

Migration, Peace and Security: What Role for CSOs?

9 - 10 October 2019

Gorée Institute, Dakar



Concept Note

Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEF-UNECA), and Gorée Institute Multi-Stakeholder Forum

Introduction

The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and the Gorée Institute are joint organizing a two-days multi-stakeholder dialogue on the theme “**Role of CSOs to Promote Regional Integration in the Nexus of Migration and Free Movement of People**”.

Background

The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa (Tana Forum) aims at bridging the gap between policy making and policy implementation by bringing together Heads of State and Government, experts, prominent personalities, leaders of international and regional institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, eminent scholars, academics and socially engaged youth to discuss timely issues in a spirit of commonality and moral duty towards finding solutions to peace and security challenging facing the continent. The informal nature of the Forum lends a different approach to discussing security issues on the continent. The Forum is not intended to deliver official declarations; instead, it is stimulated by the desire to engage in fresh, candid and in-depth discussions on pressing peace and security issues to produce innovative ideas and open new windows of opportunities for solutions.

In its 8th edition, the Tana Forum discussed “**Political Dynamics in the Horn of Africa: Nurturing the Emerging Peace Trends**” on 3-4 May 2019 in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. National and regional stability in the Horn of Africa (HoA) is of paramount importance to the region's peace and security agenda, serving as vital components of sustainable development objectives across the region. Among the various topics raised and discussed, the situation regarding migration and free movement of people in Africa and beyond emerged as an issue that requires deeper discussions and engagement with civil society institutions. This is the backdrop to the dialogue that will take place on 9-10 October 2019 in Dakar, Senegal in order to garner experiences and perspectives from CSOs and stakeholders active in this field.

Rationale

Africa is often seen as a continent of mass migration and displacement caused by poverty, violent conflict, and environmental stress. People migrate for complex reasons, including violent conflict, political oppression, family ties abroad, search for a better life, and environmental degradation among other reasons. As the world experiences migration in asymmetrical proportions, many states are increasingly devising strategies to keep their borders closed for fear of socio-cultural, political and economic ‘threats’. Migrants are also perceived as a threat to national security, causing destination countries to respond by putting in place measures to protect their borders and prevent them from entering. Other countries are more concerned with the local labour market competition and stress on the welfare system on already overstretched budgets. While migration, be it regular, irregular or forced, is not new, its governance is evidently at a crossroads in view of how it is increasingly impacting sovereignty, asylum, security, development, social welfare, border governance, health, trade, tourism, remittances, transnational crimes, mobility, racism, discrimination, xenophobic attacks, integration, and human rights issues.

Though the African Union (AU) and member states have adopted a far reaching and progressive policy framework on free movement across the continent known as the Free Movement Protocol, it has yet to be fully embraced and adopted. There is the lack of an accommodating and strategic approach that can protect the human rights of migrants and refugees in countries of destination, transit and origin and also cultivate an environment where countries benefit from migration. The absence of dialogue between and among stakeholders, including state, non-state and external actors such as Member States, the AU and regional organizations, have further contributed to this challenge.

On January 2012, the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU confirmed the decision to embark on the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017. 55 African economies will be brought together under this free trade agreement, forming a trading bloc composed of a gross

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domestic product worth USD \$3.4 trillion and a population of more than one billion people. This agreement creates the foundation for a single continental market for goods and services with the free movement of business persons and investments. This further serves as the groundwork for the creation of the Continental Customs Union and the African Customs Union. The CFTA's goal of deepening economic integration and African continental integration in turn requires the free movement of people. The 1991 Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community is predicated on this requirement. Various decisions and instruments of the African Union, including Agenda 2063 and the July 2016 decision of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU in the 27th Ordinary Session held in Kigali, also recognize free movement of people as a crucial element of continental integration.

The Continental Free Trade Agreement will constitute the largest free trade area in the world. However, the intentions to create the favourable free trade conditions for goods and services between the 55 African countries could also impact their state of peace and security. The CFTA aims to provide stakeholders across various industries with the opportunity for large-scale production and access to continental market inputs both in terms of natural and human resources. The free movement of people in the CFTA includes the rights of entry, residence, and establishment in a country other than one's own. The free movement of people and the increase in economic opportunities allows for increased employment among disenfranchised youth for example, which in turn has positive impacts on halting the spread of violence.

Nevertheless, the free movement of people is not a simple matter to accept, particularly for the host (and transit) states, and the reluctance thereof is not without merit. In fact, it is expected that states would be particularly concerned about the political and security repercussions of opening up borders to 'foreigners', as people moving from one state to another can bring opportunities, but also threats. People carry their cultural and social values (both negatively and positively perceived by others), knowledge, skills and talents that would hugely contribute to the betterment of host states. Similarly, they may also bring threats that would erode national and human securities. Communicable diseases (like Ebola), terrorist organizations and criminal groups (such as human, arms and drug traffickers) may pose potential and actual security threats.

Like the recent backlash against migrants in Europe, people who move to other states may also be subjected to institutionalized discrimination and xenophobic attacks. It is also important to acknowledge that security concerns are not evenly distributed among states and across the continent. There are variations in terms of vulnerabilities and threat perceptions as well as preparedness and capabilities to respond to actual and potential threats. Hence, it is imperative to be cognizant of variations in terms vulnerabilities, threat perceptions, and capabilities to respond thereof. However, as indicated in the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council's 661st meeting, held on 23 February 2017, the benefits of free movement of people "outweigh the real and potential security challenges...that may be perceived or generated".

It is widely acknowledged that without the presence of empowered and effective civil society groups, it will be difficult for the African continent to ensure stability, socio-economic growth and sustainable development on the continent. Engaging civil society organizations (CSOs) is key for successful regional integration.¹ Civil society engagement in regional integration processes completes the wider policy to work closely with multi-regional stakeholders separate from the government in fostering partnerships and ensuring efficient service delivery.² The number of civil society organizations functioning at regional levels and influencing decision-making processes has flourished, as they play an important role as intermediaries between state, non-state actors, and communities.³

1 Mrisho Malipula & Miraji Kitigwa, Strengthening Civil Society Organisations' Participation in Regional Integration: An Experiential Search for East African Community Adoption, <http://www.academia.edu/7291118>

2 Michael W. Oyugi, Role Of Civil Society Organization In Promoting Regional Integration In Africa: A Case Study Of East African Community, University Of Nairobi, Institute Of Diplomacy And International Studies, A Research Project Submitted In Partial Fulfilment For Award Of The Degree Of Master Of Arts In International Studies., 2015,

3 Id.

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Goals and Objectives

The proposed dialogue seeks to explore migration and free movement of people in the nexus of regional integration, address the pros and cons of this discourse, and recommend practical operable recommendations for the AU, Member States, RECs/RMs and other stakeholders working on the topic and related areas.

The specific objectives include:

- Assess the situation of migration and displacement in Africa and challenges posed;
- Discuss strategic approaches that protect the human rights of migrants and refugees in countries of destination, transit, and origin;
- Identify the critical role of CSOs on the topic.

Expected Outputs

These include:

- An outcomes document to be shared with peace, security and other stakeholders;
- Coverage of the dialogue proceedings on IPSS and Tana social media platforms;
- Political dialogue between States, RECs and the AU on how to address the issues of migration and migrants;
- Sustainable and practical policy recommendations targeting the role of CSOs in addressing the challenges facing the free movement of people.

Proposed Approach

The format of the dialogue will comprise of expert political and technical consultations resulting in practical recommendations and networking opportunities for stakeholders working in the field of regional integration, migration and CFTA.

Participants Profile

Participants will include representatives from AU Member States, AUC, RECs/RMs, experts, civil society, academics as well as development partners.

Date and Venue

The tripartite IPSS-IDEP-Goree Multi-Stakeholder Forum will take place on 9 and 10 October 2019 at the Gorée Institute, Dakar, Senegal.