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Reconciliation as a Process and a tools for Sustainable Development and Peace Building

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ABSTRACT: Conflict is a phenomenon that lives with man. It is inevitable as long as man coexists within a society. But, when there is conflict, there must be a way out of the ensued conflict which is usually the subject matter of peacebuilding as a post conflict activities and process that encourages the establishment of durable peace that tries to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict by dealing with the root causes of the conflict and the effects of such conflict through reconciliation, conciliation, institutional and eco-political transformation or peace rebuilding process. It is the position of this paper that reconciliation be seen as a sustainable tool for an effective peacebuilding. The paper analyzed conflicts and components of reconciliation and conciliation as a sustainable tools for peacebuilding and as a robust techniques for all-inclusive peacebuilding process which should be taken seriously if we really have to reduce the rates of conflicting situations in our societies.
KEYWORDS: *conflicts, peacebuilding, reconciliation, society.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation is seen and considered as a process that is centrally needed in any society evolving from violent conflicts (Judy Barsalou 2005). It is a term that is generally used in the literature and in practice of peacebuilding that addresses different issues aiming at holding a range of underlying assumptions with regard to the actor employing it. However, according to Eric.Brahm (2003) the essence of reconciliation is to establish durable peace and tries to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict by dealing with the root causes of the conflict and the effects of such conflict through reconciliation, institutional transformation for peace building or rebuilding process. Sustainable peace is the state of manifesting goodwill and cooperation after being reconciled. In many instances, third party intervention brings about the term reconciliation because the disputants or conflicting parties do not ordinarily come together to settle their conflict and resume various acts of goodwill towards each other in furtherance of the established peace most especially when the conflict has degenerated into a violent conflict which often involves the use of arms and other weapons of war. A third party intervention is needed in this instance to help conciliate the conflicting parties and guide them to finally put their conflicts to rest. It is pertinent in the drive for a sustainable peace to x-ray reconciliation, the coming together of parties who had been pulled apart by their conflicts and also to take a deep look at conciliation being the act of performing goodwill, maintenance of status quo as the sustainable tools for peace building.

Meanwhile, conflict, being the opposite of peace is inherent in human society; it has been part of human and non-human life and every society can be engulfed in one form of conflict or the other since it characterizes human interaction at the levels of the individual, group, community and nation. Conflict is understand in a clear term as a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceived as being obtainable by one or the other. Conflict is always dynamic, and therefore, grows or reduces and changes in form and shape. Conflicts escalate when people concerned or involved are not open and ready to settle or reconcile their differences. In addressing a conflict, the right to life is fundamental to all economic, social, civil and political rights. In a place where violent conflict ensues, upholding the right to life and ensuring security for all people rest upon reconciliation of the conflicting parties to the conflict. To resolve conflict is to turn the opposed position, the claims and its rejection into a single outcome and therefore to bring about peace. Reconciling a conflicting party is termed as 'reconciliation'; and reconciliation implies bringing people back together in a peaceful manner after a separation, usually due to conflict. Reconciliation is the crucial objective of peace building. It arises when disputants develop a new relationship based on apology, forgiveness and newly established trust. John Paul Lederac (1997) describes reconciliation as a "meeting ground where trust and mercy have met, and where justice and peace have kissed".

Conflict and the Concept of Peace

Conflict can be describe as friction, or disharmony that arises within a given group and assemble of people with opposing interest, beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group and being either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group. Conflict can arise between members of the same group, known as intragroup conflict, or it can occur between members of two or more groups, and involve violence, interpersonal discord conflict. Conflict in groups often follows a specific course. There are routine group interface that could be at first be interrupted by the conflict at the initial stage, it often caused by opposing or differences of opinion, and disintegrated the unity of the group hence splitting the group into coalitions.

Conflict could be violent and non-violent conflict, and spans a wide of spectrum of situations between peace and war. Conflict is not stationary, it may grow and becomes intractable; however, intractable conflicts are ones that stayed unsettled for long periods of time and then become wedged at a high level of power and destructiveness. They typically involve many parties and concern a complex set of historical, religious, cultural, political and economic issues. Peace is a state of tranquility, a state of non-violence in which the contradictions in society have been effectively conciliated in the interest of all. Peace is conceived of as a state of calmness, quietness, and living in harmony with oneself and one's neighbours. Peace also means freedom from fear, conflict, violence, war and civic disorder. Peace is also a non-violent resolution of conflict and respect for collective basic values such as life, human rights, liberty, basic freedoms, equity and social justice.

Components of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding are those several activities that involves to prevent conflict especially from resurrecting. Peace building can be described as a construction of a building that needs maintenance even after the completion of the building from depreciation. Peacebuilding operation is designed to generate a condition for durable peace; institutional rebuilding, healings of wounds, prevent conflict from restarting; reconcile conflicting parties; install rule of law; integrate people; and to address the underlying structural issues**.** However, peacebuilding address fundamental issues to restore social stability and functional structures.

In this, special attention must be given to place and role of "Truth" as a key component of peace building in conflicts reconciliation. Peacebuilding as a process involves "approaches planned to advance a protected and firm lasting peace in which the basic human needs of the people are met and violent conflicts do not recur" (Lederach, J.P 1997). There are basically two broad approaches to peacebuilding; First, peacebuilding can refer to direct work that intentionally focuses on addressing the factors driving or mitigating conflict. Second, the term peacebuilding can also be referred to the efforts that coordinate a multi-level, multisector strategy, including ensuring that there is funding and proper communication and coordination mechanisms between humanitarian assistance, development, governance, security, justice and other sectors that may not use the term "peacebuilding" to describe themselves.

Peacebuilding is an efforts but coordinated one to manage, mitigate, resolve and change beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to transform the short and long term dynamics between individuals and groups toward a more stable, peaceful coexistence. It also transform conflict through peace processes such as dialogue, negotiation, and mediation. To prevent the return of conflicts and violence.

Peace Building as a Process

Peace building is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and also to prevent a recurrence of violence by addressing the root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, conciliation, political and economic transformation. Peace building is a complex and lengthy process requiring the establishment of a climate of tolerance and respect for the truth. It encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms, these includes:

   i.   the reintegration of soldiers and refugees,
   ii. demining and removal of debris of war,
   iii. emergency reliefs,
   iv. constructions,
   v.   social and economic rehabilitations.

There are three dimensions of peace building; these include:
   i.   addressing the underlying causes of the conflict,
   ii.   repairing damaged relationships termed conciliation and,
   iii. dealing with the psychological trauma of the individuals as also termed as conciliation.

Peace building may either be rapid or gradual depending on the nature of the conflict and the personalities involved; whether the process is rapid or gradual, what is required is that all concerned parties collectively put together to address the root causes of the conflict and repair broken human relationships. This includes

empowering victims to work for the healing of their trauma and the perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions.

Peace building as a process involves approaches planned to advance a protected and firm lasting peace in which the basic human needs of the people are met and violent conflicts do not reoccur. Various actors such as the International Organizations, Donors, Regional Institutions and Specialists are involved in the peace building process. The outcome of peace building becomes a process of understanding and learning. The main principles of peace building are promoting peace through exposing the community to conflict analysis and resolution skills and to peacemaking suggestions and experiences. Peace building is an integral part of community life and should address all dimensions of society.

The activities included in peace building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace building. However, every fruitful peace building actions does produce an atmosphere that is sustainable and prevent a reoccurring of conflict by creating rule of law mechanisms peace building is generally most effective when seeking for durable peace for it resolved the underlying issues that facilitate conflict. (Coning, C 2013).

Conciliation and Reconciliation
Conciliation and Reconciliation are two terms that appears similar in nature and have been used interchangeably by people not minding the clear and distinct disparity between them. "Conciliation" according to Anthony Lewis is the state of exhibiting friendliness and care after the conflicts is being resolved (Anthony Lewis 2018). While Reconciliation implies bringing people back together after a separation, usually due to conflict. It is the crucial objective of peacebuilding, arises when disputants develop a new relationship based on apology, forgiveness and newly established trusts.

With the disparity shown above, it would be clear to say that "Conciliation" comes after "Reconciliation". Conciliation would mean doing good, being fair and a display of equity in the maintenance of an established relationship. Conciliation comes in two ways; one in peacemaking and in peacebuilding. It would therefore be safe to say that in terms of peacebuilding; Conciliation comes to sustain Reconciliation. And by the virtue of their importance in peacebuilding process, the duos are inseparable in achieving an effective and a lasting peace in any society.

The Concept of Reconciliation
Bloomfield, David (2003) contends that the complication always arises from taken decision of what we want to attain and how to get it achieved. The goal (what is to be achieved), and a process (a means to achieved the goal). He further maintains that the complexity also arises from the fact that the process of reconciliation occurs in many contexts, for example, between husband and wife, offender and victim, between friends who have disagreed as well as between nations or communities that have fought. Therefore, there is always need to make clear the context in which one discusses reconciliation. Having made clear that his concern is with post-war/post-conflict situations, Bloomfield defines reconciliation as:

> An over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness,
> healing and so on. ... And finding the means of healing the wounds, coexist with the
> past enemies and lives better together. (Bloomfield, David 2003)

Drawing from a line of reasoning similar to the above, Bloomfield earlier on argued that the basic definition of reconciliation then is 'a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future'. Closely related to this views is Mawondo's position that reconciliation is 'a process that re-establishes love and understanding between two or more estranged parties'. He argues that reconciliation occur to solve a particular conflict situation but what is most important is to identify with honesty the primary causes of the conflict with a view to finding a genuine and positive solution to the problem (Mawawondo, Simon Zvinaiye 2009)

Reconciliation can be therefore describe as a concept that seeks to re-connect, to re-establish the coherence that has been disturbed or cracked by the conflict. This further implies that genuine reconciliation is always mutual and readiness to sacrifice as well as to be prepared to forgo some prerogatives, and to surrender to some extent to the former adversary.
Van Binsbergen argues that the condition that is necessary for reconciliation is the recognition by the actors in the conflicts, that there is exact, clearly expressed conflict'. He proceeded and argue that:

> "Reconciliation is only possible if the conflict is clearly and publicly discussed by those
> involved, and such discussion creates a clarity which may well have a beneficial influence on
> future relationships due to previously unexpressed conflicts"(Van Binsbergen, Wim 1999)

If we accept the opinion of Van Binsbergen, we would also need to accept and agree to the fact that "Conciliation" consummates "Reconciliation" in the peacebuilding process; and therefore both organs of peacebuilding are inseparable interwoven tool for an effective peacebuilding process.

Reconciliation as a Process
Reconciliation is increasingly understood as a dynamic, complex, difficult, long-term and unpredictable process, not an event, isolated act, nor even an end-point or a remote goal to be achieved when war has ended**. (**Susan Dwyer 1999), However, some academics, practitioners and policymakers believe that reconciliation can be understood both as a goal and a process (Vern Neufeld Redekop 2008). Recognizing when reconciliation has been achieved may however be problematic, and must always be context specific. Luc Huyse, (2005) stressed the fact that it is not a linear process as the various steps and stages it entails may not follow logically in any sequential order (Luc Huyse, 2005), Reconciliation is however a 'multidimensional phenomenon,' encompassing several processes of addressing conflicting and fractured relationships and including a range of different activities. As Louis Kriesberg, puts "Reconciliation to mean a processes by which transformation occurs, or the outcome of such processes." (Louis Kriesberg, 2004).

Reconciliation and Coexistence
The notion of 'co-existence' has most often been suggested as an ancillary for reconciliation, it coincides with the first Roget's Thesaurus definition of reconciliation as 'to put up with'; 'to bear'; 'to tolerate'. The scholar Elizabeth Cole considers that such a definition "implies only the thinnest understanding of reconciliation, in which former enemies desist from trying to destroy each other."(Cole 2011)

Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation
John Paul Lederach, one of the key scholar in the field of peace studies, express that conflict transformation is an all-inclusive and multi-faceted method of managing violent conflict. The term signifies an ongoing process of transformation from negative to positive relations, behavior, attitudes and structures (John Paul Lederach 2005). This approach to peacebuilding does not only tries to find solutions to the issues underlying the conflict but also works to alter the structural elements that underlie the conflict as well as the adversaries relationships, which is what reconciliation is about. (Reina Neufeldt, Larissa Fast, Fr Robert Schreiter, Fr Brian Starken, Duncan MacLaren, Jaco Cilliers, and John Paul 2002).

Reconciliation and Trauma Healing
Scholars are of the opinion that healing and reconciliation need to go together, "especially when the groups that have engaged in violence against each other continue to coexist." (Ervin and Staub 2005). The linkage between trauma healing and reconciliation is that the healing is normally considered as an enhancing factors for the possibility of reconciliation, while reconciliation in another hand has the possibility of healing. The developments of reconciliation to healing actually often appeared to be recurring and underpin each other, progressively and ultimately preventing of future violence. In reconciliation both immediate emotional needs are important (Vern N. R. 2008). In the words of Ervin and Staub, "while the nature of psychological wounds of survivors, perpetrators and bystanders varies greatly, as does the moral meaning of their wounds, healing assist reconciliation. (Staub, et al 2008). Individuals need to heal from wounds that result from being harmed (Joseph V. Montville 1993) but also from having harmed others, or being a member of a group that has harmed others. Indeed, some analysts stress the fact that for reconciliation to take place, "perpetrators and members of the perpetrator group who may not have engaged in violence also need to heal."(Staub, et al 2008) But as reconciliation begins, it can, in turns, contribute to the 'healing' process for survivors. Several mechanisms may be at play here. First, the reconciliation process generally increases the feeling of security, which facilitates further healing easier (Staub, et al 2008). Reconciliation activities may also help "make sense of injuries" and deal with deep physical and emotional wounds (Barsalou, 1999). For instance, public acknowledgement of the events may allow the survivors and victims' relatives to engage in a mourning process (Batrice Pouligny, Bernard Doray and Jean-Clment Martin 2007). This explains that many consider that healing generally proceeds from a reconciliation process. In the words of Ervin Staub et al., "psychologists, progress in one realm fosters progress in the other in this cycle."(Staub, et al 2008) The connection between the two is exemplified by those cases in which traditional rituals are clearly meant and experienced as both healing and reconciliation rituals.

Truth as a Component of Reconciliation
Truth is the character of being truthful to a person. It could be faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, constancy, steadfast allegiance (Oxford English Dictionary). Truth is stating the actual state of the case, the matter or circumstance as it really is.

Accepting the truth of past event is a fundamental factor in reconciliation and is the first step in reconciliation. Truth is the recognition by the perpetrators and the damaged inflicted on the victims. Truth suggest honesty and revelations, without truth, conflicts cannot be resolved and differences cannot be reconciled. Revealing the truth plays a critical role in reconciliation, victims can be recognized and have their humanity and civil dignities transformed in the process. That in turns creates room for forgiveness; goodwill and the parties' willingness to move forward.

In the understanding of the importance of "Truth" as a fundamental component of reconciliation; rising democracies in the recent years have been using Truth and Reconciliation Commissions to work at reconciliation issues. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is said to be the best known. The South African law requires that those requesting reprieve should tell the whole truth about their actions.
Dan Bronkhorst summarizes the findings from his research on this trend in a book for Amnesty International and state thus:

> "Clearly, the most important conclusion is that apparently there exists no model for the reconciliation process which would apply to all, or most countries… There are too many differences in the character of the genesis and transformation phrases… There are certain minimum requirements... The first requirement, an essential component of reconciliation is establishment of the truth…" (Bronkhorst, Dan 1995).

The main object of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in reconciliation process is the sequence of fact-finding, truth telling, retributive justice, forgiveness and restorative justice that leads to reconciliation which is precisely about bringing different versions or perceptions of the truth into harmony. Liberia President, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (as she then was) in a peacebuilding process and as a means of total reconciliation and in conciliation of the achieved peace in her country after a protracted civil war; set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia; however, this was used to settle several conflicts during the period.

Justice as a Factor of Reconciliation
'Justice', like 'truth', is another significant aspect of reconciliation process. The term is commonly used in connection to trial and punishment of individual perpetrators through the formal justice system. Pope John Paul II in his emphasis on forgiveness in connotation to justice siad:

> "The command to forgive does not precede the objective demands of justice, but justice in the correct sense of the word is actually the ultimate aim of forgiveness" (Pope John Paul II (Encyclical No. XIV) Quoted in Bromkhorst, Dan 1995)

Justice is not penalty or chastisement, but restitution and not necessarily to bring things back to the way they were, but to the way they should be. It is about restoring people's lives, restoring peace and harmony (National Open University of Nigeria 2009). In a reconciliation process, justice does not only functions at the individual level, but also at the level of social order. Processes of justice and reconciliation are influenced by numerous factors including the impact of the conflict, parameters of the settlement, resources available, the degree of political will and consensus, institutional capacity, cultural norms and so on. For instance, the demand for truth and justice, and the desire to achieve reconciliation began in East Timor as soon as the multinational peacekeeping troops arrived in September 1999. The Timorese people had suffered human rights violations for decades and after the ballot the desire for truth about these crimes was intense.

For countries emerging from conflict, balancing the compromises of peace settlements with the pursuit of justice and long-term reconciliation is a significant challenge. Justice according to Lederach, involves 'the pursuit of restoration, of rectifying wrongs, of creating right relationship based on equity and fairness. Pursuing justice involves advocacy for those harmed, for open acknowledgment of the wrongs committed, and for making things right (Lederach, J.P 1997).

Mercy as a Tool in Reconciliation
Mercy is an essential ingredient to healthy relationship. Mercy is forgiveness and forgiveness means willingness to pardon other for their wrong deeds. Mercy and reconciliation are tools to fix relationships whenever there is a confrontations. This would help to live and move forward in relationship; the past would be put aside and forgotten. This is also true and healthy positive dialogue encounters with all. Mercy involves compassion, forgiveness, and a new start. Mercy is oriented towards supported persons who have committed injustices, encouraging them to change and move on. Lederach argues that reconciliation involves the identification and acknowledgment of what happened (that is, telling the truth) an effort to right the wrongs that occurred (that is, justice) and forgiveness which is mercy.

Mercy is a prerequisite for reconciliation. Reconciliation enhances the process of forgiveness at a transformation level which helps to break through personal barriers and lift the veil of delusions that may blind individuals, groups, and states to the potential for cooperation. When disputants are able to embrace the suffering of our enemy, then a reconciliation process can begin. Mercy and reconciliation therefore, requires community participation, they cannot be accomplished in isolation.

Peace as a process of Reconciliation

Peace process is a political process in which conflicts are reconciled by peaceful means. They are a mixture of politics, negotiation, changing relationships, compromise, mediation, and dialogue in both official and non-official arenas (National Open University of Nigeria 2009). Karen Brouneus (2007), defined peace processes as "step by step reciprocal moves to build confidence, resolution issues such as disarmament, and carefully define the future through the design of new political institutions. Batrice Pouligny, (2002) in her own understanding divided peace processes into two stages and each of these into another two phases:

i. The first stage of peace process are:'termination of violent conflict'. This she breaks up into two phases:
    a) negotiation and;
    b) cessation of hostilities.
ii. The second stage is peacebuilding, which moves from an:
    a) alteration phase to;
    b) a consolidation phase. It is on the consolidation phase that peacemaking and peacekeeping come to play in the reconciliation process.

Reconciliation as a Sustainable Tool for an Effective Peacebuilding

The re-establishing a cordial relationship between conflicting parties and the state of manifesting goodwill and cooperation after being reconciled by parties to a conflict is the sole function of reconciliation. It is a justifiable sustainable tool of peacebuilding in which parties to conflict are able to continue and maintain a peaceful relationship after the settlement of their conflicts. The Joint Analysis Workshop (JAW), London, in November 2015 hold a conference on the subject matter 'Peacebuilding and Reconciliation'; addressing the topic, Mark Salter reported and emphasized the role of reconciliation as a stimulus for, or component of, inclusive peacebuilding as thus:

> "Reconciliation processes can help to transform relationships in societies affected by conflict, encouraging accommodation of conflicting views and facilitating space for individuals and groups to engage in inclusive political processes. To support inclusivity, reconciliation requires integrated top-down and bottom-up reconciliation approaches that engage both elites and non-elites, and sensitivity to the types of reconciliation activity that are appropriate to different circumstances and phases of peace processes." Mark Salter (2015)

The report of the workshop suggested how reconciliation and conciliation contribute to inclusive peace as follows:

a) reconciliation support inclusion and brings people together.
b) it broaden and strengthen the social contract by linking state and community-level views of reconciliation and joining these strands in an inclusive dialogue.

However, it can be problematic to talk of inclusiveness when a reconciliation process has been designed and implemented by political elites, with relatively little reference to other social forces. For outsiders trying to support reconciliation there is also the question of ownership: what if stakeholders prefer separation to integration?

Reconciliation allow space for narratives, and designed a structure for difficult discussions from diverse perspectives. Making voices heard that may otherwise go unnoticed is another form of inclusion. Reconciliation also draws attention to the quality of relationships. It is about knowing and accepting "the other", and creating dialogue focused on the kind of shared future a society wishes to create. Emphasis should be placed on its transformative perspective.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Reconciliation and Conciliation is increasingly acknowledged as an important component in responding to legacies of violence in order to build a sustainable peace. It is an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) method of conflict resolution where there is no victor and no vanquish. Yet, parties to the conflict are able to shield their swords, discuss their grievances, resume peaceful coexistence and continue to do well to one another as brothers. However, reconciliation initiatives have struggled to achieve the transformative impact needed to create the space for inclusive peacebuilding to take place. However, Reconciliation is a sustainable tool for an effective peacebuilding hence, it should be encourage and accommodated as a tradition in our societies.

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