

# **THE CONCEPT OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER TO ENHANCE LASTING PEACE AND STABILITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The approval in July 2001 by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) of the “New African Initiative” and a commitment soon afterwards by the world’s richest countries (G8) to launch a detailed development plan for Africa over the next year, can justly be regarded as a major boost for South African President Thabo Mbeki’s vision of an “African Renaissance” as the cornerstone for an “African Century”.

Although this latest revival plan for Africa, aimed at stabilising, reconstructing and redeveloping the world’s poorest continent, is the result of a merger between President Mbeki’s Millennium African Recovery Program (MAP) and President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal’s Omega Plan, it is not difficult to recognise the golden thread of the African Renaissance initiative in the final product.

President Mbeki’s strategy to secure high level support for his initiative before he tried to sell it to his African peers proved to be highly effective. In this regard, the visible assistance of Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria in crafting and marketing MAP, as well as the full backing of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, largely contributed to the general acceptance by African leaders of the idea of an African recovery plan. His successful effort to secure global support from developed Western countries such as Japan, America, Britain and Germany, further contributed to convince members of the now disbanded OAU and the newly formed African Union (AU) to throw in their weight behind his initiative. Most important, however, was his insight and willingness to, as one of Africa’s new generation leaders, merge his plan with that of the Francophone African countries and share the credit with them. This not only made the plan more credible and acceptable, it allowed him to remain in the driver’s seat as the effort to market the New African Initiative gains momentum.

But, however noble the objectives of the “New African Initiative” may appear to be, the implementation of this ambitious plan obviously will remain the biggest challenge to Africa’s leaders, many of whom who are not known for their ability and willingness to adapt to changed circumstances and new challenges. Their commitment to the concept of an African Renaissance, even under any other name, will therefore be decisive.

Although the notion of an African Renaissance is not a new idea, it is the most prominent initiative to come out of Africa in recent times. Besides being a proposal to harness Africa’s potential, it also is an effort to remove the sources of conflict, restore its self-esteem and turn it into a zone of economic prosperity, peace and stability.

The “rebirth” of the African continent would, however, in President Mbeki’s words, require a “**rebellion**” – an “open resistance to authority...” (Thompson, 1995: 1144) – against political instability on the continent, and an end to “the mixture of greed, dehumanising poverty, obscene wealth and endemic public and private corruption practice” that give birth to many of Africa’s *coups d’etat*, civil wars and situations of instability (Mbeki, T, 1998: 298).

Despite widespread doubt and a wait and see attitude both in South Africa and the rest of Africa, the most important challenge facing President Mbeki and the supporters of his idea in realising this vision, would therefore be to determine how the African Renaissance could manifest itself as a “**rebellion**” that could produce the much desired precondition of peace and stability which should form the foundation for growth and development in both South Africa and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

## **AIM**

The aim of this paper is to determine how the concept of the African Renaissance could be implemented as a force multiplier to enhance lasting peace and stability in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the endeavour to achieve this aim, the concept of the African Renaissance is analysed against the backdrop of Africa’s dilemma and the dream to overcome this dilemma. Special attention is given to President Mbeki’s notion of the concept. The preconditions necessary for the concept to be successful, possible stumbling blocks, as well as the implementation of the concept in the South African and sub-Saharan Africa environment are then investigated. Finally, a model for the implementation of the concept in sub-Saharan Africa is suggested, before a conclusion is reached and recommendations and concluding comments are made.

## **THE AFRICAN DILEMMA (REALITY) VS THE AFRICAN DREAM**

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000, President Mbeki acknowledged the fact that Africa’s current poor image is justified due to bad things happening on the continent and *coups d’etat* occurring. This awesome reality is linked to the fact that fifty years after decolonisation began, the majority of Africans still remain chained in poverty, ignorance and backwardness, by and large poor, ill-educated and living in squalor, mostly because they “lack the skills and capital necessary to prosper”. The continent’s economic and political marginalisation in world councils also appear to be “more extreme than at any stage since the 1960s”, while the proliferation of recent conflicts seriously undermine “the organs of civil society, infrastructures, systems of exchange and the state itself across broad swathes of the continent” (Barrell, 2000: 82). The worst, however, is the fact that “ten times more people died of AIDS in the region last year than in all those wars” (Malala, 10 September 2000).

Further factors that compound Africa's dilemma are the phenomena referred to as "Africa fatigue" and "Afro-pessimism". Although the two concepts are inter-related, the concept of "Africa fatigue" refers to a global perception that Africa has lost its strategic value after the end of the Cold War and due to its high volatility, non-development, corruption, discrimination and conflict potential, also its potential for involvement and investment by the world's donor community. "Afro-pessimism", in turn, relates to sub-Saharan Africa's seemingly inability to contain its regional conflicts and resulting refugee crises. It also refers to its lack of will to do something about its appalling systems of governance and approach to human rights, its huge poverty-problem, debt and dependence on charity, its ailing infrastructures and the quality of life of all its peoples, including the spread of HIV/AIDS.

According to Hanekom, the human factor in sub-Saharan Africa further contributes to the continent's problems. Many of these problems relate to a remarkably similar way of thinking and a tendency for over-optimism. This he ascribes to the inclination of the African people to, regardless of their ethnic compilation, suddenly become volatile or provoke volatility, and their strong tendency not to question or openly speak out against authority. Freedom of speech and challenging obviously wrong decisions or perceptions, as a result, pay the price in this regard, with the concept of democracy the ultimate victim. Another factor is a certain naivete regarding successes elsewhere and a tendency to jump on the bandwagon and to implement solutions that worked elsewhere in their own environments without investigating the practical implications (Hanekom, 22 September 2000).

These and other negative realities and perceptions, however, do not negate the fact that Africa, although being regarded by world leaders such as the former President Clinton of the United States of America as "the world's greatest development challenge", remain the one continent of limitless opportunities (Mbeki, M, 1998: 209). This is especially true if one takes into regard its unexploited resources, the "resilience of the African people", their environmental and cultural heritage, the continent's strategic location, and the "low cost of entering the African market" (Wakeford: 25 August 2000).

The idea to harness Africa's potential is therefore understandable, as is the dream long cherished by leaders in sub-Saharan Africa of a "rebirth, revival and renewal of Africa" as a remedy to address this very real dilemma. The "big idea", however, has since the onset of decolonisation in the late 1950s, "whether deployed as a slogan or a route map to a better future", been applied "disingenuously by its originator or failed to achieve its promised outcome in practice". Kwame Nkrumah's pan-Africanism and the various versions of "African socialism", from Julius Nyerere's "*ujamaa*" to Kenneth Kaunda's 'humanism', are examples in this regard. Most of these "attempts to polish a veneer of philosophy into the grubby business of politics and economics" has, however, brought "little discernible advantage to those Africans said to be the intended beneficiaries. In some instances, the application of these ideas has measurably worsened African's plight" (Barrell, 2000: 82). Later efforts to save Africa, such as the Lagos Plan of Action launched in 1980, were abandoned by

African governments who forgot about their promises to support the plan as soon as they received the aid promised for their commitment.

The dream, however, as well as the hope for some kind of messiah to make it come true, lives on.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Whether the idea of an African Renaissance will follow suit, at this stage remains to be seen. The use of the term “renaissance”, however, needs to be clarified. In dictionary language, it refers to “the revival of art and literature under the influence of classical models in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, the period during which this took place or the “culture and style of art, architecture....”. The word, however, also implies “any similar revival” (Thompson, 1995: 1163).

Pending the interpretation of the term, an African Renaissance may therefore imply a revival of an Africa of hope and prosperity. It may thus imply a “positive vision of Africa as a peaceful, democratic and market-orientated region that will attract foreign trade and investment, as well as the return of thousands of talented Africans and billions of flight capital now in safe havens abroad”. Calls for a renaissance will therefore hopefully “encourage all Africans to **confront** the harsh realities” of human deprivation and deadly conflict and “to take greater responsibility for reversing them”. According to Stremlau, an African Renaissance, from a strategical point of view, offers an “**alternative** to the prevailing European concepts of, and structures for, African and global order”. In this regard, sovereign rights must give way to more enduring and universal human rights. While national governments will remain the principle guarantors of the security and well being of Africa’s people, the governments will increasingly have to hold one another accountable for good conduct in both domestic and foreign affairs. A community of nations, rather than an alliance of states, could therefore become “the basis for advancing peace and prosperity throughout Africa and for enhancing Africa’s influence in world affairs” (Stremlau, 1999: 61).

President Mbeki’s encapsulation of the idea of the “reawakening” of Africa into a vision of an African Renaissance (according to Barrell initially a “Black Renaissance”) and a belief that this will “truly be the African Century”, therefore supports both interpretations of the term “renaissance”, but probably favouring the latter (Barrell, 2000:83 and DFA Workshop document, 17 July 2000). Being the originator and now principle driver of the concept of an African Renaissance (and as the leader of the governing party in South Africa, the enforcer, institutionaliser and internaliser of the concept in government policy and programmes), it is therefore important to develop an understanding for his notion of the idea, which he, according to Moeletsi Mbeki, regards neither as a policy nor a prescription, but rather as a “description of the coming epoch of Africa’s history and of the emerging socio-economic conditions that will bring this epoch about” (Mbeki, M, 1999: 211).

His vision is an all-embracing concept that “draws its inspiration from the rich and diverse history and cultures of Africa” and which acknowledges Africa as the cradle of humanity, “whilst providing a framework for the modern Africa to re-emerge as a significant partner in the new world order”. This framework, according to a document on a “Conceptual Framework for the African Renaissance” by the Department of Foreign Affairs, touches on all areas of human endeavour, in this case the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and cultural spheres (DFA Workshop document, 17 July 2000).

The security dimension is not included, probably because of President Mbeki's conviction that Africa's problems should be solved on the political, economic and cultural terrain.

President Mbeki is convinced that the African Renaissance has begun in the political sphere. Africa's history therefore **demand**s that Africans must do everything in their power to “**defend** the gains that have been achieved”, to encourage all other countries on the continent to move in the same direction “according to which the people shall govern, and to enhance the capacity of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to act as an effective instrument for peace and the promotion of human and people's rights to which we are committed” (Mbeki, M, 1999: 211-212).

The African Renaissance, according to him, is the third moment in Africa's contemporary historical cycle that is dated from the 1950s and more specifically Ghana's independence 41 years ago. The “first moment” was Africa's rebirth after years of colonialism and exploitation by foreign powers - the period of the liberation struggles of the immediate post-Second World War years, which culminated in the continent's political liberation. The “second moment” dates to the end of the Cold War in 1989, which resulted in the collapse of the socialist community of states. This historical event gave rise to “the resurgence of more open political and economic interaction on a world scale... and manifests itself in campaigns for democratisation in independent African countries”. In this regard, South Africa's **political liberation** in April 1994 was one of the highpoints of Africa's “second moment”. The “first and second moments”, however, serve as dress rehearsals for the African Renaissance “which has a far broader and deeper agenda than political liberation and democracy” (Mbeki, M, 1999: 210).

Any such an agenda for an African Renaissance should therefore reflect the need to **empower African peoples** to deliver themselves from the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism - “the use of economic, political, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies” (Thompson, 1995: 913) - and to situate themselves on the global stage as equal and respected contributors to, as well as beneficiaries of, all the achievements of human civilisation. This renewal should, however, be built on a “growing and sustainable economy capable of assimilating the best characteristics, contribute to and take advantage of the real flows of the economic activities around the world” (Mbeki, M, 1999: 210-211).

There can be no doubt of the seriousness of President Mbeki's intention to make the concept of the African Renaissance work. In becoming the leader of the ruling party and thus the political leader of South Africa, President Mbeki, who since 1994 has been the intellectual power behind the political throne, now finds himself in a position in which he could shape South Africa and Africa the way he sees fit.

Notable Governmental policy changes and programmes are already definite indications of his resolve to use this concept as the golden thread in his endeavour to utilise South Africa as the basis for the reconstruction and redevelopment of Africa. Should he succeed in this quest, and especially in removing the origins of conflict on the continent, he could leave behind a legacy greater than that of any of his many African predecessors.

### **PREREQUISITES FOR THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE TO BE SUCCESSFUL**

President Mbeki identified a number of necessary preconditions for an African Renaissance to happen. Factors such as "the emergence of a new, unionised 'proletariat class' that is not only concerned with traditional issues such as working conditions and wages but that is also involved in ownership and enterprise management", and the emergence of a "large urban professional and entrepreneurial middle class that is property owning and is an active participant in the development of small and medium enterprises", are included in his argument, which further holds that **these "phenomena will happen irrespective of the self-serving aims of individual governments"** (Mbeki, M, 1999: 210).

In order to give impetus to the importance of implementing the concept of the African Renaissance as "the main pillar" (Mbeki, M, 1999: 212) of, or "national interest" (Botha, P. du T, 2000: 2) in South Africa's international policy, "not only relating to Africa but in all the country's international relations globally", African National Congress policy makers, as members of the majority party in Government, identified a number of key elements necessary for an African Renaissance. These elements include the "economic recovery of the African continent as a whole, the establishment of political democracy on the continent, the need to break neo-colonial relations between Africa and the world's economic powers, **the mobilisation of the people of Africa to take their destiny in their own hands** and thus preventing the continent being seen as a place for the attainment of the geo-political and strategic interests of the world's most powerful countries, and the need for fast development and people-driven and people-centered economic growth and economic development aimed at meeting the basic needs of the people" (Mbeki, M, 1999: 212).

President Mbeki is convinced that the conditions exist in Africa for the formulation of a practical **programme of action for revolutionaries** geared to achieve a renaissance in Africa. These conditions include good governance, the development of a culture of human rights, the promotion of cultural and language rights in multicultural societies, recognition of the bankruptcy of neo-colonialism by the masses of people throughout the continent, including the middle class, the weakening of the struggle among the major powers for spheres of influence on our

continent, and the acceleration of the process of globalisation. He furthermore identified a “critically important and urgent need to develop a **Popular Movement for the African Renaissance**” in order to mobilise political organisations and governments in all African countries to act in furtherance of the objectives of the African Renaissance. Tasks or objectives that effect domestic policies that should be implemented (including all the elements of the state’s power base) include the establishment of democratic political systems to ensure “that the people shall govern”. The form of these democracies, should, however, take into account African specifics so that they could ensure that political and, therefore peaceful means can be used to address the competing interests of different social groups in each country. Further tasks are the achievement of sustainable economic development that results in the continuous improvement of the standards of living and the quality of life of the masses of the people, changing Africa’s place in the world economy so that it was free of the yoke of the international debt burden and (was) no longer only a supplier of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods. Also included are ensuring the emancipation of women, successfully dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, rediscovering “Africa’s creative past”, recovering cultures, encouraging artistic endeavour and accessing and advancing science and technology, advancing the “genuine” independence of African countries and enhancing their role in international forums (Barrell, 2000: 84), as well as environmental protection.

Inspired by alleged historical evidence of African achievements in science and culture two thousand years ago, President Mbeki also suggests that Africa’s intellectuals be called back from their places of emigration in Western Europe and Northern America to “add to the African pool of brain power, to enquire into and find solutions for Africa’s problems and challenges, to open the African door to the world of knowledge (and) to elevate Africa’s place within the universe of research, the formation of new knowledge, education and information”. The contribution of these intellectuals could lie in the struggle to end poverty, ignorance, disease and backwardness (Mbeki, T, 1998: 299).

Very important in this regard, however, is the fact that many of the conditions, preconditions, elements and tasks or objectives of the African Renaissance are reflected in the values and principles contained in the Constitution of South Africa. These values and principles also form the basis for South Africa’s national security policy, as well as in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) or currently the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy of the Government, which “is the principal long-term means of promoting the well-being and security of citizens and, thereby, the stability of the country” (White Paper on National Defence, 1996: 7). It can therefore be deduced that the concept of the African Renaissance as a means to address sources of conflict, not only constitutes an important element of South Africa’s national security policy, but also its regional and continental policy in this regard.

## **POSSIBLE STUMBLING BLOCKS**

A number of possible stumbling blocks exist which may have an effect on the implementation of an African Renaissance.

With regard to the concept itself, Botha points out the different uses of the concept by Africanist scholars, journalists and politicians in different contexts without defining or clarifying its meaning. These contexts, for instance, include the ruling party's adherence to the "globalism/structuralism paradigm of international relations theory", based on "Third Worldism" or a "South-perspective of the world, accompanied by a close identification with the latter in the international fora" (Botha, 2000: 2). It is therefore not difficult to understand why the different perceptions of the concept give rise to misunderstanding, scepticism and resistance.

A further stumbling block is the possibility of escalating conflict as a result of new freedom and knowledge in the region. Moeletsi Mbeki in this regard mentions the fact that a renaissance normally "is a period of spiritual liberation which frees the creative energies of society ..." and therefore a "period of great optimism" which "frees enormous forces which it is unable to contain". With reference to the fact that Europe's renaissance was followed by the great conflicts of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, he suggests that Africa may also be faced with "a period of great ethnic, religious and class struggles", the beginnings of some which are already seen "in Somalia, Sudan, the Great Lakes region, Angola, Kenya and Algeria" (Mbeki, M, 1999: 216).

Although conflict *per se* is not necessarily unhealthy, especially when it is aimed at the re-balancing of wrongs, such conflicts normally results in spill-overs into neighbouring countries such as refugee problems with high costs to economies.

Another challenge that faces Africa is that of a lack of leadership and a hesitancy to take the lead. Although leaders such as President Clinton have hinted that South Africa should play a leading role in the effort to turn Africa's hopes and dreams into reality, and even President Mbeki himself has suggested a need for action by South Africa in this regard, indications are that South Africa is not necessarily ready to fulfil this role. At the same time, Africa, however, appears not to be too overly interested nor convinced that South Africa should indeed be playing such a role. Moeletsi Mbeki warns in this regard that South Africa appears to have walked into the trap of forgetting that "post-colonial Africa already has a history and has developed institutions and practices that by definition must pre-date" newly-liberated South Africa's independence. By touting an African renewal, South Africa's Africa policy moves therefore place the country in diplomatic conflict with other African states. Cases he mentions, include South Africa's decision not to join the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States (Comesa), the country's call on the West for sanctions against Nigeria's military regime after the execution of Ken Sao Wiwo, its embrace of Taiwan after 1994 and its closeness to the United States (Mbeki, M, 1999: 213-214).

Linked to the above, are the role and position in African politics of personalities such as the elder statesmen (the Mandelas, Kaundas, Nyereres, etc) and younger leaders

of liberation struggles (the Mugabes, Nujomas, Chissanos etc) and their perceptions with regard to the concept of the African Renaissance. In this regard, the attitudes and actions of the leader of Zimbabwe serves as an example. President Mugabe for instance selfishly stymied the effort by the SADC to reform its co-operative security and regional crisis management which would enable the SADC to respond more effectively to security crisis through its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

The question therefore is to what extent President Mbeki is accepted in this closed circle. It is known that South Africa's strong military capability and economic position *vis-a-vis* the rest of Africa and its attempts at taking the initiative to resolve Africa's problems, do not endear him to his colleagues. Nor is the fact that he, as a Western-schooled economist, bases his reform policies and specifically his approach to address the needs of his people, on an "economic kingdom" rather than a "political kingdom" as aspired to by Africa's old heroes.

Another complicating factor is the fact that the South African government sees Africa's revival as the linchpin of its foreign policy and therefore regards itself as the "spokesman for Africa in international forums and in the diplomatic circuit". African countries, however, appear not to appreciate this initiative and "are becoming nervous about South Africa as they see us riding roughshod over their sensibilities". Examples of this growing antipathy towards South Africa is the non-support of Cape Town's bid to host the 2004 Olympics and recently also the 2006 Soccer bid. Moeletsi Mbeki also suggests that the ongoing squabble about the chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community's Security Organ is a direct reflection of some African countries' reluctance to "entrust South Africa with a sharp object" and even to support the country's bid to become a permanent member of the expanded United Nations Security Council. South Africa's noticeable inexperience on this terrain and the fact that its leaders and diplomats have not really begun to "make the effort to understand the character of the social structures that are now in place in African countries, and how these affect possible revival in the post-colonial environment" also confuse this matter" (Mbeki, M. 1999: 215-216).

The impact of globalisation (the linking of the world through technology, competition for resources, the disappearance of borders and the changing of levels of influence and decision-making) and its impact on the economic, political and cultural spheres of society, are further factors that must be considered. In this regard, South Africa's leaders appear not to notice the pervasive influence of the West in Africa's economies and in African economic policy-making as a fundamentally undesirable obstacle to the continent's ability to forge its own economic identity. According to Moeletsi Mbeki, state corporations are sold to foreigners and are managed by non-Africans. This signals a resignation by Africa's leaders to the idea that, despite many words to the contrary, Africans are not capable, in the foreseeable future, of running their countries' economies, nor of being able to master modern technology and management. Added to this, is the fact that the neo-liberal policies that are being pursued by an increasing number of African governments, including South Africa, seem to suggest that the new African leaders no longer see the state as an important vehicle for bringing about socio-economic change on the continent. It is

therefore possible that the African Renaissance will be brought about more by the actions of emerging social forces in Africa than by activities of governments. These forces may include the non-governmental organisations, the trade unions, professional organisations, universities and especially the indigenous private corporations. Moeletsi Mbeki suggests that it may be that it is to these new players, rather than to governments that Africa should look for leadership of the African Renaissance. This change of society's leadership in Africa from politicians to the people, will, however, not be easy, especially because Africa's politicians remain tied with an apparently unbreakable umbilical cord to the West. This does not apply to the new players who do not have such attachments and whose growth depends on their severing that umbilical cord and dealing with the West as equals (Mbeki, M, 1999: 216).

Barrell further warns against the use of the notion of the African Renaissance as a grand slogan under which political leaders can mobilise their own projects for political purposes without having the means to ultimately deliver results. He also questions President Mbeki's notion that "democracy was intrinsic to African cultures" and that it was "common to all African traditions that the people must govern" (Barrell, 2000: 85).

African governments also have a history of a lack of commitment to plans to help them to help themselves. In this regard, *The Economist* refers to commitments by African governments to plans such as the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 that was abandoned as "soon as the going got tough". These promises of commitments, most of which was drawn up "by outsiders and accepted by signatories only in order to win aid", was forgotten as soon as the aid was received (Pretoria News, 21 July 2000). A mechanism to enforce commitment and a way to deal with renegade leaders will therefore have to form part of any future plan.

A further observation is that South Africa should get its house in order before it flexes its muscles outside, thus implying that by practicing what it preaches South Africa should set the example by implementing the concept of the African Renaissance internally first, and if it succeeds, then try it elsewhere.

Other stumbling blocks include the following:

The perceptions of "Africa fatigue" and "Afro-pessimism" have made it clear that Africa will in future have to fend for itself. Africa must therefore wake up and sort out its own problems, while simultaneously demand from world bodies such as the UN to honour promises of assistance. In this regard it must be noted that, because of the huge cost implications, Africa cannot afford UN involvement and will have to look at other alternatives to address inter and intra-state conflict.

Dangerous levels of xenophobia in specifically South Africa could harm relationships with neighbouring countries, especially in the light of the fact that

the concept of free movement in the region for trade purposes are currently being investigated.

The African approach to conflict resolution, such as South Africa's "silent diplomacy" with regard to the land-issue in Zimbabwe, appears not to be working and will therefore not be effective until the SADC security mechanism comes off the ground.

Most of the stumbling blocks mentioned above have serious implications with possible security repercussions for South Africa and should therefore form part of the first issues to be addressed in any effort to implement the concept of the African Renaissance.

### **IMPLEMENTING THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXAMPLE**

President Mbeki is convinced that South Africa has an important role to play in the economic, political and cultural revival of the continent. Because South Africa is an integral part of sub-Saharan Africa, its national interest and specifically its economic development is undeniably linked to that of the rest of the sub-continent. The mutual interdependence of the countries of the sub-continent therefore require a joint understanding of the challenges of the modern economy and the need to design common programmes to build infrastructures that will enable all to address the many challenges they face. South Africa therefore cannot function in isolation from what is happening in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

A further implication is the fact that, from a national security perspective, conflicts in neighbouring countries have a spillover tendency, which could result in potential disastrous economic consequences. If one considers the old adage that one cannot sleep well when your neighbour is hungry, one can also understand President Mbeki's preoccupation with sub-Saharan Africa's welfare.

In the absence of alternatives, it is therefore clear why President Mbeki regards the liberal democratic constitution of South Africa, including the "process of negotiation and compromise that created it" as an example to the rest of Africa. According to him, such a democracy could "ensure that political and, therefore, *peaceful means* can be used to address the competing interests of different social groups in each country" (Barrell, 2000: 86). In terms of its contribution to the African Renaissance, South Africa's example addresses all the dimensions of its national strategy. This example is based on the far-reaching transformation of the South African society which, if events abroad allows South Africa's "policy prescriptions to work through at home, might very well deliver a range of 'goods' to ordinary people on a scale sufficient to engender a domestic 'renaissance'" (Barrell, 2000: 90).

From a political perspective, it includes the political settlement of conflicts of interests by catering for instance for representation of minority parties in Parliament in order to include them in the central legislative process and the creation of a range of

institutions (such as the Constitutional Court and the Human Rights Commission) to guard over the democratic process. Other important milestones include the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the drive for greater equality through legislation to ensure racial representivity in institutions. In this regard, affirmative action and political appointments were enforced in the public sector, while in the private sector legislation was introduced that made equity in employment practices a legal requirement.

Diplomatically speaking, South Africa resumed its seat in the UN, joined the OAU/AU and SADC, acted as chairman of the Non-aligned Movement, increased trade-links with Africa, promoted co-operation and regional economic integration in Africa, assisted in the development of a regional peace-keeping and peace-making capacity, highlighted Africa's debt burden and championed the case for the restructuring of the United Nations and other fora in order to allow a greater say for developing countries. Although being regarded as the economic powerhouse of the region, its foreign policy towards the region is characterised by caution. It is, however, involved in a facilitator role in most of the current attempts to resolve conflicts on the continent.

From a social perspective, spending on education at 20% remains the largest single item in the Government budget, running water was supplied to 3,5 million people in the past 6 years while more than 1200 households were provided with electricity connections per day in 1996/7 and 777 591 houses were build during the same period. While the programme of land restitution is considered less successful, health services underwent a "substantial reorientation towards the provision of primary care" to especially black communities in outlying areas. The government, however, does not seem to make progress with the HIV/AIDS pandemic which threatens the achievement of the renaissance in Africa due to the "incoherence of its programme" in this regard (Barrell, 2000: 87, 88).

From a moral point of view, President Mbeki appears to "structure the morality he required of South Africans in the service of a domestic and continental renaissance around his own and (former President) Mandela's earlier call for '**a new patriotism**'" which enables all South Africans to understand the common good in the same way and which is aimed at addressing the vestiges of mistrust and racism, the widespread malaise of the corruption of public and private morality and the frequency of violent crime (Barrell, 2000: 90).

The economic contribution to the African Renaissance appears to be the most significant at this stage. A self-imposed adjustment programme was implemented, policies put into place and quasi-conservative fiscal and monetary controls enforced which "saw economic growth as a prerequisite for a significant redistribution of wealth and services". The policies furthermore "sought to unlock value domestically and ease fiscal pressures via a programme to privatise a number of state-owned enterprises", opened up the economy to competition from abroad and sought to "increase the proportion of exports that consisted of competitive, value-added manufactured goods as opposed to commodities" (Barrell, 2000: 88).

These policies, in terms of the government's GEAR policy (and RDP), however, up to now and due to a number of reasons, have failed to deliver the desired results in terms of growth and job creation (hundred of thousands jobs were lost instead). The major challenge in economic policy, however, still remains the requirement for the inflow of capital investment and technology, the creation of a black bourgeoisie and the development of a black entrepreneurial class and culture, as well as the implementation of MAP (involving President Mbeki himself) to influence and restructure global financial organisations to facilitate a greater understanding and support for Africa.

An indication of the seriousness with which South Africa regards the economical upliftment of Africa, is the establishment of an African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund for the African continent. The fund, based on formal legislation, forms the basis for President Mbeki's initiative to combat widespread poverty and underdevelopment in South Africa and its northern neighbours. The fund will grant loans to other governments and private institutions for development projects, attempts to ensure peace and reconciliation, the promotion of multiparty democracies in Africa, humanitarian assistance and disaster aid, technical assistance, training and projects to foster better relationships between African countries. All projects will have to be approved by the Department of Foreign Affairs, supported by an advisory committee. A mechanism will also be developed to involve countries outside Africa in the process in order to attract donations or joint projects, while international participation will be actively promoted.

From a military and specifically security perspective, it is clear that President Mbeki has accepted that military options offer little or no solutions to Africa's problems and that military capabilities will mainly be used to enhance foreign policy decisions. South Africa has already made it clear and has already shown (through its participation in an SADC operation to restore order in Lesotho) and its involvement in peace keeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Eritrea and others that it is prepared to contribute to UN and SADC endeavours to restore peace and stability in African countries. The implementation of the National Crime Prevention Strategy is a further indication of the Government's intention to address the rampant crime situation inside the country.

The South African Government's methodical implementation of actions and programmes to remove obstacles that cause conflict and alleviate the plight of South Africans as well as that of fellow Africans, offers a clear indication of President Mbeki's resolve to institutionalise the concept of the African Renaissance, not only in South Africa, but also in Africa and especially sub-Saharan Africa. His Millennium partnership for the African Recovery Programme is specifically designed for this purpose and with the stamp of approval by the leaders of Africa is now set for implementation.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA THROUGH MAP AND THE NEW AFRICAN INITIATIVE**

President Mbeki's solution to the monumental challenge of returning Africa to its roots lies in his conviction that Africa is set on the road towards its renaissance and that the people of the continent have it within them to bring about this rebirth. To achieve an African renewal in politics, in economics, in social life and in culture, however, the people of Africa will have to act together as Africans, but will also have to have the will to translate the vision of the African Renaissance into actuality. They will therefore have to be their own **liberators** from the conditions, which seek to describe the "continent and its people as poverty-stricken and disease-ridden primitives in a world riding the crest of a wave of progress and human upliftment". His challenge to the people of Africa is therefore to become **combatants** in this quest for self-discovery and restoration of their self-esteem. His call for Africa's renewal is a call for a **rebellion** against "tyrants and dictators, those who seek to corrupt our societies and steal the wealth that belongs to the people". It is also a call to "**rebel** against the ordinary criminals who murder, rape and rob" and a call to "**conduct war** against poverty, ignorance and the backwardness of the children of Africa" (Mbeki, T, 1998: 300).

### **The Millenium African Recovery Programme (MAP)**

The concept of MAP, accepted and due to be implemented by Africa's leaders, can be regarded as their response to these challenges. According to Nkuhlu it seeks to develop a coherent, but focussed, strategy and implementation programme to address the problems of Africa. The most important requirements for this programme and thus challenge to African governments, will be imaginative leadership, the will and commitment to improve the lot of ordinary people, the political capacity to lead and manage development in a integrated global system, the end of violent conflicts and a return to peace and stability. It further calls for investment in people and improvement of the quality of life of Africans, diversifying of production and exports through value adding and reforming trade rules, investment in energy, telecommunication, transport, water and sanitation, as well as in Information and Communication Technologies in order to access the knowledge economy. Further challenges include new solutions to finance development and debt management (Nkuhlu, M, May 2001:1).

The success of MAP will therefore require sustained commitment with clear milestones, bold and decisive leadership and the mobilisation of society as a whole. This, according to Nkuhlu, needs to be underpinned by a partnership among countries which is characterised by a resolve to engage meaningfully with one another on the basis of common undertakings. It will also require a partnership with others in the world, including developed and developing countries and international organisations (Ibid:1).

### **The "New African Initiative"(NAI)**

President Mbeki's MAP was merged by the OAU with President Wade of Senegal's Omega Plan, which sets goals and defines financial means to narrow the structural

gaps of infrastructure. The result is a plan currently called “A New African Initiative” which “combines Omega’s more detailed economic emphasis on the need for Africa’s economic recovery to be based on sub-regional co-operation and the boosting of the continent’s infrastructure with MAP’s more philosophical stress on the need for African leaders to take charge of their own destiny and form a partnership with the developed world based on good governance and self-reliance” (Fabricius, P: 10 July 2001).

According to Fabricius, NAI’s stated objective is to consolidate democracy and sound economic management on the continent. It implies a commitment by African leaders to their people and to the world to join hands in rebuilding the continent. It furthermore is a pledge to promote peace, democracy, sound economic management and people-centred development and to hold each other accountable in terms of the agreements outlined in the programme. The NAI comprises numerous themes, all with practical and achievable plans. According to Fabricius, these include the following initiatives: a peace, security and political governance initiative, an economic and corporate governance initiative, a human resource development initiative, a diversification of production and exports initiative, a rehabilitation of infrastructure initiative, a market access (for African products) initiative, a capital flow initiative and an environmental (protection) initiative.

In terms of the plan, now approved and due to be implemented, a Heads of States Forum will monitor the observance of these principles by member states. It does, however, not specify how it will deal with recalcitrant members. This unfortunately does not bode well for possible donors who will need more formal assurance before they commit their resources to this initiative.

However, despite the rivalry between the two plans, and whatever the eventual name of the new initiative may be, it is clear that the concept of the African Renaissance is alive and slowly but surely filtering its way down to those it will affect most – the millions of Africans waiting for the miracle to happen.

## **MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

### **The African Renaissance Rebellion Model**

To empower the African peoples to liberate themselves from their fate as outlined by President Mbeki remains a big challenge. According to Brynard, an inability to implement policy and plans appear to be a common problem in this regard (Brynard, 17 August 2000). This is often due to different understandings of basic concepts. The implementation of the concept of the African Renaissance therefore appears to be no exception. The result, despite efforts by the South African Government to incorporate the concept into official planning and programmes, is a general belief that the concept is a pipe dream that will never be realised.

In order to address this problem, a model consisting of four consecutive stages to implement the *rebellion* referred to by President Mbeki, is proposed. The first stage will be to determine whether the concept of the African Renaissance could indeed be practically implemented to promote the notion of peace and stability. If it could be done, the second stage would be to develop an implementation plan according to which the concept could be implemented. The third stage would be the actual execution of the plan and the fourth the monitoring of the execution of the plan. Due to Africa's unpredictability, the model is also based on constant renewal and reinvestigation of the basic understanding of the concept. For the purpose of this paper, only guidelines will be proposed for the implementation of the model.

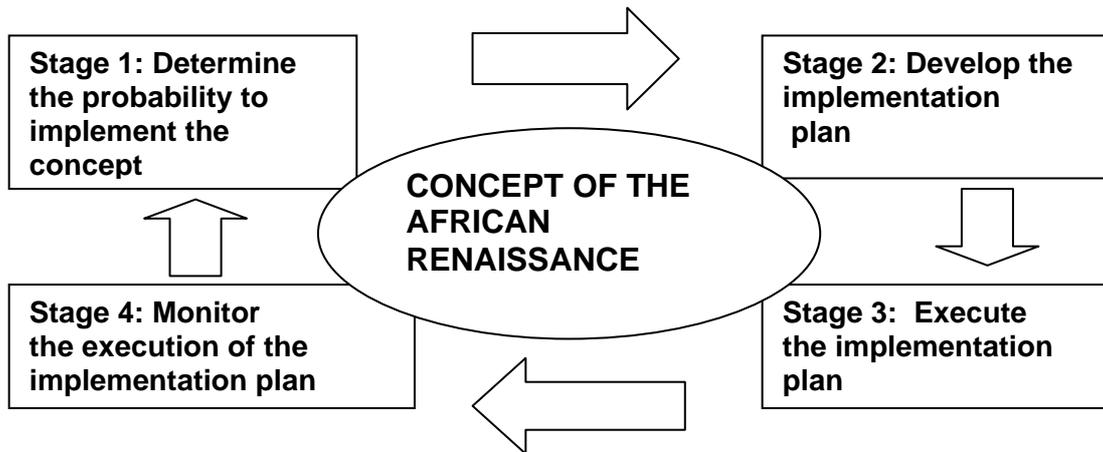


Figure 1: African Renaissance Rebellion Model

**Stage 1: Determine the probability to implement the concept of the African Renaissance**

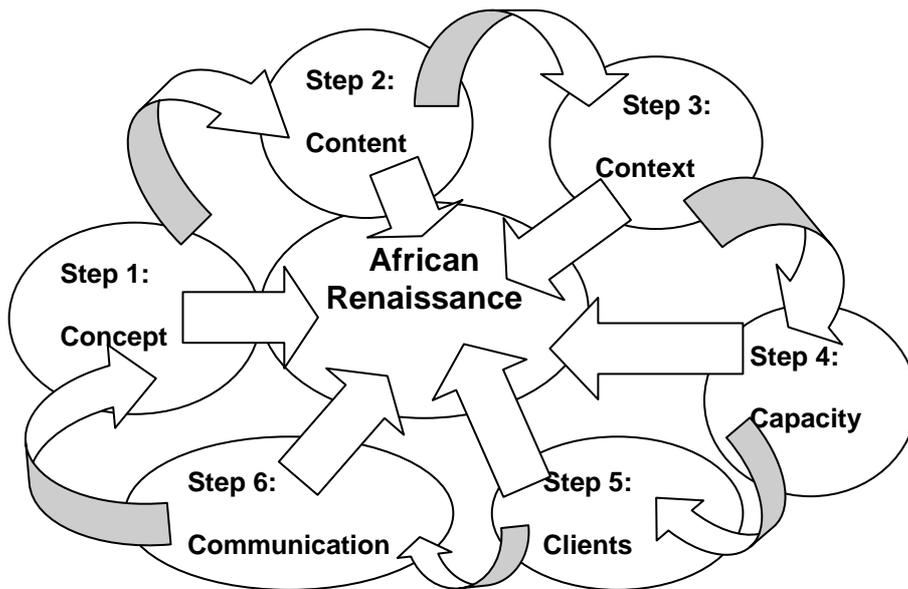
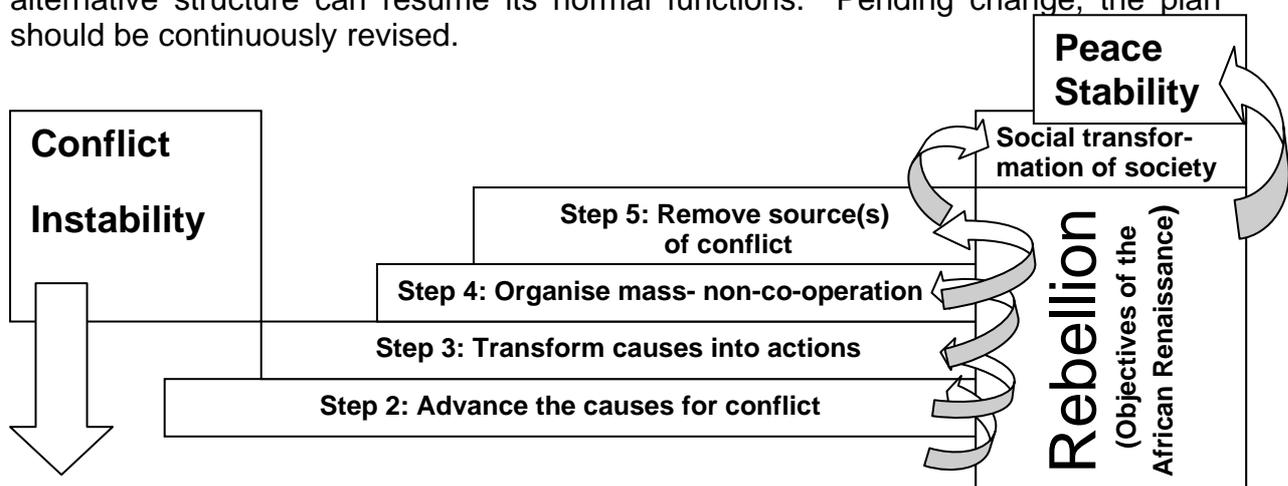


Figure 2: Adapted from Brynard: Probability to implement the African Renaissance

Brynard's "5 C protocol" with regard to critical variables for the implementation of policy is adapted to provide a tool which could be used to determine whether the concept of the African Renaissance is implementable (Brynard, 17 August 2000). The first step in this regard would be to ensure that the essence of the concept is understood by all. The second step would be to determine whether the content of the concept is implementable (workable). The third step will be to determine the context (or influence) of the concept, the fourth the capacity (or link between skills and resources), the fifth step who the clients and locations are and the final step the requirement for two-way communication to promote acceptance and understanding for the concept.

## Stage 2: Develop the implementation plan

Due to a number of developments over the past decades, the use of violence has become an unpopular means to resolve conflict. It is very clear that President Mbeki has acknowledged this fact in his notion of the African Renaissance. In order to support his approach in this regard, an adapted version of Lakey's "Strategy for a living revolution" as a **non-violent** path to social transformation is used to develop a plan to implement the concept of the African Renaissance. The first step in this regard constitutes a programme of awareness or conscientisation where the needs of the masses are publicly transformed into causes for conflict. During the second step, public forums are openly used to advance these causes in order to mobilise the masses against the sources of conflict (propaganda of the word). During step three the momentum of the mobilisation effort is accelerated when the causes for conflict are transformed into specific actions and programmes (propaganda of the deed). These actions constitute "forthright, non-violent" challenges of the sources of conflict through activities such as demonstrations and boycotts (Lakey, 1973: 198). Step 4 focuses on mass non-co-operation by exploiting the developing crises and rendering the source of conflict ineffective. Mass civil obedience campaigns are used to restrain the resources and cripple the power base of the source of conflict, while external pressure is used to discredit it and exert influence on it. In the fifth and final step, alternative structures are used to duplicate functions of the source of conflict and to create liberated zones until the source of conflict is removed and the alternative structure can resume its normal functions. Pending change, the plan should be continuously revised.



<p><b>Step 1: Create a programme of awareness or conscientisation</b></p>
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Figure 3: Adapted from Lakey: Development of African Renaissance rebellion plan

### **Stage 3: Execute the implementation plan**

Before the actual implementation plan is executed, it should again be confirmed that a common understanding of the concept exists and that as many stakeholders as possible have been consulted and their concerns considered.

Furthermore, it must be ensured that steps were taken to institutionalise and internalise the concept, that champions were identified to advocate both the concept and the process, and that a basic set of rules or code of conduct were agreed upon according to which performance will be implemented, enforced and measured.

In the process of launching the plan, care should be taken how and by whom the plan is presented and communicated (preferably the most senior executive). Training and reinforcement of the concept should furthermore support the institutionalising and internalising of the concept in order to ensure reinforcement of the message and to enforce compliance thereof.

### **Stage 4: Monitor the execution of the implementation plan**

The monitoring of the execution of the implementation plan is arguably the most important step in the process. If a sound foundation has been laid and monitoring takes place pro-actively, one could expect a self-monitoring capability to ensure compliance with the plan.

If not, a “watchdog” will have to be appointed to verify performance at all levels in terms of performance measures (created during stage 3) and to monitor contraventions of the plan. Rewards for positive conduct and penalties for contraventions should constitute a formal part of the monitoring process. Because the plan is subject to constant change, the process will continuously repeat itself.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The noble intention of the concept of the African Renaissance is to create an opportunity for the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa to deliver themselves from the legacies of the past and to restore their self-esteem, to use Africa’s strengths to influence major role players with regard to the reconstruction and redevelopment of the sub-continent and the establishment of a sound and growing economy.

Ultimately, however, it is about removing the sources of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa and replacing it with conditions conducive to peace, stability and prosperity. From a conflict resolution as well as a force multiplier point of view, the concept of the African Renaissance could therefore be presented as follows:

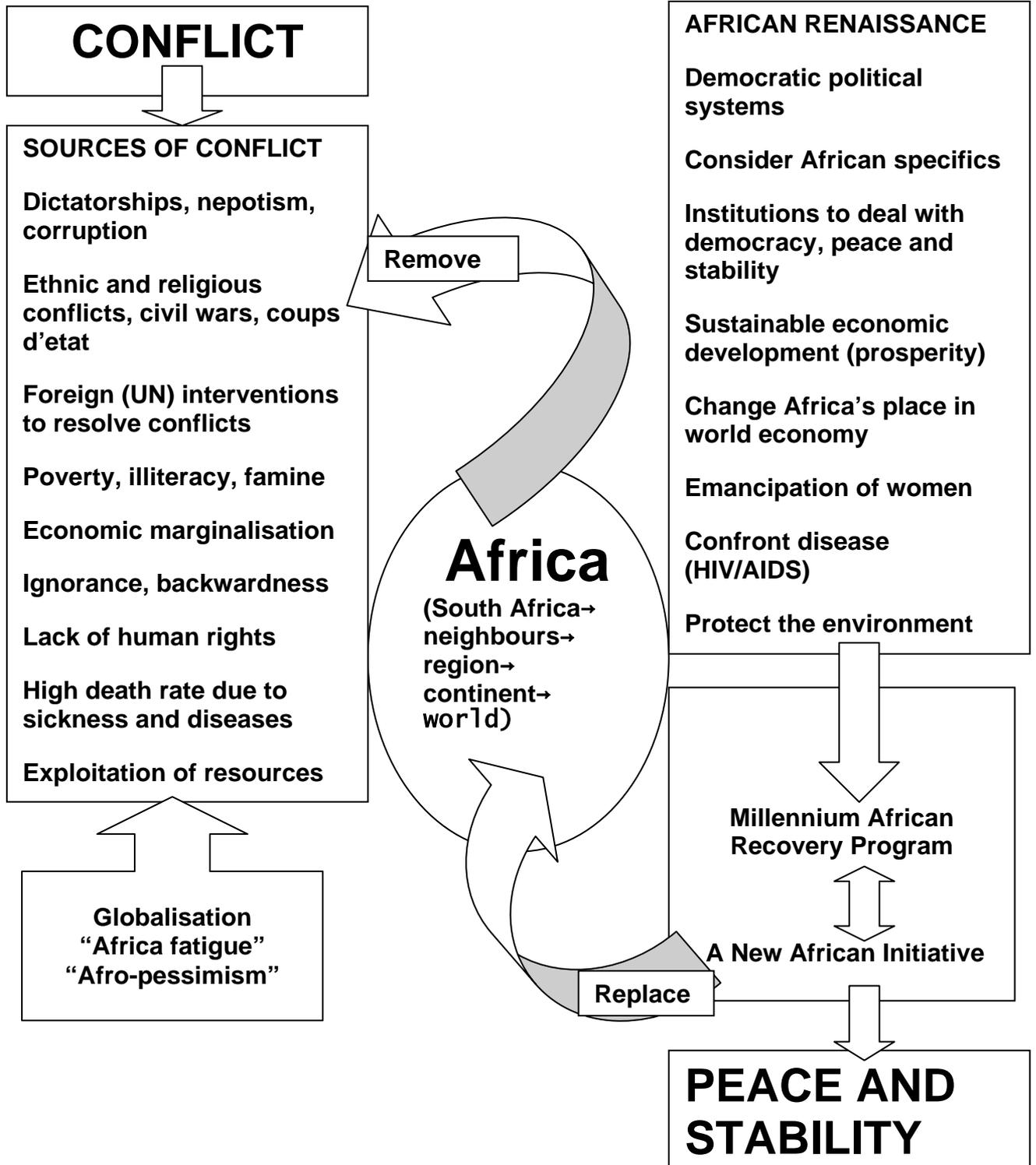


Figure 4: The concept of the African Renaissance as an instrument for conflict resolution

In the force multiplier role, the focus will be on aspects such as the mobilisation of the people of Africa to take their destiny in their own hands, to end poverty, disease and backwardness, to address the sources of conflict, to achieve sustainable economic development, to recall their intellectuals to help find solutions to Africa's problems, to exert pressure on governments through non-governmental organisations, trade unions, professional organisations, universities and private organisations to bring about socio economic change.

Because President Mbeki is acutely aware of the realities of Africa and especially sub-Saharan Africa and the fact that whatever happens to South Africa's neighbours can also happen to South Africa, the dream of an African Renaissance will remain alive for at least as long as he remains at the helm of political power in South Africa. Whether the dream will survive and its results become his legacy, will, however, depend on the way he and his government manage to realise the objectives they have set for themselves in terms of the concept of the African Renaissance.

In this regard, the South African Government's serious intent to create and maintain a stable and peaceful environment as a cornerstone for reconstruction and development, not only in South Africa but also in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, is reflected in its day-to-day actions and activities which, in turn, is offered as an example to the rest of the continent. Underpinning this example, is the concept of the African Renaissance, which as a golden thread, is offered as a lifeline to South Africa's brothers and sisters in despair. The concept is built on the solid rock of South Africa's Constitution and reflects those issues that address the sources of conflict which may constitute a threat to South Africa's national interests and therefore its national security policy. It also offers viable instruments and structures to address these issues.

It is therefore in South Africa's interest to do whatever it takes, and to make no excuses for taking the lead, to implement the concept of the African Renaissance, under whatever name, as the only current alternative to instability and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. In order to do this, South Africa, however, must take note that it will have to serve the aims of Africa, lead by example and not through dominance, and specifically accept the fact that due to the realities of the current situation in sub-Saharan Africa, it will take at least a generation or two to realise the dream of an African Renaissance.

To make this dream work, probably is the biggest challenge South Africa currently faces. Although the concept must continuously be "sold" to all Africans and especially its leaders, as well as to potential investors and prominent international political and financial decision-makers, the initial major focus of the effort should be on South Africa. Once success is achieved domestically, the product could be

exported, first to neighbours, then to the region and later to the rest of the continent and even the world.

The way to market the concept, would be by implementing the New African Initiative, which appears to be a generally accepted, workable plan, anchored in reality, but aimed at the dream of a better life for all on the African continent. In this regard, the ***African Renaissance Rebellion Model*** offers a solution which could be successful in a force multiplier role, should the following guidelines be considered:

- A common understanding of the concept of the African Renaissance, its relevancy, intentions and objectives will only follow after definite results have proven its success. Stakeholders, including international, political and cultural leaders, economic institutions and every individual on the sub-continent, will accordingly only “buy” into the concept if South Africa, and specifically President Mbeki, could prove himself a visionary though realistic, credible and non-controversial leader with Africa’s interests at heart. It is therefore possible that to be merely characterised as being on the wrong side of crucial issues such as HIV/AIDS could jeopardise the achievement of the renaissance in Africa.
- South Africa’s technological, communication and education capabilities should be used to transfer knowledge and skills through awareness campaigns to the most remote places. In the process, all stakeholders, no matter who and where they are, should develop an awareness of the objectives of the African Renaissance. Once informed, these leaders, institutions and individuals should be in a position to identify, accept and understand the dilemma they are confronted with. Being empowered with knowledge, they should then be in a position to organise themselves or empower groupings to exert pressure on the sources of power to institute change on their behalf. President Mbeki’s shuttle-policy in this regard and his efforts to influence the decision-making processes of institutions of global governance (UN, AU, SADC) and finance (World Bank, IMF) constitute constructive contributions in this regard.
- South Africa should not shrink from playing a leadership-role, based on sound ethical principles, in the ***rebellion*** against the political and economical injustices of the sub-continent. Although its role may be restricted due to issues such as non-interference in the domestic affairs of neighbours, every opportunity should be used to creatively empower and mobilise governments, political and financial organisations as well as individuals in the region to act in the furtherance of the objectives of the African Renaissance. In this regard, South Africa could play a leading role to encourage sub-Saharan Africa to get on the globalisation wagon and to produce initiatives that will encourage and convince possible investors and development partners to become involved in the sub-continent. An important initiative in this regard would be for sub-Saharan Africa to audit its political and economic leadership in order to rid itself of matters such as rampant corruption and nepotism which is hampering sustainable economic development.

- South Africa should make a concerted effort to prove its credentials as a regional role-player, especially with regard to its contribution to stabilise or support other countries. In order to achieve this, South Africa should build political capable partners, promote economic unity, maintain good contact and relationships with other African states and their leaders, show interest in what is happening in those countries and show that it wants to make a difference in the region and the continent.
- As far as regional security is concerned, South Africa should, however, promote the idea of collective security in the region. Although it would be advisable for South Africa to restrict itself to a negotiation and facilitation role, it must be accepted that South Africa has an obligation to militarily support its neighbours through military pacts if so requested. If this should happen, it should ensure that it plays a precise role in order to prevent being sucked into never-ending conflicts. As an alternative, the role of private security companies in external conflicts, considering the successes of these organisations already achieved, could be reviewed.
- South Africa's willingness and actual participation in peace missions in Africa should do much for its general acceptance on the continent. These opportunities should, however, be used to empower as many as possible soldiers in the art of peace-keeping. Apart from capacity-building, this will also serve as an excellent opportunity for image-building.
- The role of African defence forces within the African Renaissance concept will be to, subject to civilian control, support the country's foreign policy. In the endeavours to do so, a climate of stability should be created which will allow the other role players on especially the socio-economic terrain to carry out their individual mandates.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Instability and conflict anywhere in sub-Saharan Africa inadvertently threaten South Africa's national security. It is therefore in its national interest to do all in its power to prevent or to intervene to end the occurrence of such activities. President Mbeki's notion of an African Renaissance is a genuine attempt to remove the sources of conflict and to replace it with instruments that could ensure peace and stability. From this perspective, there can thus be no doubt that the concept of the African Renaissance should, as the only alternative, be used as a force multiplier to ensure lasting peace and stability in sub-Saharan Africa.

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South African National Defence College  
17 October 2000**

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