

PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

ROAD MAP
TO WORLD
PEACE

*D*iplomacy is a constructive way of dealing with issues between two or more persons, and it goes on to finding relevance in groups, societies, nations, and even world organizations. It is simply choosing a part of dialogue instead of confrontation and peace instead of war to resolve issues. Over a period of time, experience has taught humanity that prevention is better than cure. In other words, the cost of prevention is far cheaper than the cost of curing or trying to bring to an end something. Prevention, no matter the level of application, is always the best alternative.



War is easy to escalate but hard to deescalate. In some cases, prevention is a matter of choice and choices are made based on factors such as foresight and the readiness and know-how to combat a situation or keep it from happening. It follows therefore also that failure to prevent can be due to ignorance and the lack of knowledge on how to prevent crises or situations in some instances.

Now, looking at governance and the place of prevention, we reckon with different levels which can be classified into local, national and international, and the higher the level, the higher also is the required level of responsible intervention.

Prevention at the local level has the same benefit as it is with the national or international levels. No matter at what level, it is cost effective and a wise decision to make. The problem of governance begins from the lowest to the highest and constitutes a chain of both actions and reactions. It is essentially the problem of leadership and failure on the part of both the leaders and the led to live up to the terms of the social contract.

Looking at the interconnectedness of the various governments from local, national, and international, it becomes crystal clear that a failure at one level of governance affects the other levels of governance adversely. For in-

stance, if things are not going on well at the local level, reactions to the leaders at that level create tensions and that situation spills up to the next level of government, which is the national, and it continues to the international. So until there is peace at the local level, there can be no peace at the national and the international levels.

The activities of the international organizations, prominent among which are the African Union and the United Nations, are brought under review, and on the backdrop of what their aims and objectives are.

The topmost priorities of the African Union and the United Nations are both security by preventing and ending conflicts among the member nations, and these objectives are outlined in the charters of the two organizations, but suffice it to say that evidences on ground are not in favor of the two organizations with regard to the work of conflict prevention. So many African countries have witnessed coup attempts and coups between 2010 and the present, and some of these include Niger, Mali, Central African Republic, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Tunisia, Guinea, and with the most recent of the coups in Burkina Faso.

What is worrisome about these coups is the fact that all the countries affected are all in democracy. Similarly, there was none of the coups that the United Nations did not condemn, and where necessary provided humanitarian assistance that is worth millions of dollars.

Can't these coups be prevented? If the answer is no, then that means the United States, which is the symbol and custodian of democracy, needs to step up. Democracy is all about the people and where the people are in the center, dividends of democracy flow freely and easily to them. People don't revolt against enjoyment. Agencies of the United Nations that are spread all over the globe, especially in Africa, are laid-back in their responsibilities in preventive diplomacy. Quick intervention in matters of human rights abuses in member countries of the United Nations, especially those that are developing and have witnessed coups, will have served as a stitch in time that saves nine.

It is understandable that intervention from the United Nations into crises in continents like Africa are carried out to the original agencies, but what is on ground is not different from a dog that barks but which cannot bite.

Unprevented world situations in the African continent, with its alarming frequency and consistency, have painted a picture of the United Nations as a crisis management organization instead of a conflict preventing and ending organization.

Most of the outcries of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, both past and present, at conferences and the UN General Assemblies that sound like a duplicated version of the outcries of the representatives of the member nations, make one begin to wonder if there is any difference between the Office of the Secretary-General in terms of capacity and power from what the member states represent in the United Nations. The Secretaries-General themselves appear as helpless but hopeful. They talk tough but with no guarantee of having the solutions in their hands.

One of the factors that makes the failure on the part of relevant government agencies to prevent conflict look like it is deliberate is the lack of trust among the member states of the United Nations. It is understandable that with the African Union, there are underlying problems of economy and insecurity and this has, to a large extent, weakened the capacity of the organization. The lack of capacity accounts for incessant coups in the continent.

There is suspicion among the member states of the UN, especially between the developed and the developing countries of Africa, that the failure to prevent conflict eruption in Africa is traceable to the weaponization of identity by the super powers. This is believed to account for the carefree attitude towards preventing conflict in Africa. As long as the United Nations remains the leader with clear objectives that are geared towards the advancement of human rights, equality, justice, and human dignity, its relevance will forever be indispensable.

If there is anything that needs to be prioritized and made to top the list of the goals to be achieved this year by the United Nations, it is preventive diplomacy. The absence of

preventive diplomacy has led so many countries of the world into chaotic situations. The priority list of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the year 2022 in his words is as follows:

Conflict prevention is at the heart of the proposed New Agenda for Peace. I pledge to spare no effort to mobilize the international community – and step up our push for peace. Allow me to mention a few.

In Afghanistan, to provide a lifeline of help for the Afghan people, inject cash to avoid an economic meltdown, ensure full respect of international humanitarian law and human rights – particularly for women and girls – and effectively fight terrorism.

In Colombia, to sustain and deepen peace implementation and reinforce UN support.

In Ethiopia, to guarantee the end of hostilities, all hostilities and also humanitarian assistance everywhere, ensuring a lasting ceasefire and the withdrawal of foreign forces, and promote an inclusive dialogue involving all Ethiopians.

In Haiti, to encourage and support Haitian-led solutions to end a deepening political and institutional crisis, craft a new constitution and plan elections in a secure and peaceful environment.

Regarding Iran, to support talks to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as well as engagement between Iran and its neighbours.

In Israel-Palestine, to encourage parties to refrain from unilateral steps – including settlement expansion and violence – and to help revive the peace process and pave the way to ending the occupation and achieving a viable two-State solution.

In Libya, to promote dialogue, support presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible, and push for the coordinated withdrawal of foreign fighters.

In Mali, to continue working with all national and regional stakeholders towards the restoration of Constitutional order, to schedule elections with an acceptable timetable and strengthen the peace agreement.

In Myanmar, to work for the restoration of democracy, deliver humanitarian aid, and mobilise international support grounded in regional unity.

In the Sahel, to address the root causes of poverty, underdevelopment and governance challenges, and ensure robust support to the G5 Sahel and its Joint Force through predictable and sustained funding.

In Sudan, to help realize the people's democratic aspirations and support an inclusive intra-Sudanese political process.

In Syria, to advance the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2254, reconvene a credible Syrian-led, Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated Constitutional Committee, release detainees, and continue efforts to reach all in need with humanitarian aid.

In Ukraine, to reduce tensions, and urge that all issues be addressed exclusively through diplomacy.

In Yemen, to reach a lasting ceasefire, open access to the country and restart an inclusive political process to end the calamitous seven year-conflict.

On nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, to make the most of the Tenth NPT Review Conference, reduce nuclear risks and take steps towards nuclear disarmament. And we will persevere in our efforts to prevent conflict, protect civilians and consolidate peace from the Western Balkans to the Caucasus ... from the Central African Republic to Cyprus to the Democratic Republic of the Congo ... from Iraq to the Korean peninsula to Lebanon ... from Mozambique to Somalia ... from South Sudan to Venezuela to the Western Sahara and beyond.

THIS WORLD IS TOO SMALL FOR SO MANY HOT SPOTS.



Antonio Guterres
UN Secretary-General

The above is a list of some of the places that fit in for description as hot spots; however, there are so many other places where the situations there are like a time bomb that is waiting to explode. One of them is Nigeria where there are agitations by major ethnic groups who feel oppressed and marginalized. In the practice of the United Nations, prevention is not deemed necessary at this time until matters get out of hand, and this accounts for the reasons why we have so many hot spots in the world today, some of which were mentioned earlier.

The UN Security Council is one of the eight organs of the United Nations and is saddled with the responsibility of peacemaking and security. It is also responsible for accepting new members into the United Nations, initiating military interventions, responsible for amending the charters of the UN, as well as responsible for peace-keeping operations.

What becomes notable with regard to the position of the United Nations Security Council is that the council is not active enough. This deficiency could be as a result of the disconnect between the Office of the Secretary-General and the Security Council in terms of how persuasive the Secretary-General is when presenting matters of interest to the member states to the Security Council, or it may be that the Constitution of the council itself is defective and accounts for the ineffectiveness in the work of prevention and ending of conflicts around the world, especially as it directly affects the member state countries.

There is an urgent need for the restructuring of the administrative organs of the United Nations in such a way that the organization will not just represent a shadow of itself or what fits in aptly for description as a dog who can only bark but not bite. The case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has lingered for decades and accounts for the loss of so many precious lives, is a point of reference. Understandably, from the speech of the Secretary General Antonio Guterres about the priorities of his office for the year 2022, he did indicate clearly what agenda is on ground about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and I quote:

“In Israel-Palestine, to encourage parties to refrain from unilateral steps – including settlement expansion and violence – and to help revive the peace process and pave the way to ending the occupation and achieving a viable two-State solution.”

The above-stated agenda about finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is good enough as the knowledge about what needs to be done, but knowing what needs to be done is not an end in itself. The act of doing is leaving the good for the great, and that is wisdom. The labor of the foolish wearies every one of them for they do not know how to go into the city. They know the city into which they want to go but not knowing how to go there.

Preventive diplomacy is the right and the best way to go if the United Nations is goal-oriented and evidence-based.

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