

INTERFACE BETWEEN REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND SADC STRUCTURES ON HUMAN SECURITY

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Draft



FOPRISA

Research for Regional
Integration and Development

REPORT....

FOPRISA Annual Conference
Centurion Lake Hotel, Centurion, South Africa
18-19 November 2008

Introduction

The important role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in human security has increased overtime, more so since the end of the Cold War, when the world shifted its priority from traditional (state) security to human security. Indeed, enhanced political stability in SADC, with the end of civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique and Angola, has facilitated the shift in orientation to human security as the primary focus. The elevation of human security problems has necessitated a partnership between governments, regional civil society and the private sector, worldwide. However, both scholars (for example Kotter, 2007; Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), 2007; Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2005) and practitioners appreciate that state and human security are intertwined, therefore, one cannot be promoted at the expense of the other. This is more so since both state and human security contribute to peace and development, and oftentimes occur simultaneously. In reality, giving priority to either state or human security is dependent on the prevailing situation at any given moment.

The paper focuses on the relationship between regional civil society and SADC structures on human security. Specifically, the paper starts with an examination of the conceptualisation of human security and civil society. The paper also identifies the human security problems in the sub region, and interrogates the issue of the type of security SADC should prioritise. The third portion of the paper examines the nature of CSOs/NGOs-SADC engagement on human security with case studies of two organisations, namely, the SADC Council of Non Governmental Organizations (SADC-CNGO), with a much broader human security agenda; and Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), with a specific mandate of human security of the working class. The two were chosen because they have regional membership, are capable of championing human security issues and are most vocal as well as involved through regional networking and active link with SADC structures. Lastly, challenges and problems of civil society-SADC interface on human security are discussed. CSOs and non governmental organisations (NGOs) are used interchangeably.

Regional CSOs/NGOs and Human Security Challenges in SADC

Since the paper analyses the role of civil society in relation to human security issues, there is need to briefly clarify the terminologies. Human security is a contested concept. However, the focus on individuals as the target of security, security threat to life of individuals, and significant role of civil society organisations in realising human security provide a common denominator in all definitions (McDonald, 2002). The paper adopts the meaning of human security as conceptualized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994). It emphasizes two aspects of individuals' safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression; and protection of individuals from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily life at home, the workplace, or in the community. Broadly, the UNDP (1994) identifies seven interrelated

dimensions of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. Thomas (1999:3) conceives it as the security of human beings in their personal surroundings, their community and their environment that entails fulfillment of basic material needs and human dignity for the majority. To Kotter (2007: 44, 50), human security makes the individual the centre of concern in terms of freedom from fear and want, and protection against chronic daily threats to human life posed by hunger, diseases, and repression. In this respect, human security allows individuals to be empowered through human rights and human development. Thus, human security is synonymous with sustainable development.

Although the concept of civil society has defied a conclusive definition, it is commonly viewed as civil space that allows for associational life for individuals and groups devoid of state control. However, interaction with the state is also encouraged. It is conceptualised as “the space for cultivating processes through which citizens engage in public life by channeling their interests and aspirations through peaceful deliberative processes” (Kotter, 2007: 47). It embraces such groups as voluntary associations, NGOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Churches and professional associations. SADC has witnessed the mushrooming of a diversity of CSOs, composed of professional organisations, research institutions, CBOs and churches, which have become active actors at the regional level on issues of human security (CCR, 2005: 34). However, they remain weak, in part due to relatively recent entry onto the regional scene, therefore, they are preoccupied with finding contact points; and partly because of their heterogeneity, which prevents cooperation. What is promising is their potential to become instrumental partners in fostering human security at the sub regional level.

Increasingly, civil society has been viewed as an important instrument for promoting democracy, development, and human rights because of its expertise, capability, skills and proximity to the intended beneficiaries of development, the grassroots, as well as the loss of credibility by the (African) state in the eyes of Western donors and international financial institutions (Lancaster, 2000; Nyang'oro, 1999). Moreover, as alternative providers of human security and preoccupation with ‘security concerns of individuals’, their engagement brings in the bottom up approach to human security to complement states’ and regional organisations’ (SADC’s) top down approach to human security (Kotter, 2007). Articulation, mobilisation and lobby roles place them in a very strategic position to promote human security as Kotter (2007:47, 53) states succinctly:

If the concept of human security is to be successful, people themselves must be first to be motivated and mobilized for the implementation of the concept. Only people’s active engagement, be it through civil society or politics, can truly foster lasting human security.

The questions that have to be posed are: which security, human or state, should the primary focus of SADC be? Should there be a paradigm shift from state to human security? What should be the nature of the process and content of the debate on these issues? Is human security part of SADC vocabulary? While there has not been extensive

regional debate on security, whether state or human, should be at the top of the SADC agenda, and although neither the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) nor the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) mentions the concept of human security but merely aspects of it, it is generally acknowledged that the trend by SADC is towards preoccupation with resolving human security problems that impinge directly on individuals, groups and communities. Both the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), herein referred to as the Organ, and CSOs, such as SADC-CNGO and SATUCC, agree that some debate has already taken place regarding security and that SADC has already moved on to human security (Interview with Organ and SATUCC officials 8 July 2008; Interview, 25 June 2008). However, the problem and the source of potential conflict seems to be threefold: how to prioritise human security while not abandoning state security; which human security concerns should top the agenda; and what must be done to respond to human security challenges.

Much of the debate on human security is relatively recent and has involved CSO/NGO and research institutions (based in South Africa), with relatively little initiative and/or participation by the SADC structures, especially the Organ. The CCR has been most prominent and resilient in sustaining the debate on human security. The ISS has made its contribution as well. In 2004, the ISS hosted a workshop to engage civil society and researchers within SADC to debate and identify major human security challenges in seven selected SADC countries. The CCR organised five policy seminars between 2004 and 2007 involving senior SADC government officials, the UNDP, donors and civil society active in areas of peace, security and governance (CCR, 2007). The November 2004 workshop in Tshwane, South Africa, focused on the role of the Chair of the SADC Organ and SADC secretariat in implementing peace and security programmes, “more effectively”, as embodied in SIPO of 2004. The second seminar in June 2005 in Cape Town, South Africa was preoccupied with assessing the progress made in the restructuring of the SADC secretariat and implementation of SIPO that deals with human security issues. The third meeting of the CCR in October 2005 in Maseru, Lesotho, hosted civil society to analyse its own contribution to respective countries’ and sub region’s governance, security and development processes.

The fourth CCR workshop in November 2005, at the University of Namibia, was once again directed at searching for ways to support the Chair of the Organ in implementing security objectives. The fifth, the February 2006 policy advisory group conference at Windhoek, Namibia, focused on formulation of proposals to establish a Southern African HIV/AIDS and security policy. The May 2007 CCR seminar in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, continued with the search for policies and strategies for achieving human security in SADC. It is important to note that the overall preoccupation in all these CCR workshops was to foster human security through regional integration, especially, through successful implementation of both RISDP and SIPO as they address various human security challenges such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, human rights, economic inequality, democracy, food, and gender inequality. Undoubtedly, CSOs/NGOs are in the forefront of highlighting and raising awareness through campaigning for

prioritizing human security on the SADC agenda and in regional policies as testified by workshops held so far. Unfortunately, SADC's commitment to human security remains questionable primarily because of priority accorded to state security.

In Southern Africa, the human security problems are products of the development and democratic processes, destabilisation and civil wars, failure of states, and natural disasters. Whereas the 14 member countries suffer from varying and diverse human security problems, there are common characteristics for the sub region which include poverty, HIV/AIDS, socio-economic inequalities, gender inequalities, landlessness, bad governance in terms of electoral practices, poor human rights, food insecurity, lack of resources and capacity, and forced migration (CCR, 2005: 34; 2007; SARPN, 2005: 1). Poverty is a product of the development processes in member governments, especially, market-driven economic policies which impact negatively on development thereby accentuating socio-economic inequalities and threatening the stability of the sub region with dire consequences on human security. Poverty is widespread as it affects 60 percent of the population who live below the poverty line in the 14 SADC member countries. Poverty contributes to, and reinforces the prevalence of, HIV/AIDS, and vice versa. SADC has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world, with an average prevalence of 25 percent (CCR, 2005: 9, 13), primarily due to sexual behaviour that involves multiple partners.

Patriarchy culture, and gender insensitive government policies and stances account for gender inequalities, which also contribute to human security problems. Landlessness, more pronounced in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, is a product of slow or lack of land reform by respective governments (CCR, 2005: 31). Electoral malpractices have been a source of human insecurity for citizens and opposition parties in countries with weak democratic processes, as the June 2008 second presidential elections in Zimbabwe testify. Similarly, lack of respect for the rule of law and bad governance contribute to human rights violations in some member countries. Food insecurity in the sub region arises from natural disasters such as drought and floods; neglect of food production in preference for export crops; dependence on global food market and food aid; and consumption patterns that depend on imports of wheat. The problem of lack of resources and capacity has its origins in the colonial period but has worsened in the post-independence era. To ameliorate and resolve human security problems, there has been mutual recognition and desire for collaboration between states and regional CSOs to pool capacity and resources for effective outcomes.

Institutional Framework for Regional CSOs-SADC Interface on Human Security

To articulate the interface between regional CSOs/NGOs and SADC structures, one has to look at the provisions in the SADC Treaty and other related documents. The legal provision for the interface with civil society is set out in the SADC Treaty which recognises non state actors as important partners in the implementation of the sub region's processes of democracy, peace and security. The engagement of civil society in human security problems is increasingly appreciated by SADC because of its diverse

expertise, capacity and experience in research and policy advice, humanitarian assistance, HIV/AIDS and poverty projects, of which SADC has a shortfall. Furthermore, opportunity for collaboration between SADC and civil society exists in conflict management and resolution, reducing cross border organized crime and corruption, as well as spearheading disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former soldiers in post conflict member countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (CCR, 2005: 32).

The SADC Treaty under Article 23 lays the foundation for civil society participation by stipulating that:

SADC shall cooperate with, and support the initiatives of the people of the Region and key stakeholders, contributing to the objectives of this Treaty
(SADC, 2003a: 20).

The four key stakeholders that have been identified include private sector, civil society, non governmental organisations, and workers and employers organisations (SADC, 2003a:20). However, in this paper, only the last three groups are the subject of discussion.

As a demonstration of its recognition of the importance of resolving human security problems, and the involvement of civil society in addressing human security challenges, SADC has formulated two critical instruments to ameliorate human security challenges, the RISDP of 2003 and SIPO of 2004. The former is a product of consultation between SADC member states and non state actors; while the latter was by SADC members only. There are also a commendable number of protocols as well as declarations which when implemented properly will have positive outcomes (CCR, 2005). Both the RISDP and SIPO reiterate the importance of CSOs engagement with SADC. The RISDP singles out poverty, HIV/AIDS and gender inequality as major human security problems in the sub region. SIPO, a five year plan for implementing the security provisions of the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (PDSC) of 2001, identifies human security threats such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender based violence and governance issues. Furthermore, SADC has made other provisions, including the Declaration on Gender and Development of 1997 which is aimed at mainstreaming gender into all SADC activities to reduce gender inequalities; the Maseru Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2003 designed to respond to the political, social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS; the HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Plan of Action, 2003-2007 to implement intervention programmes; and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections of 2004 to facilitate free and fair elections in member countries.

Article 10 of the Protocol on PDSC provide for civil society involvement. It states that:

In recognition of the fact that political, defence and security matters transcend national and regional boundaries, co-operation agreement on these matters between State Parties and non-State Parties, and between State Parties and organizations ... shall be accepted SADC, 2001: 11-12).

In addition, SIPO of 2004 encourages partnership with non state parties in areas of politics, defence and security, and outlines specific areas in which civil society can work with the SADC's security and governance structures. Primarily, these areas involve academic research; public debates and seminars or deliberations on peace and security; public sensitisation on security issues; and conflict prevention, management and resolution (CCR, 2005: 8; SADC, 2004). Thus, SIPO paves the way for "civil society engagement in conflict resolution, public awareness-raising on security issues, and the establishment of a forum for academic and research institutions to deliberate on peace and security matters" (CCR, 2005:11).

In this respect, numerous and varying roles of civil society in its interaction with SADC structures can be identified. First and foremost, participation by civil society enables access to its expertise to augment the policy making and implementing capacity of individual governments and the SADC structure. Second, civil society can exert pressure on SADC governments to implement protocols and declarations on democracy, human rights, peace and security. Third, it could act as a watchdog to ensure that SADC adheres to commitments and rule of law and provide checks and balances to SADC governments and structures to supplement efforts of oversight institutions such as parliaments and judiciaries. Fourth, CSOs/NGOs could monitor implementation by the governments at the national and regional levels. Fifth, civil society would develop norms, standards and structures of governance to enhance democracy in SADC. Sixth, it would mobilize communities for participation in determining the SADC agenda thereby help democratise the regional decision making processes, and the development processes at national and regional levels (CCR, 2005: 33; CCR, 2007:21).

Undoubtedly, to date, regional CSOs have worked hard to open up opportunities for participation and successfully cooperated with SADC structures to ameliorate human insecurity in the sub region, more so with strengthening democratic governance, HIV/AIDS, fight against corruption and peace building processes (CCR, 2005: 8). For example, regional NGOs successfully collaborated with the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation (SARPCCO) on HIV/AIDS, human rights and violence against women. The Southern African Forum Against Corruption (SAFAC) has championed the fight against graft (CCR, 2005: 34). Not to be outdone, the youth civil society organizations in the SADC convened to dialogue and implore governments to spearhead human security, especially, regarding good governance, HIV/AIDS, peace and democracy, globalization, employment and a decent work agenda, climate change and sustainable development, and strategies and instruments for Euro-African Youth Participation and Cooperation (AISA, 2007). Similarly, the SARPAN has also organized seminars to champion the importance of human security to peace and security. In this paper, however, the discussion centres on two organisations, SADC-CNGO and SATUCC as they relate to SADC on matters of human security.

The SADC-CNGO-SADC Interface on Human Security

The SADC-CNGO is the umbrella body of mother bodies of CSOs/NGOs of the 14 member states of SADC. Its office is located in Gaborone, Botswana. It was formed in 1998 to coordinate civil society engagement with SADC at the regional level and with member states at the national levels through national umbrella NGOs. Using collaboration, the SADC-CNGO expects to raise awareness through advocacy and campaigns, and place human security on the regional agenda of SADC and CSOs/NGOs. It also aims to influence policy, and exert pressure for, monitor SADC's implementation of, and adherence to, protocols and rule of law, especially as they relate to human security. Its main preoccupation is poverty alleviation, promotion of democracy and good governance, and resolution of internal conflicts (SADC-CNGO and ZCSD, 2007).

It is in the 2000s that the SADC-CNGO has interacted actively with the SADC structures, especially since 2004. SADC-CNGO identified three ways through which it is supposed to interface with SADC structures as an observer, through consultation, and participation at meetings. However, these have not materialised well, hence SADC-CNGO's determination to fight for them (Interview, 25 September 2008). Notable among its achievements are the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the SADC Secretariat, signed in 2003 by the SADC Executive Secretary and the Acting Executive Secretary of the SADC-CNGO that institutionalises and stipulates ways in which civil society can participate in SADC activities and structures; Southern African Social Charter of 2003; Civil Society Guide of 2006 that spells out principles and strategic framework for interface with SADC; and Poverty Observatory Tool of 2008. The MoU (2003: 2) provides for "framework for cooperation between SADC and CNGO" on "eradicating poverty and creating employment opportunities...".

Overtime, the SADC-CNGO has mobilized other regional CSOs to build a regional network of NGOs to engage with SADC, after realising the limited impact of relying on its membership only. These include the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), SATUCC and FOCCISA towards a common stance in relating with SADC. For example, since 2005, the SADC-CNGO has worked "towards unified and coordinated civil society engagement through collaborative programme of action..." adopted through the SADC Civil Society Forum held every year. Such annual Forums serve as avenues to review progress of CSOs/NGOs' engagement with SADC on regional policy and development processes, tabulate a programme of action for each year, and establish platforms for sharing information and articulating policies (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006). This is particularly true of the first Civil Society that focused upon enabling NGOs to understand the SADC (Interview, 25 September 2008). The first and second Civil Society Forum of 2005 and 2006 debated CSOs-SADC interaction around four themes: SADC structures and programmes and their interface with CSOs; democratic governance and civil society; regional economic integration and civil society; and programme of action for civil society engagement (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006: 5; SADC-CNGO, 2008). The valuable role of these forums is summed up thus, "... the

Forum is beginning to play a major role in regional integration and development by bringing citizens closer to regional processes ...” (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006: 6).

The third Civil Society Forum in 2007, in Lusaka, developed strategies to guarantee participation of civil society in regional development processes and formulated a plan of action in specific areas of engagement. The fourth Civil Society Forum held in August 2008 in Pretoria was co-hosted by the SADC-CNGO, SATUCC and FOCCISA (as part of regional NGO networking) (Interview, 25 September 2008). Such co-hosting symbolised that regional civil society had become more cohesive, prepared and better organised under the SADC-CNGO. The Forum was targeted at impressing upon Heads of State and Government on the importance of improved partnership with civil society and accelerating regional development, including implementation of the SADC Poverty and Development Declaration adopted in Mauritius in April 2008 (SADC-CNGO, 2008).

Objectives of the fourth Forum included the need to: review progress of implementing RISDP, SIPO and other protocols; review and strengthen regional responses to challenges such as governance, conflicts and pandemic; develop a road map for accelerating realization of regional priorities in development, poverty reduction, democracy and integration with specific tasks, actors and time frames; re-emphasise willingness of regional CSOs to work with governments to achieve regional development objectives. Other aims of the Forum were to develop and strengthen structures and mechanisms for regional CSOs cooperation for monitoring and reporting on progress towards regional development objectives, especially, implementation of the regional Poverty Observatory; and organise dinners with the SADC Ministers to promote dialogue between SADC and CSOs (SADC-CNGO, 2008: 4). Similarly, the SADC-CNGO has utilised the SADC-CNGO Regional Assembly, which meets every two years, “to deliberate on organizational questions and regional policy challenges”, the first of which was in 2006 (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006: 7).

What is noteworthy is that whether the SADC-CNGO is accorded observer status or an opportunity for consultation or participation depends on the host country. For example, Lesotho, as the host of the second Civil Society Forum and the SADC Summit, proved more accommodative to the SADC-CNGO’s participation with the SADC officials, especially the SADC Council of Ministers and the SADC Executive Secretary (Interview, 25 September 2008). Furthermore, the Forums have served as learning experiences for the SADC-CNGO and other regional organizations with the fourth one as the most successful in terms of cohesion among CSOs and their engagement with SADC structures.

In its effort to champion the needs of the people of the sub region, SADC-CNGO has engaged in debates on, and pushed for resolving challenges in, democratic governance and economic development, with a focus on human rights, labour rights, electoral practices, rule of law, conflict management, peace building, gender equity, HIV/AIDS and poverty. More importantly, the debate has centred on the role of civil society in responding to these problems. The recent preoccupation of SADC-CNGO is how civil

society can contribute effectively to poverty elimination and food security in the sub-region; the fight against xenophobia following the surge of xenophobic violence in South Africa that targeted citizens of other SADC members in March 2008, and the crisis of democracy in Zimbabwe. In the case of the political crisis in Zimbabwe, the SADC-CNGOs, in conjunction with the SATUCC and Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), launched a solidarity campaign with the people of Zimbabwe to lobby the 2008 SADC Summit of Heads of State or Government to restore election outcomes and end political violence (SADC-CNGO, 2008). In addition, the SADC-CNGO takes credit for working with SADC to re-orient it from state to human security. In addition, the SADC-CNGO has hosted forums to debate two current crises: food insecurity in the sub-region and the world and migration, to raise awareness about constraints on migration of people (Interview, 25 June 2008). Therefore, it has pledged to remain “resilient in lobbying for removal of such obstacles” (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006: 9), and push for a protocol on free movement of people within the sub region.

The SADC-CNGO has utilised both workshops and non-workshop modes of interaction and engagement with SADC, especially, as it tries to work with the Organ, the Secretariat and the Summit (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006). Although the “only door is the Directorate of Social and Human Development Programme” that is open to the SADC-CNGO to interact with SADC, the SADC-CNGO has managed to cultivate multiple avenues of engagement including the Council of Ministers, Executive Secretary, Integrated Meetings of Ministers, Sectoral meetings on education, labour and health, and the Organ (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006; Interview, 25 June 2008). Thus, through a combination of workshops or forums; concerted pressure; “continually highlighting the key issues and monitoring progress” of enhancement of democratic governance and promotion of development; lobbying; networking; parallel summits; and adoption of innovative ways of interacting with SADC structures, such as presenting communiqués of the SADC Civil society Forums to the Chair of SADC and Council of Ministers, and dinners with Ministers, the SADC-CNGO has been pro-active and systematic, and has made some strides in building a fruitful partnership. Indeed, the Executive Secretary of SADC and the Chair of the SADC Council of Ministers, have made known their preference for the SADC Civil Society Forum or the SADC-CNGO to present recommendations and forward issues to be considered at the Summit, as the best way to interact with SADC (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006:14).

The fact that the Minister of Local Government of Lesotho attended the first SADC-CNGO Regional Assembly in 2006, and both the Executive Secretary of SADC and Minister of Finance of Lesotho attended and presented papers at the second SADC Civil Society Forum in 2006 (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006), confirms SADC’s endorsement of this mode of collaboration. The SADC Executive Secretary felt comfortable enough to use the Forum to outline SADC’s seven main priorities as peace, political stability and security; promotion of free movement of people and goods within the sub region; empowerment of women; infrastructure development; food security; HIV/AIDS; and

science and technology for research (SADC-CNGO with EISA, 2006: 10). Moreover, attendance by both SADC and member government officials is a good indicator of improved and fruitful interface between the two, and mutual commitment to working together for the betterment of the people of the sub region.

Other indications of improved partnership between the two are the SADC-CNGO parallel sessions to that of the Heads of State or Government, and allowing SADC-CNGO to attend and present a position paper as a means of influencing regional poverty policy at the SADC International Consultative Conference on Poverty and Development on 8 April 2008 held in Mauritius. The presentation was a collaborative work of the SADC-CNGO, SATUCC and FOCCISA, again as part of regional networking. The 2008 Mauritius Conference was the first time that the head of the SADC-CNGO was allowed to address the Heads of Government and States (Interview, 25 September 2008; Interview, 18 September 2008). The fact that SADC-CNGO was allowed to participate through paper presentation to the Heads of Government and State at the 2008 SADC International Consultative Conference on Poverty and Development, and the Conference reaffirmed partnership between member governments, regional structures and civil society suggests a great leap in the interface between the two, from ad hoc, parallel cum observer to actual or direct participation.

One of the recommendations to the SADC Summit by CSOs (Somarelang, Botswana, Yongwe Nawe, Swaziland; Institute for Policy Interaction, Malawi; Cruzeiro do Sul, Mozambique; Legal Assistance Centre, Namibia; Caritas, Zambia; Economic Justice Network of Lesotho; Southern Africa Resource Watch; and Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa) at the Mauritius Conference was the need to utilise revenue from natural resources to fight poverty (Civil Society, 2008).

What remains to be seen is whether, first, regional CSOs will participate in formulation of the Regional Poverty Observatory, which requires input from both CSOs and citizens, and second, resolutions of Mauritius Conference would be adhered to as they entail greater engagement of civil society. The resolutions, among others, include: SADC strengthening partnerships with the private sector and civil society to acquire financial and technical resources for poverty alleviation; establishing a Regional Poverty Observatory to monitor poverty eradication; developing capacity at SADC and member states' levels for effective implementation of poverty reduction projects; and fostering partnerships with CSOs and community leaders in poverty reduction programmes (SADC-CNGO, 2008: 3). Moreover, the fact that the Organ, which is mandated with human security matters, failed to attend the 2008 Mauritius Conference casts doubts on the SADC member countries' commitment and ability to successfully implement human security programmes (Interview, 25 September 2008).

The SATUCC-SADC Interface on Human Security

The SATUCC was formed in 1983 as a coalescence of National Trade Union Federations of all member countries, except the DRC and Madagascar. Its office is located in Gaborone, Botswana. The aims and objectives as stipulated in Article 2 require the

SATUCC to, among others, ensure that Trade Unions become full partners in development activities of SADC; promote International Labour Organisation's Convention 87 and 98; promote Trade Union rights in SADC, workers' skills development through education and training, and just labour legislation; facilitate Trade Union participation in economic and social liberation of the sub region; advance research on Trade Union rights and freedoms; cooperate with SADC governments and NGOs in rural development; and assist migrant workers (SATUCC, undated). Thus, the primary role of SATUCC is to lobby and pressure employers to promote workers' interest and rights at the regional level, as part of its interest articulation and aggregation roles. In this regard, the human security issues SATUCC advances simultaneously at tripartite meetings are primarily three: Poverty, especially, as it affects workers as a result of low remuneration and unemployment; human rights of workers, for example, to agitate for their cause; and environmental safety at the workplace. However, SATUCC believes that its goals do not only promote workers' interests as they mirror those of the ordinary citizens of the SADC member states (Interview with SATUCC official, 8 July 2008).

Unlike the SADC-CNGOs, SATUCC has a relatively formalised interaction with SADC structures in the form of tripartite meeting held once a year involving the Ministry of Labour of SADC members, SATUCC representing workers, and employers. In addition, SATUCC interacted with SADC at two levels, the Directorate of Human Development and Strategies and Special Programmes, and Integrated Committee of Ministers. However, with the re-structure of SADC, SATUCC relates with SADC through the Sectoral Committee that meets each year and the Sub-Committee of three (Ministries of Labour of SADC members, SATUCC and employers) at the Directorate of Social and Human Development. SATUCC relates with the Organ through the SADC-CNGO, which interacts more with the Organ and Secretariat on human security issues.

To date SATUCC has made successful strides in promoting the three interrelated human security issues of poverty, human rights and environmental safety in its interaction with the mentioned SADC structures. First, SATUCC takes credit for successfully lobbying for the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights in SADC (2003b) designed to promote workers' rights and interests. The Charter was ratified and signed by all SADC members, except Angola, in 2003 (Interview with SATUCC official, 8 July 2008). Of special significance is the Charter's recognition of the basic human and organizational rights as embodied in both regional and international instruments; facilitation of freedom of association and collective bargaining by workers; promotion of equal treatment of all workers regardless of gender or disability; acceptance of equal remuneration and just retirement benefits; provision of social protection, healthy and safe work environment as well as improved living conditions; promotion of industrial democracy; and skills development and training (SATUCC, undated).

Second, SATUCC initiated, and has successfully lobbied SADC Ministers of Labour (for six years) to formulate, a Protocol on Facilitation of Movement of Persons, which has to

be ratified and signed by two-thirds of SADC. The protocol for free movement of persons fell short of SATUCC's initial wish for free movement of labour within the sub region. Moreover, SATUCC expressed the view that it was unfortunate that the Protocol now falls under the Organ as movement of persons is viewed more as a matter of state security than human security. Third, it has also pressured the SADC governments to enhance employment creation and extended its lobbying efforts beyond workers' interests to the general problem of poverty. For example, in 2004 SATUCC lobbied at the Ouagadougou Extra Ordinary Summit of the Africa Union for Employment Creation and Poverty Reduction Declaration and Plan of Action on Poverty Alleviation and Employment Creation by the Heads of States and Governments, and replicated it at the SADC level in terms of how to implement declaration and plan agreed to already at the African Union (AU) (Interview with SATUCC official, 8 July 2008 & 18 September 2008).

Fourth and perhaps more unique and novel, is its role as a 'think tank' to contribute to the policy debate and influence policy in two ways: by critiquing existing policies and providing alternative policy options to SADC. In these respects, SATUCC is engaged in policy research and provides funds for policy oriented research. Of special importance are three of its recent publications: two monographs entitled: '*SADC: Experiences with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Development Processes and Trade Union Responses*' (2007) and '*Alternative Socio-economic Development Policies for the SADC Region: A Trade Union Perspective*' (2005); as well as a book, '*Alternatives to Neo-liberalism in Southern Africa (ANSA): The Search for Sustainable human development in Southern Africa*' (2006). The publications are a significant attempt by SATUCC to provide alternative policies for SADC as part of its recommendations. SATUCC proposes an alternative regional integration socio-economic development policy framework that is simultaneously holistic, people-driven, grassroots-led, human rights based and development oriented (SATUCC, 2005: 33; Kenyenze et al, 2006). Therefore, through research on concrete policy issues, SATUCC is fulfilling one of the objectives of SIPO, that of encouraging research and policy deliberations. Moreover, the three publications were used to prepare a position paper for civil society during the Maputo Preparatory Conference for the 2008 Mauritius International Conference on Poverty and Development (Interview, 18 September 2008).

In addition, through the publications, SATUCC makes valuable contributions to a number of policy debates within the region relating to regional economic development plan, policy and strategy, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; SADC restructuring; external trade with emphasis on economic partnership agreements (EPAs), regional membership and integration; and political governance. Thus, SATUCC's researches criticise the RISDP for its neo-liberal orientation that gives primacy to the market to the detriment of workers and ordinary citizens, for being donor-dependent and SADC for signing free trade agreements with Western countries. It also analyses the shortfalls of PRSPs, especially, in terms of lack of political commitment to poverty reduction, limited participation by the poor, civil society and

ministries, and market based approach to poverty reduction, especially, lack of pro-poor growth. Furthermore, the publications also highlight the negative consequences of the restructuring of SADC, including the fact that it is “predominantly donor driven”; and lumps together diverse issues and segments those that are interrelated following the collapse of 21 sector units into 4 directorates. In addition, it has weakened stakeholder participation, especially, that of workers, as the tripartite sector, the Labour and Employment Sector, was replaced by the Integrated Committee of Ministers (SATUCC, 2005: 29-32). Similarly, the publications are critical of SADC’s inability to promote good governance due to failure to sanction erring states, such as Swaziland and Zimbabwe, which violate human and trade union rights. SATUCC concedes that it is not easy to change the neo-liberal orientation in the sub-region. Nevertheless, it has been able to sensitise and explain the three publications to workers, member states and key stakeholders through workshops held in every member state (Interview, 18 September 2008).

Challenges and Problems of Civil Society-SADC Interface on Human Security

Although SADC-CNGO and SATUCC have different linkages with SADC structures, with the latter more formalised and integrated into SADC, they face the same challenges in their with SADC. Thus, in spite of the provisions in the SADC Treaty, RISDP, SIPO, and MoU, as well as communiqués, publications and parallel meetings and other collaborative attempts between SADC structures and CSOs/NGOs on human security issues, such efforts have limited impact despite the many numbers and expertise of CSOs/NGOs and their eagerness to engage SADC members on human security. This suggests that CSOs-SADC interface faces numerous challenges and problems, which if resolved, could result in maximum impact in improving the human security situation in the SADC sub region. A number of factors explain the reasons why a not so well and fully developed interface exists between CSOs and SADC structures, especially the Organ.

Foremost, is the lack of specificity as to the mode of contact with the SADC secretariat by CSOs. Neither the SADC Treaty nor SIPO, not even the MoU, spells out ways in which the two will relate to each other, whether through meetings, workshops or conferences. The end results are two outcomes: frantic efforts by CSOs to search and identify specific means of contacting SADC; and the ad hoc, parallel and observer nature of civil society participation in SADC governance, peace and security issues. CSOs concede that they feel “excluded and marginalized from key SADC structures and processes” (AU Monitor, 2008: 1; Kubatana.net, 2008: 1), therefore, they have called on SADC to “institutionalise civil society involvement in key decision making processes aimed at national and regional development” (AU Monitor, 2008: 1-2). Since 2005, the SADC Civil Society Forms have been in operation, under the auspices of the SADC-CNGO, as instruments to search for various ways of engaging the SADC secretariat. Similarly, since 2005, CSOs have been organising parallel meetings under the SADC-CNGO to that of the SADC Summit (CCR, 2005: 36).

One area where some misunderstanding seems to exist relates to the agreement governing the relationship between SADC-CSOs. The Organ talks of waiting for a 'draft' MoU from the SADC-CNGO (Interview with Organ official, 8 July 2008). The SADC-CNGO concedes that it has to finalise a draft MoU on how to operationalise the 2003 MoU following the meeting with the Organ in December 2007 and 2008 Strategic Planning Workshop on how to operationalise the 2003 MoU (Interview, 25 September 2008). The 2003 MoU remained valid for three years as per Articles 10 and 11 of the MoU, and "thereafter remain in force until terminated by mutual consent" (MoU, 2003: 4). However, the problem of communication might be due to turnover of staff at the Organ, as the Head of the Organ is a relatively new man, who presumably is still in the process of acclimatising in his position.

The other challenge is the lack of clarity of the SADC structures civil society is expected to interact with. Most of the SADC-civil society relationships are with the Organ, which is directly responsible for human security issues. However, although SIPO spells out specific areas of cooperation between SADC and civil society, it does not provide appropriate entry point for civil society engagement with the SADC structures, or implementation mechanisms, and policy responses through which civil society can supplement efforts of the Organ. This leaves civil society with no clear idea about which SADC departments to engage with (CCR, 2005: 33). Neither the SADC Treaty nor SIPO, not even the MoU, specifies authorities, offices or departments that CSOs should relate to. Consequently, the SADC Civil Society Forums, especially the first Civil Society Forum of 2005, have been designed to assist CSOs to familiarise themselves with SADC structures and programmes that allow for CSOs participation, and identify SADC officials or departments as contact points. Unfortunately, this gives the impression that SADC is merely paying lip service to CSOs' participation in fostering human security. The problem is compounded by the fact that some issues are beyond the CSOs, for example, "the defence sector has remained the domain of states despite SADC's pronouncements for participation of civil society in peace and security areas" (CCR, 2005: 30). This problem partly stems from the fact that the Organ has "no specific human security agenda but a general one with no specific policy responses or measures that need implementation" (Interview with Organ official, 08 July 2008). The CCR (2005:8) puts the blame on SIPO's idealistic objectives, stating thus:

SIPO's objectives have remained ideals that they are practically impossible to implement as they lack clarity on modalities for civil society participation in SADC activities. Consequently, the majority of civil societies have raised concern that SIPO has done little to improve their channels of engagement with the secretariat.

There is lukewarm appreciation by SADC for contributions of CSOs and tolerance by SADC for civil society participation. Similarly, there is no mutual learning experience between CSOs. For example, there is little or no evidence to suggest that SADC, or even other CSOs/NGOs, including the SADC-CNGO, has taken into consideration the SATUCC's policy alternatives as contained in the mentioned publications (SATUCC thinks otherwise). Generally, contributions made by civil society are viewed by SADC

officials as not legitimate, not binding, more of a gentleman's agreement (Interview with Organ official, 8 July 2008), and therefore, do not carry much weight. SADC-CNGO and SATUCC cited SADC's reluctance to work with them as the major stumbling block (Interview with SADC-CNGO, 8 July 2008; Interview with SATUCC official, 8 July 2008). The CCR (2005: 13) too acknowledges the reluctance by the SADC secretariat "to work with civil society groups".

There seems to be mutual mistrust and misunderstanding, resulting in confrontational relations, between member states and SADC structures and CSOs/NGOs, which prevent a beneficial working relationship. The former views the latter as opponents rather than partners primarily because member states are not receptive to criticisms from CSO/NGOs. The CSOs/NGOs are also unwilling to behave as extensions of the state in implementing the SADC agenda (Interview with Organ official, 8 July 2008). This, in itself, is a reflection of intolerance on the part of member states. The fact that CSOs/NGOs source their funds externally and are donor-dependent contributes to the member states' intolerance (Interview with Organ official, 8 July & SADC-CNGO official, 25 September 2008). Thus, as a result of their independence of member governments, scope to define their own external ties, and have 'hidden' agendas, are the bases of suspicions, tensions, and mistrust by SADC structures (Interview with Organ official, 8 July 2008). In addition, the general perception of NGOs as elite organisations, therefore, unrepresentative of the mass of the SADC population denies them credibility to SADC structures. Also, lack of clear priority to human security concerns and what needs to be implemented by the Organ, and specifically SIPO, leads to mistrust and suspicions.

The Organ concedes that it has a plethora of 'human security' problems including poverty, disaster/floods, HIV/AIDS, and global warming, with no prioritisation. The CCR (2005: 13) observes that "human security was being given less priority than that of military security". Indeed, the fact that the Organ is dominated by military personnel gives rise, wrongly or rightly, to the conclusion that it accords military security more weight than human security. In actual fact, an official at the Organ admittedly pointed out that the major preoccupation of the Organ, currently, is the tenuous situation in the DRC following the 2006 elections, unsettled question of Electoral System in Lesotho, stand off in Malawi between the ruling party and the oppositions candidates, Zimbabwe's June presidential electoral practices and outcomes, and the 2008 elections in Angola (Interview with Organ official, 8 July 2008).

Another problem is the circumscribed or confined nature of CSOs/NGOs-SADC interaction. CSO/NGOs engagement with SADC is limited to the Organ and Council of Ministers. The first direct participation in the Summit by the SADC-CNGO was at the 2008 Mauritius International Conference on Poverty and Development. Similarly, the tripartite meetings do not grant SATUCC access to the Summit as there is no provision for such interaction. What SATUCC and other regional civil society have been able to do is interact with individual Heads on an informal basis. SATUCC perceives the

Secretariat as the major stumbling block to its access to Summit meetings (Interview with SATUCC official, 8 July 2008).

However, limited cohesion and coordination among CSOs, including that between SADC-CNGO and SATUCC, contribute to their reduced impact on matters of human security. Thus, the SADC-CNGO's collaborative works with EISA, SATUCC, FOCCISA, notwithstanding, its representation of the regional voice is limited given the fact that not all national NGOs are members of their respective mother bodies, which in turn constitute the membership of the SADC-CNGO. Similarly, the SADC-CNGO does not network with all regional CSOs. Therefore, its representativeness is not inclusive. There is also the tendency for NGOs to stick to areas of specialization, as is the case with the SADC-CNGO and SATUCC. The limited capacity of NGOs, for example, in preparing and presenting viewpoints and positions on human security issues to the SADC, presents an added disadvantage. An official succinctly summed up the challenges faced by the SADC-CNGO as inadequate capacity; inability of the SADC-CNGO to engage at the regional level due to its poor design arising from membership of umbrella national NGOs instead of regional networks of regional NGOs; non functioning of SADC national committees which serve as conveyor belts of national agendas for the SADC-CNGO; and the need to create a SADC movement as a means to mobilise SADC citizenry for collective engagement with SADC structures in order to shed the elite image associated with the SADC-CNGO (Interview, 25 September 2008).

Conclusion

Human security has acquired prominence on the agenda of both regional CSOs and SADC, more so with the former as testified by awareness raising, lobbying, advocacy and monitoring by the SADC-CNGO and SATUCC. The interface between CSOs and SADC seems to be heading towards progressively improved collaboration. Indeed, the two regional CSOs are the drivers of changed and improved interface with the SADC and have exerted pressure as well as searched for ways to increase and qualitatively improve their participation in the SADC decision making structures and programmes to foster matters relating to human security. The debate on the nature and ways to enhance collaborative relationship between the SADC and CSOs/NGOs remains a lively one. Civil society, especially SADC-CNGO, remains active in analysing the challenges and constraints it faces in its efforts to interact with the SADC secretariat, especially, the Organ on matters of human security (CCR, 2005: 36).

However, the current institutional framework for CSOs-SADC interaction, as provided for in the SADC Treaty, RISDP, SIPO, MoU, is far from adequate and poses enormous problems. The unclear nature of the relationship between SADC and regional CSOs prevents a buoyant and complementary partnership. This is primarily because of lack of specified contact points with SADC structures or authorities, and cautious acceptance of engagement with CSOs. Mutual distrust and suspicions, even confrontation, seem to be the defining characteristic of the relationship. These mar the collaboration that would potentially benefit regional integration. Factors internal to the SADC-CNGO, including

limited membership and regional networking, inadequate capacity and lack of mass mobilisation, compound its inability to coordinate a united voice of the region at the SADC level. The biggest challenge, therefore, remains that of finding a mutually acceptable way of engaging the SADC-CNGOs with SADC structures for a fruitful partnership, and for regional CSOs to adopt a systematic, coordinated and cohesive stance in their relationship with SADC for the sake of promoting human security to better the lives of citizens of the sub region. The SADC-CNGO is striving to lobby for enforcement mechanism for its interface with SADC structures which it hopes can be realized through amendment of the SADC Treaty to curtail national sovereignty to pave the way for devolution of power and authority to the Secretariat (Interview with SADC-CNGO official, 25 September 2008).

Policy Recommendations

One thing is clear that a partnership between SADC and regional civil society on human security issues is an imperative in order to benefit individuals and communities in the sub region. This, therefore, suggests the need to seek for better ways of cooperation in order to implement policies, especially, those in the RISDP and SIPO, to pave the way for the realisation of human security goals. In this respect, multiple responses for improved interface are needed, especially targeted at resolving the challenges, including:

- Debate on the nature of human security, threats to human security, and prioritization of human security at the regional level should be organised to, first, develop consensus, common purpose, ownership, and a sense of appreciation by both regional CSOs, primarily SADC-CNGO, and SADC structures; second, outline the relationship between traditional and human security; and third, address the question of the appropriate agents for the promotion of human security in order to clarify the role of regional CSOs.
- Depoliticisation of human security issues by making them developmental concerns, more transparency and democratization of policy making at SADC level would be required to facilitate a working relationship with regional CSOs, especially the SADC-CNGO.
- Once the elevation of human security and role of regional CSOs as agents of fostering human security have been appreciated, there is need for SADC and regional CSOs, SADC-CNGO in particular, to debate and agree as to whether an institutionalised relationship that will make civil society part of the decision making, monitoring and implementing structure of SADC or non institutionalised interface that leaves civil society independent of SADC structures and not an implementing tool of SADC, is the best. Thereafter, clearly spell out the contact structures at SADC, mode of relating to each other, and the status of such collaboration. E.g., who at the Organ; through what means, for example, meetings; when consultations should take place, for example, annually or biannually; and for what purpose, for example, participation or decision

making, implementation, and monitoring; and on which issues, whether HIV/AIDS, poverty, conflict resolution and human rights.

- Learning from other experiences: SADC and regional CSOs (SADC-CNGO) could draw lessons from workable arrangements in the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and AU where CSOs/NGOs have been accorded observer status at official meetings (CCR, 2005: 8). In December 2003, ECOWAS encouraged the creation of the West African Civil Society Forum (WASCOF) in December 2003 as means of dialogue with both regional and nation-based CSOs (ECOWAS, 2008). The NEPAD CSO Think Tank allows for engagement of civil society, and AU's ECCOSOC has elected representatives to its Assembly, with the SADC-CNGO as the representative of Southern African NGOs (SADC-CNGO, 2008: 2). SATUCC is also represented in the AU ECCOSOC (Interview with SATUCC official, 18 September 2008).
- Mutual appreciation should be cultivated at all cost. This could be achieved through appraising and appreciating each other's skills and capacities – those of regional CSOs' from which SADC structures can tap, and that of SADC structures' and member governments', as well as CSOs according due credit to the authority of SADC. This would promote co-ownership of the people's cause.
- The SADC and SADC-CNGO, preferably with the participation of all regional CSOs, should review the existing provisions that stipulate CSOs-SADC relationship to directly address the challenges confronting the current relationship, SADC and regional CSOs, especially, SADC-CNGO, through open communication. These include the MoU, RISDP, SIPO and the founding Treaty of SADC. The first three would entail clear and adequate provisions of the nature of the interface. The latter would be directed at reducing the authority of the Summit and transfer it to the Secretariat to free it from the stranglehold of the Summit and member states (as argued by the SATUCC and SADC-CNGO, respectively), and thus, pave the way for a Secretariat that consults and seeks consensus from regional CSOs for the sake of realizing human security goals. The two can identifying areas of, and reasons for, mutual mistrust; and work towards mutual tolerance by having open discussion of each others' agendas and mutual reassurance of their common purpose of human security realisation through regional integration.
- SADC structures and regional CSOs, including SADC-CNGO and SATUCC, should engage in self-retrospection to re-orient themselves to human security concerns, move from a position of confrontation to partnership with SADC, and propose effective ways of engaging SADC structures and processes.

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