

DATE : 10 March 2007

INVESTING IN HUMAN SECURITY TO PREVENT CONFLICT AND PROMOTE PEACE BUILDING

PRESENTED BY: Ms CLAUDETTE KIGEME (PROVINCE OF BURUNDI)

She welcomed everybody who was in the room. First of all, she would like to thank you for your participation in this session. Your choice to be here shows the interest you have in preventing conflicts and promoting peace building.

Before she start,she share a short story with us.

One day, a man who was working in a farm got seriously blamed by his employer. He went home frustrated. When he arrived he knocked to the door and his wife came to open. He pretended that she has delayed and slapped her. She kept quiet and got into the house. She looked to her child who was playing and wondered why he could not keep quiet. She stood up and slapped the kid. The kid shut up and sat quietly in a corner. While sitting there, he remembered that the cat which was sleeping nearby has drunk his milk during the day. He got up and beat the cat. The cat which could not understand why her security was disturbed jumped away. She hurt a pot in which there was the evening meal and the pot broke down. Obviously, there was no food for the whole family and everyone was furious against another. And that was the end of the story.

Similar series of conflicts and violence happen around us at a narrow or wider scale. Many conflicts start small and grow bigger because they have not been addressed earlier. Conflicts start in peoples minds because of frustrations, fear, anger, and resentment. The tensions grow from one individual to another, reach communities until wars start. Human and physical infrastructures are destroyed. At the end, the protagonists realize that they have all lost, and that there is no winner in the war. Therefore, it is important to invest in human security to prevent conflicts. In the last twenty years, many countries especially in Africa have gone through civil wars and genocide. Many people have died, others have become refugees or internal displaced. The most affected are in majority women and children. The consequences are dreadful: extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS, violation of human rights to name but a few. You heard about women this morning, I am going to focus on children in this session.

Some figures from Burundi are illustrative:

Over a population of 7 millions, 800.000 are in the category of orphans and vulnerable children. Among them:

- 240.000 are HIV/AIDS orphans,
- 3000 are street children
- 194.000 are in displaced camps
- 180.000 are living in refugees camp

- 2995 have been child soldiers, and
- 30.346 children are heads of families

The same situation occurs in all countries which went through civil war or genocide. Armed conflicts cause children to miss out on their childhood in a multitude of ways. Children recruited as soldiers are denied education and protection, and are often unable to access essential health-care services. Those who are displaced, refugees or separated from their families face similar deprivations. Conflicts heighten the risk of children being exposed to abuse, violence and exploitation. Even those children who are able to remain with their families, in their own homes, may face many problems because of destruction of physical infrastructure, lack of access to health-care and education, and increasing personal insecurity caused by the conflict.

Even if armed conflicts stop, those children especially vulnerable ones are not necessarily secured. It is clear that secure states do not automatically mean secure peoples. Indeed, how can they be secured without knowing where they spend the night? How could they be secured without knowing who is feeding them the following day? And how could they be secured without having any one listening and caring about their problems? Jesus said, 'Love one another as I loved you' and 'whoever welcomes in my name such a child welcomes me'. Imagine that these children are yours and think about their security and their future.

Anais Nin Said, 'We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are' Many of those children growing in such a situation are wandering through life without a purpose as they have nobody to guide them. Will we be surprised to see them becoming the Cains of tomorrow? Remember that Esau sold his birthright to Jacob because of hunger. Will we be surprised to see them selling their morality for a piece of bread?

Some of them have been baptized and we call them by their Christian names without even realizing that we are betraying Christ. If Jesus was here today, he would not chase them when they steal from his pocket, he would understand that they are hungry and feed them. He would not blame them for their bad behavior he would understand that they need education, love and affection. He would get closer to them and heal their wounds. He would change them and make them his apostles like he changed Saul into Paul. They would become peacemakers instead of trouble-makers. They would be the hope for future generations.

Are we responding like Jesus? Mother Theresa of Calcutta said, 'It doesn't matter the quantity of actions we do, what counts is the love we put in every action'. In his ministry, Jesus did not only spread the good news, he fed the hungry, healed the sick, and protected the oppressed. It is the mission of the church today to put faith into action, to invest in human security in order to prevent conflicts and promote peace building.

As a mother, I have focused on children because of the time constraints, and I would like to invite all of you to think and your ideas about the following points.

Questions

1. What are the main problems do you have in your church/province investing in human security to prevent conflicts and promote peace building?

- Human development programmes must not be general in order to prevent them getting lost.
- Church intervene in order to provide shelters to those who will in need.
- Church, education must build in the communication
- Sweden is got the same problem of security and the education that is necessary.

2. What are the main challenges do you need?

- Hong Kong –child suicide: pressure to achieve succeed all the time, enormous pressure, highest suicide rates and the parents encourage children to be at home.
- Cape Town – same as USA affects all aspects of life children upsetting and destroying homes
- Sweden – same programme educate
- Human security is a core business
- USA homeless people due to type of economy-people get homeless
- Principles of dialogue and frustration
- Intervention tends to be delegated to woman

3. How can the Anglican communion benefit from your experience

- Dialogue eg TRC Africas processes.
- Uganda – community dialogue
- Cudderstone Liberia- former canibatonts
- Out of the shadows- community resolution from Mary Summer

RECOMMENDATION

1. Church to undertake also civic education as a core business towards peace in the home and community.
2. Church providing shelters for homeless get no long term solution.
3. A real human development programmes must be made available/designed.

