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Concept Note

Emerging Dynamics in Peace Operations in Africa

7 September 2021

Introduction

In collaboration with GIZ, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) will convene a workshop on “Emerging Dynamics in Peace Operations in Africa” on 7 September 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The workshop will specifically engage emerging topics on Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Nexus as well as Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS) in contexts of peace operations in Africa. The workshop aims to deepen the understanding of the HDP Nexus and MHPSS and the implemental role of national and regional actors. The workshop ensures further discussion of two baseline reports on the HDP Nexus as well as MHPSS in peace operations contexts in Africa. In line with these reports, two tailor-made training curricula have been piloted at the KA IPTC including “Managing HDP Nexus in conflict and post-conflict settings in Africa” as well as the “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS)”.

Context of the Workshop

The changing nature of war and the shift in the security landscape of Africa together with emerging security trends, threats and challenges have brought in their trail new dimensions to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. These new approaches seem to be at variant from the hitherto traditional or conventional ways of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Two of such approaches in recent times have been the Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Nexus as well as the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS). The KA IPTC and IPSS in collaboration with GIZ have been instrumental in incorporating these new dimensions into their training, scholarship and policy engagement.

The Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Nexus

The Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Nexus, introduced in the context of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, is a new way of working that provides a pathway to bridge the gaps between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. The sectors of humanitarian relief, development assistance and peacekeeping/peacebuilding have long worked separately, with different mandates, priorities and approaches. They can be considered as three systems with separate funding streams, timeframes and implementation procedures resulting in duplication or even conflicting interventions. While there is a joint acknowledgement that complex crises require comprehensive and coordinated responses, specialized actors continually tend to follow their respective priorities often lacking coherence and synergies on the ground.

At the United Nations and African Union (AU) levels, there have been efforts to ensure inter-collaborations between the departments of each institution. In the context of UN peacekeeping,



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there has already been significant progress over the past decade towards multidimensional integrated peace operations under the Capstone Doctrine, as formalized in the 2008 UN Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines. Integration within the UN system seeks to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of multi-agency operations in fragile states and conflict-affected environments through common strategic and operational means by incorporating military, civilian and police actors in the pursuit of complex security and developmental goals. However, the goal is to forge strategic partnership across UN institutions, especially between peacekeeping missions and the UN agencies which work on various developmental and humanitarian initiatives. In terms of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), there is also a comprehensive multidimensional approach to peace support operations involving military, civilian and police components. However, the approaches at the UN and APSA are intra-organization specific, and they do not comprise all the relevant external actors working in the humanitarian, development and peace sectors.

The HDP Nexus concept takes the further step of going beyond the UN and AU multidimensional systems to incorporate the broad range of humanitarian, development and peace actors. These include international NGOs, local NGOs, donor countries, host countries, and a wide range of international and regional organizations. However, the implementation of the nexus remains a continuous challenge. Moreover, discussions on the HDP nexus has remained confined to a relatively small group of actors and has failed to gain significant traction beyond the UN, World Bank and some like-minded multilateral and bilateral donor organizations¹. Additionally, policy research and evaluations on the HDP nexus are rare. Yet, the HDP nexus approach offers a pathway towards greater coherence and a sustainable approach to addressing complex crises. Much remains to be done to translate the concept into practice.

A recent report commissioned by GIZ reveal the need for flexible and context-specific application of the HDP nexus across Africa's contexts of peace operations. The report identifies potential roles that different actors could play as convening powers on specific projects to streamline initiatives. The report also recommends greater commitment towards implementing collective outcomes through joint analysis, mapping and planning by all the actors in peace missions. A coordinated approach in close collaboration with national actors ensures holistic and conflict-sensitive interventions driven by the collective quest for sustainable peace.

The Mental Health and Psycho-social Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS)

The Mental Health and Psycho-social Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS) on the other hand seeks to address fundamental individual and collective well-being factors essential to the overall initiation, development, maintenance and sustenance of a peace culture. This is in line with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals including health, along with the WHO priority on the reduction of mortality on non-communicable and life-style related diseases. Peace is an important determinant of health

¹ The HDP nexus is linked to key UN processes, including UN reforms, the Agenda 2030, the WPS Agenda, the Grand Bargain and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), as well as having strong buy-in from the World Bank, the European Union, and the secretariat of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).



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in general and on mental health specifically; the attainment of peace depends upon people having a healthy state of mind and healthy relationships. Both health and peace have a very broad meaning. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

A recent baseline study on the need for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS) training for Peace Support Operations and Humanitarian Assistance (HA) personnel contains important new evidence about the stress faced before, during and after deployment. The report further reveals that there are at present no publicly available guidelines or regulations for ECOWAS or African Union peacekeeping missions on matters such as staff care, psychosocial support for deployed personnel or indeed how MHPSS challenges impact on post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Similarly, international peacekeeping training institutions in Africa showed no references to training courses on MHPSS for PSO personnel. Data gathered from individuals during the baseline study revealed the eagerness of people to share personal experiences, thoughts and recommendations on how to address issues of MHPSS within the context of peacekeeping / peacebuilding.

According to the report, unaddressed traumatic experiences tend to affect people long after the actual incident. Psychological and interpersonal challenges experienced as a result of unaddressed trauma can prevent people from engaging in the types of activities that contribute to improving their wellbeing, their relationships and social fabric in general. The result is that affected persons withdraw from positive social interaction which in turn is a necessity for any form of peaceful coexistence. This has a direct effect on economic recovery and peaceful collaboration between organisations and institutions. This disharmony on all levels obstructs healing and peaceful coexistence.

The report further states that PSO and HA personnel who are directly exposed to suffering, violent conflict, the rapidly growing number of people affected by humanitarian crises living in conditions of extreme poverty and poor safety and security conditions, are exposed to a vast number of stress factors. The Guidelines for Good Practice in managing stress in Humanitarian Workers published by the Antares Foundation suggest that “stressed out staff members are less efficient in carrying out their assigned tasks. Stress fundamentally interferes with the ability of the agency to provide services to its supposed beneficiaries” (2012, p. 7). Long-term exposure to the accumulated stress caused by violent conflict can have very serious effects on citizens directly experiencing the conflict as well as PSO and HA personnel and their families. These can manifest in conditions like depression, anxiety, self-destructive behavior, sleeplessness, lack of appetite etc.

Aims and Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop's main objective is to provide a platform to understand the dynamics of the HDP nexus and MHPSS in Africa and the specific role of national and regional actors in the context of peace operations in Africa. This is to deepen reflection on the role of, and opportunities for, the



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African Union (AU) and sub-regional organizations to bridge the gap between different national, continental and international stakeholders in crises mitigation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

Guiding questions

Specifically, the workshop will engage the following questions.

HDP Nexus

1. What are the opportunities and limitations of cooperation between the humanitarian, development and peace actors in peace operation settings?
2. What is the role of national actors in the HDP nexus thinking? What needs to be done to secure the buy-in of national stakeholders in complex crises?
3. What are the linkages of the HDP nexus to the policies and initiatives of international actors working in Africa, including the African Union and Sub-regional organizations?
4. How can peace operations infuse the HDP thinking in their mandates and operations?
5. To what extent is the HDP nexus effective in peace operation contexts?

MHPSS

1. What does the MHPSS mean in the context of peace support operations?
2. What are the stressors and challenges to psychological wellbeing in peace support operations?
3. What are the mechanisms for MHPSS assessment and interventions in the context of peace support operations?
4. What are the role of national and regional actors in the psychological wellbeing of personnel deployed to peace support operations?

Expected Outcome

The workshop is expected to:

1. Enhance knowledge about the HDP Nexus and MHPSS concepts, and explore options for their meaningful implementation in Africa.
2. Enable national, regional and international actors to explore innovative and impact-oriented ways of operationalizing the HDP nexus and MHPSS in fragile and conflict affected regions.



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3. Explore opportunities to include the HDP nexus and MHPSS interventions in existing initiatives and policies of the African Union and sub-regional organizations in Africa?
4. Create awareness and interest around the training options on the HDP nexus and MHPSS in Africa.
5. Deepen the collaboration between the KAIPTC/IPSS with the African Union and sub-regional organizations in the operationalization of the HDP Nexus and MHPSS.

Event Format

1. The workshop will be a half-day event in September 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. Hybrid Workshop: Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, the event will involve a dual approach, including:
 - a. The physical attendance of 30 invited participants at a designated venue in Addis Ababa. All attending participants will observe Covid-19 Protocols.
3. At least fifty (50) participants will be invited for the online session. Virtual Participants will also have the opportunity to engage and interact with the Panellists.

Participation

The workshop will bring together representatives from the African Union (AU), Sub-Regional Organizations, the United Nations (UN), GIZ and KAIPTC, as well as representatives from the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Multinational Joint Task Force Against Boko Haram (MNJTF), G5 Sahel Joint Force, ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB), ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG), UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).