
BRICS+ High-Level Dialogue and Symposium

The Role of External Actors in the Past, Present and Future of Peace and Security
Cooperation in Africa

Proceedings Report

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- ❖ *AU* – African Union
- ❖ *ACCORD* – African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
- ❖ *BRICS* – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
- ❖ *DIRCO* – Department of International Relations and Cooperation
- ❖ *ECOWAS* – Economic Community of West African State
- ❖ *EU* – European Union
- ❖ *SADC* – Southern African Development Community
- ❖ *UN* – United Nations

- ❖ *UNDP - United Nations Development Programme*
- ❖ *SA* – South Africa

- ❖ *UNISA* – University of South Africa
- ❖ *US* – United States of America
- ❖ *DRC* – Democratic Republic of Congo
- ❖ *ECOSOC* – The United Nations Economic and Social Council
- ❖ *OAU* – Organisation of African Unity
- ❖ *APSA* – African Peace and Security Architecture
- ❖ *GCI* – Global Civilization Initiative

BRICS+ High-Level Dialogue and Symposium:

The Role of External Actors in the Past, Present and Future of Peace and Security Cooperation in Africa

14–15 August 2023

DAY 1

I. Introduction

The establishment of BRICS has become topical around the World, and the conversation around this post-9/11, twenty-first-century Bloc has acted as another catalyst towards a multipolar world. Since its establishment in June 2009, the BRICS Bloc has grabbed the attention of many economists, politicians and academics about its impact and significance on the global economy. It is imperative to articulate the involvement of Africa, insofar as its position in global politics. In recent times, spectators have witnessed more countries joining this Bloc, and thus the famous acronym has been accepted as BRICS+. This symposium preceded the summit that occurred on 22 to 24 August 2023, the following week. What attendees of the symposium were made to realise is the importance of actively engaging on factors that affect Africa as far as this Bloc is concerned. What the symposium discussion proposes is that academics and members of civil society should engage in transdisciplinary engagement that articulates strategy and forward-thinking within the spheres of peace and security. South Africa appears as the least dominant member within BRICS, in terms of capacity and trade, but at the same time remains the only country in the African sub-continent prior to the expansion. The Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs, ACCORD, and the University of South Africa in partnership with the Department of History invited attendees to deliberate on matters related to the role of external actors in the peace and security architecture/ reality of Africa, and how the established development (that is BRICS+) has impacted the trajectory of economies, and security of polities globally. A transdisciplinary team was the outcome of the dialogue, which seeks to engage scholars and individuals related to this important conversation in the post-COVID, geo-political space.

Context and Objectives

To put this dialogue into perspective and within a South African context, Prof. David Mello from the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs provided a welcoming address and expounded on the following points:

- a. The need for and importance of African scholars and key individuals in the dialogue pertaining to BRICS and Africa's positionality and future.
- b. This dialogue occurred in the backdrop of conflicts such as Russia/Ukraine and other conflicts of significance that affect the continent and the world.
- c. This dialogue also coincided with the university's (UNISA) turn and focus on Africa in celebration of the institution's sesquicentennial. Therefore, an interdisciplinary dialogue is timely to the current trajectory of the university and its stakeholders when it comes to moving the continent forward.

The dialogue related to geopolitics that have been influenced by developments and events that changed the lens through which Africans now articulate Africa's role and significance, the agency of those belonging to the continent in safeguarding the continent's future. Currently, the international community has witnessed the sturdy birth and growth of international collaboration involving Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). This neophyte collaboration, which began in 2009, has survived scrutiny and criticism from individuals who question its relevance - individuals like the Goldman Sachs's economist who coined the acronym, and thereafter predicted economies that would 'dominate' the world by 2050. However true or not that prediction was, the partners of this collaboration and their roles have been examined. China's dominance in this partnership has ruffled some feathers, with some questioning the existence of motives and hidden agendas. The question remains, who gets to benefit from this collaboration the most, and who gets to run at a loss? Secondly, what are the ramifications of this collaboration, considering the impact this has on African realities? In particular, the post-COVID setting has coincided with a growing call for South Africans to actively engage, question and decipher the extent and limitations that the country possesses.

II. The Role of External Actors in the Past, Present and Future of Peace and Security Cooperation in Africa

Analysis 1: In the first session of the symposium, Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah introduced Ambassador Welile Nhlapo as the key discussant, to give his reflections on the topic:

The ambassador recognised the task of standing in for other panellists who could not attend for various reasons. Furthermore, the ambassador highlighted the importance of refocusing attention on substantive issues when it came to understanding BRICS. The emergence of the latter signified a shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world. The first point highlighted by the ambassador was that there cannot be talks about development and stability without peace and security. This was paramount to the discussion because the success of one depends on the realisation of the other. The ambassador proposed the importance of examining what BRICS represented. The second point highlighted was how BRICS had been measured in relation to peace and security cooperation in Africa, while the third point was based on understanding the external, direct and indirect effects of the Bloc on the politics of countries such as Libya. It is important to acknowledge the power dynamics that informed and influenced the political landscape that currently exists and examine the role players of critical events that changed the world. The ambassador also emphasised that there had been a collective experience of nations besides China and the West – especially in Africa – that once worked together in formulating solutions to problems once faced.

The apartheid struggle in South Africa was affected by Pan Africanist activism and the ripple effects of the Cold War. Africa was the biggest loser from the Cold War, and now had the duty to redress how it moved on. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the continent was able to adjust (e.g. multi-party governance) to a so-called New World Order. Institutions within the changing environment needed to figure out how to deal with new realities and challenges. This included the emergence of the OAU (later AU), in which African states and related institutional structures responded and to took part in global politics and dialogue regarding what needed to be reformed and changed. The organs of the UN disrupted these emerging institutions in Africa, while developing countries sought to organise themselves in response. Decisions were imposed in terms of how Africans dealt with peace and security in Africa – which ultimately were

prescriptions from external parties. 9/11 was a monster that was created belligerent geo-politics, and it shaped how we deal with peace and security today.

- a. Responding to the questions raised by the panel chair, the ambassador highlighted the significance of recognising the role played by anti-colonial struggles, and the influence of thinking and philosophy behind it. He highlighted the emergence of Pan-Africanist solidarity within this discourse as a major development.
- b. Furthermore, in this context, international solidarity was also an important development, precisely within the context of the Cold War and how it impacted Africa's development, and post-African independence. It is within this context that former colonial powers aimed to maintain their control over the resources of their former colonies. This development resulted in Africa experiencing a greater loss over time.
- c. The fall of the Berlin Wall at the end of 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought about a response from Africa, and the need to adjust to the New World Order that had emerged. At the same time, new concepts such as multi-party democracy were also emerging. The question of human rights, constitutions, issues of governance and other factors changed the African landscape altogether.

The conversation continued to consider the impact of changing landscapes regarding stability across Africa through the influence of religious beliefs such as Islam and Christianity. The ambassador responded by alluding to the fact that global politics and how nations handle matters of peace and security had been affected by dominant ideals that set the precedence of global politics, particularly decisions established by the West, which have been notable in impacts on countries such as Afghanistan. Notwithstanding, it was evident how peace and security in Africa, and the issues surrounding it reflect the state of affairs around the entire globe. The chair continued the conversation by asking the questions below:

Q: What kind of leverage does an African mediator have when going into these dialogues, so that Africans can confront these challenges (considering the states that are in debt, and suffer from depleting resources)?

A: The ambassador began by arguing that “legitimacy is born out a desire for justice, a belief in the people who have a drive to determine their future. This right is the leverage that positions states in rooms of negotiation, and policy making. It is also agency that should be evident to achieve their own set objectives. Leverage is determined by the circumstances and the result of the fact that they were formally colonised. Non-state actors must question the conditions of their leverage and their ability to assist in the challenges. African mediators’ actors must establish a basis on which non-state actors can contribute. The only leverage is integrity and acceptance as legitimate partners to contribute accordingly to conflict management.

Q: External actors have increased interest in Africa, because of resources (such as uranium in Niger): How can we adapt to the growing influence of national interests and existing conflicts, and how do these factors affect Africa’s ability to develop capital?

A: France's reliance on uranium in Niger, and the need to keep a hold on it were questioned. Drones were deployed into Niger. When Ghaddafi was overthrown, massive weapons were seen coming into Niger and now there was never a response on what happened to those arms. We should never ask questions on conditions that were set before. As there have been coups before, never has it been that there is an evident alliance between those who have been previously placed under sanctions because of the need to establish independent responsibility, from the so-called guardians. That is what happens when the government does not establish respect and trust in its own military structures, but instead relies on those who may not have the best interest at heart. The institutional capacity of the AU was brought in. How can we make sure that we have peace and security in Africa with European money? How do we deal with the structural issues that emerge with our own institutions? We can't have an intercontinental trade agreement without the integration of African states and institutions and forms of governance (the pan-African parliament). It is essential that we respect African institutions and make them work to deal with our own challenges.

What kind of institution will define this African Union? The answer is in developing institutions that enable development, debates and discussions around the establishment of the Pan-African parliament. How do we hide away behind the issue of sovereignty and proclamation of “non-interference”? How do we ensure that we determine and address issues that emerge? Africans still need to negotiate the space,

especially if the UN does not address the fundamental issues. Not all the expectations are met. How do we use the institutions' setup for the Africa we want (intra-African trade)? We ought to ask ourselves important questions in understanding if we are going to be able to control that which we set up. The BRICS bank will collapse if it upholds Western bank principles. We will also have to bring together people who may not want to sit together, such as the minister of finance and heads of banks in collaboration (G6, G7 and a possible G8).

The chair wrapped up the conversation on that note by reiterating the points alluded by the ambassador and the importance of actualising the aspirations that will lead the continent's progress. In response, the ambassador also emphasised the need to utilise Pan-African responses to the challenges that Africans face (and to contextualise existing examples of African responses). Although there are new structures in place that are responses, the ambassador continued to emphasise that we needed to recall the existence of indigenous ways of dealing with managing conflicts. Furthermore, the ambassador sounded the call to rebuild the institutions that would respond appropriately to renewed dimensions of challenges and conflict that Africa would face (this included universities and civil society).

Questions and comments from the floor

Jean-Jacques Cornish: Since the establishment of the African Union in 2002, high and lofty expectations were set up, referring to it as a body that would hold individuals of war crimes and so on. Do you think that it has managed to act as a muscular body that would regulate what was happening in Africa? Do you think that it has met those expectations?

Question from the audience: How does the ambassador see South Africa as a key player in BRICS, the role it plays in the integration of the continent, and how Africa should respond to foreign investments within peace and security contexts?

Response to question 1: The ambassador responded by highlighting what transpired at the AU summit in 1999, held in Algiers, regarding peace and security in Africa. What remained and became evident from that meeting was that there had been a

Pan-African vision that was propounded by Nkrumah about the nature of the continent. In essence, it was evident that there were strides made to ensure that Africa engaged itself actively in the global economy by participating equally with other countries, especially in the G8. Such strides were seen with the establishment of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), which was initially termed NAI (New African Initiative) before the final approval by the OAU's heads of states. Furthermore, it was imperative that there was better definition to the kind of institutions that would determine the evolution of African Union and establish them in line with the Constitutive Act. Additionally, the states in the union needed to establish boundaries and sanctions for the problems and challenges that are encountered. African states are still in the predicament of having to negotiate the space of their interaction because of the existence of sovereign states. These sovereign states have evidently become stumbling blocks to integration because that requires concession of sovereignty for the collective to also have buy-in power. Finally, determined values need to be visible in the political parties that exist, which will translate to the policies and institutions. As a result, countries do not live up to the policies regarding the Constitutive Act of the collective and are in line with established goals towards the desired Africa.

Response to question 2: African states cannot bring partners to what is not achievable on their own. Also, they need to acknowledge the importance of establishing predetermined agreements and clauses that would prescribe the nature of their collaboration with external partners. An example of this would be the BRICS bank and the need for the African Development Bank to determine how it would work with them.

Prof Bao Maohong (an environmental historian from Peking University, China, and visiting Professor at UNISA): What is the role of the EU in global economic governance, and what is the role of South Africa in the EU's environmental governance programme?

Dr. Cecilia Nedziwe | Senior Lecturer, Rhodes University (Department of Political and International Studies): What leverage do we have in the Niger conflict, in terms

of a strong, people's voice stating that they want France out of that region? How do we address what people want using the question of leverage?

Response to question 1: Environmental issues that are not properly dealt with expose the weakness in governance. The ambassador continued to reflect on how these issues were seen in the movement of people with their cattle into areas that are not desirable. Furthermore, the institutions that have been established to curb the effects of climate change have not been realised, and consequently, this is seen in how both Europe and America have suffered under the impact of it more than in Africa. Thus, it is imperative that steps are taken to address environmental questions and concerns.

Response to question 2: The issue of Niger is pointing to certain realities that we have been avoiding for a long time. This includes the impracticality of prescribing suitable responses to conflict without historical consideration and questions. The coup is not the first, and there has now been a growing need to address those questions regarding the region with careful consideration. We must be willing to look at this development, by examining what transpired in Libya under Gaddafi, for us to be able to determine how to address the question on Niger. There must be lessons learnt, and a need to examine the peace and security architecture that will enable a suitable response to issues instead of a heavy reliance on the army.

Questions continued:

Adv. Siphon Mantula | Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs, UNISA:

A question on Western nations' dominance and cyber-security is a recurring concern, especially related to the aspect of peace and security. Furthermore, an example was made by referring to countries such as the DRC, Southern Sudan and Angola as prime examples of countries that have witnessed a growth in interest by BRICS countries (whether China, India, Russia, or South Africa). We are finding and funding the peace and security development cooperation in the BRICS countries. So, how do we deal with those issues? Furthermore, how do the national security advisors and DIRCO deal with issues of peace and security, and what they have been doing considering

what America has been doing for the past six months? This is important to consider since Americanisation and the undermining of the BRICS block also has an impact. It also became evident during the summit in Russia that the country (Russia) is clear about its intention to support Africa on issues related to security intelligence. Therefore, as pertinent as it is to look at the past, the present is also important in understanding the issues that are currently challenging African countries. In doing so, it is possible to forge the future by also understanding the present. The disorganisation that has been witnessed in the AU, ECOWAS and so on has also been reflected through the failure of our representative at the UN. Therefore, we need to examine the benefits of our investments at the UN.

Response to Question:

There was a need to understand that each of the mentioned countries had its own unique history and related impact. The ambassador then began by looking at the historical impact of the Berlin Conference, and the activities of King Leopold of Belgium in the DRC. Furthermore, the case of Somalia showed how it was still a contested space because it was colonised by Britain, France and Italy – whereby each of these countries recognised it as their colonial heritage. What was evident from the current state of the DRC, including some of the countries of the Great Lakes region, was that a plethora of policy dilemmas existed that complicate the situation in the region.

Regarding the issue of cyber security, it was unwarranted that the geopolitical affairs and rivalry that exists between the US and China, that is, the Huawei debacle, have begun to affect countries that have no prejudice between the two. As a result, there appears to be a collective punishment for those caught in between. Therefore, it is essential that African nations and those in the collective need to develop their own cyber security measures. The lack of consideration for such matters reflects a coercion of matters that African states are not yet equipped to deal with but are gradually finding ways to decrypt. Furthermore, the evolution of BRICS will witness a consideration of issues that had never been dealt with before. This “evolution” will also come with new challenges, because of the clear evidence of having to handle countries who had no prior relation, but somehow are required to find common goals and agendas.

Ambassador Alexis Bukuru | Burundi

This question alluded to examining the root causes of conflict regarding issues of peace and security: It was apparent that some people have talked about external powers and internal influences. What are your views on the real causes of the external root causes and the internal influence because of the lack of peace-built mechanisms? What are the possible solutions in this regard?

Valarie Lowe | Department of Public Administration and Management, UNISA

The African Union advocates for the meaningful participation of women towards the peace and security agenda in the continent as well as good governance democracy, as outlined in the agenda 2063. What is your opinion on the role of women in peace and security or peacebuilding? What is your opinion on a feminist approach to peace and security?

Response to Question 1: Ambassador Nhlapo responded to this question by first acknowledging its importance. Firstly, on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, an outcomes' document was produced by a team brought together by Kofi Annan titled, 'In Larger Freedoms'. This document was designed to deal with the issues facing the UN at 50 and find solutions to them. This included attending to issues regarding the reformation of the security council, and recurring conflicts. It was then decided that perhaps a Peacebuilding Commission was needed to focus on the issues raised. In applying this mandate, three countries were chosen as a test case: Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. This move was acknowledged by the UN, and it was emphasised that the Peacebuilding Commission had to be established within the office of the Secretary General. This proposed idea was not openly welcomed at the UN. The 5th committee was later approached to fund the Peace-Building office, because the commission was approved with the expansion that the Security Council demanded. There was a question raised about ensuring that a Peacekeeping mission departs the scene after completing its task so that there remains a Peace-Building office on the ground. Although this was proposed, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations resisted, and maintained that it still wanted to maintain control over the current security council. It was then decided that the Peace-Building office must be funded through voluntary contributions, instead of assessed contributions. This was another issue

because the countries which were prepared to take this on were Scandinavian and were already funding some programs within the UNDP and country teams on the ground. When the office was established, there was not enough money to run it, which resulted to Kofi Annan requesting that the UNDP release two individuals who would work at the office and use their expertise and assist. Although the early days at the office were challenging because of various issues, the issues at hand were structurally related, and efforts were continually applied to safeguard the peacekeeping mandate. So-called developmental partners did not assist amidst these issues, and only after President Évariste intervened, certain concessions were made. However, these concessions were evidently a continuation of sanctions in a veiled manner. South Africa on the other hand is now back in the Peace Building Commission, and again some questions have been raised regarding how it will function amidst foreign interference.

Lastly, the ambassador emphasised that change will not come instantly, but it was important to keep pushing for advancement, while advocating for the mandates that African states want. Currently, the challenges faced in Burundi as a prime example, is evidence of a kind of betrayal which exposes the issues with the UN system, and thus, Africans ought to make it work for themselves.

Response to Question 2: This has become a recurring question. When the UN introduced ECOSOC, the members of the AU also began to devise ways to respond to ECOSOC by establishing measures for establishing an architecture for peace and security. Dr Salim Ahmed Salim in response to that appointed five women from each region of the OAU who would be consulted and contribute towards the thinking of women's participation on peace and security issues in the Conflict Management Centre. However, this development exposed the flaws in the peace and security architecture of the AU when the "feminist" element was not institutionalised; until the establishment of FemWise-Africa. The members of FemWise-Africa in turn began to advocate for the involvement of women on the ground, instead of being subjects in conversations on peace and security. As a result, other institutions emerged that sought to investigate the role of women regarding peace and security matters in Africa. There was clear evidence of the need to advocate for women's involvement because

they are best suited to lead the conversations and devise strategies for peace and security. This is because women are usually in the theatre of conflict, and not including them is a disservice to the cause. It is imperative to recognise indigenous ways of dealing with conflict, which are in existence (stand by force) and do not take a backseat. Let's rebuild, by using the very institutions that have been set up by African mediators, and take our place (academics, civil society).

Closing: Prof. Mello

In summing up the conversation for this session, it is important to consider how Niger has brought about certain realities that Africans had not addressed. There are blind spots to history and ignorance on the role of religious and traditional leaders who have expressed indifference to what is happening in Niger. Environmental issues and global issues are evident. None of the policies that were set up have been implemented. What are we doing in mobilising resources in Africa? In multilateral organisations, is there a need for introspection? We need to look at neo-colonisation that will come in as help from outside, which leaves us indebted.

Day 2: BRICS High-Level Dialogue, 15 August 2023

Prof. Mello: Welcome and Introductions

The second day of the symposium comprised of two sessions. The first explored Chinese perspectives on peace diplomacy in Africa. The second session was on Pan-African perspectives regarding peace diplomacy in Africa.

Introduction of panel participants: Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah

The first speaker was Dr. Li Wentao, executive director for The Institute of African Studies, which is part of the Chinese Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, China.

Moderator: Prof. Charlotte Du Toit

An interactive and lively discussion was anticipated from the presenters and audience. Dr. Li Wentao gave perspectives on the topic below:

III. Session One: Chinese Perspectives on Peace Diplomacy in Africa

Analysis Two: Dr. Li Wentao, Executive Director at the Institute of African Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations

Title of presentation: China's View on China-Africa Security Cooperations

The first point that the executive director mentioned was China's long-standing relationship with Africa since the early years of resistance against colonialism and efforts for African independence. This support was highlighted by the provision of military training, and the provision of weapons in the 1950s and 60s to Algeria and Guinea. China was an important supporter of many liberation movements in Africa, providing material support (weapons and equipment) and personal training. This was further demonstrated by the invitation of promising African freedom leaders for training in guerrilla and military technologies. The purpose of this China-Africa alliance was to oppose colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism since there was already a shared ideology with some African states. Furthermore, this relationship between China and Africa also led to the founding of projects in information intelligence, to allow for the two to share information. From 1964 to 1979, China provided military training to more than 40 countries, sent more than 6,400 military instructors and experts, and received more than 8,000 foreign military students, of which more than 5,000 were African students. The third important cooperation is in information and intelligence. Since China was isolated by the West, it is important for the two to share information considering this long-standing relationship.

There is evidence of a worsening state of Africa's peace and security state because of various geo-political developments in Africa, and out of Africa, that is, the war in Ukraine and instability in Ethiopia. Regional conflicts have also troubled different parts of the country and conflicts in countries such as Nigeria and South Africa. There is

also an increase in terrorist attacks in the Sahel and some parts of Africa. Lastly, the imminent Cold War has further caused other disruptions. The director continued to call for an establishment of security cooperation that will act on these growing concerns and more. More specifically, the director elaborated on what the Chinese philosophy is concerning security. Firstly, it is mentioned that it is guided by two views: the first, is called the holistic view of national security which was established in 2014 at the first meeting of the National Security Commission, of the Chinese Communist Party security committee. This is known and understood as the most important aspect that currently guides China's security interests in national security cooperation. The other is the Global Security Initiative which was founded on this and comprises of China's thoughts and proposition on international security issues. Nevertheless, this talk is centred around China's security philosophy and attempts to relate it to China-Africa cooperation. Firstly, China upholds the principle of indivisible security, and has never upheld the idea of absolute security, but rather promotes the idea of building its own security and that of other countries. Secondly, China's involvement is not for any political gain, but its view is people-centred.

Analysis Three: Rt. Ambassador SHU Zhan, Director for the African Studies Centre at the China Foundation for International Studies

The ambassador began his opening statement by declaring that since he has been retired for ten years, he has not been in any African country. Therefore, listeners and participants should keep that in mind as the information may be inaccurate.

China wants to be a partner in solving regional and local, by a few principles and frameworks established by the United Nations and African Union. However, the ambassador reiterated the need for Africans to lead by framing their own initiatives to solve African issues. It is also important to trace the root cause of counterterrorism and other related issues, where traditional and non-traditional forms of security are introduced, and where a comprehensive form of governance is established. This form of governance will be able to deal with social, economic and political problems and other complex problems that have accumulated over the years. It is, therefore, not advisable to push every issue to geopolitics but on sustainable development for peace and security.

Ambassador Nhlapo remarks:

Ambassador Nhlapo recognised the historical relationship between China and African states throughout the liberation struggle, and the decolonial agenda. He continued to draw parallels between the two, inferring that there exists a common understanding and a shared experience because of the dynamics of the Cold War. That experience will be beneficial since there is an experience of surviving even in difficult circumstances; therefore, a reevaluation of how far the relationship has gone, and under which circumstances. Furthermore, it is essential to assess the threats and opportunities within the cooperation between China and Africa, to get rid of any confusion and resistance that marks it. The trajectory of China's development is an inspiration to Africa amidst challenges, and as a result, it is important in order identify common goals for both.

Questions and comments from the floor

Professor Antonie van Nieuwkerk (TM School: International Relations and Diplomacy Studies):

As a question to the panel, the professor highlighted his own understanding of the relationship between China and South Africa. He mentioned that China's interests are in support of development goals and the vision of Agenda 2063. He stated that Chinese approaches were informed by its role in BRICS, its Indo-Pacific strategy, its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, or B&R), and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). The following questions were then posed:

- i. What can Africans do to encourage the Chinese government and people to help improve and reshape APSA (African Peace and Security Architecture)? The professor acknowledged Mr. Li Wentao's sentiments that peace and security in Africa are not improving. That is why it is important to rethink the basis of APSA and therefore "silence the guns".

- ii. What is the role of the people/ citizens in this emerging and strengthening relationship between China and Africa?
- iii. What advice would a Chinese scholar give an African scholar when we think about the crisis in West Africa in the Sahel and in Nigeria? To ECOWAS?

Response to Questions: Dr. Li Wentao: The best individuals who can find solutions to Africa are Africans themselves. Although limited by the language barrier and unable to speak French (a language most common in central and some West African countries under ECOWAS), the most important aspect is capital and equipment for peace and security to be realised in those regions, and in the continent. It is possible to share knowledge and experience between Africans and Chinese people, but what is needed the most is responsible governments. The exchange of values and philosophies can be done well by scholars by reconceptualising and reframing scholarship that is dominated by Western thought. This is seen by the tendency to divide the world into dichotomous categories, black, white/good, and evil, and as a result, conflicts ensue. Both African and Chinese scholars and think tanks should play a role in finding shared experiences and similarities that will reflect in scholarship.

Dr. Sipokazi Madida, COD of the Department of History | UNISA

Responding to Mr. Li Wentao's contribution related to Chinese principles of indivisible and individual security, Dr. Madida requested elaboration on these principles, within the notion of individual autonomy and citizenship versus the imposed so-called global democracy (and its qualifying standards for "legitimate" sovereignty).

Response to the question by Mr. Li Wentao: By observing what is currently happening in other countries where there is conflict, it is important for China to maintain indivisible security principles. These principles are still upheld in current disputes because there is always interdependence between nations where there are disagreements.

Dr. Sokfa John, Deputy Director | Centre for Mediation in Africa University of Pretoria:

Is there a connection between China's economic interest in Africa and peace and security? This question was asked in the context of reactions to China's growing interest in Africa, which has been mixed. One of the popular views is that China's presence in Africa is more of a neo-colonial sort of presence since it is known that colonialism or neo-coloniality has never been a good development for peace and security. Considering these sentiments, Dr. John requested views from the panel presenters.

Response to question by Ambassador SHU Zhan: It is important to define neo-colonialism in this context and to also consider that Chinese people in Africa are a fraction of the size, and in most cases are contracted for a limited time only. In some cases, they are employed to work in African industries as small traders and so on. There have been cases in countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda where there was an increase of employment for citizens. The interests in Africa can be described as "common development". Therefore, popular sentiments of neo-colonialism are unfounded, and without cause.

Response to the question by Mr. Li Wentao: The view that the Chinese government wants to impose ideas on Africans is not true. In fact, there are many African countries that work with China because they do not think that it is a threat to their peace and security.

iv. Session Two: Pan-African Perspectives on Peace Diplomacy in Africa

Moderator: Professor Anthonie van Nieuwkerk (TM School: International Relations and Diplomacy Studies)

Introduction of speakers and delegates: Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah

Apologies on behalf of the main speaker, Prof. Kwesi Aning (Director of the faculty of research and academic Affairs at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre), whose absence is noted. Ambassador Nhlapo will join the session and provide a thorough introduction to the theme. Dr. Nedziwe will take the platform with a presentation, followed by Dr. Philani Mthembu.

The session began with introductory statements from Prof. van Nieuwkerk that highlighted what the engagements were about. The conversations stemming from the symposium sought to transcend the meeting room and be of benefit to teaching and learning practices and spaces. As this symposium preceded the BRICS summit, it also enabled important questions to be asked, as a reflection on African values and aspirations from the alignment. It was also essential to review Africa's stance on Western powers and forces, and a decision from the continent and its leaders was imminent. It was essential to engage difficult questions that looked at Africa's approach to its relationship with China since China has policies for interacting with African States. This is important to consider especially because China's role in Africa and in BRICS is instrumental. The question below was posed to Ambassador Nhlapo to begin the conversation:

- i. What is meant by an African approach to peace diplomacy? Who do we partner with in forging lost ground, not just in the Sahel but also in some other parts of the continent?

Analysis Four: Ambassador Nhlapo | Senior Advisor at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes

An additional perspective from Prof. Kwesi Aning was going to help to interrogate issues on African issues. There have been contestable cases, particularly in the UN, that revealed the true nature behind it and the impeachment of leaders who did not adhere to the set requirements. As a result of this, it becomes even more important

for African leaders to lead conversations, seek solutions, and engage freely on matters that are of importance. It is also important to look at the AU and institutions founded, like the Committee on Consolation and Mitigation which handles border disputes of interested countries. The issue of borders in Africa has enabled a discussion and a need to evaluate the extent of these issues, and an acknowledgment that they are inheritances of colonialism. Are these borders sustainable? At some point, it was thought that the African integration project would assist us with dealing with such issues. However, the current state of the continent does not permit such advancement yet. There are a significant number of issues, like the Lesotho and Bloemfontein debates that occurred after the elections. Land claims that constantly re-emerge in Namibia, Tanzania and Malawi have also gone through similar debates, and contestations on land. Initially, regional economic communities and cooperation founded in the continent were thought to be sufficient for dealing with other broad issues and assisting with integration. Considering this background, the ambassador asked the following questions:

- i. What are our perspectives on peace diplomacy?
- ii. How do we identify threats that will create problems, including treaties signed during colonialism? (i.e., the treaty signed by the British and Egypt on the Nile)

To be able to speak of peace diplomacy, it is essential to identify issues that will need solutions. In doing so, we will be able to get countries and the continent into the process of dialogue consistent with Pan-Africanism and common prosperity as the basis. In so doing, it is also important to extend the same debates into research done by post-graduate students instead of relying on politicians to come up with solutions that will assist in saving the continent. There is a need for brain power to solve issues and problems and develop policies that will assist in advancing the continent forward. Furthermore, in complex cases like in Darfur in Sudan, the solutions can also be found if we also engage the British who are still in possession of the maps that may assist with dealing with border disputes in the region.

The ambassador closed the introduction of the second session by suggesting that similar issues can be discussed by the panellists relating to the issue of peace diplomacy on the continent.

Analysis Five: Dr. Cecilia Nedziwe | Senior Lecturer, Rhodes University

Dr. Nedziwe began her presentation by emphasising the need for broadening and deepening conversations about Africa's place in international relations and our voice in global spaces, and to push the conversation in classroom spaces as well. It is evident that students do not know much about the continent, and it is unfortunate that externally-based people are more knowledgeable about it. The presentation focused on peace diplomacy, particularly Pan-Africanist diplomacy. Dr. Nedziwe also emphasised the need to define what peace by Africans for Africans meant. It was important to analyse examples of this diplomacy. It is not limited by the romanticisation of the diplomacy, but rather shows the agency that will contribute to building an agenda for peace.

She added that there are also African scholars who have done research that articulates how Africans address problems to avert conflicts or violence. Conversations on Pan-African diplomacy have been framed in common positions that are aimed at promoting solidarity which has also been evident in the process of decolonisation both within the organisation of African Unity as well as the Frontline States. These common positions were also evident in pre-colonial societies in West Africa whereby female leaders and role-players identified common insecurities within societies as well as strategies for addressing these different insecurities. Therefore, it is important to recognise that this is not a new phenomenon because it has been used in African and global contexts. Furthermore, there are examples that we can point to as examples of the power-sharing agreements that we've seen across the continent in the case of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Sudan. However, these agreements have been noted as "big-men pacts" and responsible for maintaining political elites in power as opposed to an agency that addresses the aspirations of the people in those territories. Another example is Nigeria's role in stabilising the West African region, particularly Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is important to highlight in indicating Africa's capability in solving its own problems.

There exist different norms within the African Peace and Security Architecture, evident in the solemn Declaration on Common African Defence and security policy, including the African Union non-aggression. These two examples reflect the common position

evident in Africa when it comes to peace and security. Although these structures exist (AU), challenges are seen in the implementation of the policies. Issues of political will or reluctance to implement the common positions as evident in various states that have committed themselves but failed to implement. Bi-lateral agreements also hinder the collective policy to deal with issues of peace and security on the continent, including the issue of Africa's sovereignty to protect its territorial integrity. There are countries that take common positions seriously, like South Africa, and their position not to host the military base as part of their SADAC agreement.

The case of Niger is a demonstration of Africa's weaknesses to galvanise around a Pan-African agenda. For example, the role of Nigeria and the regional differences evident in ECOWAS and their alliance with the West do challenge the idea of collective diplomacy and Pan-African initiative. In conclusion, there is a dominant discourse that categorises African states as quasi-states, as having negative sovereignty that depicts African states as weak compared to the West. This is used as an excuse to intervene in Africa's processes and categorise Africa as a weak state. As a final point, Africa's weaknesses are not located in the dominant narrative but in its inability to self-critique its own agenda as well as to comply with the common positions that they have established.

The first presentation was summarised by the moderator by alluding to the point that the next speaker can continue the conversation on Africa's ability to forge a Pan-Africanist approach to peace and security.

Analysis Six: Dr Philani Mthembu | Executive Director at the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)

The speaker began the conversation by affirming Dr. Nedziwe's presentation, and his own upcoming paper which may have a working title, African Peace Diplomacy, and the search for strategic autonomy and a holistic approach. This was inspired by the fact that many of Africa's issues are failures to trace the roots of the conflict. The move to an African approach can be rooted in various aspects, including indigenous knowledge systems. However, the extent of that should always be questioned, and their applicability in our mainstream approaches. At its core, the African approach to peace diplomacy is inclusive of identifying the root causes of conflicts in the continent.

Notwithstanding, there is a need to define, research and articulate root causes not just with the state actors. The root causes of conflict cannot be thoroughly addressed without engaging in dialogue. Secondly, development remains imperative while addressing the causes of conflict. The act of identifying the root causes also involves the articulation of causes that are outside the continent. In essence, there should be a means to address the systemic causes of that conflict, the question of “who benefits from some of the causes that have been identified?”.

Furthermore, the conversation of peace in Africa is about economic structures, social cohesion, and how Africa fits into global value chains. Dr. Mthembu continues this point by referring to industrialisation, and that for some countries to industrialise, they need access to cheap minerals. This point is further connected to Africa’s development agenda, prioritising it will face backlash. It is therefore important to safeguard our own positions taken, like on developing regional value chains and employ Africans.

Another question was posed by Dr. Mthembu: How do we move up the value chain? This question formed an important part of identifying root causes because it addresses where the continent is structurally positioned. Again, it is imperative to also include the importance of strategic autonomy, and redefining what this means for Africa. This redefinition would require debunking approaches that examined the nation state in traditional, Western notions of a modern nation state. Therefore, a Pan-African approach toward rethinking Africa’s position is necessary. That is why it is imperative to define South Africa as a regional state than a traditional nation state because of the notable differences that characterise the country. Another question was posed: How do Africans find their way into formal systems of governance? And agreements at the regional level and allocation of resources towards those ideas? What does state building mean? Is there a need for mini states? Or do we organise the existing state through agreements and allocation of resources?

To tackle the abovementioned challenges, there will be evident African agency and a higher degree of strategic autonomy which will only be achieved as a continent and not as singular states. Trade is one of the ways that can assist with that, including managing the movement of people and defending important policy decisions in international agreements. There is an important role that Africa plays in peace diplomacy as a continent and in sharing the experience of dealing with both internal

conflicts and those caused by external factors. This important role derived from the wealth of thinkers and practitioners who have experience with dealing with conflict from both the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Questions and comments from the floor

i. Katlego | Student, University of the Witwatersrand

Do we still have women who can continue the baton and ignite society? For example, women like the ones after the Great Depression, and World Wars, and like the famous 1956 march. Secondly, do you find it more important for Africa to unite in resources so that we revitalise?

ii. Macdonald Rammala | Law and Social Sciences Researcher, UNISA
Question to Ambassador Nhlapo

In instances where you have a foreign country like China's own key infrastructures, isn't that ground for future conflict? The so-called debt trap?

iii. Dr. Sipokazi Madida | Department of History, UNISA

Dr. Madida had a question to Dr. Nedziwe regarding quiet diplomacy as leverage, and another question on corruption and greed witnessed by the masses.

iv. Siphoesihle Gumede | Department of History, UNISA

A question on justice: How do we redefine justice within the rubric of peace diplomacy in the effort to solve the issues surrounding African histories and external actors?

**v. Dr. Sokfa John, Deputy Director | Centre for Mediation in Africa
University of Pretoria**

Question to Ambassador Nhlapo

How do we find a balance between self-criticism (mentioned by Dr. Nedziwe) and systemic issues (Dr. Mthembu) in practice? How have you encountered this polarity from your experience?

- vi. Question on gender-based violence: How can we ensure that it is kept to a minimum? And how do we address drug issues faced by the youth?

Responses:

Ambassador Nhlapo responds to Macdonald Rammala: China does not impose on African nations in terms of the kind of infrastructures that are established, but it is African states that decide what they need from countries such as China based on mutual benefit arrangements. Those agreements need to be made clear and how we strike a balance.

Ambassador Nhlapo responds to Dr. Sokfa John: First and foremost, there must be honesty regarding the challenges that we face as a continent and the development of own narrative and solutions.

Dr. Nedziwe responds to a question by Katlego:

To fully answer that question on women, it is important to unpack the involvement of women and their contribution to addressing issues of peace and security within the context in which they are operating. The answer is yes. We need to investigate these contexts where women are working and making a difference. For example, in the Southern African development community, the role that women who are organising within the regional context and contributing to the solutions of peace and security should be looked at. Furthermore, it is important to also consider how women organise themselves outside the subject space while influencing policy within SADC and beyond, and the gender agenda. There have also been women with SADC and their active involvement in providing input in the sustainable development goals. However, women's involvement should not be romanticised as though it has been easy for women when the evidence proves the contrary. It has been a struggle for women, and

it is seen in the process of coming up with SADC's gender protocol. What assisted the women behind this initiative was the networks of women organising outside the SADC space in order to provide input into the Declaration on Gender. Women have found it hard to be heard and to contribute successfully.

Responding to Dr. Madida

On the issue of quiet diplomacy, there is a need for further research on that. However, a good example of the aspect of quiet diplomacy would be looking at the conflict in Zimbabwe that led to the power-sharing agreement. While there is much that is said about the role played by Thabo Mbeki and other state actors, there is little that is said about the role played by the church, civil society and many others. The aspect of "quite diplomacy" usually sees the story told from top down and is void of other voices.

Dr. Philani Mthembu responds to questions by Katlego:

It is important to tell our stories to combat forgetfulness and poor recognition that will send a message to subsequent generations. For example, when it comes to Pan-Africanism, we do not acknowledge that the Pan-African women's organisation (founded in 1962) was formed before the organisation for African Unity (OAU founded in 1963).

Furthermore, in the African continent, 70% of the African population is under the age of 30. Therefore, there is more urgency for them to be active in current issues, and fight for spaces like their predecessors.

There are growing calls for Africa to unite, and this is a valid point which is important. What is more important is for Africans to welcome initiatives that will alleviate issues such as food security, but it is more important for the continent to be able to work with external actors so that investments are made in the continent. This is significant for Africa to be able to feed its people, and to also defend them so that they can have a significant voice.

Follow-up by Prof. van Nieuwkerk: The youth should take up space, especially in the AU, and so on because political elites are not interested – mainly because they ask difficult questions.

Dr. Philani Mthembu responds to questions by Siphoesihle:

Dr. Mthembu referred to Peter Tosh's songs that there cannot be peace without justice. Therefore, it is important to attend to justice because if not, there will always be a recurrence of calm and upheavals.

Follow-up by Prof. van Nieuwkerk: The case of Lesotho related to land is also one of justice. It is impossible to democratise Lesotho or find a balance between the monarchy and democracy. This is also an important question as well in Eswatini.

Follow-up by Ambassador Nhlapo: it was announced that the AU commission took the decision to the commission of inquiry into the atrocities that had been committed in Ethiopia Tigre. This is relevant to note when we address the aspect of justice in present-day rhetoric.

Closing points from Prof. van Nieuwkerk:

- i. The definition of peace diplomacy: The art and science of building and maintaining peaceful relations between peoples and nations.
- ii. To what extent can we identify the root causes? Can we design our own solutions? Is APSA fit for purpose?
- iii. What are the consequences of not having a Peace and Security Agenda that is set by us but co-determined or set by others foreign, and what are the challenges that arise because of that?
- iv. Does the New Agenda for Peace by the UN meet our expectations, and if not, what are we going to do about it?
- v. Should we adjust Agenda 2063 (in post-Covid-19 and as a result if the Ukrainian war)?
- vi. What are the challenges that require solutions? What are the roles of universities? What is the role of intellectuals and academics? Have we worked out a Pan-African approach to help manage conflict and resolve it better? Since there are regional institutions and associations for academics, there is now an urgent need for continental or Pan-African institutions.

African intellectuals need to write their own international relations textbooks to change the narrative.

Closing Sentiments: Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah

The conversations from this symposium will enable the publication of outputs that will engage the global community in the edited volume with the working title, “The role of external actors in peace and security engagement in Africa”. The volume will aim to shift narratives towards our strategies, or for our strategic interest as a collective and build an understanding of our society. The second output would be this conference report. Prof. Prah closed the session by thanking the panellists, and all attendees.

Prof. David Mello: Vote of Thanks

As a follow-up to Prof. Prah, it was emphasised by Prof. Mello that indeed there is power in collaborations just like what was seen in the symposium. A special appreciation was made to all organisers (both present and in absentia), ACCORD, TM School of International Affairs and the Department of History, as well as the sound and catering team.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Programme

PRETORIA
14–15 August 2023
PROGRAMME

DAY 1:

Venue (Conference Room 5, Kgorong Building, UNISA)

Acting Dean, and Director of Research, TM-School (Prof David Mbatl Mello)

Symposium Overview: *Prof David Mbatl Mello*

Theme Keynote: *Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, Senior Political Advisor, ACCORD*

MORNING PANEL

Guiding Questions: This opening session explores historical as well as current debates related to BRICS, the importance of Africa's positionality within the grouping of emerging-markets and developing countries, as well as addressing any deterrents or opportunities. The panel chair, Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah, proposed a set of questions that interrogate contexts that influence the nature of conflict, which has changed over hundreds of years in Africa. This encompasses conflicts from colonial struggles to so-called independence struggles that sought to organise nation states, the challenges faced by the governments in building themselves, to the micro-conflicts that slowly become macro-conflicts around governance, resources and sovereignty. As these struggles diversified throughout the African continent, the panel chair prods the ambassador to speak on the impact of Southern African struggles, how they impacted the conflict landscape, and how that also brought external players involved. This is important to note to pay attention to the theatre of conflict and how it has changed in a historical perspective. Furthermore, the ambassador was encouraged to speak on

these points from his perspective, while also considering the impact of religion (Arabisation/Islam/Christianity) in these spaces.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Programme

Day 1: 14 August 2023

CHAIR: Prof. Kwesi KDLS Prah: Department of History, UNISA

09:00 – 9:10	Welcome and Opening of High-Level Dialogue and Conference	Acting Dean and Director of Research, TM-School (Prof David Mbatl Mello)
09:10 – 09:30	Introduction of Panellists	Panel Chair (Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah)
09:30 – 11:00	High-Level Dialogue	Ambassador Welile Nhlapo to provide his reflections on the topic: The Role of External Actors in the Past, Present and Future of Peace and Security Cooperation in Africa
11:00 – 11:15	Tea-Break	Assistants
11:15 – 12:30	Question and Answer Session	Panel Chair (Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah)
12:30 – 12:45	Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks	Acting Dean and Director of Research, TM-School (Prof. David Mbatl Mello)

DAY 2:

Venue (Conference Room 5, Kgorong Building, UNISA)

Guiding Questions: The second day of the symposium followed an interesting conversation from the previous day. This time, the programme is divided in two segments: the first engages panellists and the audience on Chinese perspectives regarding peace diplomacy in Africa. There were no direct guiding questions, but the two leading presenters for the first session offered their personal experience and knowledge regarding the China-Africa initiatives on peace diplomacy. The topic sparked a robust conversation, which led to a conclusion for more conversations that will be led by Africa, when it comes to developing solutions to problems faced by the continent, and determining the margins of any international collaboration, including BRICS and related policies. This provocative segment of the symposium welcomed questions and thoughts that sought to engage presenters and the audience on the relevant themes and topical questions. The second segment focused on Pan-African perspectives regarding peace diplomacy in Africa. Again, without any specific guiding questions but equally related to all that had been discussed from the first day, this segment engaged discussions from three individuals whose perspective broadened the conversation on the theme. The crux of the conversation remained Africa-centred, highlighting African agency in all spheres of peace and security, by various stakeholders, organisations and groups.

Day 2: 15 August 2023

CHAIR: Prof Charlotte Du Toit

09:00 – Welcome and Acting Dean and Director of Research, TM-School (**Prof.**
09:10 Opening of **David Mbatl Mello**)
Symposium

09:10 – Introduction of Department of History, UNISA (Prof. Kwesi KDLS Prah)
09:20 Participants /
Presenters

Session One: Chinese Perspectives on Peace Diplomacy in Africa

09:30 – Presentation 1 Executive Director at the Institute of African Studies,
09:45 China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
(**Mr. LI Wentao**)

09:45 – Presentation 2 Director for the African Studies Centre at the China
10:00 Foundation for International Studies

(**Rt. Ambassador SHU Zhan**)

10:00 – Questions and Panel Chair (**Prof. Charlotte Du Toit**)
10:30 Answers

10:30 – Tea Break Assistants
10:45

Session Two: Pan-African Perspectives on Peace Diplomacy in Africa

Chair and Moderator: Prof. Anthoni van Nieuwkerk

10:45 – Presentation 3 Senior Advisor at the African Centre for the Constructive
11:00 Resolution of Disputes (Ambassador Welile Nhlapo)

11:00 – Moderated Senior Lecturer, Political and International Studies,
12:30 Discussion: Executive Director at the Institute for Global Dialogue (Dr.
Discussants: Philani Mthembu)

Senior Advisor, at the African Centre for the Constructive
Resolution of Disputes (Ambassador Welile Nhlapo)

Senior Lecturer, Rhodes University (Dr. Cecilia Nedziwe)

12:30 – Questions and Moderator (Prof. Anthonie van Nieuwkerk)
13:15 Answers

13:15 – Lunch

14:00

14:00 – Summary of Lead Rapporteur (Ms. Siphoesihle Gumede) / Editor

14:20 Discussions, (Prof. Kwesi DLS Prah)

and

Explanation of

Submission

and

Publication

Process (for

edited book)

14:20 – Closing Acting Dean and Director of Research, TM-School (Prof.

14:30 Remarks and David Mbatii Mello)

Vote of Thanks