



DENIS & LENORA  
FORETIA foundation



CONCEPT NOTE



# NKAUFU AFRICA FORUM

**Human Security and Strategic  
Peacebuilding for Sustainable  
Development in Africa**



## 1 - BACKGROUND

The global incidence of violent conflicts and insecurity is considered one of the most urgent development problems in the world today. In theory, most people and institutions around the world welcome and support the vision of security and a violent free world for sustainable peace and sustainable development. Sadly, however, it remains elusive, especially in many parts of Africa that are still inundated with problems of security, violent conflicts, and wars. Cycles of the financial crisis, pandemics such as COVID-19, natural disasters, enduring and escalating violent conflicts and wars, terrorism, injustice, food insecurity, have not only brought havoc to the peace and security of nation-states but have resulted in disastrous consequences for the survival, well-being, and dignity of individuals across national boundaries in Africa and beyond. So far, opinions differ regarding the character of progress made to instil peace and security in the African continent, especially by warding off the dark history of militarisation in the face of conflicts from the 1960s and 1980s. Apparently, in embracing the democratisation processes from the 1990s, and taking into consideration the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030; and AU's Agenda 2063, to 'Silence the Guns'; militarisation appears a favoured approach for many African governments in conflicts situations. However, experience in many parts

of Africa has revealed that extensive deficits exist in the

militaristic approach or again state-centric approach to security and peacebuilding, especially with the increasing asymmetric violent conflicts involving state security forces and violent extremist groups.

In addition to the human and financial costs, one of the criticisms that have been raised in the literature about the militaristic approach to managing societal conflict is that it does not address the underlying reasons for why people engaged in violent conflicts in the first place (the epicentre of the conflict). Instead, it focuses on the symptoms (the conflict episode) of much deeper and more complex structural factor that is at the root of the 'violent' conflict. It is therefore not surprising that states emerging from the war in many parts of Africa (and other countries in fragile situations fragile states) also frequently relapse into war. Moreover, in today's interconnected world, the concept of security extends well beyond the traditional analysis of the military actions/ state-centric approach to security and diplomatic policies of the nation-state, to embrace the human security concept.

Human security is an important component of the global political and development agenda. It encompasses firstly, the protection

of individuals as a strategic concern for national as well as international security; secondly, it spells out that the security conditions for people's development are not bound to traditional matters of national defence, law, and order, but rather encompass all political, economic and social issues enabling a life free from want, fear and humiliation... Human security does not seek to supplant state security, but rather to complement it. Such a holistic approach has the potential of contributing to more resilient societies where people are safe from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence, and repression, and protected from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives.

Being strategic in peacebuilding initiatives mean new approaches to increase the prospects for peacebuilding success, which right now hover around 30%, especially in Africa. Thus, in the context of the theme of this forum, strategic peacebuilding is a holistic and conscious effort that covers a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current, or post-conflict situations in Africa and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of lasting and sustainable peace and sustainable

development. Hence, in developing the theme for this forum, we are motivated by the assumption that if the world nations and leaders collaboratively focus on enabling human security in the peacebuilding and development process, they have a chance of meeting their citizens' aspirations for security and peace, thereby contributing towards a peaceful and equitable society and by extension also contributing to sustainable development goals (especially SDG 16 which focuses on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development 'for all' by 2030).

Hence, some fundamental questions that will inform the discussions are:

1. What are the pitfalls of the preference by African governments of a purely militaristic/state centric approach to security in the Continent?
2. How can human security and peacebuilding principles be strategically integrated into peacebuilding programming for the effectiveness of peace and development projects?
3. What role can human security and strategic peacebuilding play in enabling sustainable peace for sustainable development in Africa?

## 2 - OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM

The main objective of this Nkafu-Africa Forum is to discuss strategies to advocate and promote the investment in human security and strategic peacebuilding for sustainable peace and development in Africa. More specifically discussions will focus on:

- The need to promote human security and strategic peacebuilding in Africa;
- The challenges of promoting human security in Africa;
- Building synergies in advocating

and promoting human security as a means of violent conflict prevention;

- Creating a meaningful nexus between national security or human security.
- The need to take a holistic approach to human security and peacebuilding work and examine what the analytical and policy implications would be of looking at contemporary security threats in Africa from an inclusive and human-centred perspective.

## 3 - TARGET AUDIENCE

The event targets peace and security experts, policymakers, academics, researchers, international organizations, and regional bodies

including the UN, the AU and the RECs as well as members of civil society.

## 4 - EVENT FORMAT

The event will be hybrid, streamed live on the Foretia Foundation's social media platforms, with panel discussions comprised of senior

policymakers, diplomats, peace, and security practitioners from Africa and around the world.

## 5 - THEMES OF THE PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATE

• **High level panel discussion (Hybrid session)** : The deficits of a purely militaristic approach to security and the need to promote the Human Security approach for Sustainable Peace in Africa

- **Session 1 (Hybrid session):** The contribution of health and environmental security in promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa.
- **Session 2 (Hybrid session):** Assessing the role of political, and

economic security in enhancing peacebuilding in Africa

- **Session 3 (Hybrid session):** Prioritizing human-centred security or State-centred security in Africa?

• **Public Debate : (Hybrid session):**

What would be the analytical and policy implications of looking at contemporary threats to security in Africa from an inclusive and human-centred perspective?

## 6 - EXPECTED OUTCOME

It is expected that the forum will produce actionable evidence-based policy recommendations that can be used by the RECs and the AU's APSA and/or other bodies when adopting

a definitive innovative policy in guaranteeing peace and security in Africa.



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