technical exchanges on peace and security should be focussed
- Promote a multi-stakeholder approach that ensures fundamental freedoms for everyone

About NeST Africa

The past decade has generated growing interest and debate on the role of emerging economies and Southern partners in global development. It has also demonstrated tensions in the integration of new development players in the global aid effectiveness regimes, originally spearheaded by the OECD-DAC donors, as witnessed for example in international development cooperation conferences such as Busan HLF4 (2011) and Mexico HLM (2014). Despite some efforts to address knowledge gaps and to develop appropriate platforms for the exchange of knowledge, such as the Delhi Conference of Southern Providers (2013), limited understanding and evidence continues to exist on the role and contribution of Southern partners in global development.

Against this background the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) was established on the fringes of the Mexico High Level Meeting (HLM) in March 2014. This network of development cooperation experts and academics from the global South was formed in order to generate, systematise, consolidate and share knowledge on South-South Cooperation (SSC) approaches in international development. The executive group of NeST met in Beijing in November 2014 to finalise the governance arrangements, and to draw up the work plan, which included an ambitious agenda of methodology development, empirical research, capacity development, improvement of data and M&E systems, knowledge sharing and policy support to Southern development agencies. While some of the plans of NeST remain global in nature, many of the activities are to be further elaborated and implemented by the various national and regional chapters of the network. In 2015 the South African chapter of NeST was established.

NeST Africa's aim is to generate evidence, understanding and systematised knowledge on South Africa and African development cooperation, and how this relates to approaches of other Southern providers and traditional donors operating on the African continent. This paper is a result of meetings held on 4 April 2018 and from 12-13 June 2018, which brought African stakeholders together to discuss the key priority areas that civil society identify as important for feeding into the discussion on BAPA+40.

Select participants agreed to develop a number of papers on specific thematic areas that would be submitted to the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation in the lead-up to BAPA+40. These include: 1) definitions 2) monitoring and evaluation 3) civil society's role in BAPA+40 and 4) peace and security.