



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

'Climate Change, Resources, Migration: Old and New Sources of Conflict in Africa?'

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Welcome Address by Dr Antonie Nord, Regional Director, Heinrich Boell Foundation

Honourable Deputy Minister Ebrahim, Ambassador Haller, distinguished guests and speakers, dear colleagues, dear friends.

On behalf of the Heinrich Boell Foundation Southern Africa, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this conference on "Climate Change, Resources, Migration: Old and New Sources of Conflict in Africa?'

In the discussions that will start this evening and continue over the next day, we aim to take stock of the state of Africa's security architecture, and examine it with regards to the growing challenges of global warming, the exploitation of natural resources, and migration or forced migration.

The effects of these challenges on Africa's development have been researched and discussed for quite some time. It is for example widely accepted that the expected impact of climate change will have consequences for social and economic well-being in many regions of the continent. Climate change will most likely threaten water and food security and increase risks to human health from vector-borne diseases like malaria. But it is only in recent years that the link between peace and security and climate change has been explored and the term "securitisation of climate change" has been introduced. It has become clear that when paired with poverty and already degraded environments, climate change threatens to fuel conflicts, both existing and new. Africa's security architecture, and its future, should be examined in light of this risk.

With regards to the extraction of natural resources – our second issue – the long standing debate on the so called "resource curse" has made it clear that in numerous instances conflicts are linked to natural resources. Of course, a country's resource wealth does not necessarily lead to violent conflict – as examples like Botswana demonstrate. Furthermore, political processes such as the Kimberly process or the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative have improved resource governance in some countries. Nevertheless, natural resources are still targets and instruments of warfare in Africa, and lessons should be drawn from efforts to address this.

Our third issue, migration, is perhaps the most sensitive and complex. Most often a consequence rather than a cause of conflict, migration is also strongly related to both socio-economic issues and environmental conditions which frequently drive the movement of people. Research shows that a rising number of migrants in Africa are women and children, who are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses.

However, in contexts of scarce resources, social polarisation, and or weakened security and justice institutions, migration can also cause or aggravate security problems, especially in conflict or post conflict regions. Instances such as the spill over of conflicts from one country to another alongside war refugees, the militarisation of refugee camps or the violence witnessed in South Africa last year draw attention to this. Although challenging to build,

societies united in their diversity are resilient societies, and this is key for Africa's development, peace and security agenda.

It is clear that all three issues are closely interrelated, and that the impact of climate change is likely to amplify situations of instability. This conference will therefore emphasise differentiated analyses of these concerns, as well as explore their intersections. Both approaches will be crucial for the development of effective conflict prevention and resolution strategies in Africa. I very much look forward to the insights of the experts gathered here.

To open this conversation, tonight's discussions will explore the implications of these sources of conflicts for the evolution of Africa's security architecture, as well as South Africa's role in it. Other questions we will address will be: What role has the AU-EU partnership played so far in building up the new security mechanism? What have been the challenges to cooperation between the UN, AU and Regional Organisations like SADC? Does the international security architecture and the so called "new world order" affect Africa's security challenges, and if so how?

I trust that this will be an interesting evening, and look forward to engaging with you on these questions.

Thank you.