

ONE THAT SERVES NEEDS OF ALL HUMANITY

Global solutions required

IN AN era marked by complex global challenges, ranging from climate change to geopolitical tension, the call for a robust, equitable and resilient global governance system is not just timely but imperative.

A short while ago, I had the privilege of sharing the collective wisdom of the Africa Focus Group in New York, an essential part of the Global South Perspectives on Global Governance Reform Network.

This network is a confluence of intellectual powerhouses from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East, united in the quest for a more balanced and inclusive international order.

The insights garnered from our discussions underscore the urgent need to reimagine the architecture of global governance; it is a call for crafting a multilateral system in which Africa can participate fully and thrive.

Africa's peace and security landscape is complex and marred by armed conflict, terrorism and political volatility.

The surge in coups in the Sahel region for the past five years is a stark reminder that Africa's challenges are not isolated; they have far-reaching implications for global stability.

Inequality in Africa is not merely a standalone problem; it is deeply rooted in a long history of colonialism and racialised capitalism. The legacy continues to manifest in contemporary issues such as land ownership, access to quality education and economic opportunities, often skewed in favour of elites.

International corporations and governments continue to exploit Africa's abundant natural resources, often without adequate compensation or benefit to communities.

This form of neo-colonialism deepens inequalities and undermines Africa's ability to achieve sustainable development.



DARYL SWANEPOEL

CEO of the Inclusive Society Institute

The extraction of minerals, oil and other resources creates a cycle of dependency that hampers efforts to diversify economies and invest in human capital.

The militarisation of Africa has emerged as a critical issue that warrants immediate attention.

Over the years, the continent has seen a significant increase in domestic and foreign military presence, raising concerns about the long-term implications for peace, security and sovereignty.

Countries like the US, France, and China have established military bases across the continent, ostensibly for reasons ranging from counter-terrorism to safeguarding trade routes.

However, the presence of the bases often serves to protect the interests of foreign powers rather than contributing to regional stability.

The involvement of non-state actors, such as the Wagner Group, adds another layer of complexity, as they operate in a legal grey area, often without the oversight or accountability that state military forces are subject to. Their activities can exacerbate conflicts and introduce new elements of instability, all while escaping the scrutiny usually applied to traditional military operations.

While the UN has been instrumental in orchestrating various peace

agreements, its track record reveals a high failure rate in sustaining peace agreements, particularly in Africa.

One of the critical reasons for this is the marginalisation of local and regional peacebuilders in peace processes.

The UN's top-down approach often overlooks the complexities of local conflicts. It fails to adequately engage African institutions and communities with a more nuanced understanding of the issues.

Thus, as a response to situations where the UN is unable or unwilling to respond, the AU has increasingly become a significant player on the global stage, particularly in matters related to peace and security.

Its initiatives, such as the African Standby Force and the Panel of the Wise, demonstrate a commitment to proactive conflict resolution.

The AU has deployed dozens of missions across Africa in varied contexts like Somalia, Sudan, Burundi and Mali. However, the AU often finds itself outmatched by the sheer scale and intricacy of its problems.

The resource gap inevitably leads to a dependency on the UN and other external actors for support, particularly in peace operations and humanitarian interventions.

The over-reliance on external support has several ramifications.

First, it undermines the AU's credibility and authority, as it appears incapable of resolving the continent's challenges independently.

Second, the dependency creates a power imbalance that may limit the AU's policy options and strategic autonomy. For instance, external priorities may not always align with the AU's. Yet, the AU finds itself in a position where it cannot easily dissent due to its reliance on UN resources.

Multilateralism is increasingly facing a crisis of legitimacy.

Despite its lofty goals and numer-

ous initiatives, institutions like the UN have struggled to enforce compliance among its member states on various global issues.

This ineffectiveness has paved the way for alternative international groupings, such as BRICS, which offer a different global governance model, challenging the Western-centric paradigm that has dominated international relations for decades.

Considering the UN reform's slow and often frustrating pace, alternative solutions are being proposed.

One such proposal comes from the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability, which suggests the establishment of a Global Resilience Council. The body would focus on non-military existential threats such as climate change, pandemics and economic instability.

By concentrating on the pressing issues, the Global Resilience Council could serve as a catalyst for making the UN system more responsive and focusing on the long-term planning needs required to move countries from fragility to resilience.

While it may not replace the need for comprehensive UN reform or existing structures, it could be a supplementary mechanism to address urgent global challenges more effectively.

We find ourselves at a pivotal moment in history. The challenges that confront us require global solutions. The multilateral system should serve the interests of humanity rather than catering to the narrow interests of a select few nations.

The stakes are too high to allow inertia and vested interests to impede progress.

Let us seize this moment to create a more equitable, just, and resilient global governance system.

The onus is on all of us – governments, civil society, and international organisations – to work collaboratively. The time for action is now.

Let's just repeat what others seem not to have heard

"THE ANC NEC has condemned, in strongest terms, the brutal killing of civilians by Hamas."

These words were uttered by the ruling party's leader, President Cyril Ramaphosa, this week in response to the unprecedented escalation of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which is now in its second week.

Since some seem to have missed, or chose to close their eyes and ears to such remarks as delivered by Ramaphosa when closing of the party's National Executive Committee, we thought his speech needed recording and repeating.

"The ANC has also been perturbed by the genocidal and atrocious activities of the State of Israel which are being directed indiscriminately at Palestinian citizens, shutting them off from all means of livelihoods.

"On Saturday, we conveyed our condolences to the affected citizens on both sides of the conflict and called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to negotiations along the lines of the two-solution."

"The NEC reaffirms the long-standing support for, and solidarity with, the oppressed people of Palestine and calls for an end to the occupation of Palestine, which is against UN resolutions.

The state of Israel should immediately end the siege on Gaza so that water, food, energy, medical supplies and fuel can reach the civilians.

"As the governing party, the ANC will ensure that the South African government works with the international community towards an inclusive process that produces a viable Palestinian state, existing in peace alongside the state of Israel, based on the 1967 borders.

"The NEC is firmly of the view that the only way to end the cycle of violence and retribution that has lasted 75 years is a just-and-peaceful settlement."

The governing party, as well as the government it leads, came under tremendous criticism over its remarks and stance in relation to another war that has destabilised the world, the Ukraine- Russia conflict.

There were strong and valid criticisms about the clarity, or lack thereof, of the party and the country's stance to the war.

Thankfully there's clarity around the Israel-Palestine one.

Cape Argus

FOUNDED 1857

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IMAGE OF THE DAY



A BOY walks on a dry area of the Igarape do Taruma stream which flows into the Rio Negro River, as the water level at a major river port in Brazil's Amazon rainforest hit its lowest point in at least 121 years, in Manaus, Brazil, this week. | Reuters

MENTAL HEALTH

Tap into the power of music for healing

MUSIC is like words to the soul, just like words are to the mind. We are the generation that witnessed multiple musicians turning to excess drug use and coping mechanisms that led to their destruction.

Addressing mental health concerns and using music as therapy to remove stigma is a responsibility we all have. The power of music is crucial for our mental health and well-being, as it brings positive energy.

The start of written-down music was liturgy (worship), which was discovered to have had a connection with the idea of our meditative state. It's like having the ability to heal wounds that medicine cannot cure.

Music is the language of the spirit, and the soul becomes gradually intertwined as it uncovers the secrets of life, bringing peace and ending strife.

Musical instruments such as drums, ocarinas (flutes) and chimes have been used to decorate the tombs of Chinese leaders for thousands of years. Their pictorial depictions have been found in tombs, on monuments, on temples.



ANOLENE THANGAVELU PILLAY

Psychology adviser

In 1040 CE, Guido of Arezzo created a system that allowed composers to compose works with multiple melodies, influencing how music is written today. When listening to cultural music, it's crucial to be open to enjoying diverse interpretations.

Perhaps music that is diverse is loved by everyone. For more than 40 000 years, music has been a part of human culture. In 2009, an archaeologist discovered a flute made from a culture's wing bone during their cave excavation, which is one of

the oldest musical instruments.

According to a recent study in *Nature Neuroscience*, the brain's levels of the feel-good chemical dopamine increased by up to 9% when people listened to music they enjoyed. Music listeners can confirm this sentiment by noticing its stress-relieving effects, how it inspires creativity and provides peace of mind during challenging times.

When music touches us emotionally, our psychological stress response decreases, speeding up our nervous system's recovery. This happens to people who suffer from physical and psychological conditions, such as dementia, grief, anxiety, depression, cancer and chronic physical pain. Music is a remedy that soothes us when weary and re-inspires us, leaving us with joy, as it lifts us out of depression or tears.

The chills you feel when you hear a particularly moving piece of music enhances your mood, to trigger sensations of magnificence.

Music sounds allow our soul to become filled with energy and vitality, just like our bodies need food and

energy to thrive in this world. Music has an energising effect with profound effect on our mind and bodies.

Listening to upbeat music has the beneficial power to elevate positive moods. The limbic system, which is involved in processing emotions and controlling memory, lights up when we listen to music. The wisdom of the world of music can catch hold of peace deep within and push it into the cells of our body, allowing peace and music to remedy our mental health.

Music in forms of celebration remains a powerful way of uniting people through national anthems, protest songs during marches, love songs during dating, hymns during worship or lullabies which help the young fall asleep. When words are not enough to express ourselves, music is a beautiful form of expression.

Music's healing power can provide us with a sense of connection, support and understanding in difficult moments. It has a divine ability to remove all obstacles from our mind, especially when we feel the world is against us.

QUICK READ

MKHWEBANE

IMPEACHED Public Protector advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane has joined the EFF, saying she believed in its seven cardinal pillars and wished to continue to protect South Africans.

A large majority of parliamentarians voted to remove her from office last month, owing to a report by the Section 194 inquiry that recommended her removal on grounds of incompetence and misconduct. On Monday, Mkhwebane was joined by other members of the EFF to make the announcement of her new political home. | IOL

HLABISA

THE IFP has resolved to move its president, Velenkosini Hlabisa, to the National Assembly (Parliament), to replace the late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who died last month aged 95.

The decision was taken on Monday during the party's national executive committee meeting.

Hlabisa's seat in the KwaZulu-Natal legislature, where he was serving, will be taken by Reverend Musa Zondi, who was appointed to the party's national council last week. Zondi is the former secretary-general of the party. | IOL